

**Systematic notes on Asian birds. 20.**  
**Recent additions to the list of type specimens of birds collected by**  
**Walter Koelz in the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology**

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Four previously unrecognized holotypes are listed, and two syntypes reported for another bird described by Koelz, from the Koelz collection in Assam.

**Introduction**

Walter Koelz (1895-1989) was an enthusiastic collector in southern Asia. From his extensive collections he described many new subspecies of birds. He was born near Ann Arbor, Michigan, and began collecting birds in his hometown of Waterloo (Koelz, 1923). After undergraduate and graduate work at the University of Michigan, where his Ph.D. dissertation was on fish systematics, Koelz was a museum Research Investigator and then Curator of Fishes in the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology (UMMZ). Koelz then had appointments with the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries and the State of Michigan Institute for Fisheries Research. He was Naturalist on the U.S. Navy-National Geographic Society MacMillan Arctic Expedition of 1925 (MacMillan, 1925a, b) and he published on the gyrfalcons of Greenland based on his collections (Koelz, 1929). UMMZ purchased his 3,350 arctic bird specimens in 1929. In later years Koelz collected extensively in North America but particularly in southern Asia from Iran to Assam.

Although Koelz gave a few birds to the museum, more often he sold and exchanged birds from his personal collection that he kept through his lifetime. Over the years, he published many new taxa, the types of which are in a number of museums. Most of the types held by the UMMZ were listed in Storer (1988), including 171 taxa, some from the Assam collection. A few other UMMZ specimens from Assam have only recently been recognized as Koelz types.

**Koelz collection activities in Asia**

Koelz's interests and collections in Asia were broad and included plants, art and cultural artifacts in addition to mammals and birds. His early work in northern India was in Ladakh (Koelz, 1935). The first trip in 1930 to 1932 was to study ethnobotany and medicinal plants (Koelz, 1979). On his return, Koelz was a Research Fellow at the University of Michigan where he worked with Dr Josselyn Van Tyne, Curator of Birds at UMMZ. In 1932 he went to India to collect Tibetan plants, animals and cultural

materials, and in 1933 he returned with artworks that are now in the University's Museum of Anthropology and the Museum of Art (Copeland, 1980). In March 1936 Koelz went to India and Afghanistan as Plant Explorer for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He returned in early 1938 to Michigan, collected in the southeastern United States in Georgia, then went to southern Asia where from 1939 to 1941 he travelled in Afghanistan and Persia as plant explorer (Koelz, 1957; 1983), and traveled and collected there through the wartime period. He left this area in 1946 to collect birds in India (including areas now in Pakistan and Bangladesh), Nepal, and eastern India in Assam (including the Lushai and Garo Hills and Manipur). From 1931 to 1953 Koelz travelled with his Ladakh partner, Thakur Rup Chand (Trow, 1957; Koelz, 1983). The field team put up as many as 100 bird skins in a day; over the years they collected over 60,000 birds, considerably more than the 40,000 estimated by Ripley (1961; 1968) and Mearns & Mearns (1997). Koelz returned to the United States in 1953 to the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) where he deposited some specimens and considered selling others (Koelz, 1950; 1951a, b), then he brought his remaining specimens to Michigan when Van Tyne acquired the funds to purchase the collection. In 1955 Koelz retired to Waterloo where he lived in the house of his childhood (Koelz, 1979; Payne, 2000).

### Koelz collections in UMMZ

Koelz's relationship with UMMZ centered around Van Tyne, who looked after his mail when Koelz was abroad, secured funds to purchase his birds, stored his specimens, and wrote and edited his early publications (Van Tyne & Koelz, 1936; Koelz, 1937; 1939a, b; 1940). In 1955, Van Tyne arranged for the University to purchase 25,000 bird specimens, including 15,000 from Assam, where Koelz had collected after 1950. The Koelz birds are well labeled with sex, date, and locality. During his last visit to the museum, in 1957, a few months after Van Tyne had died, Koelz annotated a series of 1:50,000 maps with his collecting localities. No specimen register or field diary is known; his diaries of 1932 and 1933 were lost (Copeland, 1980) and other notebooks were left in India in 1953 (UMMZ correspondence). However, from 1935 through 1948, Rup Chand kept a field diary in Urdu which he translated into English when he worked at the University Herbarium in the 1970s and 1980s. The manuscript, now in the University Herbarium library, unfortunately has few comments on the birds collected (Payne, 2000).

