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E A N H S  
BULLETIN



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## LEECH HUNTING IN EAST AFRICA

"The leeches of Africa are less well known than any of the great continents . . ."

Thus wrote J. Percy Moore, the grand master of leech taxonomy, in his book *African Leeches*, published in 1939. His statement is just as true today, and was one of the spurs which urged me to Kenya in the summer of 1984, to try to plug a few of the appalling gaps in the knowledge of Kenyan Hirudinea.

I had worked previously on chemoreceptor systems in leeches, and was well acquainted with collecting and preservation techniques. I arrived in Kenya in early August with a collecting brief from the British Museum (Natural History), the blessing of the National Museums of Kenya and high hopes.

Much of my work was based at Tony Dyer's farm north of Timau, near Nanyuki. Collecting conditions could hardly have been worse. Kenya was crippled with drought in August and September, and the northern districts were particularly badly affected. No water means no leeches; many hours were spent mournfully walking up dried river valleys, collecting jars optimistically at hand. The drought had another consequence: Boran, Somali and Samburu tribesmen had moved south in a desperate search for grazing. There were violent clashes on the Timau farms, and many potential collecting areas of northern Kenya were rendered effectively out-of-bounds. Nowhere in the Nanyuki area were leeches as numerous as I had expected. I spent many hours wading in rivers (particularly the Ngare Ndare and Naro Moru rivers) and paddling in swamps (including the apparently leech notorious Boranea swamps north-east of Timau) but remained unhappily unpunctured. Patiently I worked through all the techniques in the leech-hunters armoury. I exposed tempting ankles, and turned over stones. I paid African children to swim in deep pools and agitated the water with a white glove, which leeches often find irresistible. I dangled bleeding flesh baits into the water, and examined the mouths and nostrils of cattle as they returned from drinking. A few species were taken, but in disappointingly small numbers. Cattle mouth and nostril leeches have, in the past, been a serious problem in the Nanyuki area. The dearth of leeches may perhaps be a result of reaction by the diligent farmers of the region. I heard of several cases where Copper Sulphate had been sprayed onto leech-infested areas. This will certainly eliminate the leeches, it may also be responsible for the general poverty of freshwater fauna which I saw.

I had heard many attractive horror stories about the man-loving leeches of Lake Naivasha, and it was here that I searched next. I searched around the papyrus beds, and in the filters of the water pumps (often a fruitful source) but found none. The local Tilapia fishermen confirmed that leeches had indeed been abundant in the lake until about seven years ago. Since that time leeches had never been seen. From several sources I pieced together the multi-stranded ecological background to this disappearance.

A major factor was the appearance in the lake of *Salvinia molesta*, a free-floating, non-flowering aquatic fern from South America. It is very fast growing and competes with native aquatic vegetation for light and nutrients. In Lake Naivasha the escalation of *Salvinia* heralded the end of the huge lily-beds which once bordered the lake. These lily-beds were the stronghold of the large leech population, and as the lilies disappeared, so did the leeches. With regard to leeches, the situation was compounded by the ill-advised application of a herbicide, Grammoxone, in an attempt to control the *Salvinia*. 5 - 6 litres of Grammoxone per hectare was sprayed onto Lake Naivasha, a concentration which would cause death to leeches and many other freshwater invertebrates. The details of the *Salvinia* saga, and the ecological consequences of the application of Grammoxone are documented in Stephen Njuna's article.

At about the same time that the *Salvinia* crisis was at its height, crayfish were introduced to the lake. These are voracious natural predators of many leech species, and are probably the most important factor in the leech decline. The final factor was the introduction of Coypu. Although their importance compared to that of *Salvinia* and crayfish is probably slight, the Coypu certainly helped to deplete the already retreating lily-beds still further.

The Ewaso Narok River downstream of Thompson's Falls, Nyahururu, proved a leech hunter's paradise. Many different species were found in close association on the stones of the river bottom, and I spent a blissful hour squatting in the river anaesthetising my leeches with alcohol, picking them off with blunt-ended forceps and dropping them into 10% formalin - the time-honoured method.

Ecologists working on Mount Kenya have maintained a sinister silence in the literature with regard to Hirudinae there. My permit did not extend to the National Parks, and so systematic collecting on the mountain was impossible. Leeches are certainly present in the Naro Moru River, however. Leech ecology at various altitudes on Mount Kenya would be trivially easy to study, and enormously interesting.

The Methodist Hospital at Maua, near Meru, had reported several human casualties and fatalities caused by leeches. I went to investigate these.

In the dry season when water is scarce, bad water is often drunk. This may contain minute leeches which, when swallowed, lodge in the oropharynx and may crawl up into the nasopharynx.

