

Notes on the vocalizations of Arafura Fantail (*Rhipidura dryas*)

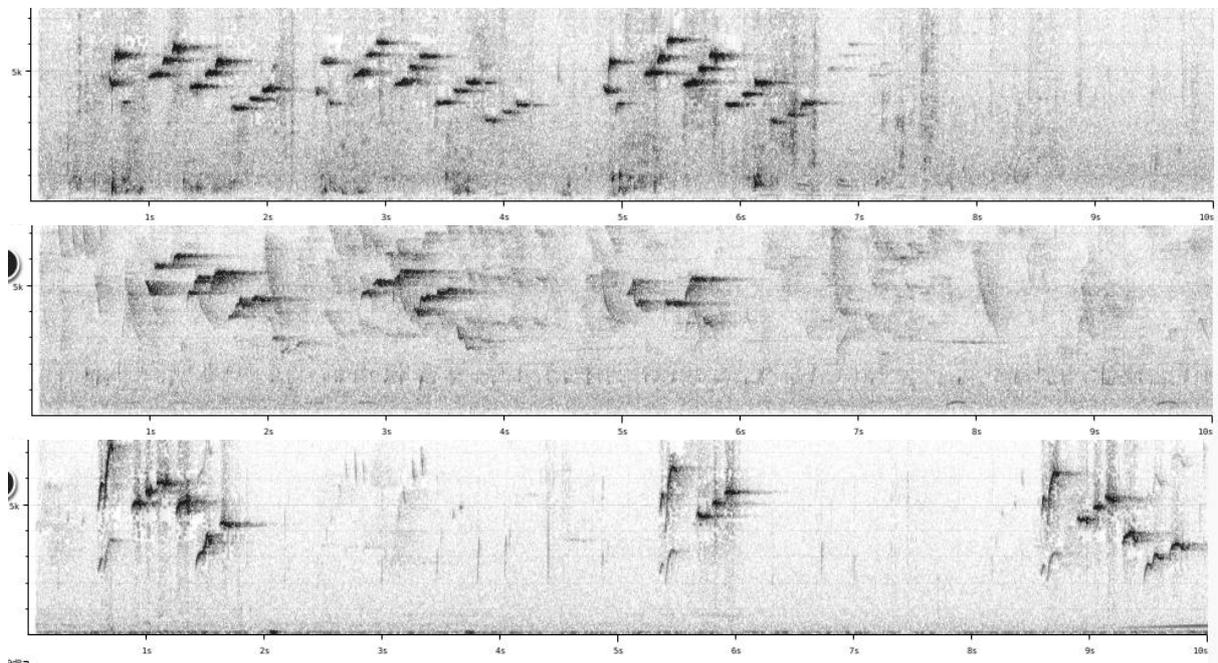
Peter Boesman

In the following we briefly analyze and compare voice of the different races of Arafura Fantail (*Rhipidura dryas*). We also try to quantify the extent of any vocal differences using the criteria proposed by Tobias *et al.* (2010), as a support for taxonomic review. We have made use of sound recordings available on-line from Xeno Canto (XC).

Three groups are mentioned in HBW (Boles 2016):

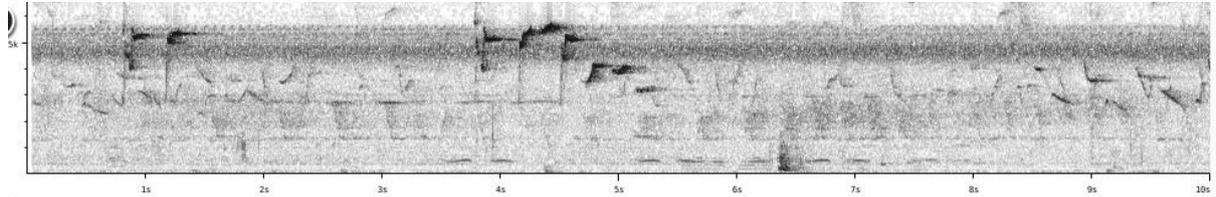
1. “*squamata* group” (also including *henrici*, which sometimes merged with *squamata*) in S Moluccas and W Papuan Is
2. “*elegantula* group” (with *reichenowi* and *hamadryas*) in E Lesser Sundas
3. “*nominate* group” (including *streptophora*, *semicollaris*, *sumbensis*, *celebensis* and *mimosae*) in S New Guinea, C Lesser Sundas and Australia

Vocally these three groups are not readily recognized (from a quick look at sonograms). It would seem that recordings from Alor, Timor-Leste, Wetar and Pantar (which basically coincides with the race *semicollaris*) have the most distinctive song, consisting of short, fast rising series of 3 notes repeated a few times:

