

## Revision of the Quail Finch *Ortygospiza atricollis*

by MELVIN A. TRAYLOR

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Historically, the various forms of the Quail Finch, both those with black and those with white chins, have all been considered races of one species for which the oldest name is *atricollis*. Chapin (1954, *Bull. A.M.N.H.*, 75B, p. 499) was the first to report that the two types occur together without intergradation. He found both in the eastern Ituri, the black-chinned *dorsostriata* at Bogoro on the escarpment, and the white-chinned *ugandae* at Kasenyi on the shore of Lake Albert. More recently, Benson (1955, *B.B.O.C.*, 75, p. 106) has shown that the two types overlap geographically in north-eastern Northern Rhodesia, and again in 1960 (*B.B.O.C.*, 80, p. 118) he found both together on the Lungwevungu River in extreme western Northern Rhodesia. In 1961, I also found both types in the Kalabo District of Barotseland, south of the Lungwevungu, so it was evident that there was a fairly broad overlap in this area.

Since the two types overlapped geographically in three areas without intergradation, it was apparent that two species must be involved. However, the race *ugandae* van Someren, from published descriptions, appeared to be intermediate, and made it difficult to allocate the various named forms to their proper species. Fortunately the type of *ugandae* has just been received by the Chicago Natural History Museum, and it is now possible, with the help of generous loans from other institutions, to determine the limits of the two species and their respective races. Altogether I have had 214 specimens for examination, and for their generosity in loaning me comparative material I would like to thank the authorities of the following institutions: American Museum of Natural History, British Museum (Natural History), Durban Museum and Art Gallery, National Museums of Southern Rhodesia, the Transvaal Museum, and the Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola. I would particularly like to express my appreciation to Con Benson for stimulating my interest in this problem and for seconding to me his gifted collector Jali Makawa who secured most of the Kalabo specimens.

As a general picture of the distribution of the two types of Quail Finch, birds with large white chin spots, a broad white ring around the eye, and the upper mandible dusky instead of red are found from Abyssinia south through Kenya to Cape Province and east through the Rhodesias to Angola and Damaraland (*fuscocrissa*, *mülleri*, *et al.*). Birds with no white on the chin or eye ring, and with the whole bill red, are found around the southern edge of the equatorial forest from Gabon to Uganda (*gabonensis*, *fuscata* and *dorsostriata*). In the savannas of West Africa, and north and east of the forest in Sudan and Uganda lives a form that at first sight appears intermediate, having only a small white chin spot and at most a single line of white feathers around the eye (*atricollis*, *ansorgei*, *ugandae*). However, this latter group has the dusky upper mandible characteristic of the other white-chinned forms and in Uganda it overlaps the black-chinned *dorsostriata*. It is evident, therefore, that the *atricollis* group of races with restricted chin spots represents the *fuscocrissa* group with which it does not overlap, and all the white-chinned races from Senegal to Abyssinia and south to Cape Province must be considered one species.

The black-chinned races comprise a second species, to be called *gabonensis*, the oldest name.

There appears to be only one character that serves to distinguish the two species throughout the whole of their ranges: in *gabonensis* males the bill is always wholly red, while in *atricollis* males the upper mandible is always washed with dusky. The white chin spot varies geographically in *atricollis* as noted above, and even in nominate *gabonensis* and *dorsostriata* occasional white feathers may be found on the chin. However, in the three regions of geographical overlap (three races of *atricollis* and two of *gabonensis* are involved), there are other characters that make identification of the two species quite simple, even in museum specimens where the colour difference in the bill is hardly apparent.

In the Ituri and Uganda, *ugandae* is further distinguished from *dorsostriata* by the almost plain instead of streaked back, the very fine and sparse white barring on the breast, and the limited extent of the black on the throat of the male, which hardly extends onto the upper breast. The plain back and sparse pectoral barring are also characteristic of *atricollis* and *ansorgei*, and serve to set this group of races apart from the other white-chinned forms. Between *ugandae* and *dorsostriata*, *ugandae* averages slightly larger.

