

the babbling thrushes; I regret never having seen *Neocichla* alive. Its range is restricted to a rather narrow belt running from southern Angola to the Luangwa Valley in Northern Rhodesia and to the central regions of Tanganyika Territory. The observations of Dr. R. Böhm, Dr. S. A. Neave, Dr. A. Monard, and Dr. J. M. Winterbottom all show close agreement with regard to its behavior. *Neocichla gutturalis* is very sociable, living in pairs, small parties, and flocks numbering up to thirty or more. It is wary and active, keeping mostly rather high up in the trees of light savanna woodlands, "miombo" or "mopane bush," to which it is largely confined. Its calls are shrill, even confused or parrot-like, and to Böhm and Winterbottom they suggested the voice of *Turdoides*. But it must be remarked that the haunts of *Turdoides* are much more apt to be thickets, and they are eager to keep out of the sight of man.

In October and November, 1929, my friend Frederic G. Carnochan collected two specimens of *Neocichla* in the region of Tabora, Tanganyika Territory. The following year I asked for his opinion of their relationship. Without hesitation, Mr. Carnochan expressed his conviction that they were starlings. He had found them in flocks numbering up to forty or fifty birds in "miombo" or *Berlinia* woods, and noticed that they sometimes fed on the ground in open spots. Natives spoke of them as "ngoye," a name used for glossy starlings as well; and they caught both *Neocichla* and *Lamprocolius* with lime-sticks placed about a small hut or blind. There a boy would hide, holding a live decoy and making it call.

Comparing all the evidence, I find that there is nothing in the known ways of life of *Neocichla gutturalis* that may not be regarded as starling-like. When its nest is found I expect it to be placed in a hollow in a tree. In Tanganyika Territory the breeding season must come during the first half of the rains. Carnochan secured a male with enlarged gonads in early October, Böhm reported one in early December. Flocks of young were seen by Böhm in March, and Loveridge obtained a young bird in full juvenal plumage near Kilimatinde early in that same month. In Mossamedes Province, Angola, Dr. W. J. Ansorge took young birds in the latter part of January, and at that season the adults were molting their primaries. So breeding seemed to have taken place about six weeks earlier than it would in East Africa.

Comparison of four adults from Tanganyika Territory with eight from Angola confirms the validity of *Neocichla gutturalis angusta* Friedmann (Journ. Washington Acad. Sci., 20: 434, 1930—Muhulala, Kilimatinde, Tanganyika Territory). Angolan birds, adult and young, all have large whitish areas at the tips of the outer rectrices. In the East African specimens these are much narrower or reduced to mere fringes. I find no significant difference in size; wings and tail of Angolan examples may average a couple of millimeters longer.

I am firmly convinced that *Neocichla* should be assigned to the family Sturnidae, and that it is rather closely allied to *Lamprocolius*, despite the difference in coloration.—JAMES P. CHAPIN, *American Museum of Natural History, New York.*

**A new genus of Sylviidae from the vicinity of Lake Tanganyika.**—One of the rare warblers of the eastern Congo, known only from the highland northwest of Lake Tanganyika, was described as *Sylvietta neumanni* by Lord Rothschild (Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, 23: 42, 1908) and figured in color by Doctor Hartert (Novit. Zool., 26, pl. 5, 1919). All but one of the specimens known—and the total scarcely exceeds a dozen—were collected by Rudolf Grauer before 1911 on the highland to the northwest of Baraka at elevations of 1900 to 2000 meters. A single example was secured by J. Sterling Rockefeller and Charles B. G. Murphy in 1929 at Kisale on the Elila River, at a similar elevation.

Except for an abbreviated tail, this bird shows no special affinity to the genus *Sylvietta*, of which nine or ten species are spread over most of tropical and southern Africa. The bill of *neumanni* is markedly broader, its feet are much larger, and its coloration is different from that of any species of *Sylvietta*. There is a much plainer resemblance to the genus *Tesia* of southern Asia, Java, Flores, and Sumbawa, to which four species were referred by J. Delacour (*Ibis*, [14] 6: 514, 1942). In *Tesia*, however, the tail has undergone still greater reduction and is virtually hidden beneath its upper coverts. I propose therefore to erect a new genus for the African bird:

***Hemitesia*, genus novum**

TYPE.—*Sylvietta neumanni* Rothschild, 1908.

Similar in the form of its flattened bill, rounded wing, and large feet to *Tesia* Hodgson, 1832, but with wings relatively longer, and rectrices extending 12–13 mm. beyond their upper coverts; tail-length, 27–32 mm. The wing-length is 59–65 mm.; 5th and 6th primaries (as counted from outer side) longest. The culmen to base measures 14–15 mm.; width of bill at rear margin of nostril about 3.8 mm. The tarsus is 24–26 mm. long; middle toe with claw 20 mm.; hind toe with claw 14 mm.

The color-pattern of *Hemitesia neumanni* is distinctive; there is a conspicuous pale yellowish superciliary stripe, bordered with black below, and with a black stripe above at each side of the crown. The mid-line of the crown is grayish. Back, wings, and tail are dark green; the under parts mainly yellowish with middle of abdomen white.

From the form of its feet and from a note on one of Grauer's labels that the bird was secured in a thicket, it would seem more than probable that this warbler lives on or near the ground amidst dense vegetation. It is clearly a montane bird, for it has not been taken below 6,000 feet.—JAMES P. CHAPIN, *American Museum of Natural History, New York, N. Y.*

**The Systematic Position of *Xenocopsychus ansorgei* (Plate 8).**—Toward the middle of 1946, while studying the various African thrushes or robin-chats of the *Cossypha* group, I looked into the possible relationships of *Xenocopsychus ansorgei*, then known only from the two specimens in the Rothschild Collection, secured by Dr. W. J. Ansorge in 1906 near Lubango (or Lobango) in the Mossamedes Province of Angola. The genus and species were described by Dr. Ernst Hartert in the *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club*, 19: 82, 1907; and the male type was figured in color in *Novitates Zoologicae*, 16: 33, pl. 14, 1909. It was not difficult to decide that this member of the thrush family was really a relative of *Cossypha*; but the mystery remained as to why it had not again been collected in forty years, during which not a few experts had explored Angola for birds.

Little did I suspect that the puzzle had recently been solved by Rudolf H. Braun while collecting birds in northwestern Angola. At the end of October, 1946, I received a letter from Mr. Braun telling me that in 1942 he had the good fortune to rediscover *Xenocopsychus* in quite a new region of Angola, near Ndala Tando. He enclosed a couple of pages of notes on its haunts and behavior, which were to be forwarded to Professor Erwin Stresemann at the Berlin Museum.

Professor Stresemann has now related in the *Ibis* for 1947, pages 123, 124, how the birds were found living in limestone caves, from which they emerged on cloudy days and at twilight. No doubt this fondness for seclusion and shade, together with the scarcity of suitable refuges, explains the rarity of *Xenocopsychus* in collections and even over its extended habitat, for Ndala Tando, or Vila Salazar as it now is called, is some 650 kilometers north of Lubango, the type locality.