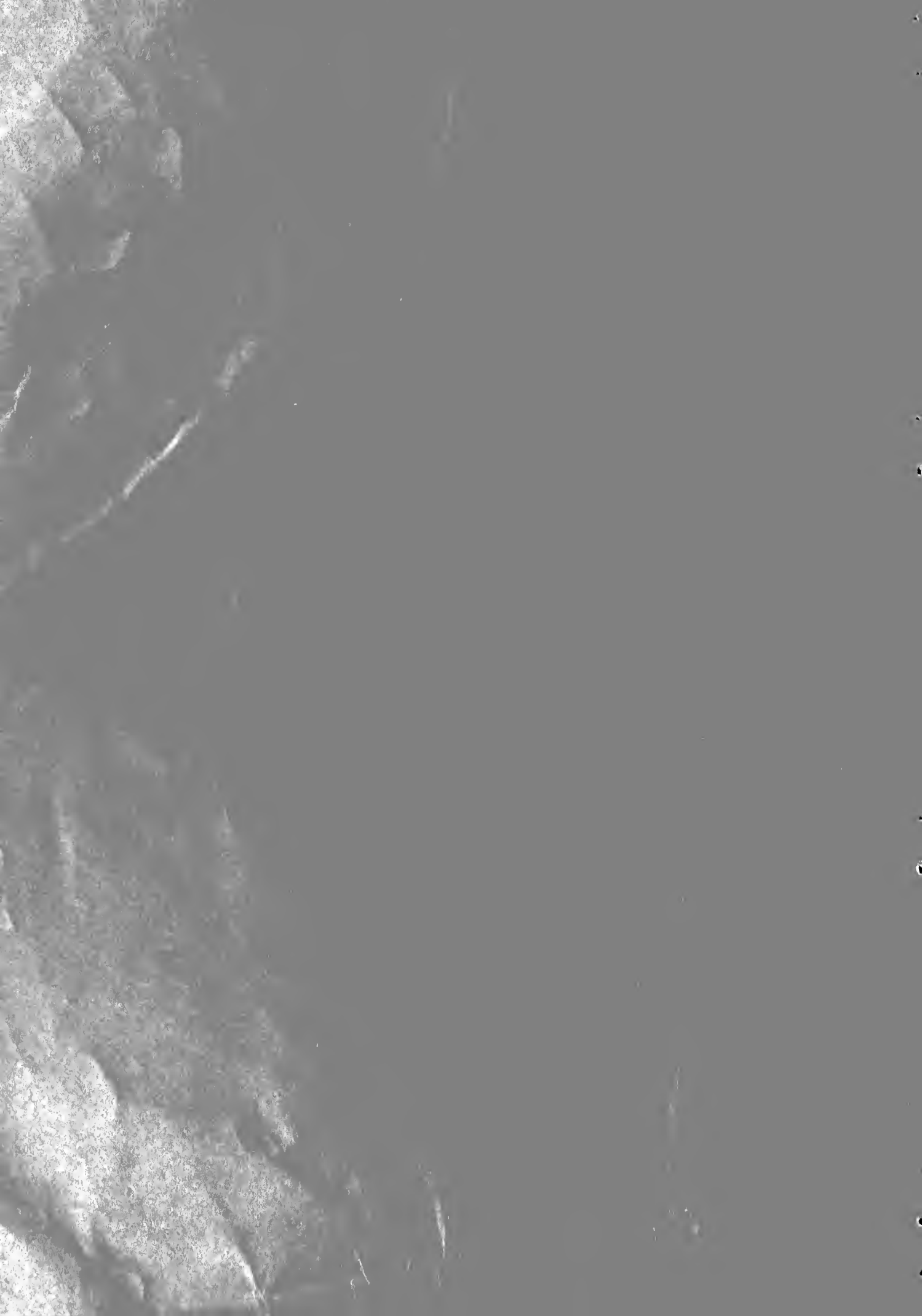
EANHS BULLETIN

A publication of the East Africa Natural History Society, Nairobi, Kenya. Price 4 shillings



CONTENTS

A NEW PATRON FOR THE SOCIETY

Having been founded in 1909, the East Africa Natural History Society is the oldest scientific society in Kenya and, indeed, in the whole of East Africa. During the 74 years of its existence, the Society has known many notable occasions; the latest of these regrettably occured at this year's Annual General Meeting when Mr John S. Karmali, the Society's longest serving Chairman, resigned due to pressure of other commitments.

Mr Karmali is a well known Kenyan conservationist and bird photographer who has played a leading role in the development of interest in the natural sciences in East Africa, and particularly in Kenya. After joining the EANHS in 1946, he served as a member of its Executive Committee between 1948 and 1952 and was elected treasurer for the last two years of this period. He rejoined the Executive committee in 1966 and was elected its Chairman in March 1969; that he was annually re-elected to this post for the following 14 years reveals the confidence of the Executive Committee and of the membership as a whole in his leadership. His is an unparalleled record of service to the Society, and this year's Annual General Meeting unanimously commended him for his splendid leadership and devotion to duty.

In March of this year, the other members of the Executive Committee began considering how best to show their appreciation of their outgoing Chairman's sterling good work. Thoughts of presenting him with a Life Membership of the Society were thwarted by the fact that Mr Karmali became a Life Member in 1974, and in any case this form of recognition seemed hardly sufficient.

However, Article 5 of the Society's Constitution states that: "Patrons and Honorary Members shall be Heads of East African States, distinguished scientists and other such persons, as in the opinion of the Committee, shall have deserved this distinction". It is the opinion of the Executive Committee of the EANHS that Mr Karmali amply deserves the distinction of being a Patron of the Society, and this decision has been supported both by an unanimous ballot within the Executive Committee, and by further unanimous endorsement by the Annual General Meeting of April 18, 1983.

Mr John S. Karmali has thus become our first elected active Patron, and the Society would like to extend its warmest congratulations to him for this achievement, together with its sincere thanks for all the services that he has rendered over the years.

John O. Kokwaro

CHAIRMAN

East Africa Natural History Society.

A BIRD ATLAS FOR KENYA: FURTHER PROGRESS II

Subsequent to our 1982 articles in the EANHS *Bulletin* (pp. 64-70, 86-91 and, with A. Mutere, 105-109), the Kenya Bird Atlas project continues to progress. There are now over 32 500 post - 1970 presence records plus the two categories of breeding data entered on the maps, and further material continues to be sent in at a steady rate. Of particular note has been the recent arrival of Peter Britton's records; his contribution of 1 300 new atlas points has, in several cases, completely transformed our picture of species' distribution. We have decided to incorporate as many pre-1970 records as possible into the scheme, these now total over 3 000 (it should be explained that there are many more pre-1970 records in existence, this figure only includes those which have not been superceded by a post-1970 sighting). To this end, all relevant data have been extracted from Jackson's *Birds of Kenya Colony and the Uganda Protectorate* (1938) and, with Mary Sinclair's help, from the whole of the specimen collection at the National Museum, Nairobi. These old records provide much insight into species' range fluctuations over the years, which in some cases can be related to habitat modifications.

The financial side of the scheme appears to be quite healthy. We still hold grants totalling KSh. 8 800 from the EANHS to fund petrol costs for two expeditions into poorly covered areas and the Society has just voted us a further KSH. 1 000 to cover the scheme's stationary, postage and photocopying during 1983. In addition to this, the World Wildlife Fund has donated KSh. 40 000 towards the publication costs of the completed scheme, we are most grateful for this support.

We have produced an experimental double-page spread to give an idea of the proposed format and appearance of the completed atlas and, together with atlas-derived publications and other literature, this has been incorporated into a folio for showing to publishers.

The presentation of breeding data on the maps is proving very useful; in particular, a number of species seem to show a relatively compact, more or less centrally situated breeding area, surrounded by regions to which the birds only move during the non-breeding season (or to which only non-breeding birds move) see Fig. 1 for examples; this may prove a major step in the understanding of the ecology of many bird species in Kenya. However, in a scheme like the atlas, breeding records are certain to be in a minority, and thus we would like to make *a special plea here for more to be sent in*. Remember that, in the context of the atlas, we do not require either details of date (as long as it is post 1970) or progressive breeding behaviour observed; all that we need is a note of the place where breeding takes (took) place, plus whether the phenomena observed fit into our 'probable' or 'confirmed' categories. Although we listed the criteria defining these categories in the first of our *Bulletin* articles, we would like to reiterate them here to help stress the importance of this aspect of the study; these criteria are taken from Sharrock (1976).

Our 'confirmed' breeding category includes, firstly, the obvious points: eggs and/or young seen, or young birds in nest heard calling. However, in addition, 'confirmed' breeding is also demonstrated by any one or more of the following: adults carrying food to a nest: adults carrying faecal sacs away from the nest: adult seen sitting on a nest as if incubating, but contents of nest not visible: recently fledged or downy young seen: used nest or egg-shells found: adults performing distraction display or injury feigning. If you see *any* of these phenomena, breeding is *confirmed*. In addition to these points, there are a whole series of other phenomena that label breeding as 'probable'; you may feel that some of these criteria do not signify much, but nevertheless we would like to hear about them: nest building or excavating nest hole: agitated behaviour or anxiety calls from adults: visiting a probable nest site: courtship (including mating) and display: pair occupying territory

during the breeding (usually the wet) season/s: pair observed in suitable nesting habitat during the breeding season. As you can see, many of these 'probable' criteria are extremely simple and rapid to observe and record: *you cannot record too many of them - please send in as many records as possible.*

The atlas scheme is now entering its final phase. *While we shall continue to collect records until at least the end of 1983*, we are now using the species maps, overlays and reference literature to write a brief summary of each bird, which will form the text accompanying the maps in the finished book. ADL will work on these species accounts in Nairobi, while DEP compiles the introduction to the study in Kampala; D.J. Pearson has kindly offered to provide brief summaries of the Afrotropical distributions of Kenya's Palaearctic migrants.

