

# THE THRUSHES OF GRAND CAYMAN ISLAND, B.W.I.

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## PART I: *MIMOCICHLA RAVIDA*, GRAND CAYMAN THRUSH

W. B. Richardson collected numerous bird specimens on Grand Cayman Island in the summer of 1886 and from these Charles B. Cory (1886a,b) described 13 new species. In this collection were four thrushes, two juvenile males (Cory Nos. 6385, 6388), one "young juv." (Cory No. 6387), and one adult male (Cory No. 6386). The adult had been taken on 26 August 1886 and the others on 23 August and 26 August. These four birds, now in the Chicago Natural History Museum, comprised Cory's representatives of a new species which he called the Grand Cayman Thrush, *Mimocichla ravida*. Because so little has been published about this thrush, the present report was undertaken to summarize biological facts gleaned from a search of the literature, examination of all 21 extant specimens, and recent extensive field studies in search of the bird on Grand Cayman.

### ADDITIONAL EARLY FIELD WORK

In 1892 another collector, D. J. Sweeting, obtained three more *Mimocichla ravida* on Grand Cayman (2-5 April) and these specimens also came into Cory's possession (Nos. 20400, 20401, 20402). These adults, two males and one female, bear on their labels simply "Grand Cayman." Two of these are now in the Chicago Natural History Museum (Nos. 26757 and 26758) and the other is in the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences (No. 108652).

C. P. Streater spent some time collecting birds on Cayman Brac in August 1888 at which time he took three specimens of the Red-legged Thrush (*M. plumbea coryi*). Because Cayman Brac is only 65 miles east of Grand Cayman, it is surprising that he evidently did no collecting on Grand Cayman at that time.

C. B. Taylor obtained an adult female of *ravida* ("Grand Cayman, N. Side") on 8 April 1896. This specimen is now in the American Museum of Natural History (No. 503700).

Nicoll (1904) reported that in 1903-1904 the Grand Cayman Thrush was not found in three days that included a two days' trip across the island. Similarly Lowe reported (1909:

340) that "neither Dr. Bowdler Sharpe, Mr. Nicoll, nor myself succeeded in finding any examples of *Mimocichla ravida* Cory, a Thrush peculiar to the Grand Cayman; but I was informed by a squatter who lives on the northern side of the island, which is covered with trees and bush, that this bird breeds there and that he knows it well."

The largest single collection of Grand Cayman Thrushes was amassed by W. W. Brown, Jr., on the island between April and July 1916. Thirteen adult specimens were obtained by Brown, all of these originally deposited in the Museum of Comparative Zoology. Today, seven of these are still at M.C.Z. (Nos. 68163-68, 68179), but five have been sent on exchange to the following museums: American Museum of Natural History (No. 184879), British Museum (1925. 12. 27. 5), Zoologisches Museum, Berlin (38- 1286), U. S. National Museum (254202), and Carnegie Museum (111528).

Outram Bangs (1916:313), in describing Brown's collecting experiences on the island, states: "The Thrush is now extremely rare and local in Grand Cayman. Brown covered the whole island and found it only in two remote patches of woodland. Each of these tracts of rather heavier forest than is usual in the island now-a-days was inhabited by a few pairs of thrushes, which Brown believes to be the entire population of the island. In each of these woods Brown was careful to leave birds enough to perpetuate the species, if it is not gradually becoming extinct from some natural cause, as seems to be the case."

Fisher and Wetmore (1931), working only on the western end of the island in April, found no thrushes.

### RECENT FIELD WORK

The last reliable report of *Mimocichla ravida* was that of C. Bernard Lewis who led a party of naturalists across the eastern end of the island in the summer of 1938. Excerpts from a letter (29 May 1965) to me included the following: "When I first visited Grand Cayman in 1938 my bird observations were rather incidental. I was working primarily on the little known faunas of reptiles, insects and land mollusks. The thrush was hard to find and

