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OCCASIONAL PAPERS OF THE MUSEUM OF
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BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

A NEW RACE OF *CENTURUS AURIFRONS* (AVES:
PICIDAE) FROM BRITISH HONDURASBy STEPHEN M. RUSSELL¹

WHILE conducting a general study of the birds of British Honduras, sponsored by the Louisiana State University Museum of Zoology, I collected specimens of the various kinds of birds breeding on the islands of the Colony. The investigation revealed only one island form significantly different from mainland populations of the same species. That form is described here.

CENTURUS AURIFRONS TURNEFFENSIS new subspecies

Type.—Adult male; no. 21054, Louisiana State University Museum of Zoology; Calabash Cay, Turneffe Islands, British Honduras; 10 April 1956; Stephen M. Russell; original no. SMR 599.

Characters.—Differs markedly from *C. a. dubius* (Cabot),² the race on the adjacent mainland: color of nasal antiae variable but never Scarlet³; pileum and occiput of males and occiput of females more orange (Grenadine Red to Scarlet, rather than Spectrum Red or Scarlet-Red); white barring on back and secondaries much broader; breast more Avellaneous, without Deep Olive-Buff; medial area of lower belly Bittersweet Orange, not Scarlet, and with the coloration usually less extensive.

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²*Picus dubius* Cabot, Proc. Boston Soc. Nat. Hist., 1, 1844: 164 (Uxmal, Yucatán, México).

³Capitalized color names are those of Ridgway, Color Standards and Color Nomenclature, 1912.

Differs from *C. a. santacruzi* Bonaparte⁴ as follows: the nasal antiae and frontal region between Carnelian Red and Rufous instead of yellow or orange; nape concolor with pileum and hence without any yellow; white bars of the secondaries broader; the dorsal tail pattern unmarked with white; the color of the breast Avellaneous instead of between Olive-Buff and Dark Olive-Buff; and medial area of lower belly Bittersweet Orange, not yellow.

Differs from *C. a. canescens* Salvin⁵ in the color of the pileum, occiput, and under parts in same way it differs from *C. a. dubius* (Cabot); similar to *C. a. canescens* in the boldness of the barring on the back and secondaries, although the black interspaces on the back are slightly broader.

Differs from *C. a. insulanus* Bond⁶ in having the pileum and occiput, sex for sex, more orange; in lacking the suffusion of yellow so prominent on the under parts of *insulanus*; in being Bittersweet Orange, rather than Cadmium Yellow, on the medial area of the lower belly (however, one specimen among the six examples of *insulanus* examined is Scarlet bellied); and in possessing slightly broader white bars on the back.

C. a. leei Ridgway⁷ differs drastically from *turneffensis* in the same manner that *leei* differs from other races of *C. aurifrons*, notably in having the frontal band in males greatly reduced or absent, in possessing Buffy Brown or Drab under parts, and in exhibiting extensive barring on the rump and upper tail coverts.

Measurements (in millimeters).—Males (5 specimens): wing (chord), 126-131.5 (128.5); tail, 79-81.1 (80.3); exposed culmen, 29.5-31.3 (30.1). Females (2 specimens): wing (chord), 127.5, 127.5; tail, 77.5, 78.5; exposed culmen, 28.3, 30.0.

Distribution.—Collected only in coconut groves on Calabash and Cockroach Cays in the Turneffe Islands, British Honduras, but probably occurs on other keys in the Turneffe group.

Remarks.—The brownish staining to which specimens of *C. a. turneffensis* are subject prevents a thoroughly satisfactory determination of the natural

⁴*Centurus santacruzi* Bonaparte, Proc. Zool. Soc. London, 1837: 116 (Guatemala). Cf. Selander and Giller, Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., 124, 1963: 213-274.

⁵*Centurus canescens* Salvin, Ibis, 1889: 370 (Ruatan [= Roatán] Island, Honduras).

⁶*Centurus santa-cruzi insulanus* Bond, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia, 88, 1936: 360 (Utilla [= Utila] Island, Honduras).

⁷*Centurus leei* Ridgway, Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, 3, 1885: 22 (Isla Cozumel, Quintana Roo, México).

condition of the under parts, nasal antiae, and frontal region. While enough of the stain can be removed to demonstrate that it is a stain, it is so tenacious that complete restoration of the true color of the parts affected by it appears impossible. The type itself is the only bird in the type series that seems entirely free of the obscuring brownishness, and this specimen probably furnishes the best clue to the true coloration of *turneffensis*.

In the type the feathers of the nasal antiae are Carnelian Red distally producing an over-all effect of Rufous, quite unlike the Scarlet Red of this area in *dubius*, the Scarlet in *canescens*, the yellow-orange in *santacruzii*, or the yellow in *insulanus*. The Rufous of the antiae invades the postnasal area to some extent, but most of the frontal region remains white. In the paratypes, in which stain is present, the nasal antiae have an appearance of Mars Orange and the color extends back over much of the white frontal band, sometimes covering it almost completely but lightening to Xanthine Orange or paler as it does so. Whether these differences from the coloration of the type are entirely due to stain remains indeterminable.

The under parts of the type are more or less uniformly Avellaneous except on the lower belly. All the topotypes are variously and asymmetrically tinged on the throat and breast with a stain that gives the effect of Mikado Brown blotches.

The specimen from Cockroach Cay is similar to mainland birds in the Scarlet coloration of the pileum and belly but resembles the type of *turneffensis* in other characters.

Specimens examined.—Seven, all from Turneffe Islands off British Honduras, as follows: Calabash Cay, 6 (LSUMZ); Cockroach Cay, 1 (ANSP).

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