

## Notes on the vocalizations of Rufous Fantail (*Rhipidura rufifrons*)

Peter Boesman

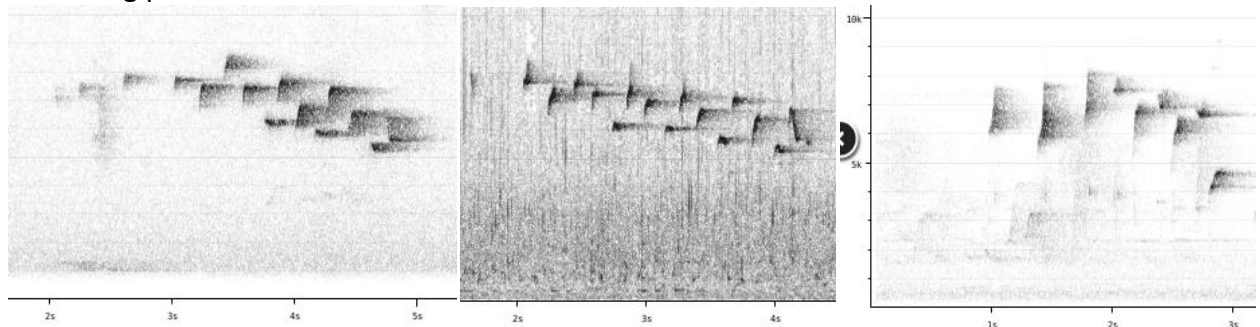
In the following we briefly analyze and compare voice of the different races of Rufous Fantail (*Rhipidura rufifrons*). We also try to quantify the extent of any vocal differences using the criteria proposed by Tobias *et al.* (2010), as a support for taxonomic review.

We have made use of sound recordings available on-line from Xeno Canto (XC), Macaulay Library (ML), Avian Vocalizations Center (AVoCet) and The Internet Bird Collection (IBC).

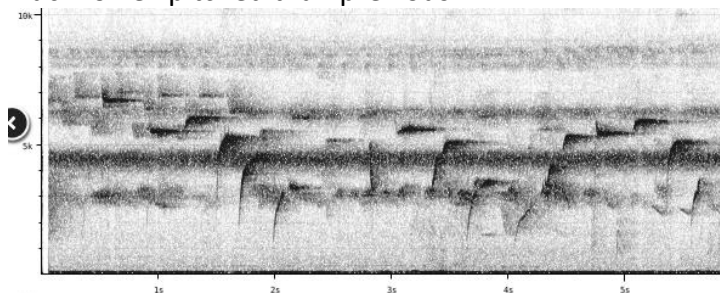
With eighteen subspecies, many confined to single islands, this is obviously a very complex group, to say the least. This note is therefore rather a preliminary analysis, based on available recordings, which per race are often just a few or less.

An overview of vocalizations per race (some already grouped):

*R.r. intermedia/rufifrons* (Australian Rufous Fantail): Song is a high-pitched series of notes with a seesawing pattern

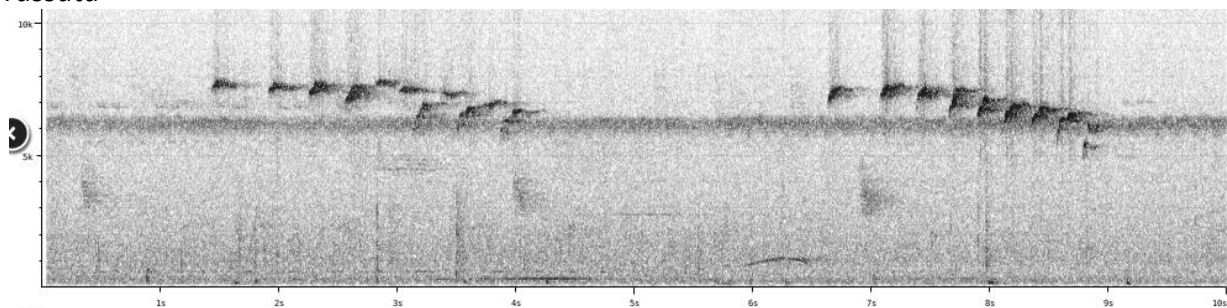


*R.r. lousiadensis(?)* (SE New Guinea Island birds): Song is a more loosely given whistled song, much lower-pitched than previous.