Patients typically present with anaemia, difficulty in breathing, coughing or sneezing blood, and understandable discomfort. Fatality, which is rare, and usually occurs with young children, may be a result of the anaemia, or of asphyxiation caused by the bloated leech blocking the trachea. Treatment is sometimes difficult. Occasionally the leech can be seen fastened to the back of the throat. It can then be anaesthetised with sprayed cocaine and removed with forceps. In areas where this is a common problem, residents become quite adept at anaesthetising leeches with nicotine from chewed tobacco or inhaled tobacco smoke. Starvation of the patient and abstention from water is a ploy often used. If a dish of water is then placed in front of the mouth, the poor dehydrated leech will crawl forward towards the water, and can be seized before it can return to the safety of the oropharynx. The problem is not reported often from East Africa, but it is probably fairly widespread. Most of the Maua cases originated from the Mutuati region of the Nyambeni range, and involved a single species, presently being identified, which is ubiquitous in rivers and water-holes in the area.

Eventually my time in Kenya ran out and I headed to England again.

Everywhere in Kenya I encountered great ignorance of, and ironic interest in, leeches. Most people were unaware that there was more than one species of leech!

The Hirudinae are a fascinating group and, I would suggest, are of far more economic importance than is generally thought. Careful farmers spend thousands of shillings eliminating leeches from their land, leeches kill thousands of fish in commercial *Tilapia* fisheries in Migori, human lives are lost in Maua, and still knowledge of East African leeches is practically non-existent.

The author hopes to return to continue studies on leeches in Kenya and would welcome any leech records, specimens or stories, however anecdotal. These should be sent to the address below.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks are due to St. John's College, Cambridge and to the Trustees of the Sir Bartle Frere Travel Scholarship Fund for financial assistance. Also to Messrs Easton and Sims of the Annelida section, British Museum (Natural

History) and Dr Mark Ritchie of the National Museums of Kenya, for valuable advice and encouragement.

I am particularly indebted to Mrs H. Morton, of Limuru and Jan Van Duinen of Hopcraft Game Ranch, Athi River, who both helped me in many ways.

The entire project would have been impossible without the tremendous help of Rose, Tony and Michael Dyer of Timau and they should have the final mention here.

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Charles A. Foster, St. John's College, Cambridge, CB2 1TP, England.

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#### LIZARDS IN KAJIADO

Our commonest lizards, *Agama agama* and the skink *Mabuya varia*, are too well known to need description. One of the funniest sights I have ever seen was a skink which had eaten so many winged termites that it could no longer get down its own burrow.

One species of chamaeleon *Chamaeleo dilepis* is quite common in the bush. Its colour can be plain green with small black dots, or it can take on an intricate shadow pattern in two shades of green. In bright sunshine it turns pale yellow, and if the sun falls on one side of its body only, then it will have one side yellow and one side green. When asleep it fades to a dirty white. If it is severely alarmed or hurt it turns almost black and expands its bright orange throat pouch, opens its bright pink mouth wide and hisses fiercely. It will even bite, though very feebly.

Geckos, *Hemidactylus* sp. are found in houses, on tree trunks, and also inside the air passages of large termite mounds. They probably occupy the mounds for protection during the day, rather than to prey on termites.

Gideon Nyamasyo, a potgraduate student of the University of Nairobi, who was doing a thesis on termite predators in Kajiado, used the time honoured method of employing small boys to catch lizards. His collection included four additional species:

the short-necked skink *Mabuya brevicollis*; the sand lizard *Eremias spekii*; the long-toed sand lizard *Latastia longicaudata*; and the snake-eyed skink *Ablepharus malaegrus*.

One further species was found at Oleserewa (20 km NW of Kajiado and 300 m higher) on 22 September 1981. This was the burrowing skink *Riofia sundevallii* a long-bodied lizard with tiny, degenerate legs, clad in the smooth glossy scales typical of skinks.

I am grateful to the Herpetology Section of the National Museums of Kenya for identifications. The common names used follow N.G. Hedges (1983) *Reptiles and Amphibians of East Africa*.

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

## AN AVIAN "ELSA"

Early on Sunday morning, October 28, as my husband and I were leaving our flat on Second Ngong Avenue to take a bike ride, we saw two cats crouched near some bushes with something on the ground in front of them. My husband chased the cats away and picked up a seemingly uninjured baby bird. Not seeing a nest in the bushes, we took it up to our place and made a temporary 'nest' out of a cardboard box. Upon returning from our bike ride, we found the bird perched on a tin we had left in the box. We decided to try feeding it; but with what? First we tried a little bread. The bird had no qualms about taking that from us. But how boring a diet! So we put some peanut butter, honey and sesame seeds on another bit of bread.

For the next couple of days, the bird seemed to be quite content being fed by its adopted parent. (I say parent, in the singular, because my husband proceeded on a business trip that week and left me in charge. That doesn't sound so bad unless you know how scared I get if a bird even flies near me!) Fortunately - for me - the bird could not fly, but fluttered and hopped around. That I could handle! But I wasn't sure if I'd wake up one morning to find the bird flying around the sitting room so, to protect me, I placed a wire grill on top of the box.