In north-eastern Northern Rhodesia the two species overlap geographically from the upper Luapula River and Luwingu Districts to Mporokoso and Abercorn. Here the representative races are *O. a. smithersi* and *O. g. fuscata*. Both of these races are the darkest of their respective species, and the differences between them are the least shown in any region of overlap. However, *smithersi* always has a broad white chin spot and eye ring, and dusky upper mandible, and I have seen no specimens that suggest intergradation. *Smithersi* averages slightly larger.

The two races that overlap in western Balovale and the Kalabo District of Barotseland are *O. a. mülleri* and *O. g. fuscata*. Here the differences are more pronounced, *mülleri* being altogether paler and with broader white pectoral barring than *fuscata*. The fact that the representative races vary in other characters than chin spot and bill colour precludes any possibility that the two species might be only colour phases. In this region also the *atricollis* representative averages slightly larger.

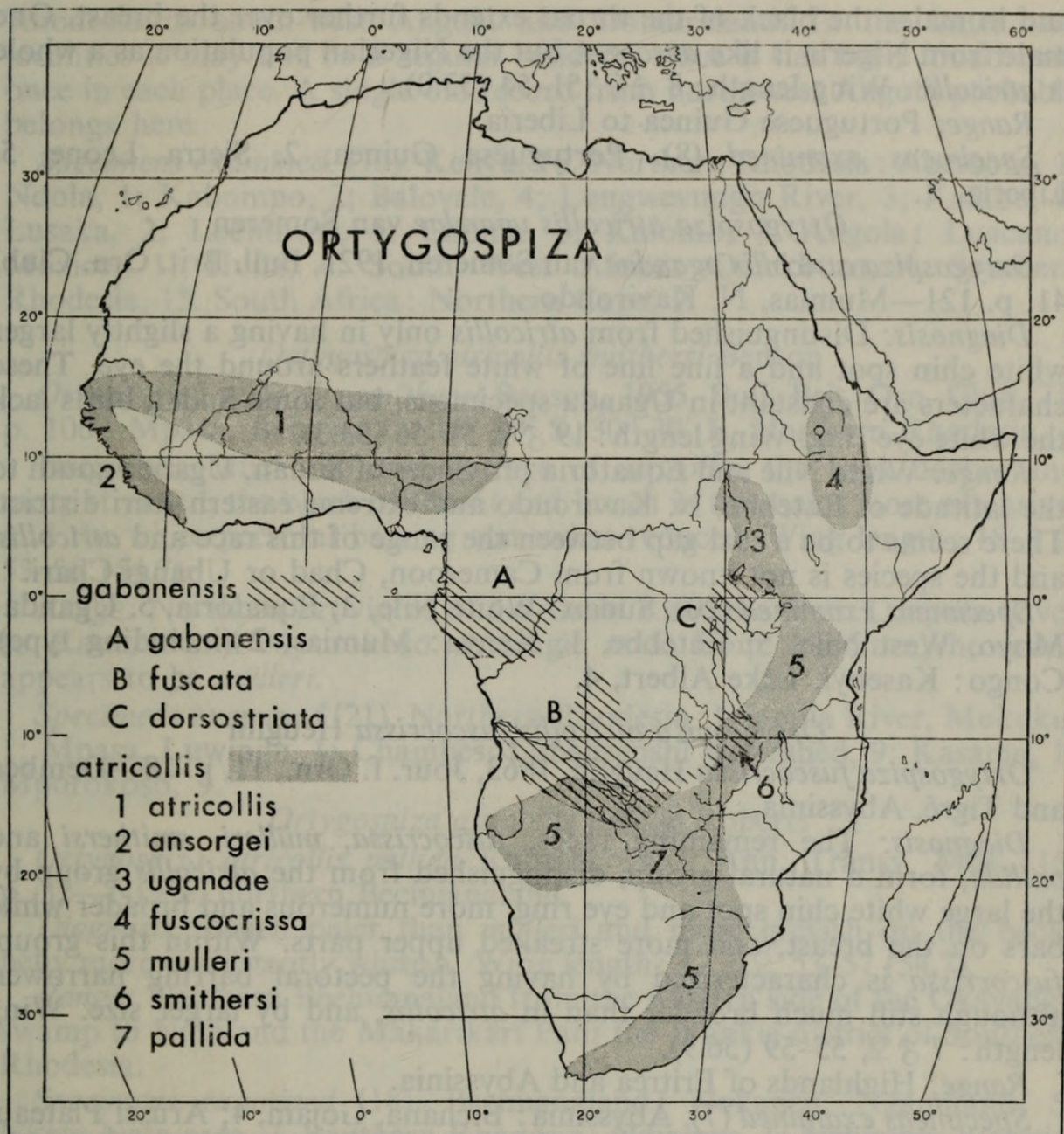
In habits and call notes there seem to be no differences between the two species. In the Northern Provinces Benson (1955) noted an ecological difference, *dorsostriata* preferring more moist habitats than *smithersi*. I noted the same distinction in Kalabo where *mülleri* was found on dry watershed plains and *fuscata* on damp flood plains. However, Benson collected both species within a few yards of each other along the Lungwungu River, so their habitats are by no means exclusive. While there must be some ethological differences between the two, these will have to await more intensive study in the field.

