

Notes on the Nomenclature of some Oriental Timaliidae

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I

Delacour, in "Birds of Malaysia," New York, 1947 (p. 257), has stated that *Macronus ptilosus ptilosus* is the race of Malaya, southern Sumatra, and Bangka, that *M. pt. sordidus* is the form of northern Sumatra, and that *M. pt. reclusus* is the one of Borneo and Billiton. Inasmuch as *M. pt. sordidus* was founded upon birds from Billiton, it is obvious that a reconsideration of the subspecies of the plume-backed babbler is required.

Material in Washington shows that the population of northern Sumatra is scarcely separable from that of Malaya, and must probably be called *M. pt. ptilosus*; if, however, the former is considered distinct, its name will derive from *Timalia trichorrhos* Temminck, 1836.

Specimens from Borneo, Bangka, and (*vide* Chasen) Billiton are immediately distinguishable from *ptilosus* by the absence of grey from the under parts, as well as by other characters. The only question in this section of the species is whether the populations of Bangka and Billiton are separable from Bornean *reclusus*.

Riley (Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, vol. 50, April 21, 1937, p. 62) established *Macronus ptilosus minor* upon a small series from Bangka, separating it from *reclusus* by the sole character of lesser measurements. Chasen (Treubia, vol. 16, December 1937, p. 228), without reference to size, named *Macronus ptilosus sordidus* from Billiton as distinct from *reclusus* by colour characters. Neither author had specimens of the other population at hand.

Examination of Riley's original series shows that his race is indeed smaller than *reclusus* and that, moreover, it possesses the colour characters attributed by Chasen to *sordidus*. It seems highly likely that the birds of the two islands of Bangka and Billiton must be called by one name, which, if the conventional generic terms are employed, must be *minor* of Riley.

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If, however, one follows Delacour (*in* Delacour and Mayr, *Zoologica*, vol. 30, 1945, p. 113) and considers *Mixornis* Blyth, 1842, a mere synonym of *Macronus* Jardine and Selby, 1835, *Macronus ptilosus minor* Riley, 1937, becomes preoccupied by *Mixornis gularis minor* Gyldenstolpe, 1916. In this case, Chasen's *sordidus* will be available for the Bangka-Billiton race.

In the event that some one, combining *Mixornis* with *Macronus*, finds that the populations of Bangka and Billiton are in fact sub-specifically distinct, *sordidus* of Chasen must be restricted to the birds of Billiton, while those of Bangka will have to be renamed.

II

Delacour and Mayr, in "Birds of the Philippines," New York, 1946 (pp. 188-189), have decided that *Macronus striaticeps* "montanus" (Mearns) must be synonymized with *M. str. mindanensis* Steere.

Examination of material in Washington has shown that "montanus," although a tenuous race, is nevertheless distinguishable from the lowland *mindanensis* by the characters adduced for it by its describer. Hachisuka has likewise considered "montanus" acceptable ("The Birds of the Philippine Islands," vol. 2, pt. 4, 1935, p. 408).

If one follows Delacour (*in* Delacour and Mayr, *Zoologica*, vol. 30, 1945, p. 113) in treating *Mixornis* Blyth, 1842, as a synonym of *Macronus* Jardine and Selby, 1835, Mearns's name becomes invalidated within the genus.

I propose, therefore,

***Macronus striaticeps mearnsi*, new name,**

for *Macronus mindanensis montanus* Mearns (Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, vol. 18, Jan. 20, 1905, p. 4), not *Mixornis montana* Bowdler Sharpe, 1887, which = *Macronus gularis montanus* (Bowdler Sharpe).