

### THE TYPE-LOCALITY OF *CRACTICUS TORQUATUS ARGENTEUS* GOULD

When Ford (1979) demonstrated that the populations of the Grey Butcherbird *Cracticus torquatus* inhabiting the Kimberley Division of Western Australia and the northern part of the Northern Territory, which previously had been united under the subspecific name *C. t. argenteus* Gould, consist of two well-differentiated subspecies, the problem of the exact type-locality of *C. argenteus* Gould, up to then a matter of purely historical interest, became of direct relevance to the nomenclature to be used in the future.

The question to be solved is whether the type-locality of *C. argenteus* is Hanover Bay, (15°16'S, 124°46'E), as claimed by Mathews (1930: 655), or Port Essington, (11°15'S, 132°12'E), as designated by Stone (1913: 168), who listed a specimen from that locality, preserved in the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, as the type. The majority of later workers has accepted Port Essington as the type-locality. Amadon (1951: 7) discussed it, stating that: "It is doubtful if the race gets into Western Australia at all". He also stated that he had been unable to find Hanover Bay on the map, and evidently he had no idea where Mathews got this locality from. De Schauensee (1957: 222-223) again studied the Philadelphia specimen from Port Essington, which he listed as a holotype although in the text he called it a cotype (= syntype). Amadon (1962: 166) definitely stated: "Type from Port Essington". Ford (1979) again discussed the type-locality, referring to the authors just mentioned and concluding that: "Port Essington can safely be assumed to be the correct type-locality". About Hanover Bay he only remarked that Mathews gave it as the type-locality: "possibly so that his (1912) name *colletti*, type-locality Mary River, could apply to Northern Territory birds".

As all recent authors (except Mathews in a single publication) have agreed that Port Essington is the type-locality, the question might well be regarded as settled and it will require strong evidence to confirm that Hanover Bay is actually the correct type-locality. Here I shall present this evidence, which I consider to be convincing.

Although the authors mentioned above all referred to Gould's (1841) original description, in discussing the name they did not base their conclusions on this paper, but on Gould's later contributions (Gould 1848, 1865), apparently without realising that the relevant part of the *Birds of Australia* was published over seven years later than the original description (on 1 December 1848).

Subsequent authors have quoted from the original description the type-locality as "North-west coast of Australia", but they ignored the definite statement on

the provenance of the two species described in this paper: "Mr. Gould next proceeded to characterize the two following new birds: -- The first (*Cracticus argenteus*) is from the collection of Capt. Gray (sic: Grey), and the second, a new species of *Amadina*, is from the collection of Mr. Dring, of H.M.S. *Beagle*". Hence it is explicitly stated that *C. argenteus* was described from the collection of Capt. Grey. References to material from Port Essington, collected by B. Bynoe, and described and figured seven years later in the *Birds of Australia* are in this connexion irrelevant. All this was pointed out long ago by Campbell (1919, 1922) but later authors have ignored his work.

It is known exactly which part of tropical north-western Australia was visited by Grey (cf. Grey 1841). He arrived at Hanover Bay on 2 December 1836, explored the country between the Prince Regent and Glenelg Rivers, and left on 17 April 1837. His specimens of *C. argenteus* can only have been collected there and in that period.

On 13 October 1840, a month after his return to England, Grey presented 52 (not 60) bird skins from Western Australia to the British Museum, which Sharpe (1906: 247, 377) believed had been collected by Gould. In my opinion this is incorrect, for there is plenty of evidence that Grey collected personally (as acknowledged by Gould for the type-specimen of *C. argenteus*); see also Mathews (1925: 62). Also on 13 October 1840 Gould read the description of *C. argenteus* to the meeting of the Zoological Society. The agreement in date can be no coincidence. In appendix D to Grey's work, Gould listed *Cracticus argenteus* as inhabiting Western Australia, which if nothing else, at least confirms that Gould knew it then from that State. The fact that it is not provided with the letters N.W.C. (for North-West Coast) may mean that by that time Gould had already seen specimens from elsewhere (Port Essington).