#### Races of *atricollis*

##### *Ortygospiza atricollis atricollis* (Vieillot)

*Fringilla atricollis* Vieillot, 1817, Nouv. Dict. Hist. Nat., 12, p. 182—Senegal.

Synonym: *polyzona* (Temminck), 1823 (see S.A.O.S. List Committee, 1960, Ostrich, p. 76).



*Diagnosis:* This race and *ansorgei* and *ugandae* form a natural group that is characterized by its almost plain, unstreaked back, and very sparse white barring on the breast. In *atricollis* males the black is confined to the throat, and the ground colour of the breast is grey-brown. The white chin spot is small, and in only one specimen out of 16 examined, a male from Mali, are there any white feathers around the eye. Wing length: 14 ♂ ♀, 51–54 (52.4).

*Range:* Grasslands from Gambia and Senegal east through Mali to extreme northern Ghana and northern and central Nigeria. Birds from the south bank of the Gambia River approach *ansorgei*.

*Specimens examined* (16). Senegal, 1. Gambia: South Bank Province, 4. Ghana, 1. Nigeria, 5. Mali, 6.

*Ortygospiza atricollis ansorgei* Ogilvie-Grant

*Ortygospiza ansorgei* Ogilvie-Grant, 1910, Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, 25, p. 84—Gunnal, Portuguese Guinea.

Synonym: *gambiensis* (Delacour), 1943.

*Diagnosis:* Generally darker than *atricollis* in both males and females,

and in males the black of the throat extends further over the breast. One male from Nigeria is like *ansorgei*, but the Nigerian population as a whole is *atricollis*. Wing length: 8 ♂ ♀, 51–54 (53.0).

*Range*: Portuguese Guinea to Liberia.

*Specimens examined* (8). Portuguese Guinea, 2. Sierra Leone, 5. Liberia, 1.

*Ortygospiza atricollis ugandae* van Someren

*Ortygospiza atricollis ugandae* van Someren, 1921, Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, 41, p. 121—Mumias, N. Kavirondo.

*Diagnosis*: Distinguished from *atricollis* only in having a slightly larger white chin spot and a fine line of white feathers around the eye. These characters are constant in Uganda specimens, but some Sudan birds lack the white eye ring. Wing length: 19 ♂ ♀, 51–56 (53.3).

*Range*: White Nile and Equatoria provinces of Sudan, Uganda south to the latitude of Entebbe, N. Kavirondo and extreme eastern Ituri district. There seems to be a real gap between the range of this race and *atricollis*, and the species is not known from Cameroon, Chad or Ubangi-Chari.

*Specimens examined* (20). Sudan: White Nile, 3; Equatoria, 5. Uganda: Moyo, West Nile, 5; Entebbe, 1; Kenya: Mumias, 2 (including type). Congo: Kasenyi, Lake Albert, 4.

