

**A new subspecies of tree-babbler from the Philippines.**—The tree-babbler genus *Stachyris* is represented in the Philippines by a number of closely-related forms, divided by Delacour and Mayr (*Birds of the Philippines*, New York, Macmillan, 1946; pp. 189–191) into seven species (to which may be added the recently-described *S. hypogrammica* Salomonsen from Palawan). One of these, the Rufous-crowned Tree-babbler (*S. capitalis*), they consider to be monotypic, but this species is shown below to comprise two recognizable subspecies. While taxonomic relationships among Philippine *Stachyris* may ultimately prove to be better reflected by combining certain of the seven currently recognized species, in any case *capitalis* is the oldest available specific name.

The type locality of *S. capitalis* is Dinagat, a small island in Surigao Strait between Mindanao and Leyte, whose faunal relationships lie with Mindanao (McGregor, *Philippine J. Sci.*, 16: pl. 1, 1920). The range of the species (*sensu stricto*) is given by Delacour and Mayr as "Basilan, Mindanao, Dinagat, Panaon, and southern Leyte." Inclusion of "southern Leyte" in the range of *Stachyris capitalis* rests solely on the specimen reported by Tweeddale (*Proc. Zool. Soc. London*, 1878: 342). Mr. I. C. J. Galbraith of the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) was good enough to search for this specimen at my request, and his findings are as follows (letter: 30 November 1962): "We believe that we have traced the specimen from Leyte listed by Tweeddale (1878) as *Mixornis capitalis*. This is an Everett specimen of *Macronus striaticeps mindanensis*, whose label agrees in date, locality, sex and iris colour with the data quoted by Tweeddale for '*M. capitalis*.' Since there is no *Stachyris* in the collection corresponding to Tweeddale's list, and no *Macronus* in the list corresponding to this specimen, it seems most probable that it was misidentified. By 1888, when it was registered (no. 1888.4.20.1129), it had been identified as *M. striaticeps*, and there is no mention of the other name on the label or in the register." In view of Mr. Galbraith's findings, it appears that *Stachyris capitalis* should be removed from the list of Leyte birds. No other collector has obtained it, and at least two-thirds of the island of Leyte is known to be occupied by the closely-related and probably conspecific *S. nigrocapitata*.

Comparison of 14 specimens of *Stachyris capitalis* from the island of Basilan with 7 from Mindanao indicates that the populations inhabiting these two islands are subspecifically separable, and the Mindanao birds are presumed to be the same as those of Dinagat. The Basilan race may therefore be known as:

#### ***Stachyris capitalis isabelae*, new subspecies**

*Type*: Carnegie Museum no. 138096; adult male, collected at Isabela, Basilan, Philippine Islands, 14 August 1891, by D. C. Worcester and F. S. Bourns (original no. 2399 D).

*Diagnosis*: similar to Mindanao specimens considered to represent *S. c. capitalis* (Tweeddale), but dorsal white streaks broader, extending farther caudad; rufous of crown averaging more extensive posteriorly, and more abruptly contrasted (less blended) with nape color; buff shaft-streaks of crown paler and broader; pale streaks on wing coverts prominent (obsolete in *capitalis*); wings grayer, less brown; upper tail coverts duller brown, less rufescent. Although the number of birds I measured is small, it appears likely that *isabelae* averages somewhat larger. Flattened wing measurements (millimeters) are as follows: Mindanao ♂ ♂, 66, 67; ♀ ♀, 67, 69.5; Basilan ♂ ♂, 70, 70, 71, 72, 72.5, 75; ♀, 69.5; unsexed, 72.

*Acknowledgments*: in addition to the Carnegie Museum's three specimens from Basilan, the following material was examined (adults only): U. S. National Mu-

seum (3 Mindanao, 7 Basilan), American Museum of Natural History (3 Mindanao, 4 Basilan), and Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (1 Mindanao). I am grateful to the curators of the last three institutions for permission to examine their specimens. The study was carried out with financial support from the Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund in connection with a project on birds of Leyte.—KENNETH C. PARKES, *Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh 13, Pennsylvania*.

**Starlings above the Arctic Circle in Alaska, 1962.**—On 2 September 1962, at noon, with light conditions good even though there was complete overcast and a slight drizzle falling, I saw three Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) perched in the top of a 30-foot white spruce tree (*Picea glauca*). With the aid of  $7 \times 35$  binoculars I observed these birds closely, noting their characteristic shape and autumn plumage.

I had been checking on migrating birds around Fort Yukon and when I saw these birds I was less than a mile southeast of the Fort Yukon Air Strip and Hospital Lake, and about a mile east of Fort Yukon School.

These Starlings were with a loose flock of Rusty Blackbirds (*Euphagus carolinus*) that were feeding in a semi-marshy area with willow-sedge-grass growth under a sparse stand of white spruce. This area has been burned repeatedly in the past and was semi-open cover of the taiga type.

The Starlings, appearing more excitable than the Rusty Blackbirds, flew from the area towards the Indian village of Fort Yukon.

Starlings were first reported in inland Alaska, at Fairbanks, 4 May 1960 (B. Kessel, *Condor*, 62: 482, 1960). My observations extend the known range of this species approximately 150 miles (210 km) north of Fairbanks and about 8 miles north of the Arctic Circle, in the vast, inland Yukon Valley of Alaska. I expect that Starlings will successfully establish breeding populations in this area some time in the near future, because there are abundant nest holes made by Yellow-shafted Flickers (*Colaptes auratus*) and other woodpeckers in aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), paper birch (*Betula papyrifera*), white spruce, and cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera*) trees. Also, there appears to be an abundance of summer food for adults and young.—CHARLES F. YOCOM, *Division of Natural Resources, Humboldt State College, Arcata, California*.

**Feeding of Least Terns over land.**—On 6 July 1962 we observed two immature Least Terns (*Sterna albifrons*) feeding over a newly plowed field in Kleberg County, Texas. This field had previously contained grain (*Sorghum vulgare*) which had been harvested. It was quite remarkable to observe these birds feeding in much the same way as Least Terns typically do over water, as we could find no previous record of such behavior. The birds would hover approximately 10 to 20 feet (3 to 6 meters) above the ground, dive toward the ground, pick up food with their bills and immediately circle around the field. They would then resume their hovering and continue feeding as previously described. They were never observed to alight on the ground. Feeding in the field at the same time were numerous Laughing Gulls (*Larus atricilla*) and Killdeers (*Charadrius vociferus*). An investigation of the newly plowed field revealed exposed insect larvae of the families Carabidae and Scarabaeidae.—BURRUSS McDANIEL, *Department of Biology, Texas College of Arts and Industries, Kingsville, Texas*, and SHIRLEY McDANIEL, *823 West Henrietta, Kingsville, Texas*.