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Additional comments of Rock Partridge morphology: *Alectoris graeca orlandoi*

Article *in* Dutch Birding · January 2012

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white supercilium. The identification as African Crane *C. egregia* was straightforward. Several other rail and crane species have black-and-white bars on the flanks, undertail and belly in combination with a grey breast. However, none have such underparts in combination with a white supercilium and a dark bill with red base. Ash-throated Crane *Porzana albicollis* from South America resembles African Crane to some extent because of similar blackish-brown upperparts and black-and-white flanks and vent but this species can be excluded because of its white throat, yellow bill and lack of a supercilium (Taylor & van Perlo 1998). There are only two *Crex* species, of which African Crane differs clearly from Corn Crane in several of the observed characters, such as the clear black and white barring on the underparts and the red-based dark bill (Taylor & van Perlo 1998, Borrow & Demey 2001). The grey breast and pinkish legs indicate that the bird was an adult (Taylor & van Perlo 1998).

Distribution and WP records

African Crane is a widespread and locally common species of moist to dry grasslands in Africa south of the Sahara, except for the arid regions in the south and south-west of Africa (Taylor & van Perlo 1998). It is a rare resident and intra-African migrant in West Africa, except for the arid north and forests (Borrow & Demey 2001). It seasonally migrates away from the equator in northerly and southerly directions to breed during wet periods (Taylor & van Perlo 1998).

The observation in November 2011 is the fourth or fifth record for Mauritania. It is the first or second for Banc d'Arguin, where an exhausted individual was reported in late January 2007 but without any documentation. Three other reports from Mauritania are all from the southernmost Sahelian part of the country, in October, November and January (Isenmann et al 2010; Paul Isenmann in litt); this part of the country is outside the Western Palearctic, by any definition (Cramp & Simmons 1977, Roselaar 2006, van den Berg 2008). The observation represents the seventh or eighth record for the Western Palearctic (WP) as defined by Roselaar (2006), who includes only northern Mauritania. Cramp & Simmons (1977) include Banc d'Arguin in the WP but not mainland Mauritania (the coastline being the border), which makes the November 2011 record truly a borderline case; however, the brief flights over

water would justify inclusion on the WP list (although purists may want to discuss if the WP border is related to high, low or neap tide...).

There are four records in the Canary Islands (three in November, one in January), all coinciding with depressions coming from Mauritania and all concerning weakened or dead birds (Chevalier & Bergier 2011). Another one was found dead in the Cape Verde Islands in February 2004 (Hazevoet 2010, Haas 2012). The most recent WP observation comes from southern Morocco, where a bird stayed near Dakhla, Oued Ad-Deheb, for a week in December 2009 (photograph in Chevalier & Bergier 2011). From Senegal, two observations north of 14°N are known (Morel & Morel 1990). Including the record from November 2011, there are currently equal numbers of observations of African Crane and Corn Crane at Banc d'Arguin (Isenmann et al 2010).

