

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

AN INNOMINATE LAUGHING-THRUSH (*GARRULAX*)
OF NORTHWESTERN YUNNAN

BY H. G. DEIGNAN¹

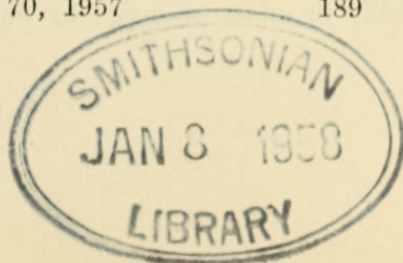
Vaurie (Amer. Mus. Novit., No. 1669, 1954, p. 6) has recently dealt with the Chinese races of *Garrulax cineraceus*, accepting the name *styani* Oustalet for the race of northwestern Yunnan (*terra restricta*: Tzeku) and *cinereiceps* Styan for the one of the Yangtze Valley, thus following the missteps of Hartert (Vögel der paläarkt. Fauna, hfa. 5, 1909, pp. 630-631), Rothschild (Novit. Zool., vol. 33, 1926, pp. 264-265), and Birkhead (Amer. Mus. Novit., No. 966, 1937, pp. 10-11). Unfortunately, no one of these authors seems to have studied carefully Oustalet's remarks at the first appearance of the name *styani*, or their treatment must have been quite different.

Oustalet (Bull. Mus. Hist. Nat. [Paris], tome 4, 1898, pp. 224-226) begins by giving the history of Styan's type of *cinereiceps* and follows with a meticulous description of the form, drawn from Styan's diagnosis and colored plate. Next, he refers to four specimens coming from Tatsienlu and three others earlier sent from Tzeku, which differed in a number of particulars from *cinereiceps*, and these differences are detailed. He emphasizes that, in these birds, "le sommet de la tête n'est ni gris, ni gris brunâtre, mais d'un brun olivâtre fortement maculé de noir, ou même, chez quatre individus, d'un noir franc, et qui dessine une véritable calotte, nettement délimitée, sauf vers la nuque où elle se fond, pour ainsi dire, en petites taches disséminées." (Italics are Oustalet's.)

In the next paragraph he continues: "Ces différences de coloration et de dimensions jointes à la différence de provenance sont-elles suffisantes pour motiver une distinction spécifique? J'hésite à le croire, d'autant plus que MM. C.-B. Rickett et J.-D. de la Touche disent que, parmi les *Trochalopteron cinereiceps* qu'ils ont obtenus à Ching Feng Ling, à 100 milles au Nord-Ouest de Fou-tchéou, . . . il y avait un spécimen chez lequel la tête était couverte d'une calotte d'un noir presque uniforme. À côté de cet individu, d'autres exemplaires, en petit nombre, avaient le vertex d'un gris foncé, avec des marques noires au centre des plumes, et beaucoup d'autres avaient le dessus du vertex d'un brun grisâtre, à peine plus foncé que la teinte du manteau."

Continuing, he proves that *Trochalopteron ningpoense* David and Oustalet, 1890, can only be the same as *Trochalopteron cinereiceps*, which is sympatric with *ningpoense* in Chekiang.

¹Published with permission of the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.



Summing up, and assuming that the differences are due to differences of season, age, or sex, Oustalet shows that the range of *cinereiceps* must now be broadened to cover Fukien, Chekiang, Szechwan, Yunnan, and "probablement . . . les provinces intermédiaires," in which case one need no longer doubt the word of the Chinese dealer from whom Styan obtained his type specimen. "Mais alors, sous quel nom conviendrait-il de désigner un *Trochalopteron* aussi largement répandu? Évidemment, le nom de *Trochalopteron ningpoense* disparaîtrait devant celui de *Trochalopteron cinereiceps* qui aurait la priorité. Mais conviendrait-il alors d'appeler *Trochalopteron* à tête grise un Oiseau chez lequel le sommet de la tête serait d'un noir franc dans la livrée de noces, et d'un brun olivâtre, mélangé de noir et tirant à peine au gris, dans la plumage de transition? Je proposerai dans ce cas de le désigner plutôt sous le nom de *Trochalopteron Styani*, en l'honneur du naturaliste anglais qui, le premier, a fait connaître l'espèce."

