

FOUR NEW WOODPECKERS FROM THE WESTERN UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

By A. J. VAN ROSSEM

The present definitions of unnamed races of woodpeckers in the genera *Centurus* and *Dryobates* are the result of no sudden "discovery." They have been under consideration for a number of years and are the result of accumulated data. They have not been published previously chiefly because material from certain critical areas was not available in sufficient quantity to insure the proper application of names. I feel certain that these cases would long ago have been similarly disposed of by any one of several systematists had it been possible for them to examine adequate series. Diagnoses of these races follow.

Centurus uropygialis albescens new subspecies

Colorado River Gila Woodpecker

Type.—Adult male, no. 14746 Dickey Collection; Laguna Dam, lower Colorado River, Imperial County, California, December 31, 1924; collected by A. J. van Rossem.

Subspecific characters.—Palest of the races of *Centurus uropygialis*. Barring on the dorsum with white bars equal to or wider (often decidedly wider) than the black; rump and upper tail coverts with barring or spotting at a minimum for the species; head, neck, and underparts, as compared with *uropygialis*, paler and more grayish (less brownish) drab, yellow abdominal patch paler yellow, and crown patch in males more orange (less scarlet) red. Size slightly smaller than *uropygialis*.

Range.—The riparian associations (chiefly cottonwood, willow, and mesquite) of a narrow strip along the lower Colorado River from extreme southern Nevada, Fort Mojave, Arizona, and Needles, California, south to extreme northwestern Sonora and extreme northeastern Lower California. Presumably this race occurs in farming country in the Imperial Valley (Calipatria; El Centro; Brawley).

As a result of the examination of much additional material, chiefly from Arizona and northwestern Sonora, I have been obliged to alter my once expressed opinion (Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool., 77, 1934: 409-411) as to the inadvisability of recognizing more than one northern race of the Gila Woodpecker. The type locality of *uropygialis* is at, or near, the juncture of the Santa Maria and Bill Williams Rivers in southwestern Arizona, a locality so close to the Colorado River that one might assume the racial identity of Gila Woodpeckers from these two localities. In the collection of the United States National Museum is a specimen (12324) taken at "Camp 121" [=juncture of Santa Maria and Bill Williams rivers] by Kennerly and Möllhausen on February 13, 1854, which is generally regarded as the type of *Centurus uropygialis* Baird. On the reverse of the red type tag is pencilled (by Dr. Richmond?) the following: "This is a co-type, and possibly *the* type, but there should be *another skin* from the same locality." On the original field tag there is also written in pencil "one of the types!" In every respect (the tip of the bill is missing) this specimen is typical of the darker, slightly larger race which occurs in quite stable form over southern Arizona in general, and in northern Sonora and southwestern New Mexico. I have not been able to locate any topotypical specimens, but thanks to Mr. W. J. Sheffler specimens from Salome, some thirty miles south of the type locality have been found to be identical. Birds from Gila Bend are likewise *uropygialis*, but nothing from west of that point along the Gila River has been examined.

Centurus uropygialis tiburonensis new subspecies

Tiburón Island Gila Woodpecker

Type.—Adult male, no. 50256 Dickey Collection; Petrel Bay on southeast side of Tiburón Island, Sonora, Mexico, December 29, 1931; collected by A. J. van Rossem.

Subspecific characters.—Nearest in general paleness of coloration to *Centurus uropygialis albe-*