There was no specimen of *C. argenteus* amongst the material Grey presented to the British Museum in 1840, but Gadow (1883: 99-100) recorded a "very young specimen" purchased from Gould in 1875 as type (see also Sharpe 1906: 375 and Campbell 1922). Warren & Harrison (1971: 34) listed this same specimen as a syntype of *C. argenteus*: "Subadult. Reg. no. 1875.11.8.14. North-west Australia (restricted to Port Essington by Mathews with particular reference to Bynoe's specimen, *vide Birds of Australia*, 10 (1922-23): 397). Collected by Captain, later Sir George, Grey. Purchased off J. Gould... In the original description reference was made only to this subadult specimen, but an adult was described. Subsequently Gould, *Birds of Australia*, 2 (1848): 51, thanked Bynoe 'for one of the specimens from which

my description was taken'. The latter, an adult, must also be a syntype and would account for the description, and later illustration, of an adult. It is in the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia ...". In this extract, the words quoted from Gould are of particular importance. Checking up on this reference one finds that the actual words used by Gould are: "for one of the specimens from which my *figure* was taken". Only in 1865 were these words changed to: "for one of the specimens from which my *description* was taken" (cf. Gould 1865: 182); the reason for this change is obvious, the 1865 edition being unillustrated. Anyway, even if in 1848 Gould had used the word *description*, this would have referred to the description in that work only, and not to the original one.

The main reason why authors have stuck to Port Essington as the type-locality of *C. argenteus* is of course that Gould's presumed type in Philadelphia is labelled as being from there, and that its type status (either as holotype or as syntype) has become generally accepted. However, the word "type" was used formerly in a different meaning from the present one, and the "types" which Gould sold to Philadelphia were not necessarily the specimens on which the original descriptions had been based, but were the specimens from which the illustrations for the Birds of Australia had been drawn; hence they were the types of the plates only.

It should also be repeated that Gould's North-West Coast of Australia stands for the tropical portion of Western Australia, and that Port Essington is on what he correctly called the North Coast (cf. Mees 1961: 112-113). See for example the distribution of *Rhipidura isura*: "This species is an inhabitant of the north and north-west coasts of Australia, in which localities specimens have been procured by Sir George Grey and by Gilbert, the latter of whom states that it is abundant in all parts of Cobourg Peninsula ..." (Gould 1865: 242-243).

Previous authors have made no use of the measurements Gould provided for the type-specimen. These are: Total length 11 inches, bill  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inches, wing 6 inches, tail  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches, tarsi  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Converted to mm (25.4 to the inch), that gives: total length 279.4, bill 41.3, wing 152.4, tail 114.3, tarsi 31.8 mm. Comparison with Ford's Table I shows that the bird described by Gould was almost certainly a male of the Kimberley subspecies. It is true that Gould was sometimes careless with his measurements, but in this case all measurements given for the type-specimen exceed those of Northern Territory birds and correspond with those of birds from Western Australia.

As the British Museum specimen is the only one definitely known to have been collected by Grey and to

have been in the possession of Gould, I wondered whether it could possibly be the bird described. Mr. Galbraith has been so kind as to examine the specimen and he reported that: "There is a good deal of brown plumage in the crown, sides of head, hind-neck and upper back, which Gould could not have overlooked, while the mantle is quite conspicuously streaked with blackish ... I have removed the specimen from our type collection. It is also of course not one of the 'types' of Gould's 1848 plate, which shows two adult birds."

The type is therefore still missing; it cannot be the specimen in Philadelphia which, apart from being labelled Port Essington, has according to de Schauensee wing 149, tail 92, culmen 37 mm - measurements confirming its provenance from the Northern Territory. Whether the type-specimen was retained by Gould or returned to Grey is not clear. As there is no evidence that Grey was interested in having a private collection, as it was not donated to the British Museum, it is indeed most likely that the specimen remained in the hands of Gould, which means that later it may have gone almost anywhere, for Gould was continuously active, exchanging and selling material. With the help of published measurements it might just be possible that it will be traced in some collection somewhere. At the suggestion of Mr Galbraith I have written to the University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge (Mr C.W. Benson), the Merseyside County Museum, Liverpool (Mr M.J. Lagen), and the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh (Mr I.H.J. Lyster), but the replies are negative.

The consequences for the nomenclature are that the Kimberley subspecies has to be known as *Cracticus torquatus argenteus* Gould (synonym *C. t. latens* Ford, type-locality Uwins Island, almost topotypical of *argenteus*) and that the Northern Territory subspecies, much as I regret being instrumental in reviving one of Mathew's names, has to be known as *Cracticus torquatus colletti* Mathews (1912: 46). For once, Mathews described this subspecies correctly as differing from the type of *C. t. argenteus* in its altogether smaller size.