*Ortygospiza atricollis fuscocrissa* Heuglin

*Ortygospiza fuscocrissa* Heuglin, 1863, Jour. f. Orn., 11, p. 18—Dembea and Tigré, Abyssinia.

*Diagnosis*: The remaining races, *fuscocrissa*, *mülleri*, *smithersi* and *pallida*, form a natural group, distinguished from the *atricollis* group by the large white chin spot and eye ring, more numerous and broader white bars on the breast, and more streaked upper parts. Within this group, *fuscocrissa* is characterized by having the pectoral barring narrower, although still much broader than in *atricollis*, and by larger size. Wing length: 7 ♂ ♀, 55–59 (56.9).

*Range*: Highlands of Eritrea and Abyssinia.

*Specimens examined* (7). Abyssinia: Bichana, Gojam, 4; Arussi Plateau, 3.

*Ortygospiza atricollis mülleri* Zedlitz

*O. [rtygospigal] (sic) a. [tricollis] mülleri* Zedlitz, 1911, Journ. f. Orn., 59, p. 604—Simbiti, Wembere Steppes.

*Synonyms*: *bradfieldi* Roberts, 1929; *miniscula* White, 1946; *digressa* Clancey, 1958.

*Diagnosis*: Characterized by broad white pectoral barring and moderately streaked back; differs also from *fuscocrissa* by smaller size, and from *smithersi* and *pallida* by paler and darker coloration respectively. Within the vast range covered by this race some variation, particularly in dorsal coloration, can be discerned, but most of this appears to be due to post-mortem change. Fresh specimens always appear greyer above than old ones, and other characters that have been used to define races, such as a whitish belly, appear to be individual variants. Size is remarkably constant throughout its range. Wing length: 50 ♂ ♀, 52–57 (54.4).

*Range*: Western and southern Kenya south through central Tanganyika, northern Nyasaland and the Rhodesias to southern Mozambique, Natal, and Cape Province west to Cape Town, and west through western Northern

Rhodesia to south-west Angola and Damaraland. In the latter two localities it may not be a regular resident, since it has been found only once in each place. A single old record from north-west Angola probably belongs here.

*Specimens examined* (70). Kenya, 16. Northern Rhodesia: Abercorn, 1; Ndola, 1; Kabompo, 2; Balovale, 4; Lungwevungu River, 3; Kalabo, 9; Lusaka, 2; Lochinvar, 1; Choma, 3; Kalomo, 3. Angola: Luacano, Moxico, 1; Huila, 6. South West Africa: Quickborn, 4. Southern Rhodesia, 13. South Africa: Northern Cape, 1.

*Ortygospiza atricollis smithersi* Benson

*Ortygospiza atricollis smithersi* Benson, 1955, Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, 75, p. 106—Mpasa, Bangweulu, 11° 00' S, 30° 30' E, Northern Rhodesia.

*Diagnosis*: Much the darkest race of *atricollis*, the back darker and more streaked, the black of throat and breast in the males more extensive, and the white pectoral barring somewhat reduced. Wing length: 18 ♂ ♀, 53–56 (54.7).

*Range*: Northern Provinces of Northern Rhodesia from Luapula River to Kasama and Mporokoso. A single male from Abercorn, however, appears to be *mülleri*.

*Specimens examined* (21). Northern Rhodesia: Luapula River, Mukuku, 1; Mpasa, Luwingu, 1; Chambesi-Lubansenshi watershed, 9; Kasama, 1; Mporokoso, 9.

*Ortygospiza atricollis pallida* Roberts

*Ortygospiza atricollis pallida* Roberts, 1932, Ann. Transv. Mus., 15, p. 32—Nkate, northern Bechuanaland.

*Diagnosis*: Much paler than *mülleri* and more greyish on the back; belly more consistently whitish. Wing length: 12 ♂ ♀, 53–57 (54.7).

*Range*: Northern Bechuanaland from the western side of the Okavango swamp to Nata and the Makarikari Pan; the Wankie district of Southern Rhodesia.

