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THREE NEW BIRDS OF THE GENUS STACHYRIS¹

By H. G. DEIGNAN²

The allocation of specimens of the rufous-crowned forms of *Stachyris* from Burma, Siam, and French Indo-China shows that considerable confusion has existed in the minds of authors as to exactly which birds should be given the available names, and, in fact, verbal descriptions of one form often serve equally well for almost any other member of the group.

In 1916 Gyldenstolpe recorded two Siamese birds (apparently representing two subspecies, if not two distinct species) which he called *Stachyridopsis rufifrons*, with the observation that one probably belonged to *bhamoensis* and the other to typical *rufifrons*. In 1920 the same author listed these specimens as *Stachyridopsis rufifrons rufifrons*. In 1933 De Schauensee, following Gyldenstolpe, recorded a single specimen from Doi Chiengdao as *Stachyris rufifrons rufifrons*.

In French Indo-China similar difficulties have prevailed. Birds from Haut-Laos and Tonkin were recorded in 1931 by Bangs and Van Tyne as *Stachyris rufifrons rufifrons*, but another series from Bolovens in Bas-Laos was listed in 1932 by Delacour and Engelbach as the Assamese *Stachyris rufifrons ambigua*.

In 1937 two breeding males were taken by me on Doi Chiengdao, and, points of disagreement being found between them and Hume's description of *rufifrons*, De Schauensee's specimen from the same locality was borrowed, together with an odd bird of anomalous characters from Doi Pha Hom Pok. From the American Museum of Natural History I was able to obtain topotypical material of both *rufifrons* and *ambigua*, which made it evident that the Siamese specimens had been misidentified. This raised the question of the exact identity of birds from French Indo-China, and, in accordance with my request, series of skins from Bolovens and from Haut-Laos were forwarded to me from Field Museum.

¹ Published by permission of the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

² Division of Birds, United States National Museum.

The gathering together of this material shows that all identifications of specimens from southeastern Asia have been in error, and that at least three unnamed forms occur in Siam and French Indo-China. The three birds from Doi Chiengdao cannot be considered representatives of any known species. From *ruficeps* they differ in the absence of yellows from the plumage; from *rufifrons* in having gray lores and throat; from *poliogaster* in the absence of gray from the belly; from *pyrrhops* in having no black on the throat. Moreover, a form of *rufifrons* occurs within 50, if not 25, miles of Doi Chiengdao, and there is even some reason to believe that both *rufifrons* and *ruficeps* occur on Chiengdao itself.

To the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences and the American Museum of Natural History I am indebted for the loan of comparative material; to Field Museum both for the use of its specimens and for the privilege of naming the two new forms represented among them.

***Stachyris rodolphei*¹ sp. nov.**

Type from Doi Chiengdao, Chiengmai Province, northwestern Siam. Alt. 3,525 feet. No. 336891 United States National Museum. Adult male. Collected March 21, 1937, by H. G. Deignan.

Description.—Front and crown dull, dark rufous, with inconspicuous dark shaft-streaks; upper parts, including wings and tail, dark olivaceous-brown; lores and feathers above eye pure gray; ear coverts olive-brown; edge of wing, under wing coverts, and axillaries pale gray; chin and upper throat pale gray with conspicuous black shaft-streaks and sharply defined from the remaining under parts; lower throat and upper breast olivaceous-buff, changing to a dull, light olivaceous-brown on rest of breast, abdomen, flanks, and under tail coverts—the whole bird below darker and duller than any race of *rufifrons*. Irides red; bill dark gray; feet, toes, and claws olive (fide De Schauensee).

Range.—The three known specimens were taken at 3,525 feet, 3,825 feet, and 5,500 feet. The two birds from lower elevations were found in tall bamboo forest, acting like *Mixornis*; each had the testes greatly enlarged.