The one great failure that we have to report is the total lack of formal entries for the competition to determine the species shown on the final map of our second article (EANHS *Bulletin* Fig. 5, 1982:90). With over a thousand species to choose from, we obviously greatly underestimated the difficulty of the task. The points that might be used to solve this puzzle are as follows:

1) we noted that it is a 'common and well known bird', thus ruling out any erudite obscurities; a definite 27 of these were again deleted by admitting that it was not a cisticola:

2) the complete absence of the bird from the coast rules out literally hundreds of species of seabirds, waders and species of the forests and other habitats of the coastal lowlands:

3) thus, with a few very important exceptions (see point 5), this is a highland species; our note that it is common and well known is supported by the almost complete map coverage from Kitale (quarter degree square 37c) to Amboseli (88c), and from Thika (76a) to Lake Victoria; a lot of people clearly know and see it:

4) closer examination of the map shows that it has been detected breeding in a high proportion of the atlas squares that comprise its range, which gives rise to two conclusions: (a) that, as well as being a well known bird, its breeding must be comparatively easy to detect; and (b) that it is relatively sedentary, i.e. that it does not wander far from its breeding areas (compare with Fig.3 of the same article, in which the Fish Eagle *Haliaetus vocifer* was shown to breed in relatively restricted areas of its Kenya range, while wandering widely from the breeding areas at other times). At this stage, several thinkers, usually in the course of imbibing beer with ADL, made the stab that it might be the Robin Chat *Cossypha caffra* and, but for the few presence records on Kenya's northern borders, this could well have been the case, though the Chat's breeding areas appear to be more restricted to the real 'highland' areas of the highlands. So,:

5) one would have to hunt through Britton's *Birds of East Africa* (1980) for a well known, presumably easily detectable relatively sedentary breeding species of the Kenya highlands, *which also occurs* (but does not breed) in northern Turkana and near Moyale (17a) - all true highland species are instantly ruled out. Ferreting through 'Britton', you would only have to get to number 194 for a good fit: the unknown species is the Crowned Crane *Balaerica pavonina* (the few records on Kenya's northern borders represent individuals from the separate population of this species that inhabits Ethiopia and the Sudan (Britton 1980)).

Further maps

We feel that one reason for the scheme's popularity with observers lies in the simplicity of the data requested; anyone with knowledge of only a few common species can contribute materially. With this in mind, plus the fact that many of the more intriguing distributions shown by our maps are those of the commoner birds that are usually incorrectly assumed to be ubiquitous, the maps chosen for this article illustrate our picture of some of the commonest and well known birds, the sparrows of the genus *Passer*. But even amongst the five members of this genus which occur in Kenya, there are profound differences. Four are

indigenous to this country while the fifth, the House Sparrow *P. domesticus*, that very well known familiar of man in Eurasia, is a localised species that has been introduced into East Africa. Similarly, whilst three of the indigenous species (the Chestnut *P. eminbey*, the Grey-headed *P. griseus* and the Rufous *P. motitensis* are familiar to most of us, the fourth, the Somali Sparrow *P. castanopterus* is a little known inhabitant of Kenya's northern deserts. The distributions of these five species are now considered in detail, with the aid of the transparent overlays that we have produced for the interpretation of the atlas maps.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the Rufous Sparrow. Breedong appears to be confined to an almost triangular area in the central highlands that lies mostly over 1 500 m in altitude, with rainfall predominantly over 500 mm per year. Around this central breeding area, the bird extends as a non-breeder to Lake Victoria in the west, and to Kitale (37c) and Maralal (38d) in the north; to the northeast and southeast of the highlands there is also a non-breeding dispersal along permanent rivers to decidedly lower and drier areas, i.e. altitudes of 500 m and below, and moisture index categories semi-arid and arid (40d, 52a, 7 b, 88d, 101a). It could be argued that this central breeding zone with its peripheral non-breeding area is a result of insufficient data, i.e. that the species would in fact be found breeding in many of these peripheral areas if specific searches were instituted. This criticism is possibly valid, but we feel that two points argue against it: (a) that the breeding zone is centralised and relatively compact and, (b) that many of the supposed non-breeding areas do in fact receive regular coverage by birdwatchers, so that breeding might be expected to have been noted at some time if it indeed occurs, e.g. Tsavo West and the Taitas, including all the lodges (88d, 89c, 101a, Amboseli (88c), Samburu (51b), Baringo (50a), Kisumu (60b), Kakamega (48d), Kitale-Saiwa-Kongelai (37c) etc.. In any event, we regard the hypothesis of the central breeding area to be valuable in that it indicates the areas in which simple observation of a very common and well known bird can significantly add to our knowledge of its ecology. Needless to say, if anyone *does* have breeding records from the 'non-breeding range' we would like to hear about them, as soon as possible !

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the Grey-headed Sparrow; we follow Britton (1980) in combining the four forms found in Kenya into a single species, rather than giving each specific status; (since we have absolutely no wish to become entangled in problems of nomenclature and taxonomy, the atlas as a whole will follow Britton precisely in these respects). Comparison of the Grey-headed Sparrow's distribution with that of the Rufous Sparrow (fig. 1) shows a fundamental difference: the Grey-headed extends all over Kenya from sea level to well over 2 000 m altitude. Similarly, it extends throughout the rainfall and moisture index regimes from the driest to the wettest and occurs in dry areas with no permanent rivers or other types of surface water. There seems to be no reason why the species would not be found in every quarter degree square in Kenya if all were visited. Similarly, breeding occurs throughout but is more common over 250 mm per year rainfall and 500 m altitude, and in areas that the moisture index categorises as semi-arid or damper. In great contrast to the centralised breeding zone of the Rufous Sparrow (fig. 1), all but one of the Grey-headed's breeding areas fall in a diffuse zone that runs south-westwards from Lake Victoria (60a), Kitale (37c) and Baringo (50c) to the coast. This zone does, of course, roughly approximate to the areas of Kenya that receive the highest birdwatching coverage, so that this factor may have decided the distribution of the breeding observed, particularly in view of the fact that birds in Kenya's arid northern and eastern regions breed only during the food abundance of those area's short-lived but often torrential rains, when access for birdwatchers is restricted or impossible; though the absence of breeding records from areas that have had *resident* observers (Lake Turkana, Wajir (42a) and Garissa (65b) might argue against this.