Back to food. It quickly became apparent that peanut butter and honey on bread was not an all time favourite item. I suspected that the bird was an immature Fiscal Shrike, so I proceeded to swat all the flies I could find. That really went over big . . . with the bird, not the flies! But he could gulp down 6 flies and come back for more.. I did have other things to do with my time than swat flies, so I tried bits of raw bacon, cheese and eventually mince. The bird helped himself to water from a shallow dish in the box, but usually planted himself in the dish while he drank.

I tried to vary the protein intake with a little sesame seed, but the bird would take the raw bacon which had the seeds on it and bash it around, trying to knock off the seeds before it would swallow the bacon. And when he had had enough to eat, he would shut his beak and turn his back on me! I got the message and left him alone until later.

I was actually becoming quite fond of my little charge and was gaining confidence in my ability to catch him whenever he got out of the box. (I did not leave the lid on all the time.) However, there were a few times when he would hop away from me before I could catch him, so I had to do a 'hat trick'. Taking an old straw hat, I quietly approached the bird and dropped the hat over him, scooped him and the hat up and put him back in the box.

On Wednesday evening around 6 p.m., the bird was in his box out on the balcony of our flat - with the wire screen covering the box. Suddenly a fiscal flew to the balcony and perched on the railings. It was the first time I had ever seen a fiscal on anything other than the trees and bushes in the garden or on the telephone wires. I figured some sort of communication was taking place. Going out on to the balcony, I uncovered the box and waited inside the room to see what would happen . . . Nothing happened. The adult fiscal had moved off to a nearby tree when I came out onto the balcony, but did not return to the railing. However, the little bird almost fell off the balcony as it was hopping around (we live on the first floor, not ground level). As it was getting dark and I was afraid I'd lose the bird if he did fall off the balcony, I brought the box back in and put him to bed (i.e. covered the box) for the night.

Thursday morning, back out on the balcony with the bird in its box, I noticed two fiscals in a nearby tree. Uncovering the box, I again waited to see if anything would happen. This time the bird, after getting out of the box, did fall - or possibly took a courageous leap into flight - and ended up in a hedge on the ground below. Still watching, I noticed the two adult fiscals coming

eloser and eloser to the little bird in the hedge. And one of the shrikes had a crust of bread in its mouth. A few minutes later the little bird disappeared into the hedge and was no longer visible, but one of the adults flew into the hedge and contact was made as the hedge shook! From the hedge, the little bird got onto the branch of a bush, fully exposed, and I was entranced as I watched the adults (whether just one or both I could not tell) come to feed the youngster. (Note: All that work swatting flies, and what does the shrike parent bring? Bread!)

After one particular feeding, the adult moved away from the baby but still on the same exposed branch and started to call. Within seconds a kite appeared and started toward the baby when the second shrike came to the rescue, darting at the kite and deflecting it from its course . . . only to have the kite fly towards me as I stood watching from the balcony. There went my confidence!

The feeding progressed, but the birds eventually moved into a bougainvillea and disappeared from view. I gave up watching, but felt very gratified that the little bird was back in its normal habitat - whether with its natural parents or adopted ones.

On Friday morning, I heard the baby calling for food (I had become accustomed to its cry) and within a few seconds I located him on a branch of one of the bushes close to where he had disappeared the day before . . . and one of the adults was still coming with food. I thought I was happy when the birds had made contact the day before; I was overjoyed to find that he was still being cared for. It was all a most delightful and rewarding experience.

As of this date, 7 November, I have not seen him again.

Carolyn L. Brown, Box 42493, Nairobi.

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#### CHEMOSIT

The above name stands for the Nandi Bear, which is a mystery in its own right.

Going through Bernard Heuvelman's book, *On the track of Unknown Animals*, there is a whole chapter on the Chemosit or Nandi Bear.

There are three main areas where sightings have been recorded. They are along the Magadi to Kajiado railway in 1913, where it was sighted by an engineer called Hicks, his account reads "as I got closer to the animal, I saw it was not a Hyena. In colour it was tawny - about like a black-maned lion - with very shaggy long hair. It was short and thick-set in the body, with high withers and had a short and stumpy nose. It was very broad across the rump, had very short ears and had no tail that I could see; as its hind-legs came out of the grass I noticed the legs were very shaggy right down to the feet".

Another locality is in the Tana River area, where the Pokomo people call it *Koddoelo*. A German missionary, staying in the district, found that a whole village had deserted their settlement and moved across the river, as they said the *Koddoela*, was in the vicinity. A Pokomo identified it as a huge baboon, which occasionally moves on two legs and is very fierce.