***Stachyris rufifrons adjuncta* subsp. nov.**

Type from Phong Saly, Haut-Laos, French Indo-China. Alt. 4,400 feet. No. 78911 Field Museum of Natural History. Adult male. Collected April 26, 1929, by J. van Tyne.

¹ In honor of Baron Rodolphe Meyer de Schauensee, of whose generosity I have availed myself on numerous occasions.

Description.—Front and crown dark rufous, with conspicuous black shaft-streaks; upper plumage dark olivaceous-brown; lores brownish-gray or pale grayish-brown; ear coverts pale buff; edge of wing, under wing coverts, and axillaries pure white; chin and upper throat white with conspicuous black shaft-streaks and contrasting strongly with remainder of lower plumage, which is darker than warm-buff (Ridgway) and slightly more olivaceous on the flanks; the bill in the dried skin horny-black, probably plumbeous in life.

Range.—Haut-Laos and Tonkin, French Indo-China.

Stachyris rufifrons unsuspecta subsp. nov. THE LIBRARY OF THE

Type from Thateng on the Plateau of ~~Holovers~~ Bas-Laos, French Indo-China. No. 90967 Field Museum of Natural History. Adult male. Collected December 3, 1931, by J. Delacour.

Description.—Front and crown orange-rufous with conspicuous black shaft-streaks; upper plumage medium olivaceous-brown; lores yellowish-gray; ear-coverts olivaceous-fulvous; edge of wing, wing coverts, and axillaries white washed with buffy; chin and upper throat buffy-white (or buff) with conspicuous black shaft-streaks and merging into remainder of lower plumage, which is nearest antimony yellow (Ridgway) and slightly more olivaceous on the flanks; bill horny-black in the dried skin, in life "gray."

Range.—Bas-Laos, French Indo-China; northwestern Siam.

Remarks.—It is well known that yellow is a very fugitive color in the *Timeliidae*, and this fact is exemplified by my series of *Stachyris ruficeps davidi*, in which the color of the under parts varies from yellowish-gray to bright yellow. On the whole, the older the skin, the paler the color, but this is not consistently the case; there is no doubt a certain amount of change while the bird is alive, and as a result fresher specimens are sometimes more faded than much older ones.

In typical *ruficeps*, which never has the pure, bright yellow hue of *davidi*, much less alteration occurs. I have before me four specimens from the same locality, of which one was collected in 1876, two in 1880, and one in 1931. The old skins differ from the comparatively fresh one in a slightly duller color below, especially on the throat, and a foxing of the upper parts from olive-green to olive-brown.

That the forms of *rufifrons*, which lack yellow coloration, show much change with age, is less certain. My specimens of typical *rufifrons* were taken in 1911, 1912, and 1915, and are the very

specimens described by Harington (Journ. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc., 23, p. 628, 1915). Likewise, my specimens of *ambigua*, which were collected in 1895, are paratypes of Harington's race, and were equally carefully described at the same time and place. These birds, in 1938, agree exceedingly well with the descriptions made in 1915; what changes I have made in color nomenclature have been merely for the sake of greater accuracy in dealing with an increased number of nearly related forms. I might add that my whole series of *adjuncta* was taken in 1929; of my series of *insuspecta*, six were collected in 1931, one (northern Siam) in 1938.

I am not at all satisfied with the conventional arrangement of the various forms. *Stachyris ruficeps ruficeps* differs from *davidi* in a degree which, in this group, may well have specific significance. Moreover, no one has recorded specimens intermediate between the Himalayan and Chinese forms. If *ruficeps* and *davidi* are eventually shown to belong to different species, my *insuspecta* will no doubt properly be considered a southeastern race of *ruficeps*. With the present arrangement this is not possible, because of the occurrence of *davidi* at no great distance in Annam. Until more is known of the respective ranges of these birds, I shall leave *insuspecta* in the *rufifrons* complex, as a matter of convenience.