Figure 1: The distribution of the Rufous Sparrow in Kenya

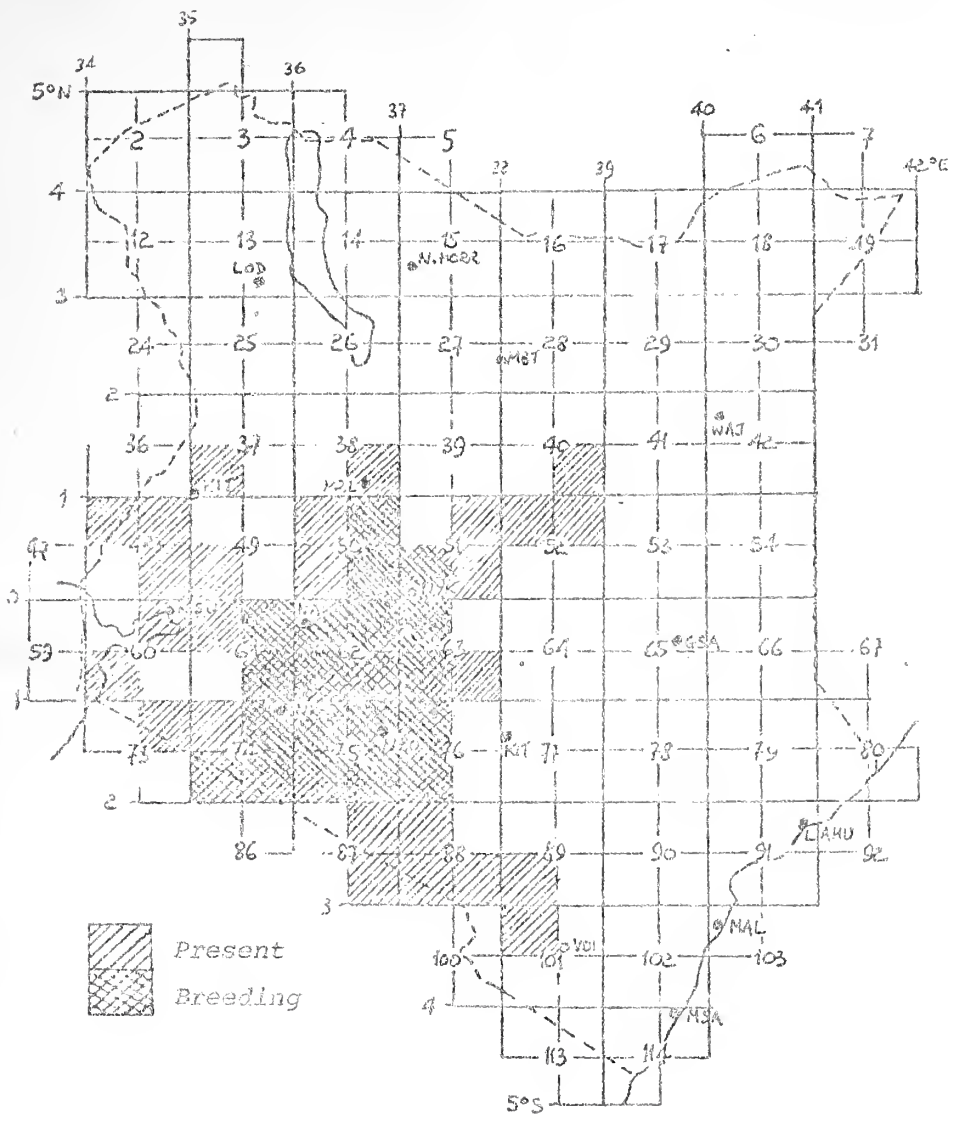
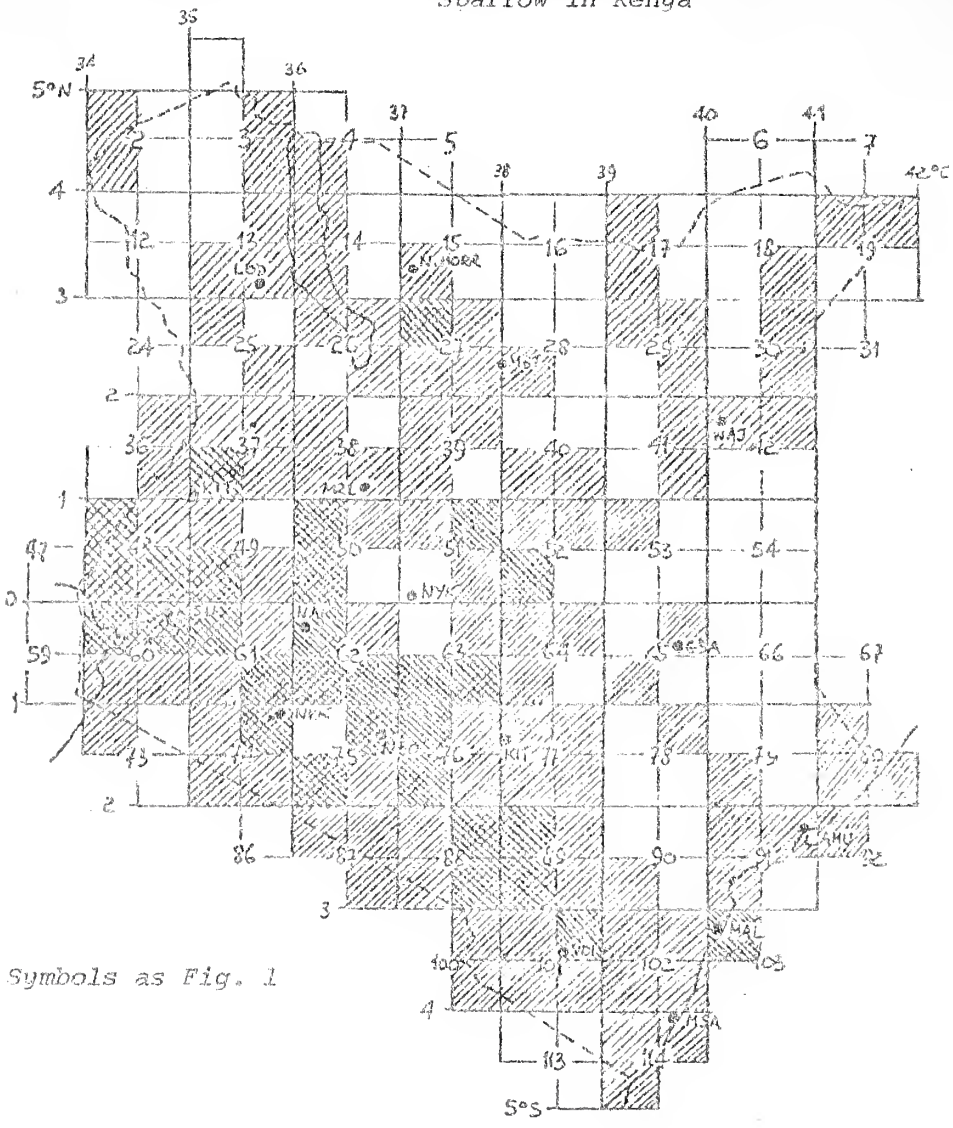
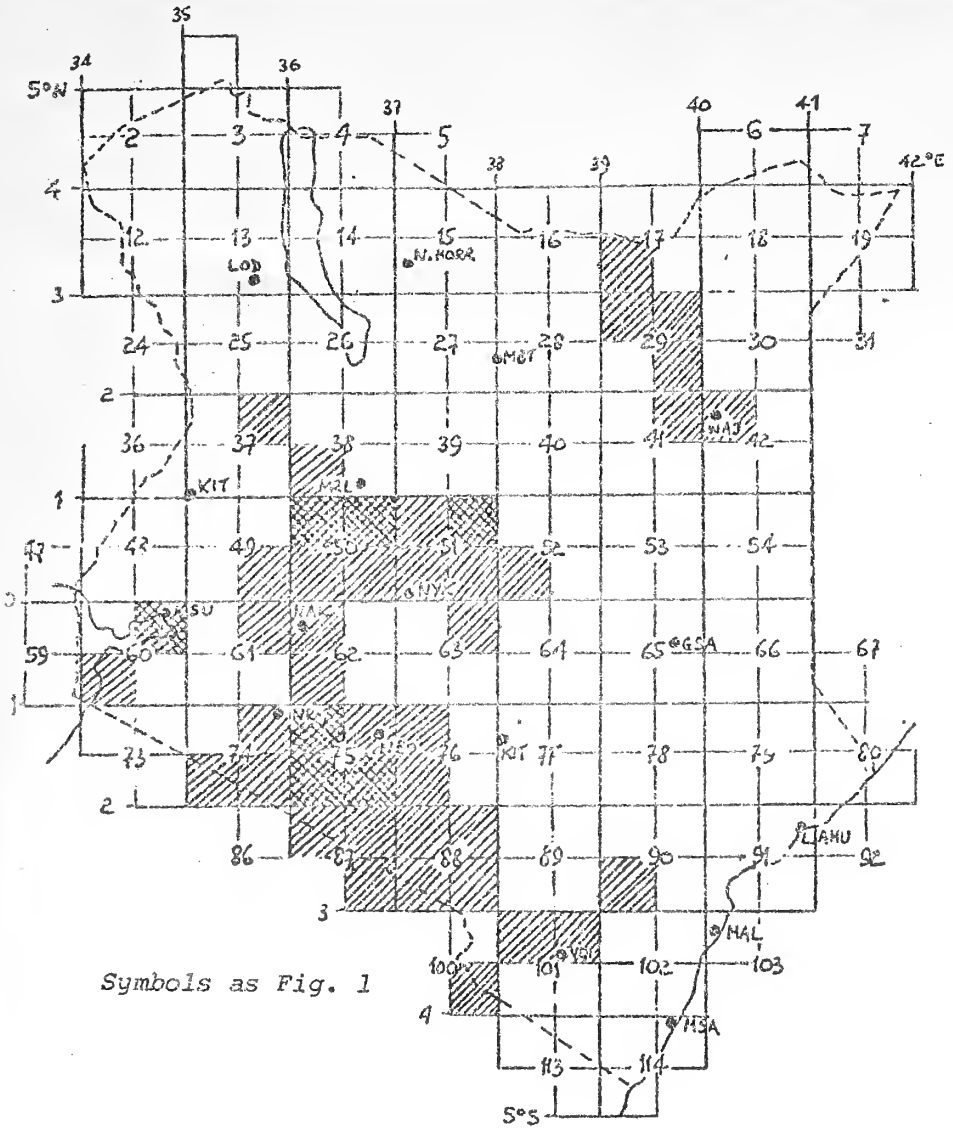