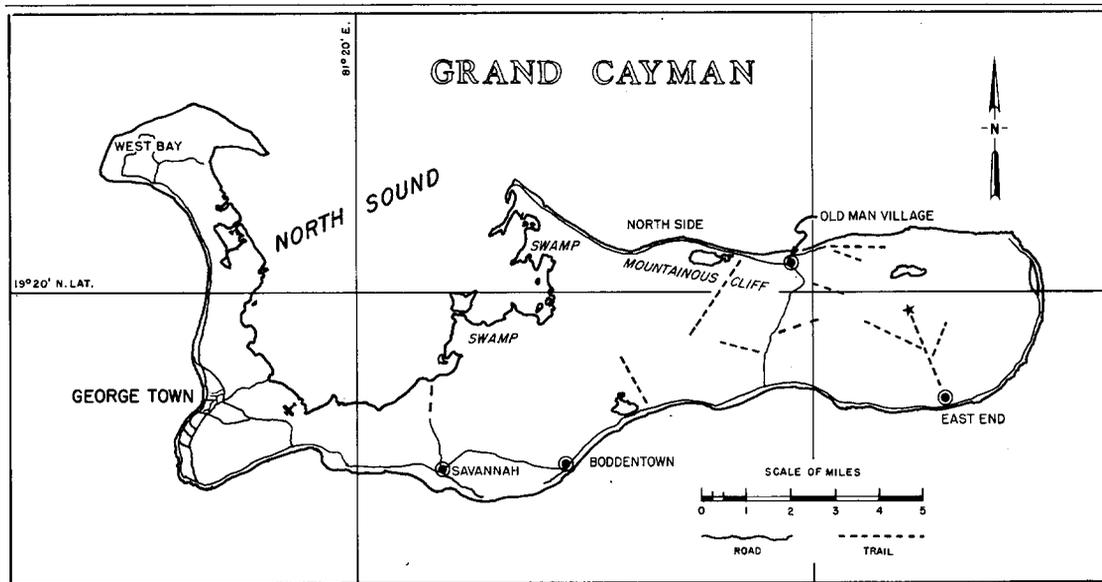


FIGURE 1. Grand Cayman, showing principal roads and trails utilized by the author in searches for *Mimocichla ravidula*. Star marks the site where *ravidula* was last seen (1938).

was not well known to the local people. The one specimen, which I distinctly recall seeing, was in the interior of the eastern end of the island along the edge of a cultivation between Battle Hill and Winter's Land." That location is indicated by a star on the accompanying map (fig. 1). Perhaps it was this observation that prompted Bond's remark in 1940 to the effect that the bird, though rare or local, is "probably in no immediate danger of extinction."

Albert Schwartz and his colleagues collected birds and other vertebrates intensively on Grand Cayman on 11–20 August and 29 August–9 September 1961. Although these workers covered the island from end to end, they did not encounter *Mimocichla ravidula*.

My field experiences on Grand Cayman included 10–17 May 1965, 27–30 December 1965, 15–18 May 1966, and 24–27 April 1967. On each of these occasions nearly all of the daylight hours were spent searching the island for *ravidula*, utilizing roads and trails (fig. 1) to gain access into nearly impenetrable areas. Prior to 1967 I relied upon "squeaking" and "scolding" to attract land birds in the bush. In 1967, an additional technique was employed. The song and call notes of *Mimocichla plumbea* (recorded in Puerto Rico) were broadcast from a portable tape recorder. Two entire days were spent in the hot, dry, thorny scrub in the interior of the eastern end of the island where *ravidula* had been last reported. My experienced guide on one of these days was Norris Jackson, C. Bernard Lewis' com-

panion in 1938 when the Grand Cayman Thrush was last seen in that section. On one excursion or another I have seen every one of the resident terrestrial land birds, with the exception of *Mimocichla ravidula* and the Jamaican Oriole (*Icterus leucopteryx*), and most of the migrants ever recorded on Grand Cayman. In fact, with rare exceptions the bird-life on the island was found to be quite tame and responsive to "squeaking" and "scolding"; many species could be attracted to within 3–4 ft.

Anyone presently visiting Grand Cayman and manifesting an interest in birds is immediately directed to Ira Thompson, a life-long resident who has for many years operated a modest zoo and museum in Georgetown. He has also hunted game and trapped the endemic iguanas on the eastern end of the island. In his many years of experience as an outdoorsman on the island, he has never seen *Mimocichla ravidula*. Similarly, only negative reports came from the dozens of residents, hunters, and farmers that were interviewed and shown a painting of *M. ravidula*.