The third area is the Nandi region, where the legend of the Nandi Bear is the strongest.

There is an account by Gunner Anderssen, around 1934, at Kiamosi. A forest-pip had just been killed by a very powerful creature. This animal was also roaring and he wrote - "and to judge from the roar, he was not very pleased to be driven off". The Nandi tribesmen who saw the animal described it as - "very big, with long black hair and a long tail, the head not very big but *baya sana*". He describes the spoor as - "very large, something like the mark of an old leopard, which could not draw his claws in properly. The forest

pig had been mutilated but not in the same way that the cats and other animals kill their prey.

The author concludes, while discussing the authenticity of these accounts, by suggesting that the animal sightings might be of old specimens of the Honey Badger *Mellivora capensis*, as old specimens are normally black in colour.

Who knows? maybe a new species of Anthropoid remains to be discovered, only time will tell.

#### REFERENCE

Bernard Heuvelmans 1959. *On the track of Unknown Animals.*

Pritpal Singh Soorae, Box 44919, Nairobi.

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#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir;

On a recent visit to the Sokoke-Arabuku forest, we inadvertently parked the car in the vicinity of several animal middens. One, in current use, converged with the track we had been travelling along. It measured approximately two metres in length and one metre wide, and was in progressive stages of decay. At one end, most of the organic matter had been broken down, while at the opposite end there was an accumulation of recent dung deposits; a few intact fresh droppings of 2 cm in diameter and between 6 - 10 cm long, were distinguishable.

The composition of the droppings indicated that the animal was an omnivore: there were insect carapaces - mainly millipedes and some beetles - and vegetable matter, notably the seeds of a recently devoured fruit. In addition, mats of grey-coloured animal hair were evident in the fresh faecal matter. It was thought unlikely that these were the indigestible remains of a prey mammal, but belonged to the animal visiting the midden. The colour and length of the fur (about 3 cm) suggested that it was from the pelt of a civet *Viverra civetta* or a ratel *Mellivora capensis* possibly swallowed by the animal during cleaning. The droppings lay on the surface, no attempt had been made to dig a pit or cover them up.

The other middens in the area were no longer in use.

We are curious to know what species of animal is responsible for creating these middens. Civets are known to frequent particular places to defaecate and the ratel's European counterpart has a latrine area quite separate from its living quarters. Does the ratel have a similar habit? As described, the animal always visits the fresh end of the midden, and we wonder whether the reason for this is known.

Carol Reid and Colin Ryall, Box 88692, Mombasa.

Sir,

On Tuesday, November 13 1984, my wife and I were en route to Namanga. After passing through Bissal at about noon, we noticed a large flock of birds which at first reminded us of Black Kites, then as we drew nearer they looked like Tawny Eagles. But upon stopping to check with our binoculars, it became apparent that we had met up with a large flight of Steppe Eagles *Aquila nipalensis*. There were more than 50 birds - dark brown adults predominated -

but there were also a large number of the immature tawny brown birds as well. Most of them were on the ground searching in the grass for food, quite a few were perched in the smaller thorn trees, and others were circling about just over the area.

About 3 Km down the road we came across another similar group of about 12 birds. We must have crossed paths with a migrant flock

Unfortunately we did not return until after dark and could not see nor hear anything as we passed through that area. I wonder if you have had any other reports of this incident?

George Machamer, Box 41141, Nairobi.

Migrating flocks of this size and larger have previously been recorded from this area and may also be seen occasionally elsewhere in central and southwest Kenya during November and December. Ed.

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#### CORRECTION

In my review of *Where to watch birds in Kenya* in the November/December 1984 issue of the *EANHS Bulletin* I stated (page 17), that there was an apparent error, in that Percival's Oriole *Oriolus percivali* was listed as being present in the Kare/Ololua Forest and I understood that this bird was a race of the Black-winged Oriole *O nigripennis*, which does not occur in Kenya at all.

I have been corrected on this point by Mr G.R. Cunningham-van Someren of the National Museums of Kenya, who has pointed out that *O. percivali* is a full species and is now referred to in Britton 1980 as the Montane Oriole, which most certainly occur in the forests around Nairobi. I would therefore like to publish this correction in the *Bulletin* with apologies for any confusion that may have been caused.

However, I would like to bring out the following two points arising from this:

1. My discovery of the apparent "error" was based on research into Mackworth-Praed and Grant 1957/1960, which does list *O. percivali* as a race of *O. nigripennis*.
2. I think that all of the above serves as a good example of one of the criticisms that I made of *Where to watch birds in Kenya* when I wrote the review - the fact that the author has used the nomenclature of Mackworth-Praed and Grant in his book will only serve to confuse people. It has certainly served to confuse me so far with regard to this particular bird, although it has opened an interesting debate which I look forward to resolving in the near future.