Figure 2: The distribution of the Grey-headed Sparrow in Kenya



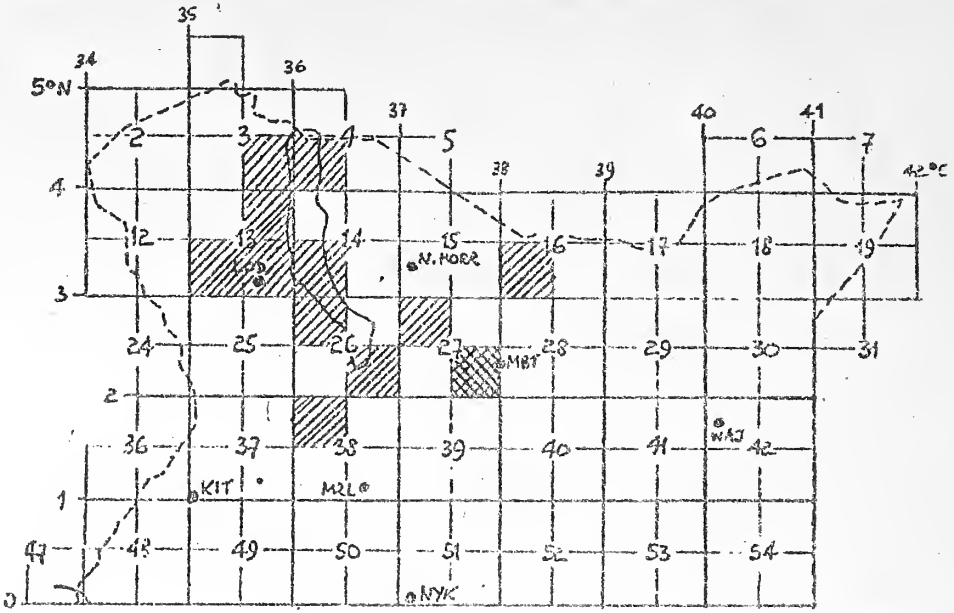
Symbols as Fig. 1

Figure 3: The distribution of the Chestnut Sparrow in Kenya



Symbols as Fig. 1

Figure 4a: The distribution of the Somali Sparrow in Kenya



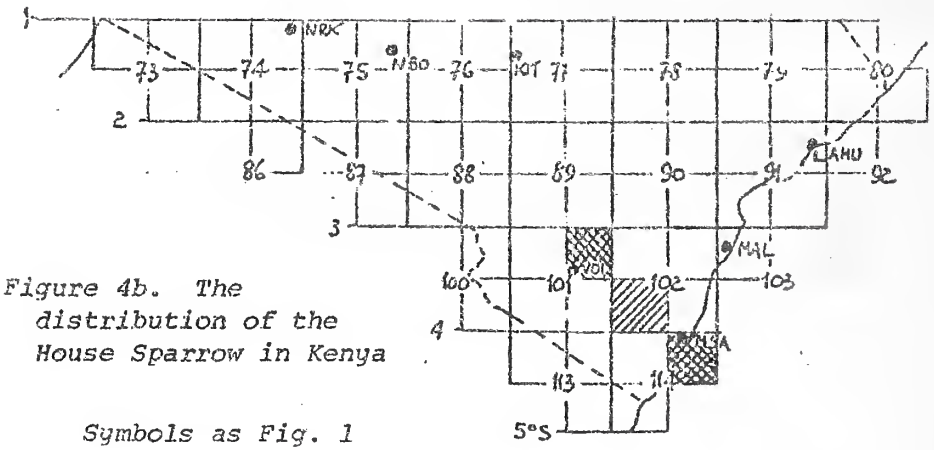


Figure 4b. The distribution of the House Sparrow in Kenya

Symbols as Fig. 1

The distribution of the Chestnut Sparrow is shown in Figure 3 and resembles that of the Rufous Sparrow (Fig. 1) except for two features: (a) the Chestnut is mostly peripheral to the highest parts of the highlands and, (b) there is a curious isolated batch of records in and around one degree square 29. Since the atlas maps show only the presence or absence of a species, they can never provide an absolute description of the abundance of its individuals. However, the number of atlas squares in which a species is recorded can give a crude estimate of its abundance, provided factors like nocturnal or other obscuring habits or difficulties in identification do not hinder its detection. Since the Chestnut Sparrow is a reasonably well known and distinctive diurnal species we disagree with Britton's (1980) view that it is mainly a bird of the Rift Valley and westwards, while only occurring locally to the east. Excluding the square 29 phenomenon, we have recorded it in 16 quarter degree squares in the rift and westwards, as against 22 to the east of the rift.

The records around one degree square 29 demonstrate the effect that a single observer can have in a remote, poorly covered area. The observations were made by D.A. Turner (pers. comm.) during a journey from Wajir (42a) to Moyale (17a) during the wet season, when the area was lush and green and many bird species were present/breeding. Here then is a point made under the discussion of the Grey-headed Sparrow; many birds occur/breed in the remote northern areas of Kenya only when the rains render them relatively inaccessible/unattractive to highlands-based birdwatchers. Britton (1980) mentions that this species wanders widely, and here is a striking example. Another example of this opportunistic breeding by many species after the rains was noted in the Kaisut desert of northern Kenya during 1981 (Lewis 1981a).

As with the preceding two species, the few breeding records of the Chestnut Sparrow are away from the driest areas; six of the seven breeding areas are semi arid, while all presence and breeding records with the exception of those of the square 29 phenomenon are in areas with over 250 mm per year rain. While the bird occurs throughout the altitude range (sea level to 2 000 + m), the breeding records are all within the range 500 - 2 000 m.

Figure 4a shows the distribution of the relatively unknown Somali Sparrow. The nominate race of this species is the "common house sparrow" of the coastal plain of northern Somalia, also extending to the adjacent highlands (Hall & Moreau 1970), but the race *P.c. fulgens* is a much less known bird which is endemic to the Lake Turkana basin and adjacent areas of Kenya, together with nearby border areas of Ethiopia (Hall & Moreau 1970; Britton 1980). While *fulgens* is resident and thus presumably regularly breeding in northern Kenya, it is seldom encountered by birdwatchers, and the first and in fact only breeding record was obtained as recently as 1981 (Lewis 1981b), though Terry Stevenson (pers. comm.) thinks that it breeds regularly around Kapedo (38c). A glance at the map (northern portion of Fig. 4) shows at once that it is a consistently 'lower and drier' species than the three so far considered. Nearly all of its records are under 1 000 m altitude, while several in the Lake Turkana basin are under 500 m: the two southernmost records (38a & c) show extension southwards via the rift valley, but further records south of Kapedo (38c) are unlikely due to the rift's increasing altitude as it enters the Kenya highlands. Most of the records are in areas with under 500 mm per year rainfall, and all but three (26d, 38a & c) are in climates categorised as arid by the moisture index. The single breeding record occurred at a time when the area (27d) was still relatively verdant after the long rains and many species were showing evidence of breeding activity. As with the 'square 29' records for the Chestnut Sparrow (Fig. 3), this is an instance of the major contributions that can be made by observers in northern and eastern Kenya during the wet seasons.

Figure 4b shows the distribution of the House Sparrow, and those who are familiar with its abundance in Europe will be surprised by the very restricted nature of its Kenya range. This localisation is due to the fact that it is

not indigenous to Kenya, but has been artificially introduced to Mombasa (114b), probably as an accidental passenger on large cargo ships from India. The records to the northwest of Mombasa both occur along the main Mombasa - Nairobi road and railway (Mariakani 102c; Voi 101b) and thus the bird seems to be making its way inland in large road vehicles and/or trains, i.e. in a similar manner to its ship-born introduction to Mombasa (Lewis 1983). There is an unconfirmed record from Mtito Andei (89c) (D.A. Turner pers. comm.) so any further records from railway stations and/or heavy vehicle stopping places between Mombasa and Nairobi would be most significant and worth reporting; something to watch out for. The birds at the Caltex petrol station near Voi (101b) have been breeding for all they are worth and it may be just a matter of time before the progression up the road/railway reaches Nairobi (75b), where the abundance of nesting sites and food could produce a population explosion that might cause considerable expense to the civic authorities (Lewis 1983). One factor which might arrest further expansion of the House Sparrow into the Kenya highlands is interspecific competition with the closely related Rufous Sparrow, which has been recorded in the quarter degree square to the west of Voi (Fig. 1); this latter species is, however, much less a commensal of man.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

We would like to thank all contributors for their support of the scheme so far. We look forward to more contributions.

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YOUR INITIALS

The published version of the Atlas will contain a section listing the names of all contributors. Will all those people concerned please forward to ADL their full Christian names or, alternatively, their initials as they would like them displayed in print.

Adrian D. Lewis, Geology, Box 30197, Nairobi

&

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WHITE-FACED SCOPS OWL BREEDING IN KISII

On 19 September 1982 a young owl, unable to fly, was brought to the school. It had been found on a nearby path. An attempt was made to keep it alive in the school laboratory by providing it with scraps of meat and water. However, on 25 September it was found dead in the cage. Later I heard that a second dead or dying specimen had been present in the same place.

The bird was identified as a White-faced Scops Owl *Otus leucotis* by the following characteristics: a broad, black band around a largely white facial disc and orange eyes. It had white outer edges to some of the scapulars. Also the size was near that given by Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1957) and by Williams (1963): length from bill to tail 23 cm; wing 16 cm; tail 7.5 cm long.

That it was a young bird was shown by the fact that it apparently could not fly and because the under-wing coverts did not cover the shafts of the primaries and secondaries. Also, as mentioned in Mackworth-Praed & Grant (*op. cit.*), the top of the head and the nape were the same vermiculated grey colour as the other feathers.

There were some features in which the bird did not agree with the description but, I think, this was also because it was a young bird. Although the feet and toes were feathered, these were rather hair-like, especially the latter. The horns were short and not conspicuously black-tipped but of the same colour as the feathers on the head.

This observation may be of interest as Brown and Britton (1980) have only three records and none for our region, B(5), north and north-east of Lake Victoria.

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Brother M. Maas, Cardinal Otunga High School, Mosocho, Box 520, Kisii.

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OBSERVATIONS OF A PAIR OF LANNER FALCONS *F. BIARMICUS* NESTING IN IRINGA, TANZANIA

17.6.82

Two birds, obviously falcons, were noticed for the first time as they swooped low over the main dual- carriageway into the town of Iringa (7°45'S 35°40'E) The species was not confirmed at this stage, due to bad light in the late evening.

23.6.82

One bird, well seen for several minutes perched on a ledge approximately 25 m up on the bell tower of the Roman Catholic Cathedral. The rufous crown was clearly visible and this, together with the large size and the pale underwing, confirmed the species as *F. biarmicus*.