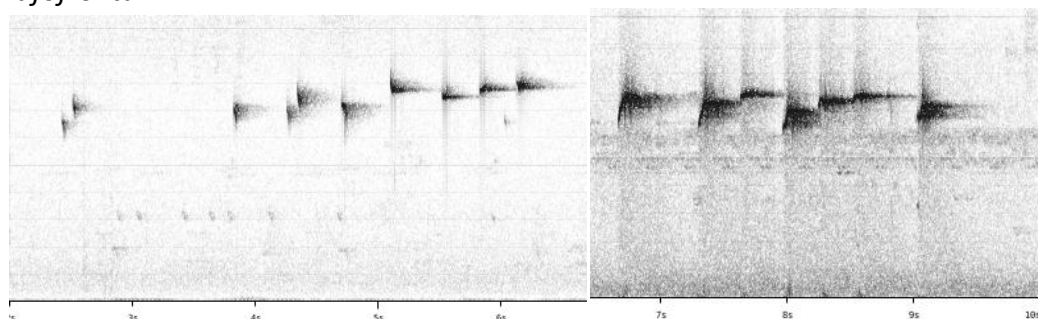


*R.r.russata* (+ *rufofronta*, *commoda*, *granti*) (Solomon Fantail): Song is a series of high-pitched notes, with ascending or descending patterns.