#### REFERENCES

- AMADON, D. 1951. Taxonomic notes on the Australian butcher-birds (family Cracticidae). *Amer. Mus. Novit.* 1504: 1-33.
- . 1962. Family Cracticidae. In E. Mayr & J.C. Greenway (Eds.), *Check-list of Birds in the world* 15: 166-172.
- CAMPBELL, A.J. 1919. Birds from the Gouldian-Gilbert type-locality, North Australia. *Emu* 18: 172-188.
- . 1922. Some birds of Groote Eylandt, Northern Territory. *Emu* 21: 188-197.
- FORD, J. 1979. A new subspecies of the Grey Butcherbird from the Kimberley, Western Australia. *Emu* 79: 191-194.
- GOULD, J. 1841. Descriptions of two new species of Australian birds. *Proc. zool. Soc. Lond.* 8 (1840): 126-127.

- . 1848. The Birds of Australia 2 (pt. 33). London: The Author.
- . 1865. Handbook of the Birds of Australia 1. London: The Author.
- GADOW, H. 1883. Catalogue of the birds in the British Museum. London: BMNH.
- GREY, G. 1841. Journals of two expeditions of discovery in north-west and western Australia, during the years 1837, 38, and 39, under the authority of Her Majesty's Government 1. London: T. and W. Boone.
- MATHEWS, G.M. 1912. Additions and corrections to my reference list to the birds of Australia. Aust. Av. Rec. 1: 25-32.
- . 1925. Bibliography of the birds of Australia. The birds of Australia, Suppl. 4 and 5. London: H.F. & G. Witherby.
- . 1930. Systema avium Australasianarum (pt. 2). London: BOU.
- MEES, G.F. 1961. An annotated catalogue of a collection of bird-skins from West Pilbara, Western Australia. J. Roy. Soc. W. Aust. 44: 97-143.
- SCHAUENSEE, R.M. de. 1957. On some avian types, principally Gould's, in the collection of the Academy. Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philad. 109: 123-246.
- SHARPE, R.B. 1906. Birds. In The history of the collections contained in the history departments of the British Museum 2: 79-515.
- STONE, W. 1913. A list of the species of Australian birds described by John Gould, with the location of the type-specimens. Austral. Av. Rec. 1: 129-180.
- WARREN, R.L.M. & C.J.O. HARRISON. 1971. Type-specimens of birds in the British Museum (Natural History) 2. Passerines. London: BMNH.

G. MEES, *Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Raamsteeg 2, Leiden, Nederland.*  
20 January 1982.

### SHORT NOTES

#### COMMENTS ON CALLS OF COCKATIELS

Robert Pidgeon, in his paper 'Calls of the Galah *Cacatua roseicapilla* and some comparisons with four other species of Australian parrots', Emu 81: 158-168, states that a juvenile food-begging call has not been recorded for the Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*. He describes the names as 'F-call' the piping noise made by juvenile Galahs as they swallow food.

These statements disregard my paper 'Comments on

JOHN COURTNEY, 'Ashgrove', Swan Vale, Glen Innes, NSW 2370.

15 March 1982

#### SPECIATION OF FLAMINGOS

I found the recent review by J.A. McNamara of "Relationships and Evolution of Flamingos (Aves; Phoenicopteridae)" (Emu 82: 185-186) of some interest, but was surprised to find the reviewer apparently ignorant of the existence of two species of flamingo in Africa. In his third paragraph he states that "Africa, Eurasia and North America each have one species of Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor* in Africa and *Phoenicopterus ruber* in the others) ....". Africa has both *Phoeniconaias minor* and *Phoenicopterus ruber* (see e.g. L.H. Brown, E.K. Urban & K.B. Newman.

J.N. TALBOT, 29 Joyce Road, Lesmurdie, WA 6076.

14 January 1983

### ANNOUNCEMENT

#### 19th International Ornithological Congress

The Scientific Programme Committee for the 19th International Ornithological Congress to be held in Ottawa in 1986, has been appointed by the President, Professor Klaus Immelmann, and will meet in October 1983. Suggestions for the scientific programme may be sent to the committee chairman, BRUCE FALLS, Department of Zoology, University of Toronto, Toron-

to, Ontario M5S 1A1, Canada. Suggestions for symposia may include details of subject matter, possible leaders and participants. Symposia of general interest and involving international participation are encouraged. The possibility of including contributed spoken papers as well as posters is under consideration. Responsibility for the final programme remains with the committee.

1982. The Birds of Africa Volume I London: Academic Press) and, according to Salim Ali and S. Dillon Ripley (1968. Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan Volume I. London: OUP), so does India, although *Phoeniconaias minor* had not been definitely proved to breed in the subcontinent when the latter work was published.

In the result, only in North America is there only one species of flamingo i.e. *Phoenicopterus ruber*.