

POSTILLA

Published from 1950 to 2004, the short papers of the *Postilla* series reported on original research by the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History's curators, staff, and research associates, and their colleagues, in the natural science disciplines represented by the collections of the Museum's curatorial divisions.

The *Postilla* series, which ceased publication with Number 232 (2004), was incorporated into the journal *Bulletin of the Peabody Museum of Natural History*, available from BioOne Complete at <https://bioone.org/>.

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Yale PEABODY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

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YALE PEABODY MUSEUM

OF NATURAL HISTORY

Number 10

November 1, 1951

New Haven, Conn.

THREE BIRDS FROM THE MOUNTAINS OF MUSCAT

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Dr. W. Wells Thoms, a resident of Muttrah in Muscat, has been kind enough to send me several specimens of the flora and fauna from the Jebel Akhdar Mountains which lie within the territory of the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman in southeastern Arabia. Three bird specimens taken among the fruit trees near the village of Seik at 6300 feet above sea level are most interesting as affording the first recorded specimens from this mountain range.

Streptopelia senegalensis cambayensis (Gmelin):

Indian Little Brown or Laughing Dove.

A single female dove proves to be somewhat dark in plumage tone, but indistinguishable from south Indian examples of this subspecies. The record is an unusually interesting one as the brightly colored typical *senegalensis* of Africa has always been considered the resident form of Arabia. If this specimen represents the valid breeding population of the Jebel Akhdar (as indeed there is no evidence to indicate that it is not), it is another link between the fauna of Muscat and the Indian subregion, similar in kind if not in degree, to the presence of a Tahr (*Hemitragus jayakari*) in these isolated southeastern Arabian mountains.

Galerida cristata thomsi, subsp. nov.:

Green Mountains Crested Lark.

Type: ♀ ad. (No. 2021, S. Dillon Ripley Coll.) collected at Seik, Jebel Akhdar, Muscat, July 1951, by W. Wells Thoms.

Diagnosis: this is a dark Crested Lark which bears no relation in its coloration to *magna* from the lowland deserts of adjacent Saudi Arabia. It is nearest that form in the smallness of the streaklets on the upper breast. Similarly the inner edges of the primaries are pinkish buff as in *magna*, but darker. In tone of coloration, however, this form is near *imami* of the Yemen highlands, but altogether darker, more blackish on the upper surface, the back, wings, and tail. Below, the streaklets on the underparts are much finer than in *imami*, not wider than approximately 1-1.5 mm., compared to 2-4 mm. for the latter form.

Measurements: wing 98.5, tail 61.5, exposed culmen 16.5 mm.

This single bird is so noticeably darker than equally worn specimens of *magna* or *imami* that it would seem to require a name. In its response to the isolated montane environment of the Jebel Akhdar it seems to parallel *imami*, but its dimensions and characteristics show a relationship to *magna* indicating that it is an offshoot of that widely dispersed form.

It gives me great pleasure to name this Green Mountains Crested Lark for its discoverer, Dr. Thoms.

Anthus similis arabicus Hartert:

Arabian Long-billed or Rock Pipit.

The third species collected by Dr. Thoms proves to belong to this form, not previously recorded from Muscat.