It was my good fortune to interview on 28 December 1965, Bunyon Whittaker, probably the oldest (72) living resident on Grand Cayman. Still living at Old Man Bay, Mr. Whittaker clearly recalled his experiences in 1916 when W. W. Brown sailed around to Northside from Georgetown and remained in the home of Willie Tatum for several weeks during which time Brown paid the small boys one dollar apiece for bird specimens. Mr. Whit-

taker helped his brother collect the thrushes and other species with slingshots. At that time the thrushes were, according to Mr. Whittaker, conspicuous, noisy, and common where timber was being cut about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile inland from Northside. This area (fig. 1), known locally as "mountainous cliff" and "bullrush walk," contains the highest ridges on the island, some 60 ft above sea level, and was originally heavily wooded with old, large trees of mahogany (*Swietenia mahagoni*), cedar (*Cedrela odorata*), ironwood (*Gymnanthes lucida*), and red birch (*Bursera simaruba*) (Swabey and Lewis 1946). Many of the large trees have now been logged out. Mr. Whittaker believed the thrushes preferred the densest woods, not occurring in clearings. Although he has regularly returned to these wooded areas for many years, he hasn't seen any thrushes for at least 40 years.

In 1966 I spent the greater part of two separate days searching the "mountainous cliff" area. The trails inland crossed rocky ridges where the dominant trees were red birch and ironwood, interspersed with clearings for cassava (*Manihot utilissima*) and banana (*Musa* sp.) plantings. It appeared that this area once supported a denser forest wherein Mr. Whittaker had seen and collected the Grand Cayman Thrush 50 years before. Despite our careful search of this area in 1966 we neither saw nor heard any thrush.

In 1966 Michael S. Harvey addressed a letter to James Bond (Bond 1967) in which he described a brief field experience near Old Man Bay where he heard a call similar to that of the Red-legged Thrush, a bird familiar to him on Cayman Brac. The area was that of thick, nearly impenetrable bush, and no thrush was actually seen. When I wrote to Mr. Harvey and suggested that the bird he heard might not have been *Mimocichla ravidia* as he inferred, he replied (in litt.) that "Mocking-Birds were also in evidence and it may have been one of these I heard and mistook for a thrush." In view of his uncertainty concerning the identity of the bird, it seems best to accord this observation hypothetical status.

In summary, the negative reports of many reliable field observers over the past 30 years strongly indicates extinction of *Mimocichla ravidia*. Admittedly, the vegetation on Grand Cayman is in places quite thick and nearly impenetrable and every square mile of the island has not been thoroughly covered. But should *M. ravidia* exist today, it is an extremely secretive bird represented by a very small, isolated population that many competent observers have been unable to find.

Causes underlying the diminution or, as the case may well be, extinction of *M. ravidia* are somewhat speculative. Severe hurricanes, such as those affecting Grand Cayman in 1932 and 1944, might have played significant roles. Indirect evidence suggests, however, that habitat destruction has been a major factor. Formerly the thrush was reasonably common in dense forests on the north side, but these forested areas have been cut over and partially cleared and the thrush has evidently disappeared. Presumably a small population of *M. plumbea* was extirpated from the Swan Islands as a consequence of habitat destruction (Paynter 1956).

#### TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION OF *MIMOCICHLA RAVIDA*

Only two detailed descriptions of *M. ravidia* have been published. One, the original species description by Cory (1886a), was based upon a single adult male and included no comments on the three juveniles available at that time. Cory, incidentally, did not designate a type specimen, but because he prepared the species description from the single adult bird available at the time, it is clear that the male bird (Cory No. 6386, now C.N.H.M. No. 26762) has been correctly designated the lectotype. Apparently the first person to mention a type specimen in print was Hellmayr (1934). Ridgway's account (1907), more complete than that of Cory, contained descriptions of adults (one of each sex) and the juveniles. Both of these descriptions, however, can now be amended somewhat because a larger series has been examined in detail in the present study. Although we cannot be certain which two of the five extant adult birds were examined by Ridgway, clearly the lectotype is in very worn plumage. Wear of rectrices is so advanced in this specimen that some of Cory's measurements are grossly inaccurate when they are compared with measurements of unworn specimens. He noted, for example, a tail measurement of 4.40 inches (ca. 111.8 mm), compared with a mean measurement of 125.2 mm now available from 10 unworn specimens (table 1).

