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# NEW BIRDS FROM YUCATÁN

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IN the course of our work on the birds of Yucatán we have found several undescribed forms which we here characterize in advance of our general report.

We are greatly indebted to the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and especially to Dr. A. V. Kidder and Dr. Sylvanus G. Morley, for support and co-operation without which our work in Yucatán would not have been possible. We have been privileged to use in this study the collections of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, the United States National Museum and the U. S. Biological Survey, Field Museum of Natural History, American Museum of Natural History, and the Carnegie Museum. We also wish to acknowledge the friendly assistance we have had from James L. Peters, Ludlow Griscom, Frank M. Chapman, John T. Zimmer, Alexander Wetmore, Herbert Friedmann, Rudyerd Boulton, and Pierce Brodkorb. In Yucatán we were helped by many people, especially Morris Steggerda, Karl Ruppert, Alberto and Juan Urcelay, and Angel Chang. The senior author's field work was largely financed by aid from the University of Michigan Faculty Research Fund.

*COLINUS*

The quail, *Colinus nigrogularis,* has had a checkered career in zoological history. It was found by Dr. Samuel Cabot in Yucatán during the winter of 1841–42 and was described in his zoological appendix (p. 474) to the second volume of John L. Stephens' *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan* (1843), but, although he remarked that it was a species "which, as far as the plumage and size go, is indescribed," he did not give it a scientific name. However, in the same year John Gould published a careful description in Latin and English of a single male "in the collection of the Earl of Derby" and called it *Ortyx nigrogularis* (*Proc. Zool. Soc. London,* 1842 [1843], p. 181). He stated that its habitat was "Mexico; locality unknown." The identical description was published soon afterward in the same year in the *Annals and Magazine of Natural History* (12, No. 77 [Oct.] : 284) and attracted the attention of Samuel Cabot. He was apparently annoyed that Gould had named his quail, and he immediately published (*Boston Journ. Nat. Hist.,* 4 [1844] : 460) a full account of the bird's habits and plumages, based on his own "residence of seven months in their native country," remarking that "Mr. Gould has only met with one specimen of the bird and that the dried skin" of a male. Fortunately Dr. Cabot agreed that, in spite of a certain priority to which he was entitled, he "could not wish the name altered, as it is very well chosen."

Gould's *Ortyx nigrogularis* of course stood as the name for the species, but Cabot's locality of "Yucatan" naturally prevailed over Gould's indefinite designation of "Mexico" and became established as the type locality of *nigrogularis.* Even in 1934 J. L. Peters (*Check-list of Birds of the World,* 2 : 49) listed the type locality as "Mexico = Yucatan."

In 1846 Gould came to this species in his *Monograph of the Partridges of America* and published a colored plate and an account of his knowledge of the species. He wrote: "Numerous living examples of this pretty and strongly marked species have lately been imported into this country, some of which

having passed into the possession of the Earl of Derby, have upon more than one occasion bred in his Lordship's aviary at Knowsley. . . . It is very common in Honduras and Yucatan where [i.e., in Honduras] Mr. Dyson informs me it frequents the pine ridges. . . ."

In May, 1846, George R. Gray published a very similar colored plate of this bird, together with a reference to Gould's monograph (*The Genera of Birds,* 3, Pl. 132).

In 1888 Robert Ridgway published (*Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus.,* 10, 1887 [1888]: 593) a description of *Colinus nigrogularis segoviensis* from the Segovia River, Honduras, comparing it with "true *C. nigrogularis* from Yucatan." His Honduras specimens were indeed much darker and browner than Yucatán specimens.

The next point to be noted in the taxonomic history of this species is the description by E. W. Nelson of *Colinus nigrogularis coffini* from La Libertad, Petén, Guatemala (*Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash.,* 45 [1932]: 169–72). Nelson inexplicably compared *coffini* only with "typical *nigrogularis* from Yucatan," assigning to his new form precisely the same characters which Ridgway had designated for the southern form forty-four years earlier. Nelson even said that *coffini* "is much more like *segoviensis,*" but failed to indicate what difference, if any, there is between those two.