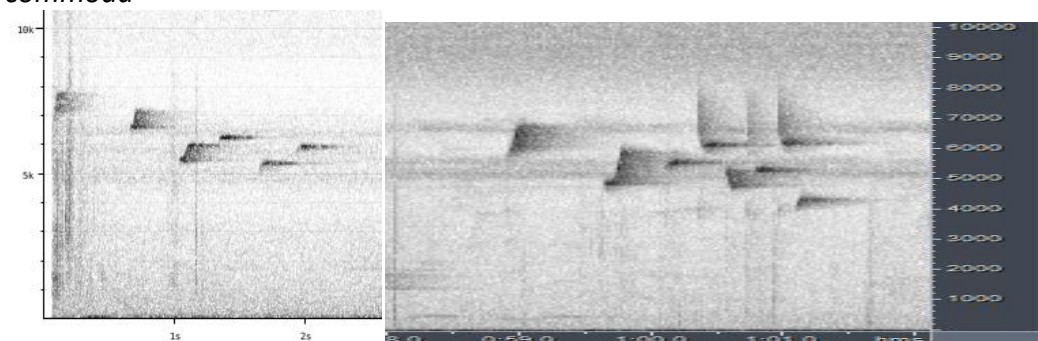
*russata*



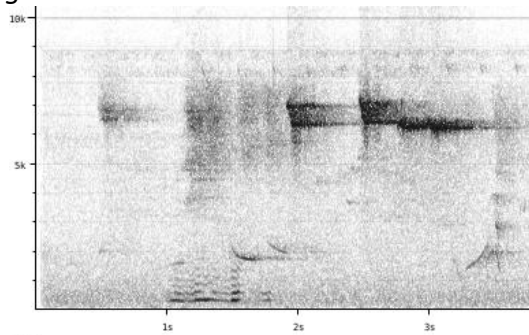
*rufofronta*



*commoda*

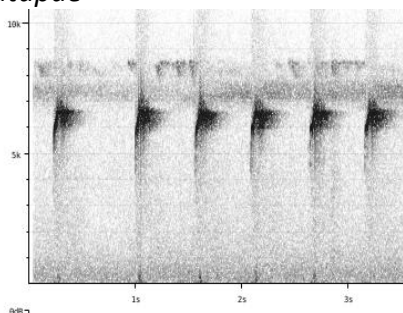


*granti*

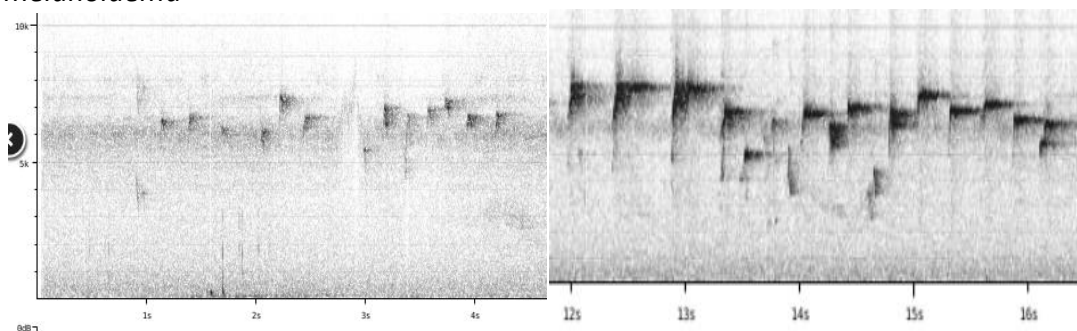


*R.r.utupae* (+ *melanolaema*) (Santa Cruz Islands Fantail): Song is a series of staccato emphatic high-pitched notes, in a narrow frequency range.

*utupae*

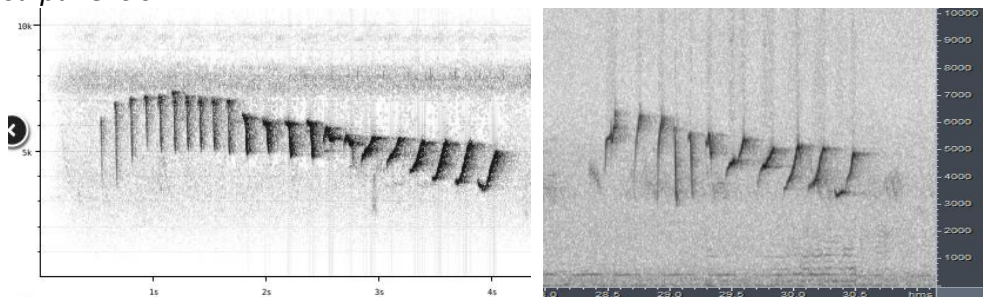


*melanolaema*

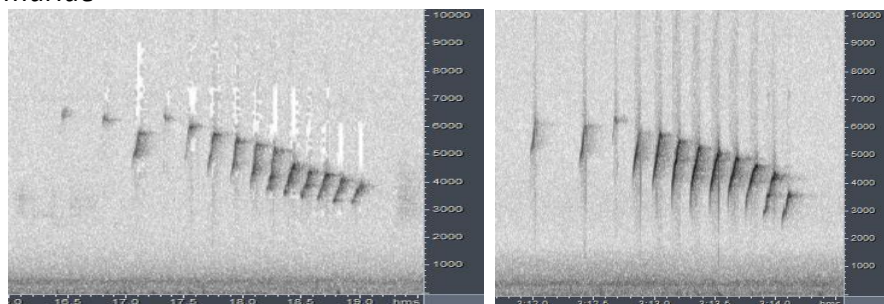


*R.r.saipanensis* (+ *mariae*) (Micronesian Fantail): Song is very different from above groups, a series of rich whistles descending in pitch. Most notes are sharply upslurred.

*saipanensis*

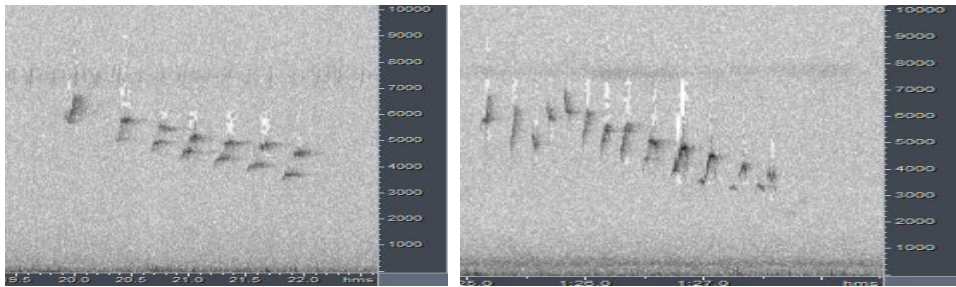


*mariae*

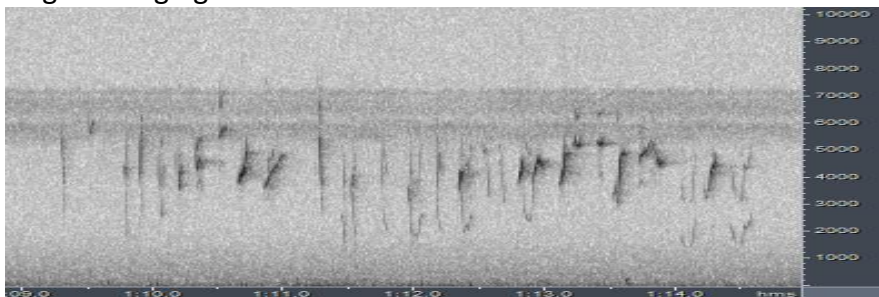


Guam (*race uraniae*??) Song slightly different, as upslurred notes seem to break up in 2 distinct notes, but kept within this vocal group.