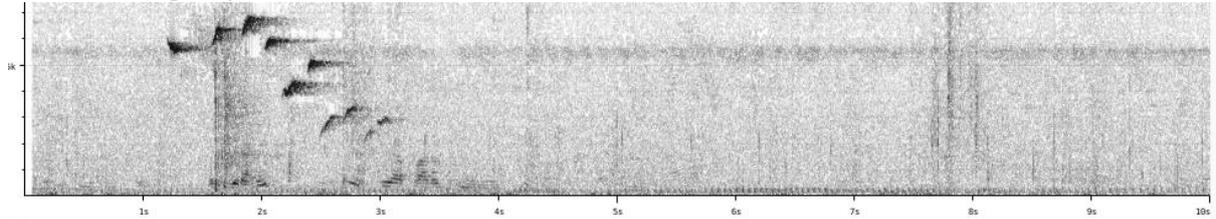


Other races in western Lesser Sundas have the more typical song shared with eastern races:
Some examples:

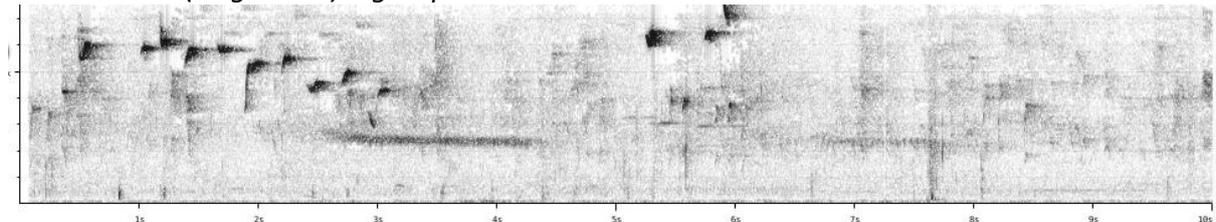
Sumba (*sumbensis*) = group 3



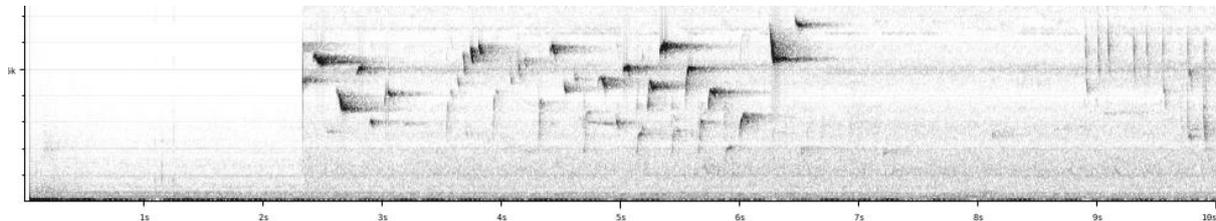
Flores Sea = group 3



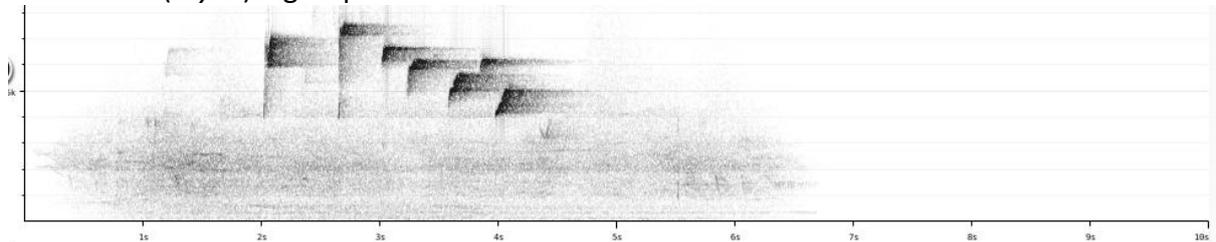
Damar island (*elegantula*) = group 2



Maluku (*squamata*) = group 1



N Australia (*dryas*) = group 3



It is thus quite striking that *semicollaris*, about in the middle of the distribution of the nominate group, is vocally so different. Of all other races, based on the few recordings available, *dryas* seems to be the most deviating (slightly higher-pitched and more emphatic). Which actually indicates that all vocal variation is within group 3 (nominate group).

It would thus seem that the proposed grouping based on morphological (?) characteristics, is not supported by a similar differentiation vocally. From this short analysis, we can at most conclude that race *semicollaris* (spread over several islands) is vocally the most distinctive.

This note was finalized on 15th January 2016, using sound recordings available on-line at that moment. We would like to thank in particular the sound recordists who placed their recordings for this species on XC: Marc Anderson, Mike Catsis, Frank Lambert, Mike Nelson, Colin Trainor and Bas van Balen.

References

Boles, W. (2016). Arafura Fantail (*Rhipidura dryas*). In: del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A., Sargatal, J., Christie, D.A. & de Juana, E. (eds.). *Handbook of the Birds of the World Alive*. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona. (retrieved from <http://www.hbw.com/node/59163> on 15 January 2016).

Tobias, J.A., Seddon, N., Spottiswoode, C.N., Pilgrim, J.D., Fishpool, L.D.C. & Collar, N.J. (2010). Quantitative criteria for species delimitation. *Ibis* 152(4): 724–746.

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