Inaccuracies also occur in the descriptions of patterns of white on rectrices. Cory noted that the "three outer tail-feathers are tipped with white on the inner webs," and Ridgway, that the "terminal portion of inner webs of rectrices (except middle pair) are white." Both statements are inaccurate, but, in due fairness to these authors, the errors probably stemmed from the examination of worn specimens. In fact, contrary to Cory's assertion,

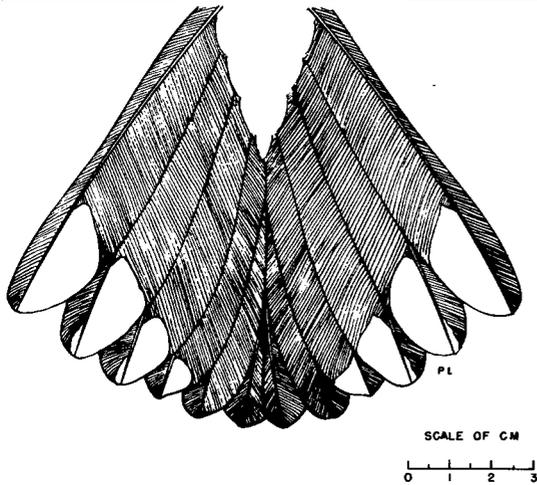


FIGURE 2. Typical tail pattern of adult *Mimocichla ravidata*, ventral view.

the third rectrix of the lectotype, though quite worn, has a discernible spot of white on the inner vane only. Of the 13 adults with unworn rectrices, only three showed a trace of white on the second rectrix, the other birds having the two middle pairs of rectrices without white (fig. 2).

Superficially and at a distance the throat color in adults of *ravidata* is uniform bluish slate-gray, that is, lacking the conspicuous stripes seen in most *M. plumbea* (fig. 3). Closer scrutiny, however, revealed inconspicuous whitish throat stripes on some of the adult *ravidata*. Four birds had a few of the gray feathers with whitish edges and tips for 12–20 mm, giving the overall impression of three indistinct whitish rows. Under a dissecting microscope at 20× the barbs on the individual feathers are gray brown proximally but have whitish distal portions. Because the three subspecies of *M. plumbea* (*coryi*, *rubripes*, and *ardosiacea*) have a conspicuous black and white throat (see fig. 3), the discovery of indistinct stripes on *ravidata* is significant in the evaluation of generic characters.

Cory (1886) reported that the "bill, bare space around the eye, and legs [are] orange red; iris dull red," and Ridgway (1907) stated that the "bill, bare orbital space, legs, and feet, [are] yellowish (bright orange or orange-red in life?)." Cory's statement no doubt was based upon a notation on the label of the lectotype: "E. reddish B. orange F. orange." MCZ specimen 68173, a bird that has all the appearances of a W. W. Brown study-skin, bears the notation: "orbital [sic] skin, tarsus, and bill coral red. Iris brown." Brown wrote on the