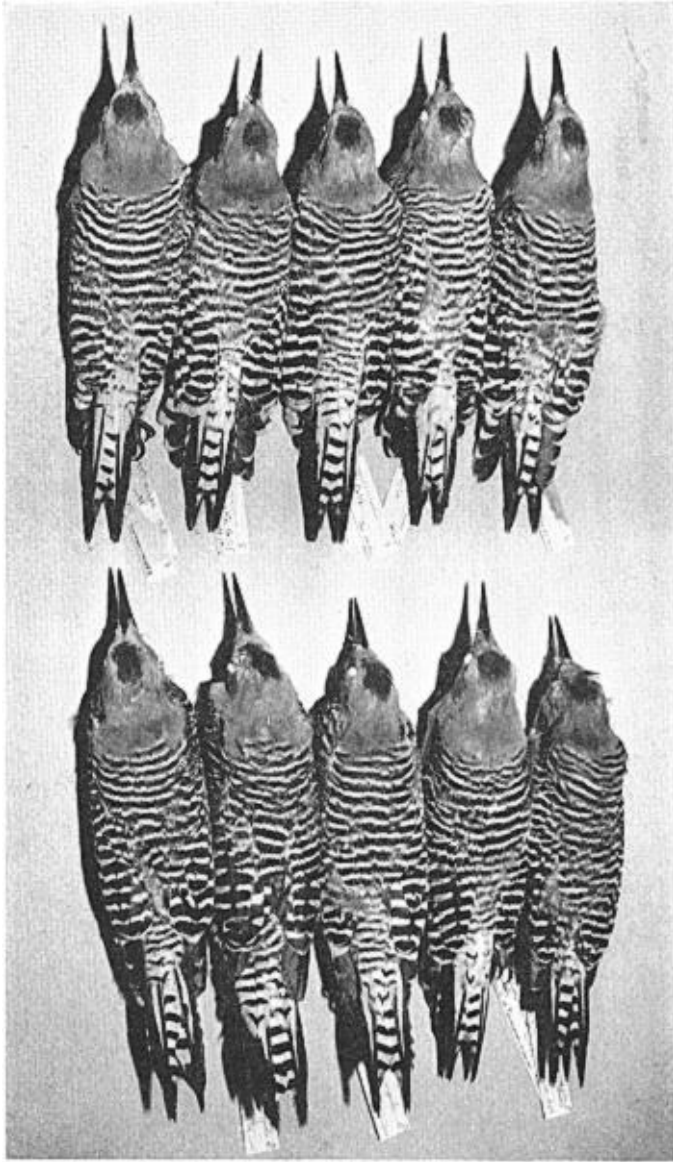


Fig. 8. Upper row, *Centurus uropygialis albescens*; type second from right. Lower row, *Centurus uropygialis uropygialis*.

scens but black and white barring on the dorsum more numerous, narrower, and approximately equal in width. Wing slightly shorter and tail slightly longer.

Range.—Tiburón Island, Sonora.

In two previous publications (Trans. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist., 6, 1931: 255; *ibid.*, 7, 1932:136) I commented on the paleness of the birds from Tiburón Island and their resemblance to “*uropygialis*” [*albescens*] of the lower Colorado River valley. Thanks to Mr. Laurence Huey, I have been able to examine four specimens from Puerto Libertad which demonstrate that *uropygialis* extends westward to the coast between Tiburón

Island and the Colorado Delta. A series of twelve additional specimens from Kino Bay (also in the Natural History Museum) are also *uropygialis*, although occasional individuals approach *tiburónensis* in color. In view of the isolation of the Tiburón birds, separated as they are from *albescens* by a large territory occupied by *uropygialis*, it seems advisable to give them a name even though the characters are not outstanding.

***Dryobates scalaris yumanensis* new subspecies**

Yuma Ladder-backed Woodpecker

Type.—Adult male, no. 8734 Dickey Collection; Laguna Dam, lower Colorado River, Imperial County, California, January 25, 1913; collected by A. J. van Rossem.

Subspecific characters.—Compared with *Dryobates scalaris cactophilus* Oberholser of southeastern and south-central Arizona, entire coloration paler; forehead (particularly of females) lighter brown; barring on back with white intervals wider (usually much wider) than the black; spotting on wing coverts larger and more conspicuous; auriculars with less of black and more of buff; underparts, including sides of neck, paler buff; spots on flanks and sides of chest fewer in number and more linear (less guttate) in form.

Range.—The Colorado River valley and closely adjacent deserts from extreme southeastern Nevada south in Arizona and California to the Delta region in Lower California and Sonora; east in the valley of the Gila River to about Gila Bend and west in the Imperial Valley of California to the Salton Sea.