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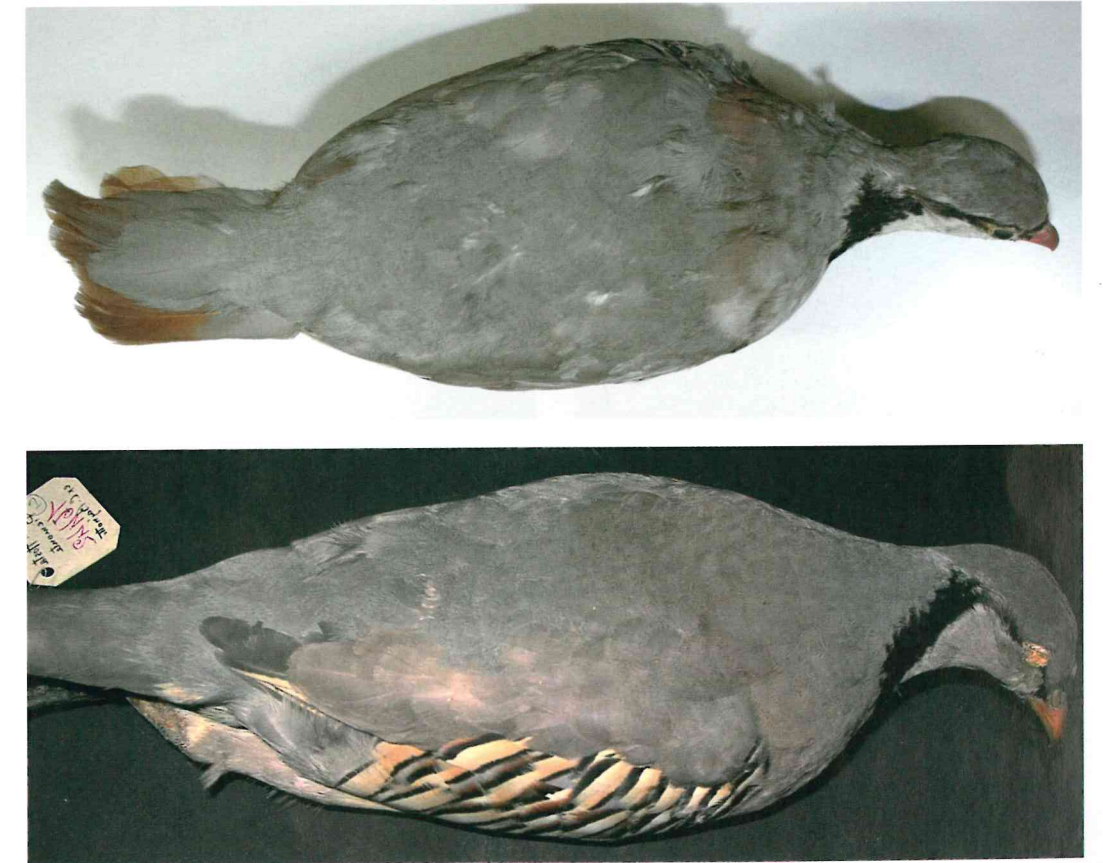
Additional comments on Rock Partridge morphology: *Alectoris graeca orlandoi*

In my recent paper dealing with the identification and taxonomy of Sicilian Partridge *Alectoris whittakeri* (Corso 2010), I also discussed the taxon *A. graeca orlandoi* (Italian Rock Partridge), which occurs (only) in the Apennines, Italy. Although the description in the paper is detailed and the taxon is well illustrated in the accompanying plates by Lorenzo Starnini, only a single photograph of *orlandoi* was published (plate 102), showing only the upptail. To my knowledge, no photographs

are available in other publications. It is therefore interesting to present a series of photographs of an *orlandoi* skin (photographs of live birds in the field prove to be really hard to obtain) for comparison with *whittakeri* and the other Rock Partridge taxa. The photographs show an *orlandoi* specimen collected at Molise, Apennines, central Italy, within the core breeding area of *orlandoi*, and preserved at Università di Scienze Naturali del Molise, Pesche, Campobasso, Italy. The accompanying plates make it possible to check the characters of *orlandoi* mentioned in Corso (2010) and to compare these with skins of *whittakeri* and Alpine Rock Partridge *A. g. saxatilis*. These *orlandoi* characters

126 Italian Rock Partridge / Italiaanse Steenpatrijs *Alectoris graeca orlandoi*, adult (collected at Molise, Apennines, Italy, November 2007), Università di Scienze Naturali del Molise, Pesche, Campobasso, Italy (Andrea Corso). Same bird as in plate 129 and 131-133. Note pale upperparts, being most azure-cerulean grey of all Rock Partridge taxa. Also note brownish-vinaceous tinge on scapulars only. Rump and upptail-coverts concolourous with upperparts.