Peter C. Fletcher, Box 43675, Nairobi.

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#### ANNOUNCEMENT

Would you like to know what those two bright lights that are passing each other in the evening sky are up to? Or how to find the Southern Cross? or the latest on the approach of Halley's Comet. Then join the Kenya Astronomical Society. Full details from the Hon. Secretary, Kenya Astronomical Society, Box 15569, Nairobi.

## BUSTARDS

### AN ACCOUNT OF PAUL GORIUP'S LECTURE TO THE SOCIETY

On 5 November Paul Goriup, Assistant Director of the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP) lectured to the EABHS on Bustards, their behaviour, ecology and conservation.

Goriup arrived in Kenya in mid-October with two colleagues, Sue Everett of the Nature Conservancy Council and Pat Osborne of Swansea University. Their brief was to gather material on the status, habitat preference, general, and display behaviour of bustards in Meru National Park. Although the Afro-tropical region supports two-thirds of the species that occur worldwide, they remain poorly known, a fact that had come to light during research for *The Birds of Africa*. Only the Kori Bustard *Otis kori* could be described as well studied and even its spectacular balloon display has not been thoroughly investigated.

Meru appeared to have advantages for a short term study. It is comparatively small and offers a wide range of habitat. The park also supports 6 of the 7 species of bustard found in the region. Five certainly occur: Hartlaub's *Eupodotis hartlaubi*, Black-bellied *E. melanogaster* (Gomez de Silva pers. com.), White-bellied *E. senegalensis*, Buff-crested *E. ruficrista* and Kori. The scarce Denham's *Neotis denhami* does not. The status of the Heuglin's *Neotis heuglini* in Meru is uncertain, it probably occurs, at least as a wanderer. Heuglin's is a very attractive bird, well worth trying to find. The best known site lies just north of Marsabit on the fringe of the Didi Galgalla desert. Goriup's expedition were especially interested in activity patterns, male display and how the similar *Eupodotis* species were dividing their shared habitat.

As it turned out the expedition were very unlucky with the weather, since they arrived at the end of the appalling drought that has thankfully now released its grip on most of the country. The sudden rain unleashed a burst of bustard activity. The drought and consequent intensive grazing by game had driven most bustards out of the area. However, Buff-crested remained and the males began a frenzy of calling and rocket flights. Goriup played tapes of their persistent whistle which rises to a scream and often pre-empt the advertisement flight. Buff-crested males may duet in groups, call in isolation or in response to neighbours some distance off. In display they fly some 20 m or so into the air, then, at the apex of their climb suddenly drop as if shot only to open their wings, break and land safely at the last moment.

Bustards are basically medium to large terrestrial birds that prefer walking to flying, although they remain capable of sustained, strong flight should the need arise. They live mainly in open grassland habitats though some species occur in quite thick bush. Most are cryptically coloured on their upperparts, whilst being white, buff or black below. Hard to see from above for predators but boldly marked for visual communication with other bustards. They have hexagonal leg scales, three toes and no preen gland, feathers are eared for with a covering of friable powder down and dustbathing.

Most bustards are omnivores and opportunistically eat whatever is available. They may walk and feed, searching the vegetation and ground around them, or stop and feed intensely in one place for a lengthy period of time.

The breeding systems of the African species are little known and are likely to range from monogamy to polygamy. In the latter case the female may rear the young on her own. Males establish widely spaced territories or form loose associations where they court females. Most bustards display but since this is largely a male behaviour aimed at achieving matings with as many females as possible it is reduced or absent in monogamous species. If you have established a permanent pair bond there is no point in wasting valuable time and energy resources displaying. White-bellied call a great deal but do not perform the

dramatic flights characteristic of their congeners. More subtle pair enforcement occurs: males have certainly been seen to bring food to females (pers. obs. and Goriup, pers. com.). The aerial displays of the remaining *Eupodotis* species reach their most complex form with the Buff-crested, although both Black-bellied and Hartlaub's (pers. obs.) perform beautiful parachute flights. If you are a small bustard and you live in long grass or bush the best way to advertise your presence is to fly up above the habitat. They may do this in response to females or to flights by neighbouring males. All the displays are subject to variation. Buff-crested, for example, don't always culminate their flights in the tumbling fall to earth and may spend a lot of time hidden in the bush calling. The remaining species, Kori and Denham's, both perform balloon displays which are appropriate to their open habitat, for they can be seen over great distances. Bustards display most in the morning and evening, often in response to sudden weather changes.

In polygamous species, the male may indulge in a courtship ritual, after attracting a female, by dancing round her. Copulation is rough and quick: the female crouches and the male grips her head and neck feathers with his beak, often plucking them. They then separate, the male pursuing other potential mates, the female is left alone to seek a nest and rear the young.