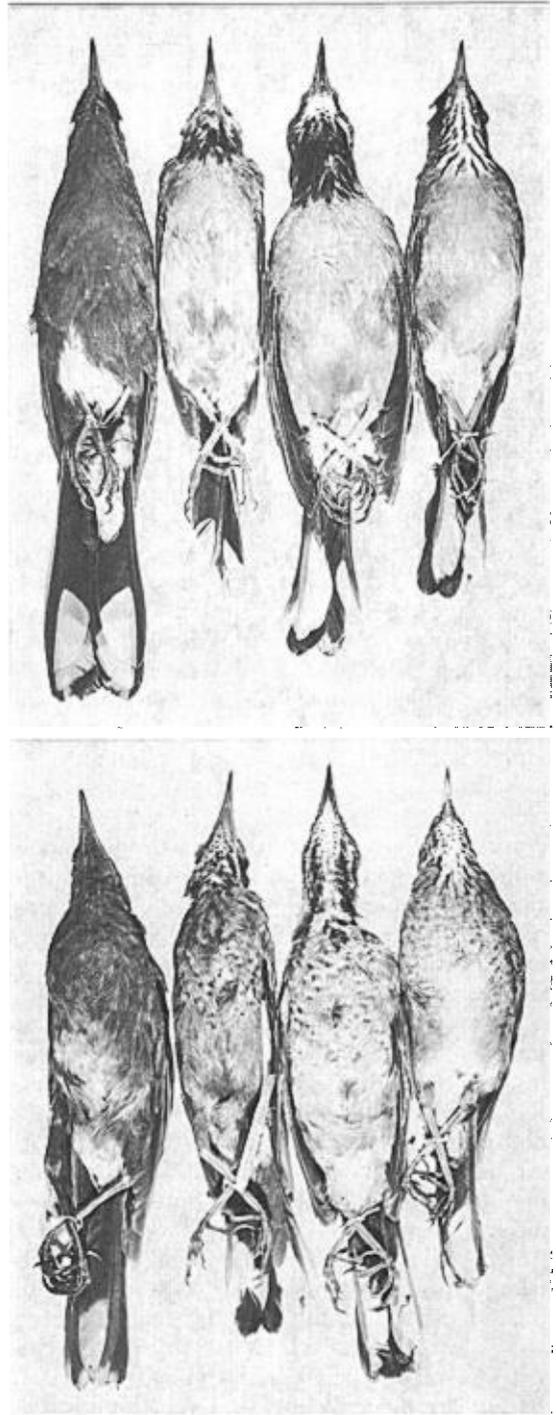


FIGURE 3. Ventral views of adult (upper) and juvenile (lower) *Mimocichla*. Left to right: *M. ravidata*, *M. plumbea coryi*, *M. p. rubripes*, *M. p. ardosiaacea*. Photographs by R. W. McFarlane.

label of MCZ 68163, an adult female: "tarsus, bill, and skin of orbital [sic] region coral red."

Studies of 11 adult males and 7 adult females revealed no sexually dimorphic color differences and there is no evidence that colors

TABLE 1. Measurements (in mm) of *Mimocichla ravida*.

	Wing chord	Tail	Bill (culmen)	Bill (nostril)	Tarsus
<b>Adult males</b>					
Number	8	10	10	10	11
Mean $\pm$ SE	133.2 $\pm$ 1.2	125.2 $\pm$ 0.9	25.3 $\pm$ 0.4	18.2 $\pm$ 0.2	41.6 $\pm$ 0.4
Range	126.7–138.0	120.1–129.8	22.5–27.3	17.5–19.2	39.4–43.7
<b>Adult females</b>					
Number	5	6	6	5	7
Mean $\pm$ SE	126.3 $\pm$ 1.9	118.9 $\pm$ 1.3	25.9 $\pm$ 0.2	18.5 $\pm$ 0.3	40.6 $\pm$ 0.6
Range	122.0–131.9	115.2–121.9	25.2–26.7	18.0–19.5	38.1–42.3
<b>Juvenile males</b>					
Number	2	2	1	1	2
Mean	127.3	114.8	—	—	43.1
Range	126.6–128.0	111.6–118.0	24.8	15.7	43.1–43.2

of soft parts differed between the sexes. Similarly, in the Red-legged Thrush of Puerto Rico (*M. plumbea ardosiacea*) Rolle (1963) noted no "external characteristics correlated with sex." He did report, though, that "males have longer wings (chord measurement), tails and tarsi than the females." Measurements of *ravida* (table 1) reveal a similar tendency in size differences: adult males have longer wings, tails, and tarsi than adult females.

