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NATURAL HISTORY,  
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# FIELDIANA: ZOOLOGY

*A continuation of the*

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## TWO NEW BIRDS FROM NEPAL

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Our report on the birds collected by the various Fleming expeditions to Nepal from 1949 to 1954 is in the editor's hands. It seems advisable to publish descriptions of these novelties in advance of the main paper.

### *Dendrocopus auriceps conoveri* new subspecies

*Type*.—Chicago Natural History Museum no. 214818, from 15 miles west of Tansen, West Nepal; altitude 5,500 feet. Adult female collected January 9, 1952, by R. L. Fleming.

*Diagnosis*.—Differs from *D. a. auriceps* in the smaller size and, in the female, the golden yellow nape (not usually brown or yellowish brown); an additional, less diagnostic character is the more fulvous (less brownish) forecrown in both male and female. The males of this subspecies average more yellow on the nape than do more western birds but there is almost complete overlap in this character.

*Range*.—Nepal, from the Kali Gandak area, West Nepal, eastward through Kathmandu Valley.

*Measurements* (wing).—*D. a. conoveri*: males 105, 105, 108, 109, 109, 110, 111, 111, 112, 115 (av. 109.5); females 107, 108, 109, 110, 111 (av. 109).

*D. a. auriceps*: FAR-WESTERN NEPAL: males 114, 114; females 112, 112. KUMAON: males 118, 118, 120; females 112, 113, 113, 113. MUSSOORIE, UNITED PROVINCES: males 114, 114, 115, 115, 116, 116, 116, 118, 119 (av. 115.8); females 109, 111, 113, 113, 114, 114, (av. 112.3). PUNJAB: males 115, 116, 117, 119, 122 (av. 117.8); females 117, 119.

*Remarks*.—The small woodpecker, *D. auriceps*, is restricted to the slopes of the Himalayas at moderate elevations from Nepal west

to Afghanistan. No geographical variation has been described in this species, but our Nepal series indicates that birds from the extreme eastern part of the range represent a distinguishable subspecies.

The size variation in this species is clinal, a gradual decrease in size from west to east, with the wings of the most western males (Punjab) averaging 117.8 mm. in length, while those of the most eastern males (Nepal) average 109.5 mm. The variation in color of the nape in the female is not clinal, but the bright orange of the five eastern *conoveri* females examined is matched by only two of the sixteen more western *D. a. auriceps* examined (one from Mussoorie, one from Punjab) while the other fourteen are quite distinct. Neither character alone would perhaps merit naming the eastern bird, but the two characters together seem an adequate basis for separating two subspecies.

The two names applicable to this species—*auriceps* and *brunnifrons*—both of Vigors, 1831, probably were based on western birds, and Stuart Baker (Fauna Brit. India, 1927, 4: 42) has given the type locality of *auriceps* as Simla, which can well be accepted for both names. In the plate of *brunnifrons* the female has a dull-colored nape consistent with this view.

*D. a. auriceps* ranges to far western Nepal, for two females from Baila and Sahajpur agree with Mussoorie birds.

*Specimens examined.*—*D. a. conoveri*: Dana, 1 male, 1 female; Tansen, 2 males, 2 females; Nagarjung, 2 males; Godaveri, 1 female; Kathmandu, 1 male; Sisagarhi, 1 male; Bhimphedi, 1 female; Chitlang, 3 males, 1 female; Thankot, 1 male; Khulikan, 1 female.

*D. a. auriceps*: Baila, far-western Nepal, 1 female; Sahajpur, far-western Nepal, 1 male, 1 female; Rekcha, 1 male; Mussoorie, 8 males, 8 females; Kumaon, 4 males, 4 females; Punjab, 5 males, 2 females.

We are indebted to Dr. Dillon Ripley for lending us part of the above material, and we have also examined the material in the Koelz collection. This race is named for the late H. Boardman Conover, formerly Trustee and Research Associate of Chicago Natural History Museum, who financed the first Nepal expedition.

### **Garrulax affinis bethelae** new subspecies

*Type.*—Chicago Natural History Museum 84,809, from Thangii, Sikkim; altitude 14,000 feet. Adult male collected May 18, 1931, by V. S. La Personne.



*Diagnosis.*—Like *G. a. affinis* of central and western Nepal but differs in having the under parts generally darker, with the edgings of the feathers dull gray and relatively inconspicuous (not conspicuously grayish white). The crown also averages blacker, but this color is not constant.

*Range.*—East Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan.