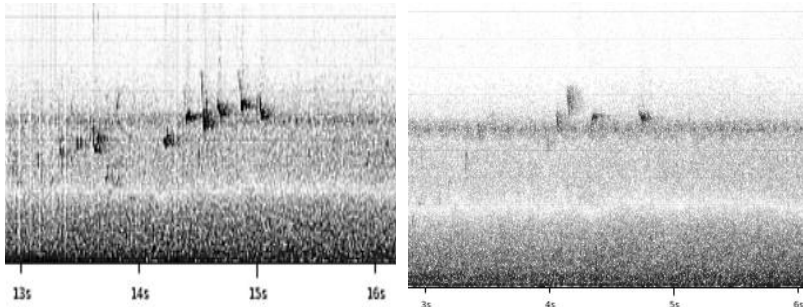




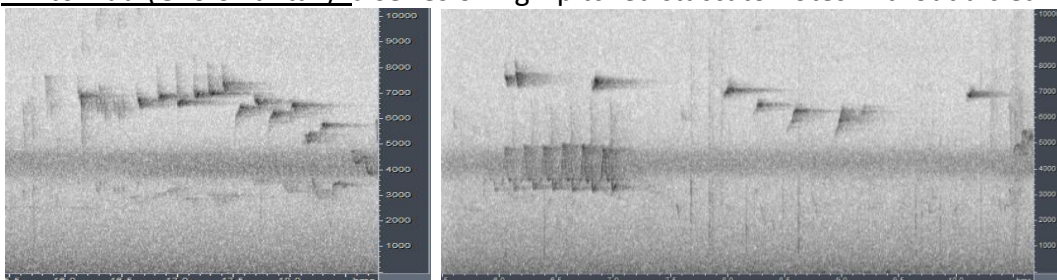
*R.r. versicolor* (Yap Fantail): Song starts with some short staccato notes which gradually become longer changing into some sweet whistles.



*R.r. kubaryi* (Pohnpei Fantail): a series of high-pitched staccato notes



*R.r. torrida* (Gilolo Fantail): a series of high-pitched staccato notes without a clear pattern



Given that we have very few recordings of several races and that there is a fair amount of variation in song, a reliable analysis at present is difficult.

We have tried to compare and quantify the vocal differences of all groups with a rough estimated score in a comparison table:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Austr	PNG	Solom	S Cruz	Micron	Yap	Pohn	Gilolo
1 Australian Rufous Fantail <i>intermedia/rufifrons</i>	-	6	2	5	7	4	2	2
2 SE PNG birds <i>louisadensis??</i>		-	4	5	5	2	5	5
3 Solomon birds <i>russata, rufifrons, commoda, granti</i> etc.			-	2	5	4	0	0
4 Santa Cruz Islands Fantail <i>utupae, melanolaema</i>				-	4	4	3	3
5 Micronesian birds ( <i>saipanensis, mariae</i> )+ Guam					-	5	6	6
6 Yap Fantail <i>versicolor</i>						-	3	3
7 Pohnpei Fantail <i>kubaryi</i>							-	0
8 Gilolo Fantail <i>torrida</i>								-

Some groups are convincingly vocally different (e.g. group 1 (Australia), group 2 (SE PNG) and group 5 (Micronesia)), others much less so (partially due to the fact that the Solomon group stays quite a mixed bag, and as a consequence, e.g. Gilolo and Pohnpei Fantail seem to fall within the range of vocalizations of the Solomon group).

This note was finalized on 1st March 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: Patrik Åberg, Marc Anderson, James Bradley, Fernand Deroussen, John Dumbacher, David Gibbs, Phil Gregory, Niels Krabbe, Frank Lambert, John Mittermeier, Mike Nelson, Douglas Pratt, Mark Robbins and Mark Todd.

## References

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

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