*Specimens examined* (18). Bechuanaland: Nokanen, Ngamiland, 5; Nkate-Nata area, 7. Southern Rhodesia: Odiakwe, 1; Nehimba, Wankie, 1; Sibanini Pan, Wankie, 4.

Races of *gabonensis*

*Ortygospiza gabonensis gabonensis* Lynes

*Ortygospiza gabonensis* Lynes, 1914, Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, 33, p. 131—Gabon.

*Diagnosis*: Smallest race of the species. The outer webs of the dorsal feathers pale in contrast to the dark centres, giving a sharply streaked effect. White pectoral barring slightly broader than in *fuscata* and *dorsostriata*. Wing length: 5 ♂ ♀, 48–49 (48.4).

*Range*: Spanish Guinea and Gabon, and both banks of the middle Congo.

*Specimens examined* (6). Spanish Guinea, 1. Gabon, 4. Moyen Congo, 1.

*Ortygospiza gabonensis fuscata* Sclater

*Ortygospiza atricollis fuscata* Sclater, 1932, Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, 52, p. 142—Kawambwa, Northern Rhodesia.

*Diagnosis*: Darker than either *gabonensis* or *dorsostriata*, so dark on

the upper parts that the dorsal streaking is obscured. Wing length: 19 ♂ ♀, 52–55 (53.3).

*Range:* North-western Angola to southern Kasai, western Katanga, and western and northern Northern Rhodesia. A female from the coastal plain of Luanda, Angola, recently collected by Rosa Pinto, marks a surprising extension of range westward from the highlands of the interior. I have had the privilege of examining the specimen, and it is a typical *fuscata*, showing no approach to *gabonensis*.

*Specimens examined* (33). Northern Rhodesia: Fort Rosebery, 3; Kasama, 1; Kawambwa, 9; Luakela—Chitunta confluence, 1; Mporokoso, 1; Abercorn, 3; Ndola, 3; Solwezi, 1; Kabompo, 1; Salujinga, 1; Lungwvungu River, 2; Kalabo, 4. Angola: Dondi, Huambo, 2; Quifangondo, Vale do Bengo, Luanda, 1.

*Ortygospiza gabonensis dorsostriata* van Someren

*Ortygospiza atricollis dorsostriata* van Someren, 1921, Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, 41, p.115—South Ankole, Uganda.

*Diagnosis:* Paler than *fuscata* and more noticeably streaked above; larger and darker than *gabonensis*. Wing length: 13 ♂ ♀, 49–53 (51.7).

*Range:* Extreme eastern Kivu from the south-west shore of Lake Albert to the northern end of Lake Tanganyika; Ruanda, Bukoba on Lake Victoria, and southern and central Uganda.

*Specimens examined* (16). Congo: E. Ituri, 4; Rutshuru Plain, Kivu, 2; south Ruwenzori, 3. Uganda: Entebbe, 3; Masaka, Budda, 1; Butiti, 1; S. Ankole, 2 (including type).

## **The geographical variation in the Marico Flycatcher *Bradornis mariquensis* Smith, with the description of a new race**

by WALTER J. LAWSON

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This rather drab-coloured flycatcher is endemic to southern Africa, its distribution being confined to South West Africa (except southern Great Namaqualand), northern Cape Province (south to Kuruman), Bechuana-land, western Southern Rhodesia and the dry western Transvaal; also extending northwards into southern Angola and Barotseland, south-western Northern Rhodesia.

It was regarded as monotypic until Irwin demonstrated geographical variation, when he described *B. m. acaciae*, based on specimens from Ohopoho, South West Africa. *B. m. acaciae* was considered to be more or less confined to Ohopoho, but further research has shown that its range is considerably more extensive than at first believed.

A critical study of the geographical variation in *Bradornis mariquensis*, was recently carried out in the Durban Museum and it is proposed that three races should be recognised in preference to the existing two.

*B. mariquensis* shows a pattern of colour and size variation which is now known to be normal for bird species distributed from the periphery of absolute desert in western South West Africa eastwards to mesic conditions reigning in the thornveld savannas of interior south-eastern



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