

DU BUS' TYPE OF THE COLLARED TOWHEE,
PIPILO TORQUATUS

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IN 1847,¹ Du Bus published the description of a Collared Towhee from "Mexico" under the name of *Pipilo torquatus* and later, in 1851, pictured the individual in plate 36 (livr. 7) of his "Exquisses Ornithologique." About twenty years later Lawrence described² *Buarremon ocai* from Jalapa, Vera Cruz, but in accordance with the opinions of Salvin³ and of Salvin and Godman⁴ this latter name has rested peacefully in the synonymy of *Pipilo torquatus*. It must now be revived for the reasons given below.

Du Bus' original diagnosis and plate by no means describe or picture the collared towhee which for so many years has passed as *torquatus*, in fact they are so at variance that it is difficult to understand why they were ever confused. The type of *torquatus* is still extant in the Musée Royale d'Histoire Naturelle in Brussels, where I examined it in July, 1939, and verified the characters originally ascribed. Briefly, it is an obvious hybrid between what has currently been called *torquatus* and some other *Pipilo*, probably *maculatus*. Notes made at the time are as follows:

"No. 7391 Brussels Museum, marked as "♂"; no locality (other than "Mexique"), nor is there any indication of the original source either in the register or on the stand. It is apparently fully adult. Measurements are: wing 86; tail, 103; exposed culmen, 14.5; depth at base, 10.3; tarsus, 30.7; middle toe minus claw, 19.2; hind toe with claw, 19.0 mm. Plumage fresh, though showing slight abrasion as though collected, perhaps, in midwinter. The specimen may have faded somewhat, though obviously in no great degree. It is mounted on a small, conventional, bar perch and is in good condition.

"Forehead solidly black to a line at posterior corners of eyes, with no trace of median crown stripe; hind part of crown rufous brown, heavily variegated with black tipping and bounded laterally with broad stripes of black [in other words the chestnut patch is obsolescent]; superciliary stripes very narrow and solidly white only on the supra-loral region, with about equal amounts of black and white posterior to the eyes; pectoral collar brownish black and 10-12 mm. broad; sides, flanks, and under tail coverts grayish brown [originally described as "rufis"]; black grayish green, the feathers with broad (1-2 mm.), central streaks of dull black; rump and upper tail coverts with a distinct brownish tinge; lateral rectrices with an irregular creamy white spot (12 mm.) on inner webs; next pair with only the tip of the inner webs white."

¹ *Bull. Acad. Roy. Sci. Belgique*, 14, pt. 2, 1847 (séance of Aug. 7): 105.

² *Ann. Lyc. Nat. Hist. New York*, 8, 1863-1867 (read May 1, 1865): 126.

³ *Ibis*, 1874: 315.

⁴ *Biologia Cent.-Amer., Aves*, 1, 1886: 399.

Since *torquatus* is not available as a specific name for the typical Collared Towhees, *ocai* will have to replace it. Thanks to the courtesy of Mr. John T. Zimmer of the American Museum of Natural History, I am able to examine one of Lawrence's two cotypes, both of which (*vide* Zimmer) are practically identical in all particulars. Both were collected by Rafael Montes de Oca at Jalapa, Vera Cruz, but further data are lacking. A comparison of the specimen forwarded (Amer. Mus. No. 41, 669) with the original description indicates little or no post-mortem color change. In characters it exhibits the relatively dark brown sides and under tail coverts typical of the race which inhabits the mountains of Vera Cruz and eastern Puebla.

The final solution to the whole complex problem of the relationships of the *ocai*—*macronyx*—*maculatus* group of towhees will come only after a long study of all available material combined with competent field observation. It is not impossible, though improbable, that the numerous intermediate specimens, some of which have received names, will prove to be, in some instances, valid connecting forms. At present it seems safest to regard them as hybrids. Undiluted *ocai* apparently has at least four recognisable races. These are:

Pipilo ocai ocai (Lawrence)

Mountains of central Vera Cruz and eastern Puebla.

Pipilo ocai brunescens van Rossem⁵

Mountains of central and northern Oaxaca

Pipilo ocai alticola (Salvin and Godman)

Mountains of Colima and Michoacan

Pipilo ocai guerrerensis van Rossem

Sierra Madre del Sur, Guerrero

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⁵ The differences between *ocai* and *brunescens*, described in 1938 (*Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, 58, July, 1938: 131) are readily recognizable in the British Museum series, but less so in American material more recently examined. More specimens are needed for final disposition of the case. A series of five *guerrerensis* in the Biological Survey collection confirms the validity of that race, originally named in the paper cited above on the basis of six specimens in the British Museum.