Koelz described one new species and many new subspecies from India, including 122 taxa in one paper (Koelz, 1954), of which copies are still available in the Bird Division at UMMZ. He published little beyond his *Persian Diary* (Koelz, 1957; 1983) and the descriptions of new taxa. Nevertheless, Koelz collected more Indian birds than anyone except A.O. Hume, many of whose specimens were originally collected by other naturalists (Sharpe, 1906). The Koelz collection holds plumages that were previously unknown for juveniles and adult females, and it has larger series for several species (e.g. honeyguides, babblers) than all previous collections of Indian birds combined. Koelz's Assam collection is by far the largest anywhere and is the primary record of birdlife for this region. Altogether, Koelz and Rup Chand collected 32,100 birds in southern Asia that were subsequently catalogued in UMMZ. Of these, 27,808

were taken in India, 2,032 in Pakistan, 1,759 in Iran, 264 in Afghanistan, 215 in Nepal, 21 in Bangladesh, and 1 in Burma (Chin Hills). Other major collections of Koelz's Asian birds are in the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago (19,300 skins) and the American Museum of Natural History, New York (8,600 skins).

Many type specimens of the birds described by Koelz are in UMMZ: 171 were listed by Storer (1988) and five additional types are noted here, recognized after publication of Storer's (1988) list of type specimens. These specimens were located in the museum for many years but the curators maintained them apart for Koelz with his other personal collections and they were uncatalogued. Ownership was transferred to the museum only after his death in 1989, along with more than 1,000 birds that Koelz kept in his house, including a series of bush warblers *Bradypterus* that were badly damaged by insects (Dickinson et al., 2000). The acquisition of these specimens further increases the significance of the Koelz collection as a major resource in systematic ornithology.

### Additional Koelz type specimens

Unrecorded type specimens need to be added for five taxa not covered by the 171 Koelz type specimens at the UMMZ listed by Storer (1988). All these were described by Koelz (1952; publication date "April 1953" on cover of issue)<sup>1</sup>. Four of these were represented in a tray of "manuscript types" along with other specimens from Assam, collected in 1948-1951 but not incorporated into the type collection. A fifth was apparently overlooked by Storer (1988). In addition to these five taxa Koelz (1952) described three other new taxa (*Mesia argentauris aureigularis*, *Arborophila atrogularis rupchandi*, *Dryonastes caerulatus biswasi*) which were dealt with by Storer (1988), although they are not listed in his index.

The data in Koelz (1952) and on the specimen labels agree in locality, date, sex, and size and these data support the status of the specimens as missing Koelz types.

The four specimens for which no other birds are known to have been collected with the same date, sex, and locality, and which are recognizable as the specimen indicated as the "type" by Koelz (1952) are considered Koelz holotypes. In the fifth case there are two possible type specimens which are here considered syntypes.

*Spizixos canifrons nobilis* Koelz, 1952, Hmuntha, Lushai Hills [Assam, India], 6 April 1951. Journal of the Zoological Society of India, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 154, Dec. 1952. Adult male, wing 97 mm (Koelz, 1952). For this taxon Koelz reported five specimens from Hmuntha, a "type" and four "topotypes"<sup>2</sup>. The type was not uniquely described by Koelz as there are two males in the type series collected on 6 April 1951. One of these, UMMZ 229706, was in the "manuscript types" box. Koelz gave the wing measurement of his "type" as 97 mm. My measurement of the wing of UMMZ 229706 is 98 mm, and of the other male UMMZ 184901 is 96 mm, with the wing unflattened, the

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<sup>1</sup> The date 1952 is retained here at the author's request to accord with usage by Storer (1988); elsewhere this Series will date it 1953. Eds.

<sup>2</sup> Koelz's "topotypes" are correctly paratypes.

style in which Koelz measured his birds. The specimen label bears no indication of "type" by Koelz. Both UMMZ 184901 and UMMZ 229706 must be considered syntypes. Although UMMZ 299706 was in the "manuscript type" box this is not sufficient reason to encourage its designation as a lectotype. The name was considered a synonym of *Spizixos canifrons canifrons* Blyth, 1845, by Ripley (1961).

