

OCCASIONAL PAPERS OF THE MUSEUM OF  
ZOOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESS

## A NEW HAWK FROM SOUTHERN MEXICO

BY PIERCE BRODKORB

EXAMINATION of the Mexican series of *Buteo magnirostris* in the collections of the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology (U.M.M.Z.) and of the Museum of Comparative Zoology demonstrates that birds currently passing as *B. m. griseocauda* Ridgway really comprise at least two subspecies. This is hardly surprising in such a variable bird, since the range attributed to that form includes some of the most humid and most arid parts of Mexico, where the average annual rainfall varies from almost 5000 mm. to under 500 mm.

When Ridgway described *griseocauda* he did not designate any type or type locality, so all of the fourteen specimens which he had must be considered cotypes. These are referable to at least three races, and it is desirable to fix the name to a single form. According to Herbert Friedmann (*in litt.*), United States National Museum No. 27103, taken by C. Sartorius at Mirador, Veracruz, has been labeled the type. I therefore restrict the type locality of *griseocauda* to Mirador, Veracruz. The locality of one of the other cotypes, Río Seco, is also in the state of Veracruz (near Córdoba), and not in Oaxaca as assumed by Peters and Griscom in their revision of the Central American forms of this hawk.

It appears to me that the presence or absence of rufous in the tail of this hawk has been overemphasized as a taxonomic

character, since there is a great deal of individual variation in that respect in birds from the same place. As an average, however, birds from the more northern parts of Mexico have grayer tails, and in those from the south red becomes more frequent, a trend showing relationship to some of the rufous-tailed races of southern Central America.

In my work on these hawks I have been greatly aided by Mr. James L. Peters, who compared some of our birds with the types at Harvard. Later, I had the opportunity to go over the entire Harvard series personally.

The bird inhabiting the arid part of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec is described in the present paper. The indications are that still another undescribed race occurs farther north along the Pacific, but since the material from that area is wholly inadequate the matter must be deferred.

*Buteo magnirostris petersi*, new subspecies

TYPE.—U.M.M.Z. No. 102048; male adult; above Arriaga, Chiapas, altitude 100 meters; May 25, 1939; P. Brodkorb, original number, 14683.

CHARACTERS.—A very pale race with a minimum amount of rufous on the underparts; gray of upperparts, neck, and upper breast as pale as in *conspectus*; differs from that form and other allied races in having the bars on the belly and flanks distinct instead of running together along the shaft; ground color of belly, sides, thighs, and the whole crissum almost pure white; bars on thighs narrow and very pale rufous.

RANGE.—Arid Pacific part of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in southeastern Oaxaca and southwestern Chiapas.

REMARKS.—The other subspecies of this hawk which inhabit the Mexican mainland may be characterized as follows:

*Buteo magnirostris griseocauda* Ridgway is a very richly colored, dark race. The bars on the breast and belly are broad and more or less confluent. The thighs are heavily marked with deep rufous. The ground color of the posterior underparts is decidedly buffy. The tail has little or no rufous, at least in birds from the north. This bird ranges from central

Tamaulipas along the lowlands to eastern Tabasco and northern Guatemala.

*Buteo magnirostris direptor* (Peters and Griscom) is very similar to *griseocauda*, but the bars on the breast are somewhat more distinct, though not as much so as in *petersi*. The neck and breast are paler gray, and there is less rufous posteriorly than in *griseocauda*, in these respects also approaching *petersi*. The tail has on the average more rufous than either of those forms. I believe that the range of this bird will be found to be confined to the Pacific slope from southeastern Chiapas to southern Honduras, instead of extending over both sides of Guatemala.

*Buteo magnirostris conspectus* (Peters) is also similar to *griseocauda*, with which it agrees in having the bars on the breast confluent and in being very richly colored with rufous on the belly and thighs. It differs in being decidedly paler gray on the neck and in having, on the average, more rufous in the tail. It agrees with *petersi* in its paleness of the gray on the upperparts and neck, but differs in having the bars on the belly usually running together along the shaft, in more reddish thighs, and in having the ground color of the belly and the whole crissum buffy instead of white. It inhabits Yucatán, Quintana Roo, and probably all of British Honduras, instead of extending just to the northern edge of that colony.

MATERIAL EXAMINED.—*B. m. griseocauda*: Tamaulipas, Río Cruz, 2; Caballos, 1; Altamira, 10; Santa Leonor, 1; seven miles north of Villagrán, 1; not specified, 1. Veracruz, Río Seco, 1 (cotype); Presidio, 1; Buenavista, 1; Medellín, 1; Minatitlán, 3. Tabasco, Balancán, 2; La Reforma, 1; Boca del Cerro, 1; Tenosique, 1; La Ribera, 1. Chiapas, Palenque, 1; El Aguacate, 1. Guatemala, Virginia Plantation, 1 (not typical). Total, 32 skins.

*B. m. petersi*: Oaxaca, Tehuantepec, 1. Chiapas, Arriaga, 4 (including type); Tonalá, 3; Pijijiapan, 2 (one is intermediate to *direptor*). Total, 10 skins.

*B. m. conspectus*: Yucatán, San Ignacio, 1 (type); Chichen Itzá, 16; Río Lagartos, 1; unspecified, 2. Quintana Roo,

Camp Mengel, 4; Xcopen, 1. British Honduras, Cayo, 1; Belize, 2; Toledo District, 1. Total, 29 skins.

*B. m. direptor*: Chiapas, Finca Esperanza, 6; Acacoyagua, 2; Barra de Cahuacán, 1. Guatemala, Finca Cipres, 4; Ocos, 1. Salvador, Hacienda Zapotitan, 1. Honduras, Tegucigalpa, 1; San Juan Tegucigalpa, 1; Monte Redondo, 3; Comayagua, 1. Total, 21 skins.

*B. m. gracilis*: Cozumel Island, 1.