26.6.82

Two birds seen, again in the immediate vicinity of the bell tower. Despite repeated efforts, no trace of a nest was seen, nor was either bird observed

carrying nesting material.
01.7.82

Again a good view of both birds, the larger (presumably the female) was perched on the ledge, the other was flying in the near vicinity.
18.7.82

Permission was obtained from the priests, who were very co-operative, to enter the bell tower and search for a nest or signs of nesting. The tower is brick-built and square and the bells are reached by means of a staircase inside the tower. The falcons themselves were not seen on this occasion but there was plenty of evidence of their presence. The birds apparently gained access to the tower through the windows at bell level, these were covered with weld-mesh, now broken in several places. The remains of three mice were found and there were feathers and droppings all over the belfry. We questioned some church going Tanzanian youths, who agreed that the birds had been around for several weeks and even confirmed the species by pointing to the correct bird when shown Plate 13 in Roberts *Birds of South Africa*.
20.7.82

One bird, possibly the male, seen flying away from the bell tower in a southerly direction.
26.7.82

At last the nest was located in a circular depression above the windows in the bell tower. The view from the road below was rather restricted and only the outer edge of the nest could be seen, however, the female was clearly visible, sitting. The nest was quite a neat arrangement of twigs and was already marked with white droppings, as was the wall of the tower below the site. There are similar depressions on the other three walls of the tower and we deduced that they were originally intended to house a four-faced clock.
27.7.82

The male bird was seen perched on the ledge above the nest site to the south-west, devouring prey. After eating his fill, he flew to the nest with the remains and left them there for the sitting female. She took about three minutes to eat, standing up towards the back of the nest and then flew on to the nearby church roof and deposited the remains there after giving the carcase a few more tugs. Unfortunately the prey was rather mangled by the male and was difficult to recognise. It was mammalian rather than avian. When the female rose to eat there was no sign of young underneath her, but the angle of view would preclude seeing eggs or very small chicks. After depositing the remains, the female returned to the nest and settled down again very quickly.
07.8.82

Female sitting on the nest, male not seen.
10.8.82

No adult birds on the nest, or flying in the vicinity. A number of chicks could be seen, their heads being just visible above the level of the nest. There was almost no movement by the chicks. However, it was possible to make out at least two chicks, completely white in colour.
14.8.82

Female sitting on the nest, some chicks seen but impossible to count. Male bird not seen.
23.8.82

Chicks now larger and more mobile and as they approached the front of the nest, four were counted. The feathers of the head, breast and back downy white with heavy spotting on the upper breast and at least two of the young birds were showing a hint of the rufous crown. All four chicks moving about the nest from one side to the other. They appeared to be almost as big as the female bird but one chick was definitely smaller than the others.
25.8.82

All four young birds well seen in the nest, all very mobile and moving

about all over the nest. One bird actively preening the wing feathers. Some downy feathers still on the head and back, the breast heavily spotted and on two of the birds there was a hint of the moustachial stripe as well as a fairly marked rufous crown. The backs of all four birds was mottled black and white, while the wing coverts appeard to be very fluffy. The parent birds were not viewed on this occasion.

It is hoped that at least two more visits to Iringa will be possible in the near future, before the young birds fly. It is also interesting to note that the bells of the cathedral are rung with gusto every Sunday and on other special occasions and that the Lanners' nest is no more than three metres above the bells.

Elizabeth Boswell, P.O. Box 23, Mufindi, Tanzania.

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SIDE - STRIPED JACKAL

On 13 April 1983 at about 08.00 h we were driving along the road between Lolgorien and the Siria escarpment where there is open bush country. A few kilometres before the foot of the escarpment we noticed a pair of Lappet-faced cultures *Torgos tracheliotus* not far from the road watching something at a nearby carcase. For a better view we passed another bush and stopped. The "something" turned out to be a Side-striped Jackal *Canis adustus* feeding on the leftover of a kill (zebra) and fiercely defending it against the other scavengers around, some African White-backed Vultures *Gyps africanus*, Hooded Vultures *Neophron monachus* and one Black-backed Jackal *Canis mesomelas*. With hairs raised and tail lifted like an angry cat the Side-striped Jackal looked quite impressive. This is the first time we have seen this jackal in this area.

A. Lohding, Lolgorien, Box 93, Kilgoris.

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MOORLAND CHEETAH

It would be interesting to know if any other members have observed Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus* on the moorland zone of Mt. Kenya.

In March we saw a single animal at about 4000 m whilst walking on the Sirimon Track above the high altitude airstrip. It was walking on the path up the mountain but at our approach it disappeared in the ericaceous scrub before we had recovered enough from our surprise to examine it more closely; and the altitude was not exactly conducive to dashing on up the track for a second look.

After about three hours walking on the same day we were lucky enough to see a Cheetah again at an even higher altitude. It was walking on the crest of a hill way above us and after a short walk lay down in the typical cheetah position with the head up, partly hidden in the tufted high altitude grass.

We wondered if it was the same animal or is the cheetah common

above 4000 - 4500 m ?

On a previous visit we had seen many Bushbuck *Tragelaphus scriptus*, Bush Duiker *Silvicapra grimmia* and many small rodents as well as Jackson's Francolin *Francolinus jacksoni*, however, these were not seen in any number on the day the cheetah was observed. It would appear likely that there would be ample food available at this altitude, although it would seem impossible for the cheetah to use its normal hunting methods of chasing and running down the prey among the moorland scrub and tufted grassland.

Lise Campbell, Box 14469, Nairobi.

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AGGRESSIVE DISPLAY BY SNAKES

On 2 September 1978 at 10.00 h I was driving up the Great North Road from Isenya towards Athi River in bright sunshine when I saw two snakes disporting themselves on the tarmac road. Both snakes were about four feet long and as thick as a man's wrist, but one seemed slightly smaller than the other.

The larger snake repeatedly crawled on top of the smaller one from behind, ending with its head close behind that of the smaller snake and the curve of its body overlapping the smaller snake on both sides. Then either the smaller snake crawled out from underneath or the larger one threw itself convulsively into the air, several times landing flat on its back. They continued in this way for about ten minutes, (ignoring my vehicle, myself and a group of interest Masai spectators) before departing together, pushing against each other with their necks, into the long grass of the roadside verge.

The snakes were pale straw colour with dusky, cryptic markings along the flanks and rough scales. The belly was yellow with smooth, shiny scales. The heads were triangular, with the rear corners sticking well out in front of a long tapering neck. I think they were Puff Adders *Bitis arietans* which are common in the area.The vigorous activity shown, especially by the larger snake, was in marked contrast to the usual sluggishness of this species.

These snakes were probably rival males. Such aggressive or threatening displays have been reported before but are rarely seen. (Snakes that carry on like this on public roads stand a very good chance of getting run over.)

Jo Darlington, c/o Section of Entomology, National Museums of Kenya, Box 40658, Nairobi.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

In answer to the letter in the last (January/April *Bulletin* from Daphne Sheppard who observed squirrels eating honey in her garden. It is quite normal for bush squirrels *Paraxerus ochraceous* to include nectar in their diet. Bush Squirrels, like most squirrels, are opportunist omnivores and in the wild will consume a wide range of foods of both plant and animal origin (e.g. insects and birds eggs for the latter), as available and their catholic tastes will be well known to those of your readers who keep

bird tables in bush squirrel country. Kingdon, in his *Mammals of East Africa* Vol.IIb notes that *P. ochraceous* will 'pluck flowers, eating the reservoir of nectar and discarding the petals'; East African Ground Squirrels *Xerus rutilus* go one further and eat the entire flower.

Jill Cambell, Box 14469, Nairobi.

Sir,

I plan to set up an aquarium of local fresh water fish and plants and would like to appeal to your readers for assistance in obtaining stock for this project.

Fish (excluding our local Nairobi varieties) should not exceed 15 cm in length. Please send between 10 - 20 small and shoaling fish; others 5 - 10. I would be grateful for any information you may have concerning their source, habits and identity

Plants should be submerged. Those with floating leaves are not suitable. Please send 5 - 10 plants of each variety and advise as many particulars of source, type of water etc. as possible.

Polythene bags for packing and, if necessary, a bottle of oxygen can be lent to you. The cost of sending by Peugoet Service or similar will be refunded. My house telephone is Nairobi 25134. Thank you in anticipation.

John Worth, Box 50708, Nairobi.

Sir,

From time to time over the past several years I have called at the Society's office and asked, indeed implored, the Hon. Secretary and even the Chairman himself to have nestboxes manufactured on behalf of the Society for sale to Members or anyone who might want to buy them.

In my area of Karen/Langata so many trees (particularly dead trees with suitable nesting holes) have been cut down that, unless birds are adaptable to changing their nesting sites, as some are, I fear a diminution of the number of birds dependant on holes in trees in which to nest.

Anyhow what fun it would be to have a few nestboxes of various sizes in one's garden and just see what species would use them.

I have BTO Field Guide No.3 "Nestboxes" with diagrams etc., and would willingly lend this to the Society if they will engage a carpenter and have some boxes made. It appears to be quite a simple task to anyone less incompetent than myself at carpentry.

So, if you would like to buy nestboxes and put them up in your garden, do please write in to the Hon. Secretary to support this suggestion.

Eric Risley, Box 24751, Nairobi.

