

Notes on the vocalizations of Chestnut-bellied Monarch (*Monarcha castaneiventris*)

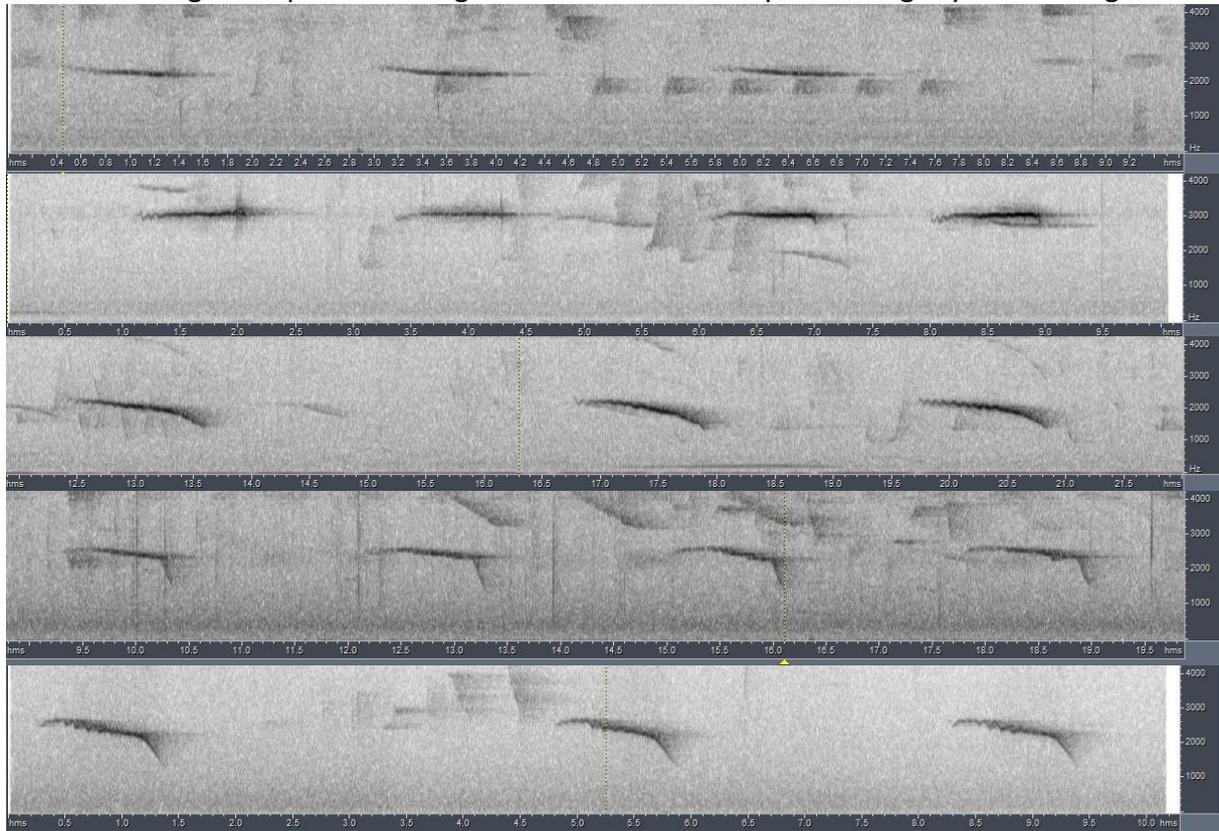
Peter Boesman

In the following we briefly analyze and compare voice of the four races of Chestnut-bellied Monarch (*Monarcha castaneiventris*). 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) and Macaulay Library (ML).

HBW (Clement 2016) writes for song a rapid series of whistles “kwee kwee kwee kwee kwee”, but this seems to be in error. From the available recordings, song seems to be rather a long whistle repeated at intervals:

Race *castaneiventris*

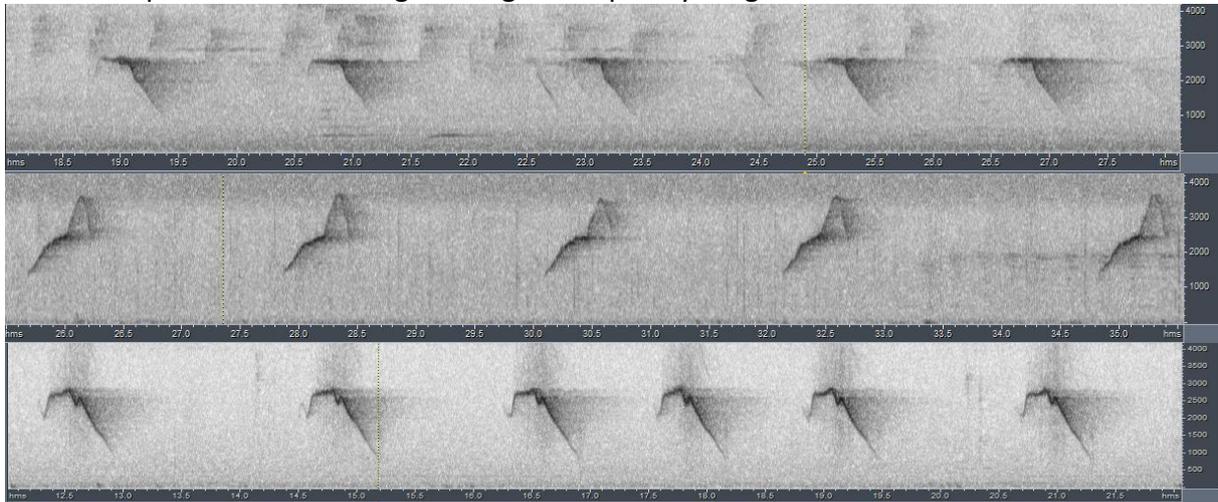
Presumed song is a repeated fluting whistle at about even pitch or slightly descending



Race *obscurior*: no available recordings

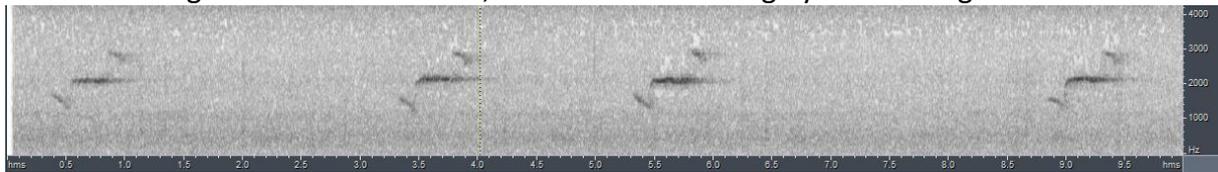
Race *megarhynchus*

Presumed song is a repeated fluting whistle, which has a rising and falling part, usually one of both emphasized and having the largest frequency range



Race *ugiensis* (n=1)

Presumed song consists of 3 whistles, the middle one being by far the longest "du-wheree-it"



From the above, it would appear that the 3 taxa all have a diagnostic song, *ugiensis* being the most pronounced having a phrase of 3 notes rather than a single whistle.

Vocal differences can thus be quantified as follows:

ugiensis vs other races: 3-note phrase vs single whistle (score 3) (or alternatively a clearly shorter whistle-length (score 3)) and seemingly different call (score 1). When applying Tobias criteria this would lead to a total vocal score of 4.

castaneiventris vs *megarhynchus*: latter has larger frequency range (c. 1500-2200Hz vs 200-1200Hz, score 2-3), shorter note length (c. 0.7 - 0.9s vs 1.0 - 1.4s, score 2-3) and different note shape (score 1), leading to a total vocal score of at least 4.

A note of caution: XC33019 from N San Cristobal (where *megarhynchus* is supposed to occur) has whistles very similar to *castaneiventris*, and even more surprising, has as a note 'all glossy black' and designated race is *ugiensis*. This may indicate both that there is also (rarely) a black phase on the larger islands (or true *ugiensis* ??) AND that *castaneiventris* and *megarhynchus* (or *uguensis*??) occasionally have the same song. This will have to be investigated further.

This note was finalized on 22nd 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 and ML: Eleanor Brown, David Gibbs, Phil Gregory, Niels Krabbe, Frank Lambert and Mark Robbins.

References

Clement, P. (2016). Chestnut-bellied Monarch (*Monarcha castaneiventris*). 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/59224> on 22 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.

Recommended citation

Boesman, P. (2016). Notes on the vocalizations of Chestnut-bellied Monarch (*Monarcha castaneiventris*). *HBW Alive Ornithological Note* 195. In: *Handbook of the Birds of the World Alive*. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona. (retrieved from <http://www.hbw.com/node/932140> on 29 August 2016).