#### MOLT

Unfortunately, very little information on molt could be gleaned from a study of the 18 adult specimens. Generally speaking, specimens taken in June and August have worn plumage, with the tips and edges of primaries, secondaries, and rectrices being especially frayed. When worn, the usually slate-gray contour feathers attain brown, ragged edges. It was in these worn birds that some molt was anticipated but was not found. In fact the only molt detectable in any bird was in the tail of two adults taken in early April. My notes on one bird (PAS 108652): "the outer 4 rectrices and all primaries and secondaries are old, brown and worn: not molted as yet." This means, for this specimen at least, that molt in the rectrices begins with the central one or two pairs. In AMNH 503700 the outer two rectrices on the right and the outer five on the left are old and brown. Even though rectrix molt in this individual was not bilateral, it appears that rectrix molt is centrifugal. It is unfortunate that specimens from other months are unavailable because now details of molt in *ravida* might never be known. Despite the fact that Rolle and others found *M. plumbea* "in full molt" in Puerto Rico in May, seven out of eight specimens of *ravida* in May had noticeably fresh plumage and none was molting.

It is noteworthy, finally, to point out the

fresh plumage of most adults taken in late April, May, and June. Possibly adults in April molted rectrices before the other contour feathers. Did these birds have a complete or extensive molt in April? If they did not, it would be difficult to explain the worn plumage of the four adults taken in early April and the fresh plumage seen in specimens taken in May and early June. This interpretation would agree with Rolle's remarks (1963:37) for *M. plumbea ardosiacea* that "the postnuptial molt of the adults may begin as early as April, while some individuals are still rearing young."

#### NOTES ON THE JUVENILES

Principal measurements of the three juvenile males taken by Richardson in August 1886 are given in table 1. Here it can be seen that the juveniles are somewhat smaller than adult males in wing chord, tail, and bill but not in tarsal length.

By far the most outstanding feature of these birds is the juvenal plumage. Whereas adults of *ravida* are generally slaty gray in coloration, the juveniles have uniformly buffy upperparts and underparts devoid of spots. The abdomen and under tail coverts are white, but the tibiotarsus is buffy brown (slaty gray in adults). The pattern of white in the tail is similar to that of adults (fig. 2) as are the number of sinuated primaries (5 through 8). The absence of ventral spotting in juvenile *ravida* stands in marked contrast to spotting of juveniles of *M. plumbea* (fig. 3) and many *Turdus*.

Postjuvinal molt, especially of the upperparts, is apparent in these specimens. New, slaty gray feathers are replacing the buffy brown and faintly streaked feathers of the nape and pileum. On the labels of these birds, Richardson noted colors of soft parts: eye, reddish or yellow brown; bill, orange; and feet, yellow.



FIGURE 4. Nest site, in the closer thatch palm, of *Mimocichla plumbea* in Georgetown, Grand Cayman, 15 May 1965.

#### HABITAT

Aside from a few scattered notes, little has been published about the habitat preferences of *M. ravidia*. W. B. Richardson in a letter to Cory (see Cory 1886b) reported that Grand Cayman was a low island, "well wooded" and that birds were comparatively scarce. The most complete account of the habitat of *ravidia* is that of Savage English (1916:26): "It was on the 21st of January, 1914, that *Mimocichla* was seen at last, during the making of a new road through such a tangle of knife-edged coral-rock, swamp, and mangroves, with patches here and there of the poisonous manchineel tree and of climbing cactus, that at first it took more than two hours to cover a distance easily walked over in five minutes when the road was made. And it was in all probability the same individual which appeared at the same place on the 27th of January and the 10th of February, and on these occasions only, though the bird and its possible nest were looked for every day." The last time it was seen, the thrush was in the same mangrove as a "Tyrant Flycatcher" but soon

"dived at once into the depths of the mangroves and was seen no more."

Unfortunately, despite the relatively small size of Grand Cayman, Savage English's description above could fit many sites in 1914. It is likely, however, that he was referring to some area along the north coast because the north-south road across the island was non-existent in 1914. Roads of a sort or well-worn trails were utilized at that time on portions of the north and south coasts, although much of the travel from one end of the island to the other was by boat.

#### SONG

Only Savage English (1916:26) published any record of this bird's vocalizations. He states: "Its song was very subdued, recalling the warble of a Budgerigar . . . the second time it showed itself it flew across the road, giving a 'thrush' chatter as it flew. This, like its song, was only just audible."

