

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.

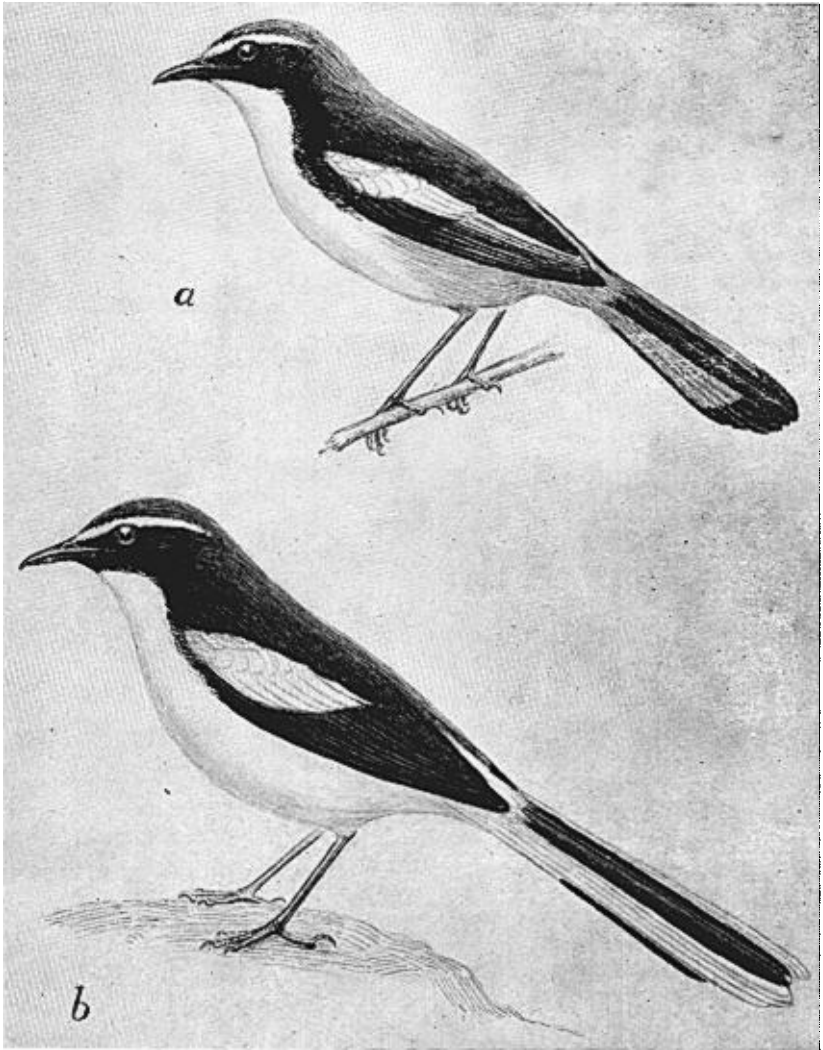
The color-pattern of *Hemitesia neumanni* is distinctive; there is a conspicuous pale yellowish superciliary stripe, bordered with black below, and with a black stripe above at each side of the crown. The mid-line of the crown is grayish. Back, wings, and tail are dark green; the under parts mainly yellowish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



*Bessonornis humeralis* (a) AND *Xenocopsychus ansorgei* (b) ABOUT ONE-HALF NATURAL SIZE, SHOWING THE GENERAL SIMILARITY IN COLOR PATTERN, ALTHOUGH THE SHADED AREAS ON FLANKS, RUMP, AND RECTRICES OF *B. humeralis* ARE RUFOUS.

I have recently examined two female specimens collected by Mr. Braun, one of them destined for the Berlin Museum. They do not differ noticeably from the Lubango birds, and now I shall give in some detail the conclusions as to systematic position which I reached in the summer of 1946 and explained to Professor Stresemann when forwarding Mr. Braun's notes.

After discussing the possible affinity of this genus to *Copsychus* of southern Asia, the Seychelles, and Madagascar, Dr. Hartert decided against uniting it with *Copsychus* because of slight differences in the frontal feathering, the form of the bill, and the more exposed operculum over the nostrils. He was satisfied that *ansorgei* could not be referred to any African genus, and bestowed on it a generic name that suggested similarity to *Copsychus*. W. L. Sclater in his 'Systema Avium Aethiopicarum,' part 2: 489, 1930, placed *Xenocopsychus* next to *Copsychus* and gave it the vernacular name of "Angola Dyal-bird." With our present knowledge we shall do well to substitute "Angola Cave Chat."

The male and female in the Rothschild Collection gave me the opportunity of making comparisons with *Copsychus*, *Kittacincla*, *Cossypha*, and some other genera. Mr. Braun's specimens only confirm my belief that Dr. Hartert's decision to separate *Xenocopsychus* from *Copsychus* was well taken. Neither do I find it closely allied to *Kittacincla*; it has more in common with some of the larger species of *Cossypha*. The pattern of the tail, with black median rectrices and a black stripe down the outer web of the outermost tail-quill, is very similar to a style of pigmentation often seen in *Cossypha*. But the lighter areas on the rectrices are white in *Xenocopsychus*, not rufous.

Rather closely allied to *Cossypha* is a bird of southern Africa known as *Bessonornis humeralis* Smith. It, too, has a tail with a definite pattern of black and rufous; in some other ways it shows a slight resemblance to certain species of *Erythropygia*. When one compares the arrangement of colors about the head, the white superciliary stripe, black lores and cheeks, and the white areas on the upper wing-coverts, one cannot fail to be impressed by the close similarity between *Bessonornis* and *Xenocopsychus*. The latter, to be sure, has more black on the chin; and the white of the wing-coverts, though slightly more extensive, does not extend posteriorly to the outer margins of the inner secondaries. Yet the resemblances in form and pattern are so numerous that I cannot doubt the close relationship of *Xenocopsychus* to *Bessonornis*. If the size of *B. humeralis* could be increased until the wings were 20 per cent and the tail 42 per cent longer, the black removed from the tips of the outer rectrices, and all the rufous in its plumage bleached to pure white, the result would be a bird extremely similar to *Xenocopsychus ansorgei*. Such changes would seem of no serious import in classification.

With regard to difference in size, it would not be out of place to compare *Cossypha albicapilla* with *C. niveicapilla*. Their color pattern is very much the same; but the wing-length of the latter species would have to be increased by 25 per cent, its tail by 35 per cent, in order to equal the size of *albicapilla*. The extension of black onto the chin of the larger species is not without interest. We have, of course, no good grounds for assuming that the loss of all rufous color in *Xenocopsychus* is connected with its cave-dwelling habits, but such a speculation may be permissible.

To me it seems plain that *Xenocopsychus* is a member of the *Cossypha* group, rather long-tailed and lacking any rufous color. The sketches will serve to show the relatively slight differences in pattern between *Bessonornis humeralis* and *Xenocopsychus ansorgei*. It is likely that the latter will long remain a rarity in museums.—JAMES P. CHAPIN, *American Museum of Natural History, New York.*