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THE FUTURE OF THE NAIROBI ANNUAL BIRD CENSUS

The following two letters on the subject of the Nairobi Annual Bird Census have been received by the Society:

THOUGHTS ON THE ANNUAL BIRD CENSUS IN NAIROBI

What, I am tempted to ask, is the point of this annual census? Few will deny that taking part in it can be fun. As to other positive aspects, I am less sure. It kindles enthusiasm of course, and maybe introduces a few more

folk each year to the delights of birdwatching. But does it tell us much about the birds of Nairobi, except that they are largely unpredictable, which we already knew?

Take our garden, for instance, some two hectares of ex-coffee farm in Lower Kabete, left with a few old fig and eucalyptus trees. We began to change its ecology some thirteen years ago by planting a large number of trees and shrubs, exotic and indigenous, most of them said to be attractive to birds.

When we moved in in 1970 the scolding calls of Fiscals, two on either side of the house and a couple more thrown in for good measure, almost succeeded in transforming me into a birdhater. This was counteracted by frequent sightings of the Long-crested Eagle (the Society's emblem) and the discovery of the Red-throated Wryneck who, patronising the birdbath just outside a window, kept me sane on the other side of the glass through many frustrating struggles with my telephone.

I have been checking through our admittedly spasmodic records, and see that while the Long-crested Eagle was sighted fairly regularly, either in the garden or in trees and sky around it, from 1970 to 1976, it has not been seen here since, until one brief overflight in early October last year. Meanwhile Augur Buzzards are frequently around. Now, we sometimes see one Fiscal, sometimes none. Where have they gone? We have neither seen nor heard the Red-throated Wryneck since October 1978. The Northern Pied Babbler was a frequent if irregular resident, in flocks of four to six, from 1973 - 79 but has not been seen or heard since, and the Tawny-flanked Prinia resident in 1970 - 72 appears to have sought fresh fields. In April 1976, well over 100 Green Pigeons exploded one evening from one of our fig trees. Now we rarely see or hear them, though three were decent enough to drop by for the annual census. Common Bulbuls, Baglafecht's and Holub's Weavers, Streakey Seedeaters, Fire Finches and Olive Thrushes were common when we came, as they are now, but skulkers, desirable in our eyes as photgraphic models, continued resolutely to take cover in the wild uncleared bottom of the garden. On the positive side some of these ex-skulkers, the Robin Chat and Ruppell's Robin Chat now make frequent use of the birdbaths near the house; a pair of Tropical Boubou Shrikes, who once mocked us from afar, loved our tree fuschia until had to be pruned to allow humans a little light - and will, no doubt, love it again. The Green-headed Sunbird made its first appearance in November 1981. So there have been pluses as well as minuses.

Which brings me to my final point. This year's census day, as we all know, was extremely wet, reducing our score to the lowest ever, 28 species. But three days earlier on a sunny evening, we inadvertantly disturbed an African Wood Owl (our first sighting in this garden) from his perch; and in the two days prior to the census our birdbaths were visited by, among others, the Greenheaded Sunbird, an Eastern Double-collared Sunbird, a Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird and a male Blackcap, all of whom would have lent lustre to our list, not to mention the regulars who wisely remained under cover on a wet Sunday

So, to return to the beginning, what is the point? Or, more constructively, can we do more with the figures obtained than just summarise the species and numbers seen? Can we glean useful comparisons? Or will it continue as just one fun day a year? - weather permitting!

Joan Karmali, Box 42202, Nairobi.

THE 1982 BIRD CENSUS

Those of us who braved the elements to participate in the Society's 1982 bird census saw some interesting birds and had a good time, especially at the convivial get-together at the Malobas' house in the evening.

The combination of rainy weather and a poor turnout, however, meant that the total day's list was not truly representative of the variety of birds found in the Nairobi area. We have therefore decided not to publish the list. The 1982 bird census, like the rest of that unfortunate year, is best forgotten.

Should we have an annual bird census at all? And if so, in what form?

The Annual bird census was started in 1978 by the Society's executive committee, and organised by John Gerhart. It is based on the success of the American "Christmas Counts". In the United States, local groups all over the country take part in these annual counts, held over the Christmas and New Year period. The census area there is a 15 - mile- diameter circle, if I remember correctly. Great care is taken by the organisers to place the circle over the most varied habitats! The Christmas Counts are almost a sporting activity, and there is great rivalry among local groups as to who will get the biggest species count.

There has been some recent criticism that the Nairobi census is not "scientific" enough, and it isn't scientific, but it has been good fun in the past. Finally, someone has to organise any type of census, and someone has to compile and analyse the results. Following John Gerhart's posting to Cairo, Dennie Angwin, Pat Wootton and myself took on this task. We have done it long enough. Is anyone else willing to help?

Please fill out the enclosed questionnaire and return it to the Society. Please only fill it out if you are fairly sure that you will be able to participate. You might like to bear the following ideas in mind:

Perhaps the annual "census" should concentrate on listing species only and leave out numbers, which are bound to be highly inaccurate? Perhaps the Society should have more intensive and scientific counts of smaller areas instead?

Fleur Ng'weno, Box 42271, Nairobi.

I would like to fully endorse the views given above. As it stands, the annual census IS a lot of fun - I enjoy belting around the Athi River Basin Circuit of the Nairobi National Park trying to find over 100 species - and it is a valuable way for Society members to meet and to participate in outdoor activities together.

But, in terms of any serious scientific purpose, it contains far too many variables to be of any real use: differing census dates; too few censuses per year; varying numbers of observers and so varying amounts of Nairobi covered; varying competence of observers, leading to uneven coverage of the more obscure species; insufficient data on climate, vegetation etc.

IF we wish to do something more significant, it would, as Fleur says, be far, far better to survey a SMALLER AREA MORE OFTEN: the sort of results that can be derived from such an exercise are well shown by Derek Pomeroy and Beatrice Tengecho's article *The importance of dams* (EANHS *Bulletin* 1982:77-85). Furthermore, if we decided to survey a small area on a regular (monthly, quarterly or whatever) basis, it would be useful to have at least one fully competent observer in each team, so that obscure species are not left as 'small brown birds'.

In her letter, Fleur mentions a questionnaire aimed at determining the sort of survey that we, the Society members, would like in the future. Such a questionnaire is a good idea, but I have taken the liberty of omitting it for the time being since, before asking for volunteers for the survey teams, there is one crucial position that has to be filled first: an ORGANISER for the whole project.

Occupied as I am with the Kenya bird atlas, I certainly have no time for such a job and, as far as I know, the same goes for the members of both the

Executive Committee and the Ornithological sub-Committee of the Society. However, I and others would certainly be willing to help with the interpretation of the results, and to give advice on methods.

So we are, first of all, asking for volunteers for this post of co-ordinator, a person or persons to be responsible for organising the various volunteers into teams, for ensuring that the study site/s receive/s regular and adequate coverage and for collating the results of the surveys. If such an organiser is forthcoming, we will go further ahead, if not then we will forget the whole concept in any form.

Lastly, I want to emphasise the element of choice here. I am not trying to be a wet blanket and there is absolutely NO compulsion to opt for a more significant and scientific scheme. As it stands, the census IS a lot of fun and, if an organiser can be found, we CAN continue it along the present lines. But, if we want to have the present fun AND the feeling of doing something eminently constructive and worthwhile, then we should change our aims and methods.

Adrian D. Lewis, Geology, Box 30197, Nairobi.

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REVIEWS

THE MARSH LIONS by Brian Jackman and Jonathan Scott, 1982. London: Elm Tree Books. Pp. 224 with numerous colour photographs and black and white drawings. £12.50

I hesitated to take this on, as all reports indicated that its anthropomorphic level almost had the lions talking to the authors . . . !

However, I read it, cover to cover, while in camp myself in the Mara. I know the area backwards (even some of the characters) and from many years of experience of similar circumstances, when lions, individual lions, take on particular characteristics and personalties of their own, I found it difficult to fault in any way.

In stark contrast to much of the material that has been published on Africa, particularly Kenya, in recent years, I found the book totally readable from cover to cover. It is not necessary to be a 'Wildlife Expert', or a Scientist, (or even a Safari Guide!) to thoroughly enjoy it.

It does not come across as a book of superb photographs, illustrating an excellent text, neither is it a book of readable text, illustrated by excellent photographs . . . to my mind, it is an extremely well done *combination* of both.

It does what it says it will do, right on the front cover, and tells the Story of an African Pride . . . very well indeed.

Peter Davey, Box 15007, Nairobi.

THE BIRDS OF AFRICA Volume 1. Ostrich - Birds of Prey by L.H. Brown, E.K. Urban and K. Newman, 1982. London: Academic Press. Illustrated by Martin Woodcock and Peter Hayman. Pp. 521, 32 plates (28 colour, 4 black and white). Price not shown.

This is the first of a set of four volumes, which when complete will cover the avifauna of the entire African continent. It is the first of its type covering the continent as a whole, and is a tribute to the late Leslie Brown who sadly died before the completion of this first volume.

As shown in the acknowledgements, many leading authorities on various families and groups have co-operated and critically examined the early drafts

of this volume, such a wealth of knowledge drawn from ornithologists both throughout the continent and in other countrie make this first volume a truly team production.

A 28 page introduction gives readers a concise and informative over all view into:

a) The main features of the African bird faunas (complete with topographical and vegetation maps).

b) Some suggestions for future research on African birds.

c) A detailed account of the scope, content and layout of this first volume.