When Oberholser revised the Ladder-backed Woodpeckers (Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., 41, 1911:139-159) he had few specimens from the range of *yumanensis*, for he lists only one locality in California, two in Arizona, three in Lower California, and one in Sonora. All the others cited are from the range of *cactophilus* or of *mojavensis* (see *postea*) as I understand those races at present. This lack of material, combined with the close color resemblance of *cactophilus* and *mojavensis*, is undoubtedly the reason why he did not detect the present race.

Intergradation between *yumanensis* and *cactophilus* seems to be rather restricted northerly. Specimens from the juncture of the Bill Williams and Santa Maria rivers in Arizona, a locality only about thirty miles from the Colorado, are *cactophilus*, as are those from Salome. The single bird from the Charleston Mountains, Nevada, is *yumanensis*, as are two from the Providence Mountains in California. Southerly, *yumanensis* extends east up the Gila River to Gila Bend and is also the race on the Tule Desert. Westwardly, it extends into the Imperial and Coachella valleys, although in the latter locality (Thermal; Mecca; Indio) intergradation with *mojavensis* is such that some specimens resemble one race, some the other. This species has been personally observed as not uncommon at St. George in the Virgin River valley of southern Utah, but what race is present there I cannot say since no specimens were collected.

***Dryobates scalaris mojavensis* new subspecies**

Mojave Ladder-backed Woodpecker

Type.—Adult male, no. J-23, Dickey Collection; Palmdale, Mojave Desert, Los Angeles County, California, January 6, 1921; collected by A. J. van Rossem.

Subspecific characters.—Most closely similar to *Dryobates scalaris eremicus* Oberholser of northern Lower California, from which it differs chiefly in shorter bill and tail and wider white barring on the back. Differs from *Dryobates scalaris cactophilus* in generally larger size, particularly in bill and wing, and in paler, less buffy, ventral coloration. Differs from the geographically adjacent *Dryobates scalaris yumanensis* in generally larger size, particularly in wing and bill, and in very much darker coloration dorsally.

Range.—A relatively narrow strip along the lower desert slopes (and adjacent deserts) of the Sierra Nevada (south from Lone Pine, Inyo County), San Gabriel, San Bernardino, and San Jacinto mountains, and the mountains of eastern San Diego County and extreme northern Lower California.

This race, as above stated, is a northern form of *eremicus* and bears relatively little resemblance to *yumanensis*, the range of which separates it completely from the range