*Remarks.*—In 1953 (Nat. Hist. Misc. no. 116, p. 2) one of us (Rand) described the pale, extreme western population of this species as *G. a. flemingi*, type locality Lete, in western Nepal, and used *G. a. affinis* Blyth (1843, "Nepal") for the extreme eastern Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan birds, restricting the type locality to eastern Nepal.

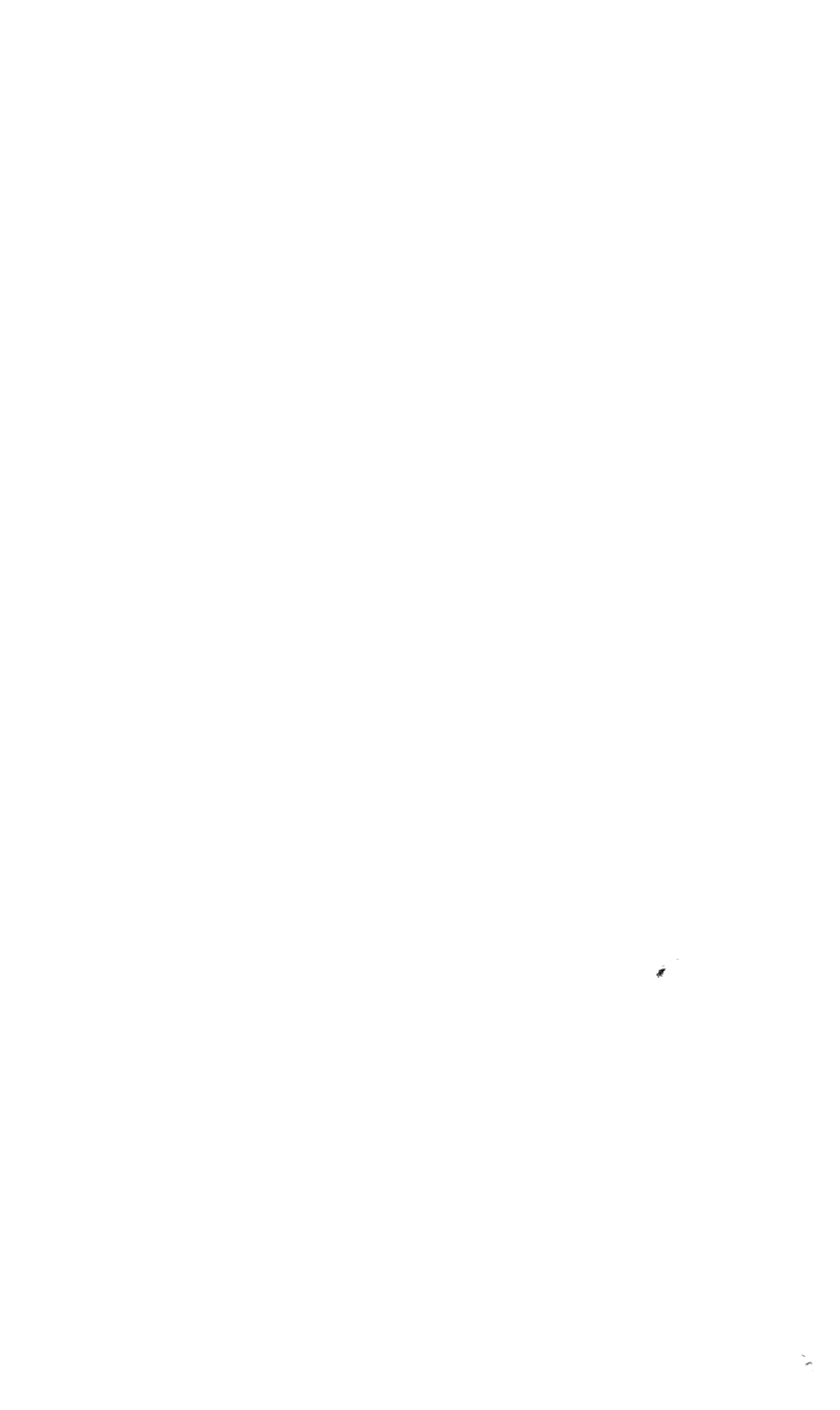
This was evidently wrong, for Mrs. B. P. Hall of the British Museum writes us that the three specimens of Hodgson's early collection, designated as "types" by Sharpe in 1883 (Cat. Bds. Brit. Mus., 7: 358), and presumably the basis of Blyth's description of the species, are still in the British Museum, were collected by Hodgson while he was resident in Nepal and before he went to Darjeeling, and have the characters of "*flemingi*." They are readily distinguishable from Sikkim birds and those of Hodgson's late collections, and match some recently collected birds from Langtang, central Nepal (Lat. 28° 15' N.; Long. 85° 30' E.).