Readers are advised that this new handbook is prepared by field ornithologists mainly for field ornithologists, though taxonomy and systematics have not been completely forgotten. All species accounts include details covering range and status, description, field characters, voice, general habits, food and breeding habits. Major references for each species are also given at the end of every species account.

A map accompanies each species account, but sadly on closer inspection many are inaccurate and misleading. Certainly more attention to detail and accuracy should have been paid to such an important feature of the book, and one that most readers glance at first. To cite a few examples from an East African viewpoint: Black Heron, Saddle-billed Stork, Glossy Ibis, White-backed Duck, Pygmy Goose, Cape Wigeon, Osprey, Hooded Vulture and Booted Eagle are all shown as occurring throughout Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, yet such species as Bat Hawk, Swallow-tailed Kite, African Fish Eagle and African Marsh Harrier are shown as being generally or almost totally absent from Kenya. In other cases maps show distribution in countries where the species has not even been recorded: Cassin's Hawk Eagle is shown as occurring over a sizeable portion of western Tanzania, yet there are no records at all from that country. Bean Goose is shown as occurring as a vagrant in Nigeria, when in fact the record was from central Mali. Similarly the inclusion of a dubious record of Red Kite from South Africa is unfortunate, as this has now been officially deleted from the southern African list. There is still no record of the Red Kite from sub-Saharan Africa.

The illustrations by Martin Woodcock and Peter Hayman are generally of a high standard, with the colour reproduction and printing equally so. One minor criticism that can be voiced is that too many species are crammed into some plates, particularly Anatidae. Also whether so many palaearctic species, occurring only in the extreme north of Africa warrant inclusion in full colour when they are only marginally represented on the continent. I feel it is unfortunate that the four plates of birds of prey in flight are in black and white; this would have been so much more meaningful and a more useful flight identification guide had they been depicted in colour. I personally see little use in having any black and white plates in any bird book, especially a major handbook such as this.

This first volume ends with a fine and detailed bibliography covering both general and regional references, as well as references for each of the families covered in this volume. This section of the book will certainly be welcomed by all readers and researchers.

The printing of the book is of an extremely high standard, and hopefully the irritations I found with the maps will be rectified in the three future volumes. I am sure that the new joint editors of Volumes 2 - 4, ably assisted by their Editorial advisory board will set as high a standard as possible in the forthcoming volumes, and incorporate the vast amount of knowledge and data that, over the years, has been scattered through dozens of journals and other publications, many of which are simply not available to workers in Africa. It is to be hoped that the publishers will not delay too long in the publication of the remaining volumes. Costs of bird books seem to increase by leaps and

bounds almost annually and such an important and major reference work should be within the reach of all pockets.

This series will be a handsome gift for anyone with an interest in African birds, and will justly grace any library, bookshelf or coffee table.

D.A. Turner, Box 48019, Nairobi.

THE FLORA OF TROPICAL EAST AFRICA (F.T.E.A)

The following 5 parts were published 5.11.1982 by A.A. Balkema, P.O. Box 1675, Rotterdam.

AMARYLLIDACEAE by Inger Nordal (Oslo) pp.31. Fig.9. Price £2.30

BALSAMINACEAE by C. Grey-Wilson (Kew) pp. 77. Fig.12. Price £5.30

CRUCIFERAE by Bengt Jonsell (Stockholm) pp.74. Fig.25. Price £5.00

GRAMINAE part 3, by W.D. Clayton & S.A. Renvoise (Kew) pp.447. Fig 85. Price £24.50

RUTACEAE by J.O. Kokwaro (Nairobi) pp.52. Fig.13. Price £3.50

The F.T.E.A, whose preparation began at Kew in 1949, is the basic work on the vascular plants of Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania on which all other less comprehensive or more popular works dealing with the plants of these countries must depend for the accuracy of their nomenclature. It provides detailed descriptions with keys for every taxon and one or more full page line drawings for almost all genera. When complete it will consist of some 220 parts, one for each family and up to 4 parts for the largest families. 113 of these parts have now appeared. Parts published up to 1978 may be obtainable from the three East African Government Printers or from the Text Book Centre, Box 47540, Nairobi.

The costs of preparation of this flora have always been borne by the employers of the editorial staff at Kew and of the individual authors, i.e. principally by the British Government. The cost of printing was until 1978 borne by the three East African Governments or the East African Community who received the income from sales. When the community broke up in 1978 publication ceased, although the preparation of typescript and illustrations for further parts continued. East African scientists (not only botanists, for many others need to know the names of plants) must always be grateful to the well known publishers, A.A. Balkema for making resumed publication on a commercial basis possible. It is regrettable that ever increasing printing costs have led to prices beyond the reach of most people in East Africa. The prices quoted here are applicable in the Netherlands: they include postage if payment is included with the order, but for orders amounting to less than £10 a handling charge of £1.50 must be added. A very generous discount has been offered to the EANHS in order to reduce prices to customers in tropical Africa if exchange control difficulties can be overcome and a suitable sales mechanism arranged.

The most important of the parts now reviewed is Gramineae part 3 which deals with the large tropical tribes Paniceae and Andropogoneae containing 481 of the 858 East African grass species and 79 of the 185 genera and closes with an index to the whole family. The largest genus is *Panicum* with 68 species, not quite so large as *Eragrostis* with 71 species in part 2. The value of grasses as food (cereals) and fodder and their abundance from sea shore to the high mountains hardly need stressing. It is perhaps worth mentioning that, popular opinion not withstanding, over most of East Africa the grass cover is more important for soil conservation than trees and bushes.

Inger Nordal's account of the Amaryllidaceae deals with 23 native species in 7 genera and gives a useful key to 15 non-native species commonly

cultivated here.

Agapanthus and *Tulbaghia* are not included and it is presumably intended that these should be treated as members of a separate family the Alliceae. True Amaryllids as the family is now defined have bulbs and are usually very ornamental the 'fire ball lily' *Scadoxus (Haemanthus) multiflorus* being the most beautiful bulbous plant in Africa. Often the bulb is poisonous and in one or two instances the alkaloides are of possible value in the control of cancer.

The Balsaminaceae with one genus *Impatiens* has 70 species in East Africa, all with attractive flowers, some of which are grown as ornamentals. They inhabit hilly or mountainous places and all require plentiful moisture so that not one has been found in Somalia all of which is too dry.

The Cruciferae (Cabbage family) has 53 E. African species in 21 genera, several of which are introduced weeds or escapes from cultivation. They are often edible and hot to the taste and never poisonous. They are usually cold-loving, being represented both on arctic and antarctic islands, and it is not surprising to find 5 species including the endemic genus *Oreophyton* ("mountain plant" in Greek) at altitudes of 4 200 m or more on E. African mountains and only one species, a water cress *(Rorippa)* as low as 100 m near the coast. Rather surprisingly, the Cruciferae are also prominent in middle eastern semi deserts (which are cold at night in winter) and 3 of these genera *(Farsetia, Matthiola* and *Ceratostigma)* have been found in the NFD.

Members of the EANHS will be pleased to see the work of their chairman, Professor Kokwaro, in the account of the Rutaceae. This aromatic family has 52 species in 14 genera in E. Africa, including the introduced *Citrus*. It is represented in Europe by herbs such as the Rue *(Ruta)* and in South Africa chiefly by hundreds of shrubby species with tiny ericoid leaves but here by trees, shrubs or lianes with normal leaves, the most striking being the Cape Chestnut *Calodendrum* ("Beautiful tree" in Greek).

Rutaceae may form 20 - 30 % of the biomass in Nairobi forests.

It is excellent news that Balkema announces 9 further parts to appear in 1983 - 4. Of these 2 parts to complete the Orchidaceae will be the most important, two will deal with medium-sized families, Lobeliaceae and Myrsinaceae and 5 with tiny families.

J.B. Gillett, E.A. Herbarium, Nairobi.

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WORLD CONGRESS OF HERPETOLOGY

By recent action of the officers and official representatives of the major national and international herpetological societies, an international committee has been established to plan the first World Congress of Herpetology. The congress will be held in 3 - 5 years at a site yet to be selected. The Planning Committee consists of:

DONALD G. BROADLEY (Zimbabwe)
HAROLD G. COGGER (Australia)
J.C. DANIEL (India)
ILYA S. DAREVSKY (U.S.S.R.)
MARINUS S. HOOGMOED (Netherlands)
TOSHIJIRO KAWAMURA (Japan)
MICHAEL R.K. LAMBERT (U.K.)
HUBERT SAINT GIRONS (France)
P.E. VANZOLINI (Brazil)
DAVID B. WAKE (U.S.A.)
KRAIG ADLER (U.S.A.), Secretary-general

The congress will be organized to include a wide range of topics, to appeal to all persons interested in the scientific study of amphibians and reptiles. The committee currently is setting guidelines for operation, including the establishment of a larger and broadly representive International Herpetological Committee to provide a self-perpetuating mechanism for future congresses.

The Planning Committee solicits comments from the herpetological community on all aspects, in particular the choice of a convenient site and content of the congress. Potential hosts for the congress are also invited to communicate. Further announcements will be published in this journal.

Address comments or questions to any member of the Planning Committee or to the Secretary-General: Professor Kraig Adler, Cornell University, Section of Neurobiology and Behaviour, Seeley G. Mudd Hall, Ithaca, New York 14853, U.S.A.