Clutches are usually one or two, laid in a simple scrape on which the incubating female is very well camouflaged. The chicks leave the nest a few hours after hatching. They follow the female and remain together for 4 - 6 weeks, possibly joining loosely associating flocks of families at the end of this period. Only one clutch a year is laid and species take from 1 - 6 years to reach maturity.

The bulk of Goriup's lecture concerned threats to bustards from hunting and trade. The Houbara Bustard's *Chlamydotis undulata* virtual disappearance in Arabia best illustrates the speed at which a population can be decimated. Once upon a time Arab falconers trapped migrant falcons in the autumn, trained them, hunted bustards in the winter and released the falcons again in the spring. The Houbara Bustards were a food source, sustaining their numbers successfully in the face of these traditional methods. The massive wealth generated by the oil boom revolutionised falconry. Powerful vehicles penetrated deep into the deserts, far more falcons were flown and the Houbara was decimated within two decades.

The hunting camps were forced to seek new populations of bustards and turned their attention to the migrant Houbaras that winter in Pakistan from breeding grounds on the Russian steppes. Between 1963 and 1982 when the Houbara was hunted extensively the breeding population collapsed some 75%. In 1983 President Zia ul Haq convened a symposium to review the status of Houbaras and Pakistan has banned bustard hunting for five years as a result.

Once again the sheikhs began looking for new hunting grounds and turned to Africa. Kenya has already exported bustards to the Middle-East. Goriup has seen the characteristic Kenyan race of White-bellied (the male has a black line below the eye) in captivity in Abu Dhabi. They are trapped on the Laikipia plateau and elsewhere with Buff-crested and Kori also being taken. Poor conditions cause the deaths of many captive birds and they are also used as targets for training falcons. All this leads to regular demand for replacement and is a constant drain on populations in the wild.

It is a depressing picture, but not without hope. In Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum has established a Wildlife Research Centre intent on conserving the wildlife of the Arabian region. The centre has a good track record of rearing Houbaras from wild laid eggs and must have a chance of being successful with captive breeding in the future. The South African Black Bustard *Eupodotis afra* bred there in 1984. Sheikh Mohammed hunts the Houbara but appreciates the need to combine this with serious efforts to augment wild populations with captive bred birds.

All this underlines the need to gather as much information as possible about bustards to help to secure their conservation. Would anyone interested in contributing to a regular survey of bustards in the Nairobi National Park, please contact me at the address below. The main intention is to gather a small group of people together who are prepared to visit the park often enough to build up a comprehensive picture of the species there. Casual observations will always be welcome, just note the species, sex and number of birds and relate the sighting to a familiar landmark in the park. Once established in an area, bustards are likely to remain faithful to it so you may have the opportunity to see familiar individuals again and again. If enough people are interested in the project I will organise a meeting so that we can arrange for the whole park to be covered regularly without too much duplication of effort!

John Fanshawe, c/o Dr Harvey Croze, GEMS:PAC, UNEP, Box 47074, Nairobi.  
Phone: 582645.

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SOCIETY TRIP TO FISHERMAN'S CAMP, LAKE NAIVASHA

23 -25 NOVEMBER

To begin with, sincere apologies to those members who could not participate in this expedition due to the late arrival of their *Bulletin*. We will make every effort to ensure that this does not happen in future. Nevertheless, a small but enthusiastic group made their way to the Top Camp on Friday night, in preparation for an early bird walk to be led by Adrian Lewis. It was clear that a good session was in store since even before the walk started, and indeed before many had arisen, a Montane Nightjar was heard in good voice. This first walk took us through the campsite, with an interesting array of sunbirds (Variable, Scarlet-chested and Bronze), doves (Laughing, Ring-necked and Red-eyed) and Babblers (Black-lored and Arrow-marked). A very good view of a pair of Coqui Francolin, feeding at the edge of a maize field, was certainly the early highlight and the marked difference in head colouration between the male and female was readily apparent. Continuing down through the acacia scrub towards the lake, we were rewarded with great chorussing from Tropical Boubou, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Rattling Cisticola and Black-breasted Apalis. Brimstone Canaries and recently arrived Willow Warblers were represented in good numbers, as were myriads of swifts (Little, Nyanza and Eurasian) in mixed flocks along with a few House Martins, feeding overhead. On entering the woodland on the lake shore, we were met with an array of flycatchers (Dusky, Slaty, Paradise and Chinspot) and a definite new species to everyone, with the exception of Adrian, a Brown Tit Flycatcher (would any of us be able to recognise this ultimate in 'brown jobs' again?). Both the Bearded and Grey Woodpeckers were active overhead and the nest building antics of the hybrid Lovebirds, attracted much interest. The walk culminated with a superb array of migrant waders in the full splendour of winter plumage! It afforded an excellent opportunity to come to terms with the subtleties of Curlew Sandpiper, Little Stint, Ruff, Common, Marsh and Wood sandpipers, and many of us were at last showing initial signs of potential in picking out the elegantly decurved bill of the Curlew Sandpiper, the white-sided rump of the Ruff and the jerky flight and tail-flicking of the Common Sandpiper. Apart from this, the usual fascinating array of duck, heron and languid hippo, kept us keen and sharp and only severe hypoglycaemia forced us back to the camp for breakfast.