*Timalia pileata arundicola* Koelz, 1952, Karong, Manipur [India], 29 October 1950. UMMZ 229709, collected by W. Koelz. Journal of the Zoological Society of India, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 153, Dec. 1952. Adult male, wing 60 mm (Koelz, 1952). "Type" was not written on the specimen label by Koelz, and R.W. Storer noted on the label "probably not type Koelz 9 Oct [19]59" during what proved to be Koelz's last visit to the Bird Division of the UMMZ (Payne, 2000). When I talked with him at his home each autumn in the 1970s about his fieldwork, Koelz was sparing and selective in his recall of events from his Asian expeditions, and the note on the label may reflect his uncertainty in 1959. Nine other specimens were mentioned by Koelz (1952). Eight additional specimens from Karong are in UMMZ, and no other was a male taken on the same date, 29 October 1950, although a female was taken then. The Koelz name was considered a synonym of *Timalia pileata bengalensis* Godwin-Austen, 1872, by Ripley (1961).

*Prinia flaviventris fulviventris* Koelz, 1952, Karong, Manipur [India], 28 November 1950. Journal of the Zoological Society of India, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 154, Dec. 1952. UMMZ 186432 collected by W. Koelz. Adult male, wing 49 mm. My measurement of the wing is 49 mm, the same as Koelz's. The specimen label bears the word "type" in Koelz's handwriting. Of "twenty additional specimens seen" (Koelz 1952), UMMZ has 18 specimens from Karong in addition to the holotype; two others from Karong were exchanged to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia in 1978. None were taken on the same date as the holotype. A female, UMMZ 229733, collected by Koelz at this locality on 29 November 1950, also bears the word "type" in Koelz's handwriting. The male specimen label has the word "type" crossed out; the female specimen label does not. The male is the holotype as it agrees with the date and sex indicated by Koelz. The name was considered a synonym of *Prinia flaviventris flaviventris* (Delessert, 1840), by Ripley (1961).

*Passer rutilans annectans* Koelz, 1952, Mawryngkneng, Khasi Hills [India], 1 December 1951. Journal of the Zoological Society of India, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 154, Dec. 1952. UMMZ 229741, collected by W. Koelz. Adult male, wing 71 mm (Koelz, 1952). My measurement of the wing is 71 mm. The label bears the words "cran gran" [= cranium granulated], consistent with the Koelz notation of an adult as the type. Koelz (1952) mentioned six males and four female topotypes, and UMMZ has nine males and four females taken in the same locality in late 1951 and early 1952; only UMMZ 229741 was taken on 1 December 1951. Considered a synonym of *Passer rutilans intensior* Rothschild, 1922, by Ripley (1961).

*Aethopyga saturata ariel* Koelz, 1952, Nokrek, Garo Hills [Assam, India], 9 March 1950. Journal of the Zoological Society of India, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 154, Dec. 1952. UMMZ 229740, collected by W. Koelz. Adult male, wing 55 mm, tail 77 mm (Koelz, 1952). My

measurement of the wing is 55 mm, the tail 77 mm. The specimen label bears the word "type" in Koelz's handwriting. Koelz (1952: 154) mentioned eight other males and five females from the Garo Hills in his type series. UMMZ has six males (excluding the type specimen) and five females taken at Nokrek; another male was exchanged to the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia in 1978. The name was considered a synonym of *Aethopyga saturata assamensis* (Horsfield, 1839), by Ripley (1961). The authorship of *assamensis* was attributed to McClelland by Deignan (1948) and Rand (in Paynter, 1967). Horsfield (1839) included most of McClelland's manuscript notes with his own commentary and descriptions. McClelland's notes are indicated in quotation marks, but none apply to this bird; the actual description of the bird (*Cinnyris Assamensis*) is in Latin and is the work of Horsfield, consistent with Ripley's notation. An earlier publication by McClelland of the name *Cinnyris Assamensis* without a description created a *nomen nudum*, according to Deignan (1948); nevertheless by current opinion the prior publication of a name without a description does not make the name unavailable when it later is published with a description (ICZN, 1999).

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