



PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
NEW ENGLAND ZOÖLOGICAL CLUB

**THE SOUTH AFRICAN FORM OF THE
SPOTTED CRAKE**

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CONTINUED study of the collections of East African birds in the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy has revealed the fact that the East African *Porzana pusilla obscura* is noticeably different from the form found in South Africa. The birds of these two regions have hitherto been considered as a single race, the type locality of which is Kibaya, Tanganyika Territory. The South African subspecies is without a name, and for it I propose

***Porzana pusilla intensa* subsp. nov.**

Type, Mus. Comp. Zoöl., no. 232,572, adult male (molting the remiges), collected at Moorddrift, Transvaal, 15, December, 1924, by Herbert Friedmann.

Subspecific characters.—Similar to *Porzana pusilla obscura*, but darker on the under parts, particularly the throat and breast, and on the cheeks, lores, and superciliaries, and slightly darker brown on the crown.

Range.—South Africa.

The eastern, tropical race, *obscura*, is more or less intermediate between the southern *intensa* and the Asiatic form *intermedia*. Although I have examined but one specimen of

the new form, the conclusions reached in this paper are supported by the observations of van Someren (Novitates Zoologicae XXIX, 1922, p. 21), who writes of a female *obscura* from Lake Naivasha, Kenya Colony, that the "gray . . . on the head and throat is paler than in southern birds. I suspect that the northern birds are distinct."

Inasmuch as the type of *intensa* is molting the remiges (all of which are shed at once, as in gallinules, anhingas and some ducks), it is not possible to measure the wing length. However, there seems to be little or no size difference between *obscura* and *intensa*.

In his synonymy of *Porzana pusilla obscura* Reichenow (Vög. Afrikas, I, p. 284) lists *Ortygometra bailloni* (*non* Vieill.), although his references to this name (Gurney, Proc. Zool. Soc. London, 1864, p. 3; Andersson, *ibid.*, 1864, p. 7; and Bocage, Angola, 1881, p. 480) all really refer to the species Vieillot called *bailloni*. The reason for this unimportant, but confusing error is probably as follows. In vol. XXIII of the Catalogue of Birds of the British Museum, *P. pusilla* and *P. intermedia* are considered as distinct species, and consequently Vieillot's name appears as a synonym of the latter, and not of the former, and inasmuch as Gurney, Andersson, and Bocage really had specimens of *pusilla*, their use of the name *bailloni* is recorded as not of Vieillot. Later *intermedia* was shown to be a race of *pusilla*, and its geographically wide synonyms therefore reverted to *pusilla*. Reichenow apparently copied the synonymy directly from the Catalogue, and thereby was led to write that the name *bailloni* as applied to *pusilla* was not *bailloni* of Vieillot. I am much indebted to Mr. Thomas E. Penard for the use of his copy of Vieillot's Nouvelle Dictionnaire d'Histoire Naturelle in this connection.

Material examined: *Porzana pusilla pusilla*, 1, Tibet. *P. p. intermedia*, 3, Europe; 1, Arabia; 2, Turkestan. *P. p. obscura*, 5, Tanganyika Territory. *P. p. intensa*, 1, Transvaal, South Africa.