#### PART II: *MIMOCICHLA PLUMBEA*, RED-LEGGED THRUSH

Whereas the Red-legged Thrush is a widespread species in the Greater Antilles (also Dominica), prior to 1965 it had not been recorded on Grand Cayman. On 15 May 1965 Tommy Adam and his son, Mike, showed me a Red-legged Thrush in their yard in Georgetown. This thrush was gathering nesting material (rootlets, red birch bark, bits of paper) and transporting the material into the top of a 35-ft thatch palm (*Thrinax parviflorum*) beside the Adam home (fig. 4). About 30 ft away in another thatch palm was an occupied nest of a West Indian Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Centurus superciliosus*). As the female woodpecker carried food to her nestlings, she was constantly harassed by the thrush, as were Mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos*) inhabiting the backyard. The thrush itself was quite tame, easily approached on the ground to within 12 ft. To test the effectiveness of my "squeaking" I hid about 200 ft from the thrush and "squeaked" loudly. The bird immediately flew directly toward me and perched in a tree 5 ft overhead. Once, when approached too closely and forced to fly, this thrush uttered a weak *cha-cha* note.

Later in the morning the bird was easily captured in a mist net below the nest site and photographed (fig. 5) in the rain. It was measured, color-banded, and released. Its measurements were: bill (culm.) 24.4 mm, bill (nostr.) 19.0 mm, wing chord 124 mm, total length 273 mm, tail 116.3 mm. An incubation patch was developing. Apparently



FIGURE 5. Adult *Mimocichla plumbea* caught in mist net below its nest site in Georgetown, Grand Cayman, 15 May 1965.

unperturbed, the banded thrush was seen feeding on the ground under the nest site the next morning.

The Adams had seen apparently this same Red-legged Thrush for the past two years. In 1964 it constructed two nests in different thatch palms, but both nests had blown down. Only one Red-legged Thrush was ever seen at a time by the Adams. Subsequently the color-banded thrush was seen in the neighborhood in December 1965 and January or February 1966. It then disappeared and has not been seen since. These records, nonetheless, clearly add *M. plumbea* to the avifauna of Grand Cayman.

Neither the measurements nor photographs unequivocally permit allocation of this bird to a subspecific population. Its closest origin would be Cayman Brac (65 miles eastward) where *M. p. coryi* is moderately common, but it might have come from western Cuba or the Isle of Pines where *M. p. rubripes* is found. Formerly, a small group of *M. p. rubripes* occupied the Swan Islands, 200 miles southwest of Grand Cayman (Ridgway 1887; Paynter 1956), but these birds were presumably extirpated there between 1887 and 1908. In light of Paynter's comments that the thrushes on Swan Island came from Cuba or the Isle of Pines, it is important to reiterate the possibility of this thrush colonizing additional islands, now including Grand Cayman. Unfortunately, the one bird on Grand Cayman remained unmated; otherwise the Red-legged Thrush might have established a breeding population there. The introduction of Red-legged Thrushes on Grand Cayman from Cayman Brac would probably be successful.

### PART III: *MIMOCICHLA* AS A VALID GENUS

Several authors have recently included *Mimocichla* in the genus *Turdus* (Ripley 1952; Mayr and Paynter 1964). Ripley, for example, stated (1952:18-19) that the differences in coloration of *Mimocichla* (and *Haplocichla*) are insufficient to separate them from *Turdus*. He noted that *Mimocichla* differs from most species of *Turdus* by having white tips to some rectrices but that "patches of white or grayish white appear in other widely scattered species of *Turdus* . . ." Bond, briefly discussing characteristics of *Mimocichla* (1956), emphasized the strongly rounded or graduated tail with large white tips in this genus.