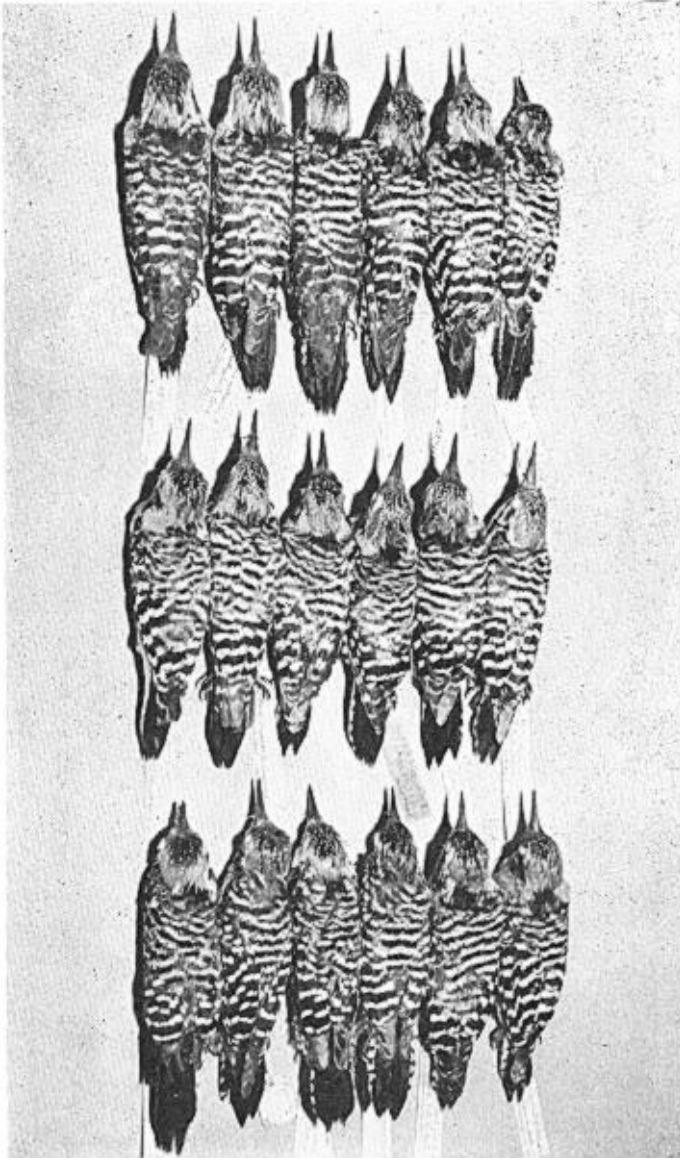


Fig. 9. Upper row, *Dryobates scalaris mojavensis*; type second from left. Middle row, *Dryobates scalaris yumanensis*. Lower row, *Dryobates scalaris cactophilus*.

of *cactophilus*. It occurs at much higher altitudes than *yumanensis*, the average range being in the neighborhood of 3000 feet.

Intergradation with *eremicus* occurs in the vicinity of the east slope of the Sierra Juárez in northern Lower California. I am indebted to Mr. Huey for the loan of nine specimens from this region. These show characters as follows: all possess the long tail of *eremicus*; eight show the bill of *mojavensis*, one the bill of *eremicus*; dorsal color-

tion is variously intermediate but averages closer, perhaps, to *mojavensis*. Their measurements are not included in the appended table. I have not examined the specimen recorded by Grinnell (Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., 32, 1928:120) from the northern end of the Nachogüero Valley in extreme northern Lower California as "*cactophilus*" but there can be little doubt that it belongs with the present race. Incidentally, the ranges of the Nuttall and Mojave Ladder-backed woodpeckers probably meet or even slightly overlap more frequently than has been noted. In addition to the meeting in the Nachogüero Valley, I may record the presence of both species in the same tract of woodland in Chino Canyon, on the east slope of the San Jacinto Mountains in late April, 1923.

In addition to the very comprehensive series of all the far-western races of *Centurus uropygialis* and *Dryobates scalaris* in the Dickey Collection, I have examined all, or nearly all, of the specimens in the Bishop, Hancock, Huey, Sheffler, and Willett collections, and in those of the Natural History Museum at San Diego and the Los Angeles Museum.

Measurements.—Measurements of the total length taken in the field are of minor value unless taken by the same collectors. The following are extreme total lengths of males of the four races of *D. scalaris* mentioned in the present paper. They were measured either by Mr. Huey or myself: 4 *eremicus*, 200-215 mm.; 8 *mojavensis*, 190-202; 11 *yumanensis*, 174-190; 4 *cactophilus*, 188-191.

Extreme and average measurements of males in millimeters

<i>Centurus uropygialis</i>			
	Wing	Tail	Exposed culmen
20 <i>uropygialis</i>	131-135 (134.2)	80-86 (83.0)	30.0-33.7 (31.8)
20 <i>albescens</i>	126-134 (129.7)	75-84 (79.3)	28.5-31.8 (30.5)
7 <i>tiburoniensis</i>	122-127 (125.4)	78-84 (82.0)	29.5-32.5 (31.3)
<i>Dryobates scalaris</i>			
16 <i>cactophilus</i>	95-105 (102.0)	60-65 (63.0)	21.5-24.2 (22.7)
30 <i>yumanensis</i>	97-106 (101.4)	58-65 (62.5)	22.3-25.1 (23.8)
24 <i>mojavensis</i>	102-108 (105.8)	61-70 (64.2)	23.0-27.5 (26.1)
8 <i>eremicus</i>	103-108 (106.1)	67-71 (70.0)	27.0-29.0 (28.4)

Dickey Collections, University of California, Los Angeles, September 20, 1941.