Early in our work we found that there are two very distinct forms of *Colinus nigrogularis* in Yucatán. This necessitated a precise determination of the type of Gould's *Ortyx nigrogularis.* Mr. N. B. Kinnear, of the British Museum of Natural History, promptly replied to our inquiry with the information that Gould's type is now in the Liverpool Museum. Dr. Douglas A. Allan, Director, and Mr. R. K. Perry, Keeper of the Department of Vertebrate Zoology, of the Liverpool Museum have given us every help in our quest. They report that there is in that collection a male "which has been marked 'type' by either the late Mr. Robinson or Dr. Forbes. In the Lord Derby Stock Book it states that this specimen was the original of Gould's description. On the label is the follow-

ing:—'Figured Gould, Mon. Odontoph., Pt. iii, p. 514, pl. CXXXII, (1846).' It was, according to the label, procured alive in Honduras (not Yucatan), brought to England and placed in Lord Derby's aviary at Knowsley, Liverpool. The date is given as 15.3.30, but whether this was the date it was placed in the aviary or the date it died, the records unfortunately do not state." From this report it was evident that Gould's name applied to the southern rather than to the northern form as had hitherto been assumed. When our friend Dr. Max M. Peet was in Liverpool in 1938 he kindly examined the type and made a careful description of it for us, but unfortunately had no specimens of the several forms for comparison. Therefore, to settle the matter beyond any doubt, we sent to Mr. Perry a typical adult male of each of the three forms, together with a synopsis of the characters of the subspecies as we had outlined them. The specimens selected to represent the northern, the central, and the southern form were from Progreso (Yucatán), Chichen Itzá (Yucatán), and La Libertad (Petén, Guatemala) respectively. Mr. Perry kindly made a careful study of these specimens in comparison with Gould's type and reported that our southern (i.e., Guatemala) specimen was "almost identical" with the type, thus confirming the previous evidence, derived from the label and catalogue, that Gould's name must be applied to the southern form.

We must conclude, therefore, that Gould's *nigrogularis* applies to the dark Honduras form to which Ridgway later applied the name *segoviensis*. The third available name, *coffini* of Nelson, also refers to this southern form. In Yucatán, as already mentioned, we find two very distinct subspecies:

### *Colinus nigrogularis persiccus,* new subspecies

TYPE.—U.M.M.Z. No. 108126; adult male; Yucatán, 5 kilometers south of Progreso; March 20, 1940; collected by Angel Chang.

CHARACTERS.—Male: above, especially tertials, very pale and gray; white feather centers of back of neck and upper back

very large; tail light gray and speckled; feathers on sides of neck more heavily edged with black than in typical *nigrogularis;* central parts of feathers of under parts whiter and black edges of feathers averaging narrower than in the southern forms of the species; flanks, thighs, and crissum very pale and gray (less brown). Female: less distinct than male, but definitely paler and grayer than southern specimens; black markings on breast and belly reduced; brown chin and throat distinctly paler.

RANGE.—Arid region about Progreso, Yucatán.

### *Colinus nigrogularis caboti,* new subspecies

TYPE.—U.M.M.Z. No. 103847; adult male; Yucatán, Chichen Itzá; June 24, 1938; collected by Angel Chang.

CHARACTERS.—Male: much darker and browner than *persiccus* but paler than typical *nigrogularis* of Guatemala and Honduras; separable from *nigrogularis* by the presence of definite areas of gray on upper surface of wings and on lower back; white feather-centers of neck and upper back smaller than in *persiccus* but larger than in *nigrogularis;* color of tail intermediate between that of *persiccus* and that of *nigrogularis,* but differing from both in being largely unspeckled; feathers on side of neck like those of *nigrogularis* in having restricted amount of black edging but usually with more white spotting; brown below as in *nigrogularis,* but distinctly paler, and dark spotting on crissum much reduced; black feather edging below about as in *nigrogularis.* Female less distinctive than male but darker and more brown than *persiccus* and paler and grayer than *nigrogularis.*

RANGE.—Yucatán, exclusive of the Progreso region. Specimens from Izamal, Temax, and the vicinity of Río Lagartos show some approach to the characters of *persiccus,* but all can be distinguished from that form.

REMARKS.—Named in honor of Dr. Samuel Cabot of Boston, who discovered this handsome species one hundred years ago and studied its habits at Chichen Itzá.