Arguments for the suppression of *Mimocichla*, however, clearly overlook other features of taxonomic worth. Ridgway (1907:5-6), in his key to North and Middle American genera of Turdidae, presented distinctive structural characteristics for *Mimocichla* (and *Haplocichla*), namely, a middle toe minus claw/tarsus ratio, tarsus/exposed culmen ratio, and tarsus/wing ratio. The species of *Mimocichla* comprise a discrete unit of thrushes restricted to the Greater Antilles (with one representative on Dominica), and they uniformly have a distinctive, bright coloration of eye-ring, bill, legs, and feet. Finally, Rolle (1963) and Vaurie (1957) both suggested that various behavior patterns of *M. plumbea* differ markedly from those of *Turdus*, particularly *T. migratorius*.

Because Ridgway relied heavily on proportional differences, in the present analysis special attention has been given to the ratios cited above. Specifically, Ridgway separated *Mimocichla* and *Haplocichla* from *Planesticus* (now included in *Turdus* by Ripley and other authors) in that the former genera have "middle toe (without claw) less than two-thirds as long as tarsus, the latter much less than twice as long as exposed culmen; wing much less than three and a half times as long as tarsus. . . ." For comparative purposes I have utilized Ridgway's measurements of *Mimocichla*, *Haplocichla aurantia*, and of species of *Turdus* including *rufitorques*, *migratorius*, *rufopalliatu*s, *jamaicensis*, *albicollis*, *nudigenis*, *fumigatus*, *serranus*, and *nigrescens*. In addition I have measured examples of *T. musicus*, *ignobilis*, *merula*, *pilaris*, *torquatus*, *erictorum*, *naumanni*, *dissimilis*, *obscurus*, and *viscivorus*. Measurements and other data for *Haplocichla swalesi* are found in Wetmore's description (1927).

Concerning the tarsus/exposed culmen ratio, I am unable to confirm Ridgway's supposed distinctions. In *Mimocichla*, *Haplocichla*, and

all the species of *Turdus* examined, the tarsus is less than twice as long as the exposed culmen. The only exception is *T. pilaris* in which the tarsus is twice as long as the exposed culmen.

With one exception the other ratios can be used to separate *Mimocichla* and *Haplocichla* from the species of *Turdus* examined. In *Mimocichla*, *Haplocichla*, and *T. jamaicensis*, the wing is 3.0–3.4 times the tarsal length; in all the other species of *Turdus*, this value is 3.6–4.6. The tarsus is 56–61 per cent of the middle toe minus claw in *Mimocichla* and most *Haplocichla* (63 per cent in one female), whereas this value is 60–75 per cent in *Turdus* (except in *jamaicensis*, 59 per cent). *T. jamaicensis*, though not conforming to these ratios for other *Turdus*, can nonetheless be easily separated from *Mimocichla* and *Haplocichla* on the basis of its color and linear dimensions (wing, tarsus, exposed culmen, and middle toe distinctly smaller in *jamaicensis*). Because the present analysis concerns chiefly *Mimocichla*, a detailed study of *Haplocichla* has not been attempted, though it should be pointed out that *Haplocichla* differs from *Mimocichla* not so much in size but rather in body plumage coloration and white in the wing.

The inclusion of *Mimocichla* in the huge genus *Turdus* (66 species according to Ripley 1952) obscures the distinctive nature of these West Indian red-legged thrushes. And the allocation of *Mimocichla* to a subgenus, as proposed by Sclater (1859) and Bond (1967), with subsequent use of *T. ravidus* and *T. plumbeus*, suggests no better the relationship among the turdids and mimocichlids than the retention of the genus *Mimocichla* with its two species. Because *Mimocichla* is well characterized on the basis of morphology, distribution, behavior, and color, I strongly recommend its retention as a distinct genus.

## SUMMARY

Studies of the endemic Grand Cayman Thrush, *Mimocichla ravidus*, comprise the bulk of this report. A review of the pertinent literature, field work, and examination of extant specimens are included. Measurements, colors of soft parts, vocalizations, molt, and habitat preferences are presented. Because none of these thrushes has been found since 1938, despite intensive and extensive field experiences of many competent observers, it appears likely that the species is extinct.

The recent occurrence of a Red-legged Thrush (*M. plumbea*) nesting on Grand Cayman is reported.

The retention of *Mimocichla* as a genus

distinct from *Turdus* is argued on the strength of differences in morphology, distribution, behavior, and color.

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