

Gull. A flock of well over 100 birds often fed over El Bahira, between August 16 and 20; all resembled in plumage adults of the second winter.

BLACK TERN, *Chlidonias nigra*.—This tern was the most prevalent representative of the Sterninae; it was not unusual to see 150 in flight at a time.

GULL-BILLED TERN, *Gelochelidon nilotica*.—At dusk on the third day I saw 50 birds take wing from a small sand spit.

LITTLE TERN, *Sterna albifrons*.—Only the Black Tern exceeded this species in numbers. These agile little birds often plummeted from considerable heights for food while their black relatives preferred to feed much closer to the surface.

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RACES OF THE STRIATED MARSH WARBLER

(*Megalurus palustris* Horsfield)

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WITH the objective of ascertaining the number of recognizable races of *Megalurus palustris*, I have recently had occasion to bring together 85 specimens from Java, the Philippines, and the Asiatic mainland. For the loan of their extensive series of this species, I am indebted to the authorities of the American Museum of Natural History.

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It soon became apparent that, in this grass- and sedge-inhabiting warbler, with but one molt during the year, the plumage quickly becomes so worn and discolored as to render worthless for taxonomic study a large proportion of the specimens in museums. Indeed, I found suitable for my purpose only those examples that had but recently completed the postnuptial molt (or were nearing its completion). Since, throughout the range, this molt comes at the end of summer, I was able to employ all specimens collected between the months of September and February, inclusive, from whatever area, but this necessary eclecticism immediately reduced my usable material to only 35 skins.

Of the species as a whole, this much may be said: there is no external character by which females may be distinguished from males, and in either sex there is an extraordinary incidence of individual variation, appearing in just the characters that might be expected to have subspecific or sexual importance—the streaking on the upper parts and upper breast, and the length of wing or tail. While it is possible to recognize three geographical forms, this can be done only by a close study of the coloration of the upper parts when the birds are laid out in series; single examples of any population may be racially unidentifiable without reference to the label! The three subspecies here accepted are the following:

***Megalurus palustris palustris* Horsfield**

Megalurus palustris HORSFIELD, Trans. Linn. Soc. London, 13: 159, May, 1821 (Java).

DIAGNOSIS: See below under *M. p. isabellinus*.

WING-LENGTH: 84–95 mm. (5 ♂ ♂).

RANGE: Java, Bali.

***Megalurus palustris isabellinus* Swainson**

Megalurus isabellinus SWAINSON, Animals in Menageries, pt. 3 [Two Centenaries and a Quarter of Birds . . .]: 291, Dec. 31, 1837, or Jan. 1, 1838 (India; type locality here restricted to Assam).

Megalurus palustris andrewsi BANGS, Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., 44: 592, Dec. 30, 1921 (Meng-ting, Yunnan, at the Burmese border).

DIAGNOSIS: "Similar to *M. palustris palustris* Horsford [sic] from Java and of about the same size, differing in the black striping of the upper parts being wider and more intensely black; the brown of upper parts deeper, brighter, more reddish brown, especially on the crown. The general color of upper parts in *M. palustris palustris*

is clay-color to buck-thorn brown; general color of upper parts in the new form is ochraceous tawny, almost tawny on the crown."

The paragraph above is Bangs's description of his *andrewsi*, of which the type was collected on February 18; the essential differences between *palustris* and *isabellinus* could not be better stated.

WING-LENGTH: 97–113 mm. (4 ♂♂); 82–100 mm. (5 ♀♀).

RANGE: Parts of India, Burma, South China, Indochine, and Siam.

Swainson's name *isabellinus* has not been noticed in the standard lists of synonyms, and for this reason it was overlooked by Bangs; it seems, however, to be unquestionably applicable to the present form. In restricting the type locality to Assam, I have selected the Indian province in which the species is most numerous, and one which was already under British political domination as early as 1826.

Megalurus palustris forbesi Bangs

Megalurus palustris forbesi BANGS, Proc. New England Zool. Club, 7: 6, June 6, 1919 (Baguio, Benguet Subprovince, Luzón, Philippine Islands).

DIAGNOSIS: "Similar to *Megalurus palustris palustris* Horsf. of Java . . . ; colors paler and grayer throughout, less ochraceous-tawny; upper parts, including head, apart from the black streaking, tawny olive to Isabella color, with a grayish tinge . . ."

I quote here those parts of Bangs's description which are supported by my own much longer series. His type was taken on April 24 and therefore is probably somewhat worn and faded; the color characters listed, however, apply well enough to birds in fresh autumnal dress.

N.B. Specimens of both *palustris* and *isabellinus* become so gray with wear as to be inseparable by color from *forbesi*!

WING-LENGTH: 93–100 mm. (12 ♂♂); 79–97 mm. (9 ♀♀).

RANGE: Luzón, Catanduanes, Mindoro. (Worn birds from Samar, Marinduque, Masbate, and Mindanao presumably belong here as well.)

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