Our second trip took us along the stunning cliffs of Hell's Gate. The primary objective was to catch a view of the Lammergeyer, but who needs an excuse. In terms of numbers, the Augur Buzzards have to take first place, appearing at regular intervals all the way along the route. The salmon-pink rump of the Mourning Wheatear was in full bloom, in addition to the Isabelline, Eurasian and Pied. The Lammergeyer was obviously maintaining a low profile and we failed to spy its characteristic silhouette spiralling amongst Tawny Eagle, Egyptian and Ruppells Vulture. Perhaps the two most memorable birds of this trip were the Wailing Cisticola with its unmistakable chestnut head appearing through the scree and a Spotted Eagle Owl, spotted being the word as it was picked out with the naked eye, in rapidly deteriorating light, sitting on the cliff face at a distance of at least a quarter of a mile, by Adrian's wife Juliette. In celebration of this great feat of observation, liberal Whitecap and Coke were dispensed.

Our total number of sightings for the day had been advancing splendidly and as we returned to the lake shore, we were all geared up for a last 'spot' to complete the 'century run'. A White Pelican obligingly flew by as our spirits were waning in the gathering gloom, only to discover on a recount, that this was in fact, species number 106 - the trials and tribulations of recording!

Next morning we arose later, a deliberate policy to allow the sun to come up sufficiently to initiate the spiralling aerobatics of the raptors in the thermals; at least this sounds a very plausible reason for a lie-in! Walking up the hill behind the camp was invigorating although not terribly rich in terms of faunal diversity. There was an excellent opportunity however, to study the huge flocks of feeding swifts, in many cases, providing good views from above. In the melee, Black Rough-wing was added to the list. The final ascent was punctuated with constant debate as to whether the female Harrier was Montagu's or Pallid and whether the falcon was Peregrine or Lanner. In the final event, the first was confirmed as Montagu's and the latter answered the question itself by flying overhead and around us repeatedly at close range and flaunting its rufous nape patch. With the temperature rising and our natural inclinations tending to follow the course of gravity, we had a final treat in the form of Brown Snake Eagle, immature Steppe Eagle, Lesser-Spotted Eagle and, of course, Fish eagle. No sooner were they overhead than they were gone from view, leaving only a feeling of intense excitement and a sore neck.

Needless to say, the return journey to Nairobi provided yet a few more sightings and the final tally for the weekend worked out at 123 species. Not bad at all, but quickly put into perspective as the world record beaters arrived back at the Norfolk for a well-deserved beer. Our thanks for the kind invitation and hospitality of our hosts, the Carnclleys, it is certainly well worth a return trip in the future.

Graham Reid, Box 30197, Nairobi.

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WHEN TO HOLD EANHS MEETINGS?

Many thanks to those who have returned the questionnaire on this topic. I have received 43 completed forms to date and would urge those who have not already done so, to send their views to me as soon as possible. There is still time for your vote to be counted and I need more response to achieve a statistically significant sample - whatever that is!

Graham Reid, Functions Organizer, EANHS, Box 44486, Nairobi.

FOR SALE

Clean copy of *The Macrolepidoptera of the Ethiopian Region* by Dr Adalbert Seitz. Published by Alfred Kern Verlag - Stuttgart.  
Offers to: Tom Grumbley, Box 200 Kiambu. Tel. 0154-40365.

TO LET

Portman's Bridge Cottage, situated on the Malewa River, just outside Gilgil. Accommodation consists of 2 double bedrooms, large sitting room and dining room. Facilities include the services of a cook and a house servant, hot and cold running water, bedding, towels, gas cooker, fridge, electricity (up to 10 p.m.), firewood, laundering and a night guard.

Bring your own food and beverages, torches and candles for late night use.

Activities available include - trout fishing, good walking, (dogs welcome!), excellent bird watching and game viewing. River is safe for children's boating and swimming.

INCLUSIVE CHARGE Sh.400/- per night. For further information and bookings contact Mrs Jacqui Tanner, Box 50381, Nairobi. Tel 330474 or 65055.

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SOCIETY FUNCTIONS

MONDAY 14th January, 1985: In the Museum Hall at 5.30 p.m. Dr Lester Short will give a talk entitled "Behaviour of Honeyguides".