MEASUREMENTS (in millimeters).—Topotypical specimens of

*Colinus nigrogularis persiccus* measure[1] as follows:

Males, wing (12 specimens), 101–5 (101.8); tail (12 specimens), 53.5–61.5 (57.1).

Females, wing (10 specimens), 97–106 (101.4); tail (8 specimens), 54–59.5 (57.1).

Topotypical specimens of *Colinus nigrogularis caboti* measure as follows:

Males, wing (11 specimens), 96–105 (99.9); tail (7 specimens), 54–58 (55.6).

Females, wing (4 specimens), 96–104 (101); tail (2 specimens), 55.5–57 (56.25).

Specimens of *Colinus nigrogularis nigrogularis* are apparently smaller, on the average, than Yucatán birds, but not many adults are available, and we are not satisfied that the measurements of them are comparable to those given above. Because of their physical characteristics and also because of the extreme effects of wear, these birds are very difficult to compare with regard to size. It will be interesting to compare weights of series of the three forms when these become available. The only satisfactory weights that we obtained are those of a July male and a March female, from Chichen Itzá, which weighed 126 and 128.5 grams respectively.

MATERIAL EXAMINED.—*Colinus nigrogularis persiccus:* Yucatán, vicinity of Progreso, 14 ♂,[2] 11 ♀.[3]

*Colinus nigrogularis caboti:* Yucatán, Chichen Itzá,[4] 12 ♂, 5 ♀; Izamal, 7 ♂, 4 ♀; Merida, 1 ♂, 1 ♀; Río Lagartos,[5] 1 ♀; San Felipe,[5] 1 ♂; Temax,[5] 6 ♂, 5 ♀; Tilam,[6] 1 ♂. Campeche, 1 ♂, 1 ♀[7]; Champoton, San Dimas, 2 ♂.[8]

*Colinus nigrogularis nigrogularis* Honduras, Segovia River,[9] 2 ♂, 1 ♀. Guatemala, Petén, La Libertad,[10] 7 adult ♂, 4 adult ♀.

[1] We have in all cases measured the chord of the wing.

[2] Including three in the United States Biological Survey collection.

[3] Including one in the Museum of Comparative Zoology.

[4] Including a pair in the American Museum of Natural History.

[5] Field Museum of Natural History and H. B. Conover collections.

[6] American Museum of Natural History.

*STURNELLA*

In 1883 Adolphe Boucard reported, in his paper (*Proc. Zool. Soc. London,* 1883, p. 446) on a Yucatán bird collection, that in June and July, 1879, Dr. George F. Gaumer had found "*Sturnella ludoviciana*" to be "common on the savanas of Río Lagartos, but not seen elsewhere." There seem to be no other Yucatán records until 1893, when W. W. Brown collected a rather worn-plumaged pair at Río Lagartos on April 18. The Brown collection was unfortunately never reported upon. The male specimen from his collection is now in Field Museum. The female went to the E. A. and O. Bangs collection, and thence into the Museum of Comparative Zoology. Ludlow Griscom examined this pair and stated in his excellent revision of the meadowlarks of Middle America (*Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool.,* 75 [1934] : 404) that they seemed to represent a distinct form, the validity of which should, however, be confirmed by additional specimens.

We noted a number of meadowlarks in the Progreso region in 1936, but were unable to do any collecting in that interesting area. Since then our friend Angel Chang has taken a good series for us. In honor of Ludlow Griscom, an authority on Middle American birds in general and meadowlarks in particular, we propose to call this well-marked race

***Sturnella magna griscomi,*** new subspecies

TYPE.—U.M.M.Z. No. 108151; adult male; Yucatán, Progreso; March 5, 1940; collected by Angel Chang.

CHARACTERS.—Like *Sturnella magna mexicana* Sclater, but slightly larger; bill longer and more slender; somewhat paler above, sides of head and neck more whitish; sides, flanks, and crissum paler, less buffy; spots on sides and crissum lighter brown; dark area of central tail feathers more confluent; pale

[7] United States Biological Survey collection.

[8] Collection of Percy W. Shufeldt.

[9] United States National Museum; including type of *segoviensis.*

[10] Part in collection of Percy W. Shufeldt and part in the United States Biological Survey collection; including type of *coffini.*

brown crossbars on back.

