

## Synopsis of Species of Thornbills

By A. G. CAMPBELL, J.P., R.A.O.U., Croydon (Vic.).

In "List of the Birds of Australia," G. Mathews, 1913, there are shown 3 genera and 13 species, comprising in all 38 sub-species of the family Acanthiza. Additions since that date, including those in "Birds of Australia," Mathews, vol. ix., 1922, bring the total to 4 genera and 13 species, totalling 86 sub-species.

I submit 2 genera and 17 species with 43 sub-species, and consider this to be a practical classification based on the evidence of a very large series of skins.\*

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**Genus ACANTHIZA.** Vigors and Horsfield.—Colour of upper tail coverts ochre brown, subterminal dark band on tail not more than half an inch wide; throat flecked or striated; first primary less than half length of second.

**A. lineata.** Gould. Striated Thornbill.—Crown umber-brown with white shaft streaks.

**A. nana.** Vigors and Horsfield. Little Thornbill.—Forehead plain; no bright rump; back olive citrine; throat buffy; abdomen yellow.

**A. inornata.** Gould. Western Thornbill.—Upper surface olive; no bright rump; no white tips to tail; under surface creamy.

**A. ewingi.** Gould. Tasmanian Thornbill.—Forehead uniform tawny; wing with five primaries edged tawny, a conspicuous patch; throat grey with indistinct flecking.

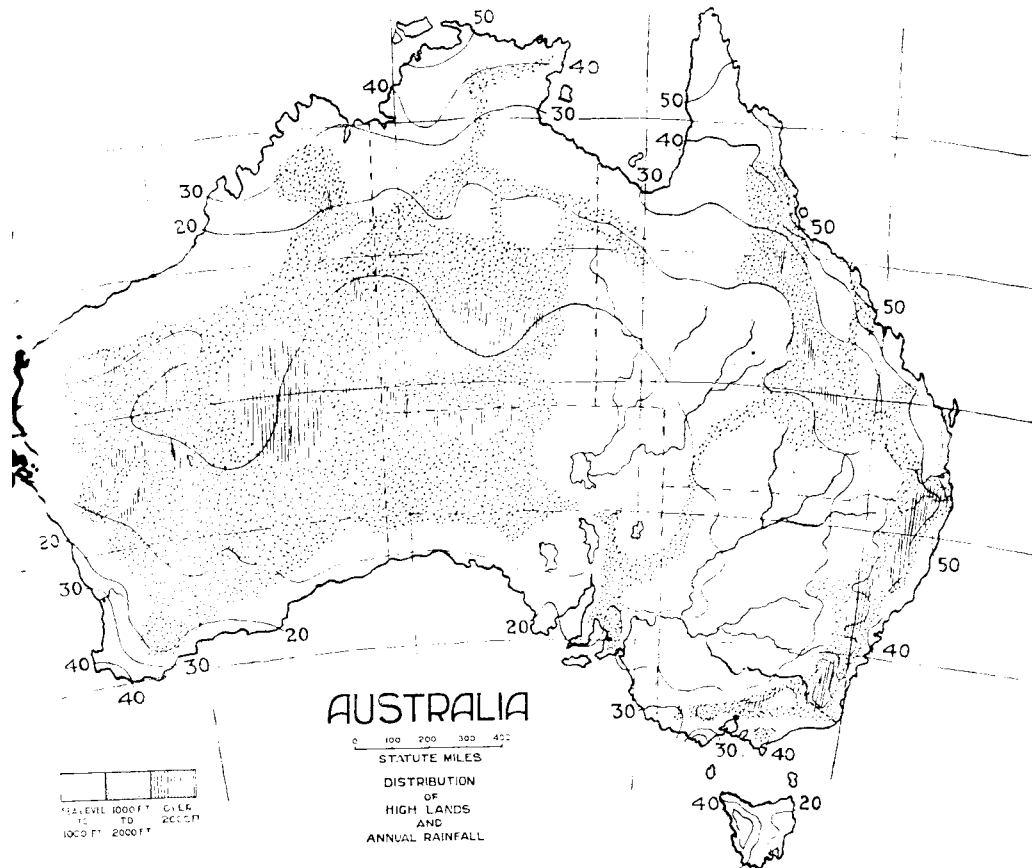
**A. katherina.** De Vis. Mountain Thornbill.—Forehead crescents indistinct; throat indistinctly flecked; flanks extensively coloured dark citrine; tail bar .4 inch wide on third feather.