It seems necessary to consider *flemingi* a synonym of *G. a. affinis*, restrict the type locality of *affinis* to central Nepal, and give the darker east Nepal-Sikkim-Bhutan birds a new name, as we have done above.

This bird is named in honor of Dr. Bethel H. Fleming (Mrs. R. L. Fleming), who took over Dr. Carl E. Taylor's hospital for three months, making it possible for him to go on the first expedition, and who accompanied later expeditions to Nepal.

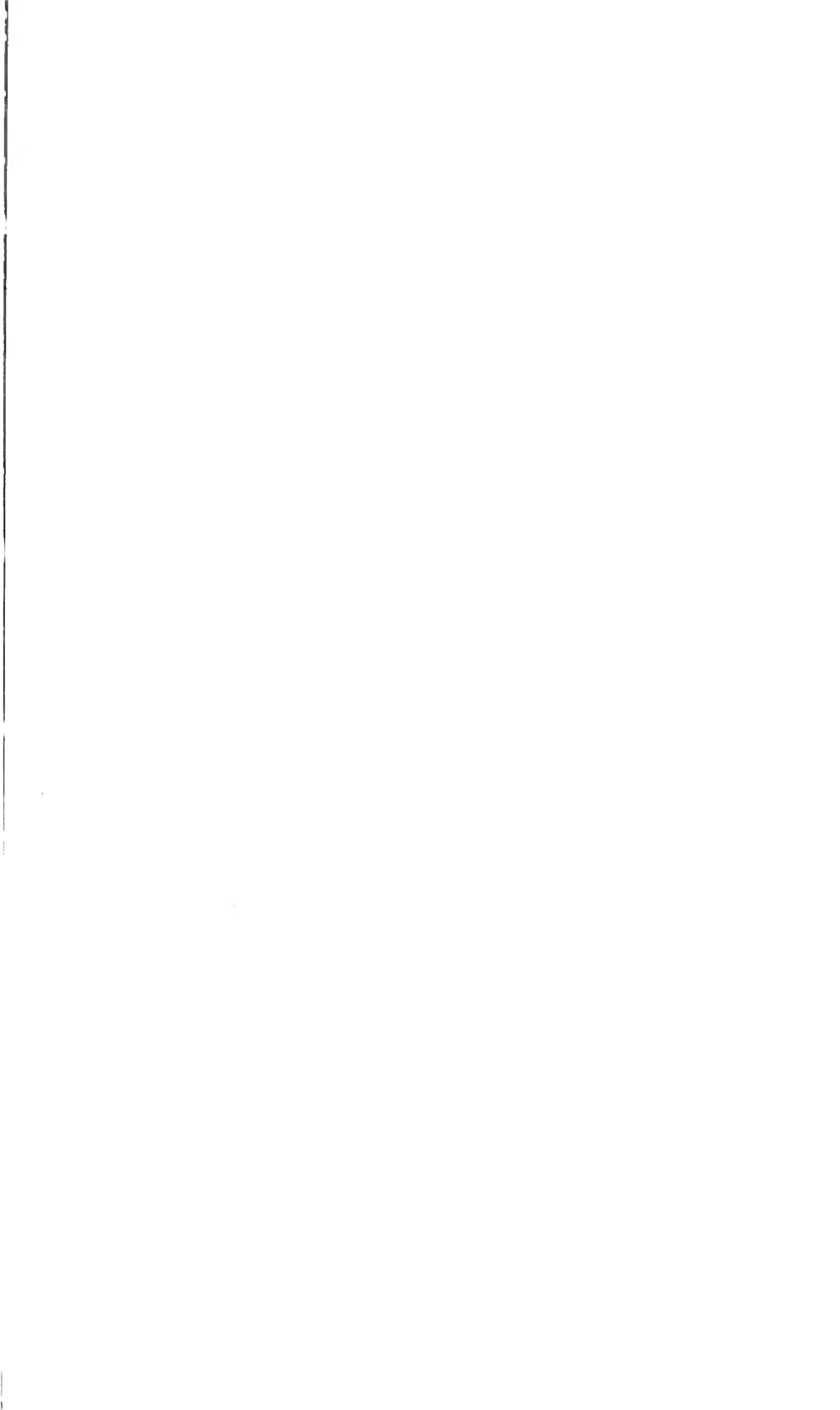


















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