The above notice was recently received from Dr Broadley whose address is:

Dr D.C. Broadley,
Curator of Herpetology, National Museum,
Box 240, Bulawayo,
ZIMBABWE.

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BUTTERFLY RESEARCH

Would any member of the East Africa Natural History Society be interested in helping a research team in England to breed Swallowtail butterflies? The team is led by Professor Sir Cyril Clarke F.R.S. and the main breeding unit is at the Nuffield Department of Medical Genetics, University of Liverpool.

At the moment we are investigating the inheritance of wing patterns in species crosses and the species we are interested in are *Papilio dardanus* and *P. phorcas*.

For the last four years I have been visiting Nairobi and working in the Department of Animal Physiology by kind consent of Professor Maloiy. My purpose is to catch females of the two species, set them up to lay and then take the eggs and larvae back to England where we can raise broods. Our greatest problem is feeding the larvae as they eat *Teclea*, which we cannot successfully grow in England. Would anyone be willing to post us packets of *Teclea* leaves regularly, say once a week, 1st. Class Air Mail Letter Post? We would, of course, pay the postage.

Perhaps anyone interested in our project would write to:
Sir C.A. Clarke F.R.S., Nuffield Dept. of Medical Genetics, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, England.

We would be delighted if anybody would like to try breeding these butterflies in Kenya. I might stress that it is the enthusiastic amateur who is our greatest help. Sir Cyril will send all details of what is involved.

We have one or two Kenyan butterfly catchers who can recognise and catch the butterflies we want but nobody who can spare the time trying to breed from the females they catch. If you have a *Teclea* tree in your garden you should have no problem.

Alison Gill (Mrs), (Research assistant to Sir C.A. Clarke) c/o Dept. of Animal Physiology, Box 30197, Nairobi.

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SOCIETY EXCURSION TO OLOLUA, NAIROBI

Despite heavy rain in other parts of Nairobi, about 35 members arrived at the Ololua Ridge home of Val and Dave Richards on May 8 to find an overcast but dry day. The morning's activities consisted of a long walk, led by DKR, through areas of the Ololua Forest, with much of interest to both birdwatchers and botanists; birds of note included a fine adult Great Sparrowhawk (all names as in Britton's *Birds of East Africa* 1980), and good close views of a pair of Black-collared Apalises. After this, although many had brought their own lunch, the needy and greedy and indeed anyone who felt like it were provided with a superb lunch by Val Richards, which was an unexpected and distinctly friendly gesture.

After this pile of food, a great show was made of having enough energy to get across the Richards' front garden to examine the apparently peaceful field in front of their house, but those who fondly anticipated a leisurely after-lunch amble soon had their composure discomfited by the ferocious attacks of a pair of Black-winged Plovers which, with a brood of chicks fleeing through the grass some way off, were intent on either luring us away with broken wing displays, or driving us off via apparently kamikaze sorties at our heads and two elderly dogs, who had accompanied us, only deviating from their targets at the very last appalling second. Ducking to avoid these onslaughts did wonders for the after-lunch digestion, but we nevertheless continued across the field to flush a roosting Montane Nightjar from an eucalyptus grove where this species nests.

The day was rounded off with another 2½ hour walk, in blazing sunshine, through the forest and adjacent areas. Few birds of note except a female Brown-backed Woodpecker and a Yellow-whiskered Greenbul were seen, but the White-starred Forest Robin and, our only notable mammal of the day, Sykes Monkey *Cercopithecus mitis* were heard. The day ended at 5.30 p.m. with yet more refreshments chez Richards, together with good views of an African Goshawk, and of the placid Ngong Hills.

Over 8 hours after we had arrived, we left with a bird list of 85 species, and with grateful thanks to Val and Dave for an excellent day.

REFERENCE:

Britton, P.L. (ed.). 1980. *Birds of East Africa their habits, status and distribution*. Nairobi: EANHS.

Adrian D. Lewis, Geology, Box 30197, Nairobi.

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PAGINATION OF THE *BULLETIN*

Members will have noticed that the gremlins were at work during the production of the Jan - April issue and page 22 appeared as page two. Therefore, this issue is numbered from page 23 although the last *Bulletin* apparently finished on page 21. Apologies for this error.

Ed.

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FOR SALE

SPECIAL OFFER TO SOCIETY MEMBERS

The Ornithological Sub-Committee, with the kind permission of the artist, offer for sale an original Rena Fennessy watercolour, depicting three migratory birds (Irania, Sprosser and River Warbler) occurring at Ngulia Safari Lodge, and as shown in *Birds of East Africa* opposite page 146.

Shs. 10 000/- or nearest offer. Enquiries to either:

Dr D.J. Pearson, Biochemistry, Box 30197, Nairobi. Tel.47041

D.A. Turner, Box 48019, Nairobi. Tel. 48772

Toyota Land Cruiser Station Wagon 1976. Roof Rack, F.W. Hubs, Jerrycan holder, Camping Refrigerator. Shs. 75 000/- or nearest offer.

H. Patel, Box 48834, Nairobi. Telephone 338429.

WANTED

By Nairobi School Junior Members (c/o P.J. Johnston. Tel. 48495, evenings)

1. Mini-Moke, used but reliable.
2. Copies of 'old' Williams *Birds of East and Central Africa*.
3. Copies of 'old' Williams *Field Guide to the National Parks of E. Africa*.
4. Second-hand binoculars.

UPLAND KENYA WILD FLOWERS by A.D.Q. Agnew. Wanted by Mrs I.F. La Croix of Malawi. Replies c/o the Hon. Secretary, EANHS please, with price. Replies will be forwarded to Mrs La Croix.

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Mrs J.F. Carnegie of Eserian Farm, Private Bag, Nyeri offers members in need of a change from Nairobi, a house which is fully furnished consisting of two double rooms, electric light, gas stove and milk supplied from the farm. 56 km from Nyeri on the B5 to Nyahururu, turn right opposite the Ngobit Estate signboard and go 1½ km down good murram road to the houses. Only charge is for the gas used and for staff to clean up before and after - about Sh.100/- for two nights. There is no telephone, enquiries by post.

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SOCIETY FUNCTIONS

SUNDAY 12th June, 1983: Mr and Mrs A. Spinks will lead a half or full day trip from their house at Garden Estate, Nairobi for birdwatching, botanising, etc. Please bring lunch if you want to stay all day, and be prepared for some walking. Please meet at the National Museum, at 9 a.m. sharp.

MONDAY 13th June, 1983: in the Museum Hall at 5.30 p.m. Dr J.P. Darlington will give an illustrated lecture on "THE ECOLOGY OF MACROTERMES spp. IN SEMI-ARID GRASSLAND".

MONDAY 11th July, 1982: in the Museum Hall at 5.30 p.m. Dr James J. Hebrard of the University of Nairobi, Zoology Department will give an illustrated lecture on "DISTRIBUTION AND ECOLOGY OF CHAMAELEONID LIZARDS IN KENYA".

FRIDAY/SATURDAY/SUNDAY 15 - 17th July, 1983. Weekend excursion to Bushwhackers (25 km from Kibwezi on the Athi River). Camping Sh. 7/50 per person per day. Accommodation in bandas Sh. 35/- per person per day. Security is much improved Bushwhackers Safari Camp has been taken over by Mr Mbindu, who is keen to continue to run the camp for guests, and is improving facilities. For camping all equipment will have to be brought. Accommodation in bandas include beds, mattresses, pots and pans, crockery, electric light and cooking stoves. Gas is 10/- per banda. If you would like to take part in this trip to a beautiful spot on the Athi River, please write to Mrs A.L. Campbell, Box 14469, Nairobi stating accommodation wanted for number of people for number of nights including full payment for accommodation in bandas to secure bookings. Please book early.

MONDAY 15th August, 1983: in the Museum Hall at 5.30 p.m. Dr M.E. Smalley of the University of Nairobi, Zoology Department will give an illustrated lecture on "MALARIA - THE PARASITE: ITS DISCOVERY AND THE FIGHT AGAINST IT".

SUNDAY 28th August, 1983: Weekend or day outing to be arranged.

3rd - 7th September, 1983: TSAVO WALKING TOUR. Please see last issue for details, contact Mrs Campbell if you want to take part.

MONDAY 12th September, 1983: in the Museum Hall at 5.30 p.m. Our Chairman, Prfessor John Kokwaro will give an illustrated lecture on"ORNAMENTAL PLANTS OF KENYA".

20th - 22nd October, 1983: Meru Mt. Kenya Self Service Lodge at 3000 m above Chogoria Forest Station has been reserved for the Society. This is a most beautiful spot with plenty of opportunity for walking on the moorland. The lodge is very comfortable with everything provided - except food. The approach road is due to be murramed before October, when it will be passable for saloon cars of reasonable power. Bookings through Mrs Campbell during August.

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRD WALKS: led by Mrs Fleur N'gweno continue. Please meet at the National Museum at 8.45 a.m. sharp.

NOTICE TO ANYONE INTERESTED IN BIRDS:

are you a birdwatcher/photographer/ringer newly arrived in Kenya, and in search of details of local birds, good areas to visit, relevant literature and ringing and other research schemes? Contact Adrian D. Lewis (Geology) Box 30197, Nairobi for information.

THE *BULLETIN*

Members who have sent articles or notes to the *Bulletin* which have not yet appeared, are requested to re-submit their contributions as it seems that some may have been mislaid. Meanwhile fresh contributions are earnestly solicited.

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THE EAST AFRICA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY