



PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
NEW ENGLAND ZOÖLOGICAL CLUB

**AN UNDESCRIBED FORM OF THE GREATER VASA
PARROT**

BY OUTRAM BANGS

A SHORT time ago the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy received two good skins of the greater vasa parrot from the Forêt Sianaka, in eastern Madagascar. Comparing these with ten specimens from Miandrivazo, western Madagascar, collected by F. R. Wulsin, proves, as I had long suspected, that the western form can at once be separated by its grayish brown color; the eastern bird is black. The differences in color are exactly similar to those shown by the lesser vasa parrot, the western form of which I named *Coracopsis nigra libs* (Proc. New Eng. Zoöl. Club, IX 1927, p. 83). The western form of *C. vasa*, however, besides being conspicuously different in color, is also smaller than the eastern.

The vasa parrots, in Madagascar, are a fine example of the uncommon phenomenon of two related species occurring together over a wide area, quite alike in color and differing only in size, and responding in exactly the same manner to similar environmental conditions. The only color difference that I can detect between the greater and the lesser vasa parrots is that the bill in fresh specimens of the lesser, whether from the east or the west, is darker, more blackish or horn color, and the bill of the greater, is paler, often whitish.

At one time I thought that Shaw's name *Psittacus vasa* (Gen. Zool., 8, 2, p. 528) might have been based on the western form, but on re-reading his description I am sure it applies better to the eastern bird, to which I therefore restrict it. *Coracopsis melanorhyncha* Finsch (Ned. Tijdschr. Dierk., Jaarg. 1, Aflev. 2 en 3, 1 Berigt, p. xx, 1863) was based on two living birds in the Zoölogical Gardens at Amsterdam, and is described as "zwartbruin. Snavel zwart. Staart eenigzins uitgesneden." Whatever the bird may have been, it of course is not the form named here.

I take much pleasure in naming the western greater vasa parrot after its discoverer, Dr. F. R. Wulsin.

Coracopsis vasa wulsini subsp. nov.

Type, from Miandrivazo, western Madagascar, M. C. Z., no. 78,284, adult male, collected by F. R. Wulsin, June 23, 1915.

Characters.—Size slightly less than in *C. vasa vasa* (Shaw) of eastern Madagascar. Color much paler: the upper parts dull grayish, about mouse gray of Ridgway; lower parts dull pale brownish, not far from hair brown of Ridgway; wings externally and upper surface of tail dull bluish gray. (Except for the bluish of the outer surface of the wing, and of the upper surface of the tail, basally, which color is darker than in the new form, *C. vasa vasa* of eastern Madagascar is dull black everywhere.)

MEASUREMENTS (in millimeters)

No.	Sex	Wing	Tail feathers	Culmen from cere
78,277	♂	270	174	33
78,278 ¹	♂	267		34
78,282	♂	269	170	32
78,284	♂	264	179	32
78,286	♂	273	175	35
78,279 ¹	♀	275		39
78,280	♀	274	180	36
78,281	♀	263	179	32
78,283 ¹	♀	263		33
78,285	♀	263	174	39

Two skins of *C. vasa vasa*, both lacking sex determination, from the Forêt Sianaka, afford these measurements: wing, 305 and 309; tail feathers, 193 and 204; culmen from cere, 36 and 39 mm.

¹ Tip of tail too much worn away to render the measurements of any value.