127 Alpine Rock Partridge / Alpensteenpatrijs *Alectoris graeca saxatilis* (collected at Piemonte Alps, Italy, 30 December 1928), Museo Civico di Zoologia di Roma, Italy (Andrea Corso). Note darker, more saturated upperparts than *orlandoi*, with conspicuously more extensive vinaceous and olive tinge and therefore visible contrast between rump and upptail-coverts and mantle.





128 Sicilian Partridge / Siciliaanse Steenpatrijs *Alectoris whittakeri* (collected in Sicily, Italy, November 2006) (*Andrea Corso*). Note richer coloured underparts, more saturated, with warmer and richer belly/vent area and darker, more colourful undertail-coverts, typical of *whittakeri*. **129** Italian Rock Partridge / Italiaanse Steenpatrijs *Alectoris graeca orlandoi*, adult (collected at Molise, Apennines, Italy, November 2007), Università di Scienze Naturali del Molise, Pesche, Campobasso, Italy (*Andrea Corso*). Same bird as in plate 126 and 131-133. Note very pale uppertail-coverts and rump, bluish-cerulean grey, with no vermiculations and no vermiculations on tail-feathers (vermiculated only in few birds). **130** Alpine Rock Partridge / Alpensteenpatrijs *Alectoris graeca saxatilis* (collected in Italian Alps, Italy, December 2008), Museo Civico di Zoologia di Roma, Italy (*Andrea Corso*). Typical *saxatilis*; note bold and broad black neck collar, far warmer and richer neck and breast side (same as on scapulars and mantle) than typical *orlandoi*, with more vinaceous tinge, and more contrasting face pattern. Black collar pattern and colour of scapulars and mantle can be highly variable within the same Rock Partridge populations but typical birds are distinctive enough.

are: **1** very pale, pure bluish-grey upperparts with almost no contrast and without strong olive-brownish hue, differing from *saxatilis* and even more from darkest *whittakeri*; **2** very pale upper-

tail-coverts, rump and tail, differing from darker and fully vermiculated pattern typical for *whittakeri*; **3** quite pale underparts, with also quite pale undertail-coverts, differing from richer, deeper



131-132 Italian Rock Partridge / Italiaanse Steenpatrijs *Alectoris graeca orlandoi*, adult (collected at Molise, Apennines, Italy, November 2007), Università di Scienze Naturali del Molise, Pesche, Campobasso, Italy (*Andrea Corso*). Same bird as in plate 126, 129 and 133. Note very pale underparts, typical of most birds (but few of the southernmost part of the range in Calabria), with almost apricot-tinged belly/vent, as well as quite pale, almost apricot undertail-coverts. **133** Italian Rock Partridge / Italiaanse Steenpatrijs *Alectoris graeca orlandoi*, adult (collected at Molise, Apennines, Italy, November 2007), Università di Scienze Naturali del Molise, Pesche, Campobasso, Italy (*Andrea Corso*). Same bird as in plate 126, 129 and 131-132. Close-up of head and throat. Note quite clean off-white throat patch, surrounded by black collar which is broader than in Sicilian Partridge *A whittakeri* but less irregular and ragged than in Alpine Rock Partridge *A g saxatilis*. Note almost invisible drab eye-line over black eye-stripe, differing from *whittakeri*. Note also well-defined and quite wide white line between crown and dark eye-stripe and lore.

colour in *whittakeri* (chiefly on undertail), as well as from darker *saxatilis*; and **4** very clean and off-white throat surrounded by well-marked black collar, often narrower than in *saxatilis* but broader than in *whittakeri*. More details are given in the captions. I hope this note and these photographs will help taxonomists to further define the phenotypic appearance of *orlandoi*.

I wish to thank Lorenzo De Lisio for helping me to find the discussed specimen and Anna Loy of the Università di Scienze Naturali del Molise for the permission to handle the specimen and take photographs.

Reference

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