It is believed that the appended tabular arrangement of the characters of *rufifrons* and its races (as herein constituted) will prove more useful than pages of formal descriptions in separating these birds. The scheme employed is that of Harington (1915) somewhat expanded.

A list of material examined is appended:

Stachyris pyrrhops.—2 (Kashmir, 1; Rampur-Bushar, 1).

Stachyris ruficeps ruficeps.—4 (Sikkim, 4).

Stachyris ruficeps davidi.—53 (Szechwan, 31; Yunnan, 5; Fukiensien, 6; Tonkin, 7; south Annam, 1; Bhamo District, 3).

Stachyris ruficeps praecognita.—3 (Taiwan, 3).

Stachyris rodolphei.—3 (northern Siam, 3).

Stachyris rufifrons rufifrons.—3 (Pegu Yomas, 3).

Stachyris rufifrons ambigua.—3 (northern Cachar, 3).

Stachyris rufifrons adjuncta.—5 (Haut-Laos, 3; Tonkin, 2).

Stachyris rufifrons insuspecta.—7 (Bas-Laos, 6; northwest Siam, 1).

STACHYRIS RUFIFRONS

Type locality	<i>S. r. ambigua</i> Harington	<i>S. r. pallescens</i> Ticehurst	<i>S. r. rufifrons</i> Hume	<i>S. r. adjuncta</i> subsp. nov.	<i>S. r. insuspecta</i> subsp. nov.
	Northern Cachar	Arakan	Pegu	Haut-Laos	Bas-Laos
Bill	In life: "light fleshy, culmen and tip darker" (collector); in dried skin: maxilla horny-brown, mandible fleshy-yellow		Infreshskin: "blue" (Hume); in dried skin: horny-black	In dried skin: horny-black	In life: "gray" (collector); in dried skin: horny-black
Lores	Buffy		Whitish	Brownish-gray or pale grayish-brown	Yellowish-gray
Ear coverts	Pale buff		Pale buff	Pale buff	Olivaceous-fulvous
Crown	Orange-rufous covering entire crown; black shaft-streaks conspicuous		Rufous, fading out at middle of crown; black shaft-streaks inconspicuous or wanting	Dark rufous covering entire crown; black shaft-streaks conspicuous	Orange-rufous covering entire crown; black shaft-streaks conspicuous
Upper plumage	Medium olivaceous-brown	"Less brown, more olive-gray" than <i>rufifrons</i> (Ticehurst)	Light olivaceous-brown	Dark olivaceous-brown	Medium olivaceous-brown

(Continued on p. 114)

STACHYRIS RUFIFRONS—Continued

	<i>S. r. ambigua</i> Harington	<i>S. r. pallescens</i> Ticehurst	<i>S. r. rufifrons</i> Hume	<i>S. r. adjuncta</i> subsp. nov.	<i>S. r. insuspecta</i> subsp. nov.
Edge of wing, under wing coverts, axillaries	Pure white		Pure white	Pure white	White washed with buffy
Chin and upper throat	White, faintly washed buffy, with black shaft-streaks, the white merging into remainder of lower plumage		White with con- spicuous black shaft-streaks, the white contrasting with remainder of lower plumage	White with con- spicuous black shaft-streaks, the white contrasting strongly with re- mainder of lower plumage	Buffy-white (or buff) with conspic- uous black shaft- streaks, the buffy- white merging into remainder of lower plumage
Lower plumage	Darker than warm- buff (Ridgway), washed olivaceous on flanks	"Creamy" (Tice- hurst)	Warm-buff (Ridg- way), with no oli- vaceous wash on flanks	Darker than warm- buff (Ridgway), slightly more oliva- ceous on flanks	Nearest antimony yellow (Ridgway), slightly more oliva- ceous on flanks
Distribution	Sikkim; Assam; Manipur	Arakan	Pegu	Haut-Laos; Ton- kin; (?) Yunnan	Bas-Laos; (?) east Siam; northwestern Siam; (?) southeast- ern Shan States



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