Somewhat later (*ibid.*, pp. 253-255), Oustalet returns to his subject. Here he says: "*Trochalopteron Styani*. Sous ce nom j'ai proposé de désigner l'espèce décrite par M. Styan sous le nom de *Trochalopteron cinereiceps*, dans le cas où il serait reconnu que certains *Trochalopteron* à tête noire du Setchuan et du Yun-nan ne représenteraient que la forme adulte et en plumage de noces des *Trochalopteron* à tête grise étudiés par M. Styan. L'étude que j'ai pu faire de trois nouveaux exemplaires envoyés de Tsé-Kou par le R. P. Soulié . . . n'a fait que me confirmer dans l'idée que j'avais émise de l'identité spécifique de tous ces Oiseaux." There follows a discussion of the great variability of the several characters, and the near relationship of *cineraceus* of Manipur is pointed out.

It seems obvious that Oustalet, who was *not* working with trinomials in these papers, considered the black-headed birds of Yunnan merely representative of the nuptial plumage of the bird earlier named *cinereiceps*, and renamed Styan's *cinereiceps* because the name was hardly applicable to a species in which the crown was more often black or olivaceous brown than gray; in short, *styani* is a mere substitute name for *cinereiceps*. That the name cannot be fixed upon the Yunnan specimens is made perfectly certain by Oustalet's remarks on page 253, quoted in the preceding paragraph.

Mr. R. W. Sims has recently examined for me the type specimen of *cinereiceps* in London and reports that it is in fact representative of the race of the Yangtze Valley, "being fairly close to specimens taken at Ichang from among other Yangtze localities. It is readily distinguished from birds from Yunnan (Lichiang Range) by the grey crown, rufous ear-coverts, chesnut supraocular stripes and comparatively little black speckling along both sides of the throat and extending up to the gape."

If *cinereiceps* (with synonyms *ningpoensis* and *styani*) is the bird of the Yangtze Valley, the form of northwestern Yunnan ("*styani*" auctorum) is left without any available name, and I shall call it

***Garrulax cineraceus strenuus*, subsp. nov.**

Type: U. S. Nat. Mus. No. 296779, adult male, collected in the Tschung Mountains (Mekong Valley), northwestern Yunnan, in November 1923, by Joseph F. C. Rock; original number 1372.

Diagnosis: From *G. c. cinereiceps* of the Yangtze Valley readily separable in *adult* plumage by having the crown and nape distinctly black,

not grayish brown or deep brownish gray, and the supraocular stripe and posterior ear coverts dull olive-brown, not chestnut-rufous.

Range: Northwestern Yunnan and southeastern Hsikang.

Remarks: Vaurie (*loc. cit.*) observes that "authors have failed to realize that *styani* [auctorum] is migratory," and, farther on, "as shown by Schäfer (1938, Jour. Ornith., vol. 86, Sonderh., p. 240), *cinereiceps* is the breeding race at Tatsienlu; *styani* [auctorum] also appears in this region but only as a migrant or visitor outside of the breeding season." Since no member of the extensive genus *Garrulax* has previously been suspected of migration, and since Vaurie's statement implies migration *northward*, one could wish for documentation of the assertion. I suggest that *strenuus* misidentified as *cinereiceps* by Schäfer) is the only form ever found at Tatsienlu [Kangting].

I owe thanks to R. W. Sims of the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) for his examination of the type of Styan's *cinereiceps*, and to A. L. Rand and Philip Hershkovitz of the Chicago Natural History Museum, S. Dillon Ripley of the Peabody Museum of Natural History (New Haven), and J. C. Greenway of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy (Cambridge), for comments on my unpublished manuscript.



1957. "An innominate Laughing-Thrush (*Garrulax*) of Northwestern Yunnan." *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington* 70, 189–191.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/107748>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/46481>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Biodiversity Heritage Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

Rights Holder: Biological Society of Washington

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Rights: <https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.