MONDAY 11th February, 1985: In the Museum Hall at 5.30 p.m. Film Evening:

- 1) *Africa, Forest or Desert*: Natural forests in East Africa are being cut down and destroyed for charcoal, the plywood industry and grazing. In the process, important wildlife habitats are disappearing and, because of the lack of trees, good farming land is being eroded by torrential rains.
- 2) *The Vanishing Breed*: East Africa is an example of a growing conflict between the desire to conserve animal species and the demands of farming and industry in developing nations. This film asks - what can be done to preserve endangered species and why they should be protected.

22 - 24th February, 1985: Society trip to Bushwhackers Camp, led by Graham Reid and Adrian Lewis. To anyone who has not yet visited this location and indeed, to those who have, here is an opportunity to spend a weekend in delightful surroundings and soak up the tremendous variety of birds, plants and animals (crocodiles have recently been sighted on the riverbank for the first time ever). Accommodation is either in well-equipped bandas (supply your own bedding, food and drink) or bring your own tent. In any event, bookings should be made directly through Mrs Stanton at Bushwhackers Safari Camp Box 33, Kibwezi. The following information should be of use.:

Self service accommodation is offered in one to three roomed bandas provided with beds, mattresses, pillows, cookers, cutlery, cooking utensils and fridge. space can be supplied. Charges are as follows:

Banda with both bath and shower	Sh.40/- per person per night
Banda with shower only	Sh.35/- per person per night
Children under 10 years	Half the above charges

The charge for camping is Sh.7/50 per person per night and Dietz lanterns are available for hire at Sh.7/50 per night inclusive of kerosene. To be sure of your accommodation, please book in advance, sending Sh.20/- per person deposit, which is returnable if cancellation is received not less than two weeks in

advance. To find the site, travel approximately 192 km (120 miles) on the Nairobi - Mombasa road. Turn left at a BP petrol station signposted Kibwezi and travel 8 km (6 miles) down the murram road. Turn right at a culvert with the Bushwhackers sign painted on it and travel on a further 6.5 km (4 miles) before finally turning left at Bushwhackers sign for the final 8 km (5 miles) straight on to the camp. It is about a 2½ hour drive to the camp and People are urged to try and arrive on the Friday evening to make full use of the week-end. Would those wishing to take part in this excursion, please fill in the enclosed indemnity form and return it to the Functions Organizer, Box 44486, Nairobi.

WEDNESDAY MORNING Bird Walks meet at 8.45 a.m. every Wednesday in the car park of the National Museum, Nairobi. The walks visit different areas of Nairobi and last about 3½ hours.

INFORMAL OUTINGS meet outside the National Museum, Nairobi at 9 a.m. on the Second Sunday of each month. The outings may be half day or all day, and the destination if "pot luck".

A big Thank You to Pat Wootton and Dorrie Brass, who led the Wednesday morning bird walks, and to Hector Gomez de Silva, who led the Second Sunday outings while Fleur Ng'weno was away on safari.

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Would intending contributors of notes to the *Bulletin* please ensure that their contributions get to the Editor (Box 24734, Nairobi) in good time, i.e at least 3 weeks before the date of publication. The *Bulletin* appears at the end of every second month of which the last week to ten days is taken up with the duplicating, collating and posting.

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## MEMBERSHIP

This offers you free entry to the National Museum, Nairobi; free lectures, films, slide shows or discussions every month in Nairobi; field trips and camps led by experienced guides; free use of the Joint Society-National Museum Library (postal borrowing is possible), reciprocal arrangements with the Uganda Museum, Kampala; family participation, wives and children of members may attend most Society functions, one copy of the EANHS Bulletin every two months, a copy of each Journal published during your period of membership. The Society controls the ringing of birds in East Africa and welcomes new ringers and runs an active Nest Record Scheme, activities such as plant mapping and game counting are undertaken on a group basis. Membership rates are given at the foot of this page.

## JOURNAL

The Society publishes The Journal of the East African Natural History Society and National Museum. Each issue consists of one paper, however, sometimes two or more short papers may be combined to form one number. The aim of this method of presentation is to ensure prompt publication of scientific information, a title page is issued at the end of each year so that the year's papers may be bound together. Contributions, which should be typed in double spacing on one side of the paper, with wide margins, should be sent to the Secretary, Box 44486, Nairobi, Kenya. Authors receive twenty-five reprints of their article free, provided that these are ordered at the time the proofs are returned.

## E.A.N.H.S. BULLETIN

This is a duplicated magazine issued six times a year, which exists for the rapid publication of short notes, articles, letters and reviews. Contributions, which may be written in clear handwriting or typed, should be sent to The Editor (EANHS Bulletin), Box 444B6, Nairobi, Kenya. Line drawings will be considered if they add to the value of the article. Photographs cannot be published.

## SCOPUS

The Ornithological Sub-Committee publishes this bird journal five times a year. Cost. EANHS members KShS 75/- p.a. All correspondence to D.A. Turner, Box 48019, Nairobi, Kenya

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