Like *Sturnella magna inexpectata* Ridgway, but much larger; bill averaging larger; paler and less extensively black above; sides, flanks, and crissum paler, less buffy; spots on sides and crissum lighter brown.

Like *Sturnella magna alticola,* but much smaller, except bill, which is larger; paler and browner above.

TABLE I

MEASUREMENTS OF *Sturnella magna griscomi,* IN MILLIMETERS

| Males | | | | Females | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wing | Tail | Culmen from Base* | Tarsus | Wing | Tail | Culmen from Base | Tarsus |
| 110.0 | 75.0 | 36.0 | 40.0 | 95.0 | 61.0 | 30.0 | 37.0 |
| 104.5 | 68.5 | 33.0 | 40.0 | 97.0 | 64.0 | 29.0 | 37.0 |
| 105.0 | ..... | 32.0 | 40.0 | 98.0 | 63.0 | 29.5 | 38.0 |
| 112.0 | 79.0 | 32.5 | 40.5 | 96.0 | 62.0 | 29.0 | 36.0 |
| 110.5 | ..... | 32.0 | 40.0 | 99.5 | ..... | 30.0 | 38.0 |
| 107.0 | ..... | 33.5 | 38.0 | 98.0 | ..... | 28.0 | 33.5 |
| 107.0 | 72.0 | 31.5 | 38.0 | 100.5 | ..... | 31.0 | 39.0 |
| 105.5 | ..... | 32.0 | 39.5 | 95.5 | ..... | 39.0 | 37.0 |
| 103.5 | ..... | 32.0 | 40.5 | 101.0 | ..... | 28.5 | 37.5 |
| 105.5 | 70.0 | 33.0 | 41.0 | 96.0 | ..... | 28.0 | 37.5 |
| 106.5 | ..... | 32.5 | 40.0 | 99.0 | ..... | 29.5 | 37.5 |
| 107.0 | ..... | 31.0 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... |
| 110.0 | ..... | 33.0 | 40.0 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... |
| 103.0 | ..... | 32.0 | 39.5 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... |
| 108.0 | ..... | 31.5 | 40.5 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... |
| 105.0 | ..... | 30.5 | 40.0 | ..... | ..... | ..... | ..... |
| Average 106.87 | 72.9 | 32.37 | 39.83 | 97.77 | 62.5 | 30.13 | 37.09 |

* We note that all of our bill measurements of this species, even when made of "exposed culmen" only, are about 10 mm. longer than Mr. Griscom's (1934: 404–5). From correspondence with him on this point we learn that, while he cannot now recall exactly how he measured meadowlark bills in 1934, he is almost certain that he measured them to the posterior edge of the nostril only. In his published paper the measurements were apparently inadvertently labeled "exposed culmen."

MATERIAL EXAMINED.—*Sturnella magna griscomi:* Yucatán, vicinity of Progreso, fifteen males, ten females; Río Lagartos, one ♂,[11] one ♀.[12]

[11] Field Museum of Natural History.

[12] Museum of Comparative Zoology.

*Sturnella magna mexicana* (type locality, Jalapa) : two topotypes and four from Tlacotalpán, Veracruz;[13] seven from Minatitlan, Veracruz; series in United States National Museum.

*Sturnella magna inexpectata* (type locality, Segovia River, Honduras) : type and one topotype. British Honduras, Belize, one ♂; Manatee River, one ♂;[14] Ycacos Lagoon, one ♂.[14] Guatemala, Petén, La Libertad, four adults.

*Sturnella magna alticola* (type locality, Ocuilapa, Chiapas) : type and series in United States National Museum and in United States Biological Survey collections.

Costa Rica : Perlata, one; unspecified, one.

Chiapas, Palenque, one ♂, one ♀.

*RAMPHOCAENUS*

***Ramphocaenus rufiventris ardeleo,*** new subspecies

TYPE.—U.M.M.Z. No. 95198; adult male; Yucatán, Chichen Itzá; March 12, 1936; collected by Josselyn Van Tyne.

CHARACTERS.—Like *Ramphocaenus rufiventris rufiventris* (Bonaparte) but bill smaller; plumage, especially the breast, sides of head, and whole upper parts, much paler. In spite of the frequently remarked color variation in Central American specimens of this species, we find that all Yucatán and northern Petén specimens are paler than the palest we have seen from anywhere in the range of *rufiventris*. Northern Petén specimens are somewhat less different from *rufiventris* than are those from Yucatán, but must definitely be grouped with the new form.

It is hardly necessary to compare in detail the Yucatán form of this species with the two South American subspecies. However, *Ramphocaenus rufiventris sanctae-marthae* Sclater is much larger and has a decidedly larger bill; it also is pale, but is browner above and its crown contrasts less with the back. *Ramphocaenus rufiventris griseodorsalis* Chapman is browner above, much darker, and has a larger bill.

[13] American Museum of Natural History.

[14] Museum of Comparative Zoology.

John T. Zimmer has recently (*Amer. Mus. Novit.*, 917 [1937]: 16) listed *Ramphocaenus rufiventris* as a subspecies of *R. melanurus*, but we are inclined to agree with C. E. Hellmayr (*Field Mus. Nat. Hist.*, zool. ser., 13, Pt. 3 [1924]: 205–10) that *R. melanurus* and *R. rufiventris* are best treated as separate species.

REMARKS.—This is another of the pale races so characteristic of the Yucatán Peninsula. Like many such races, its range extends a short distance into northern Guatemala. Bonaparte described *Scolopacinus rufiventris* (*Proc. Zool. Soc. London*, 5 [1837 (June, 1838)]: 119) on the basis of a specimen collected for him by Colonel Velasquez de Léon "during a fortnight's scientific tour in Guatemala." The type specimen apparently disappeared long ago. Since two forms are now known to occur in Guatemala, the type locality of Bonaparte's *Scolopacinus rufiventris* must be restricted. The great majority of the birds collected by Colonel Velasquez de Léon seems to have come from the Pacific slope of Guatemala, and none came from northern Petén (the only region of Guatemala where the new Yucatán form is found). We therefore hereby restrict the type locality of *Scolopacinus rufiventris* Bonaparte to the vicinity of San José de Guatemala.

MEASUREMENTS.—Yucatán specimens of *Ramphacaenus rufiventris ardeleo* measure as follows:

Males, wing, 52, 50, 52, 52.5, 54.5 mm.; tail, 44, 41, 46 mm.; weight, 8.2, 7.4 grams.

Females, wing, 50, 50 mm.; tail, 40 mm.; weight, 8.3, 8.1 grams.

MATERIAL EXAMINED.—*Ramphocaenus rufiventris ardeleo:* Yucatán, Chichen Itzá, 5 ♂, 2 ♀.

Guatemala, Petén, Uaxactun, 2 ♀.

*Ramphocaenus rufiventris rufiventris*[15]: Veracruz, Buena Vista, 2 ♀; Presidio, 2 ♀.

Tabasco, 15 kilometers north of Reforma, 1 ♂; Tenosique, 1 ♂.

Chiapas, District of Soconusco, Finca Esperanza, 5 ♂, 2 ♀;

[15] In addition to specimens in the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, we have examined the series in Cambridge, New York, and Washington, as elsewhere acknowledged.

Pijijiapan, 1 ♀; Palenque, 1 ♀; San Benito, 1 ♂; San Domingo, 1 ♂.

Guatemala, Barranca, 1 ♀; Finca Chama, 2 ♂; Hacienda California, 1 ♂; Pozo del Río Grande, 2 ♂, 4 ♀; San José, 2 ♂; Secanquim, 5 ♂, 1 ♀.

British Honduras, Cayo District, Mountain Cow, 1 ♂; El Cayo, 1 ♂.

Honduras, Catacombas, 1 ♂; Lancetilla, 1 ♀.

Costa Rica, Bolson, 2 ♂, 2 ♀; Boruca, 3 ♂, 4 ♀; El General, 2 ♂, 1 ♀; Poso del Río Grande, 2 ♂, 3 ♀; Pozo Azul, 1 ♂; Tenorio, 2 ♂, 1 ♀.

Panama, Almirante, 1 ♀; Boquete Trail, 1 ♂; Fruitdale, 1 ♂; Line of Panama Railway, 1 ♂; near Panama City, 3 ♂; Permé, 1 ♂, 1 ♀.