**A. pusilla.** John White. Brown Thornbill.—Upper surface olive to dark brownish olive; tail bar .3 inch wide on third feather reduced to an oval or round spot on central feathers; forehead crescents more sharply defined in southern and insular forms; crescents obscure forehead plain tawny in northern forms.

**A. apicalis.** Gould. Broad-tailed Thornbill.—Back of head grey; back tinged dark citrine; tail bar .4 inch wide on third feather, with obscure dark band on centre feathers, much white on tips.

\*These include collections of Edwin Ashby, Adelaide, numbered 1 to 94, of S. A. White, Adelaide, and of T. P. Austin, Cobbora, N.S.W., 400 to 420; the collection of the late A. W. Milligan numbered 95 to 120, the R.A.O.U. Collection; the National Museum Collection numbered 300 to 350, and chiefly the H. L. White Collection numbered 2074 to 2257.

I wish to express my best thanks to the owners of these bird skins, and especially to the Trustees of the National Museum, Melbourne, the Australian Museum, Sydney; the South Australian Museum, the Queensland Museum, the Hobart Museum, and the West Australian Museum, who all supplied valuable material for examination, in some notable instances types of species and subspecies.



## EXPLANATION OF MAP

Map, adapted from Federal Handbook, 1914, showing how *Acanthizae* could be distributed, assuming that the original stock came via Queensland. Hatched and dotted portions are also the geologically older land surfaces, which still show unbroken connections with Victoria and South Australia. The chief break was the large rift-valley running north through Spencer Gulf. White portions are in the main younger and newer land surfaces on which the greatest variations occur. The vast interior regions inside the 10 inch isohyet have developed pallid desert races, while many other species of birds have there passed out of existence.

**A. whitlocki.** North. Western Red-tailed Thornbill.—Upper surface olive grey with buffy brown on back, crescents whitish; wing and tail long; tail bar .5 inch wide; much white on tips; under surface mostly white.

**A. pyrrhopygia.** Gould. Red-tailed Thornbill.—Upper surface olive brown, head not lighter than back, crescents very distinct buffy with sharply defined black spot at base; upper tail coverts bright argus brown; tail bar .5 inch wide on third feather; dark band on centre feathers, much white on tips. Pallid races lose the brown on head and back; upper tail coverts become dull snuff brown and under-surface lighter.

**A. albiventris.** North. Allied Thornbill.—Upper tail coverts brightest hazel; tail bar .6 inch wide; inner web of tail feathers drab, becoming lighter towards base or tinged with tawny.

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**Genus GEOBASILEUS.** Cabanis.—Colour of upper tail coverts yellow to tawny; basal portion of tail light or brightly coloured; throat plain or with faint dusky fringes; first primary more than half length of second.

**G. uropygialis.** Gould. Chestnut-tailed Thornbill.—Base of tail tawny like upper coverts; pallid races have the under surface nearly all white.

**G. robustirostris.** Milligan. Thick-billed Thornbill.—Upper surface grey, crown streaked black; base of tail cinnamon like upper coverts.

**G. tenuirostris.** Zietz. Small-billed Thornbill.—Black greyish olive; crescents large; upper tail coverts cream; base of tail faintly light coloured; tips white; undersurface cream.

**G. hedleyi.** Mathews. Dark Thornbill.—Back dark brownish olive; crescents small; upper tail coverts cream; base of tail faintly light coloured, outer feathers tipped white; under surface dark buffy olive.

**G. reguloides.** Vigors and Horsfield. Buff-tailed Thornbill.—Back brownish olive, upper tail coverts mostly buff, base of tail buff; abdomen cream buff.

**G. squamatus.** De Vis. Varied-tailed Thornbill.—Back yellowish olive; upper tail coverts yellow; base of tail buff; face whitish, abdomen yellow.

**G. chrysorrhous.** Quoy and Gaimard. Yellow-tailed Thornbill.—Forehead black spotted with white; upper tail coverts yellow; base of tail whitish.

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