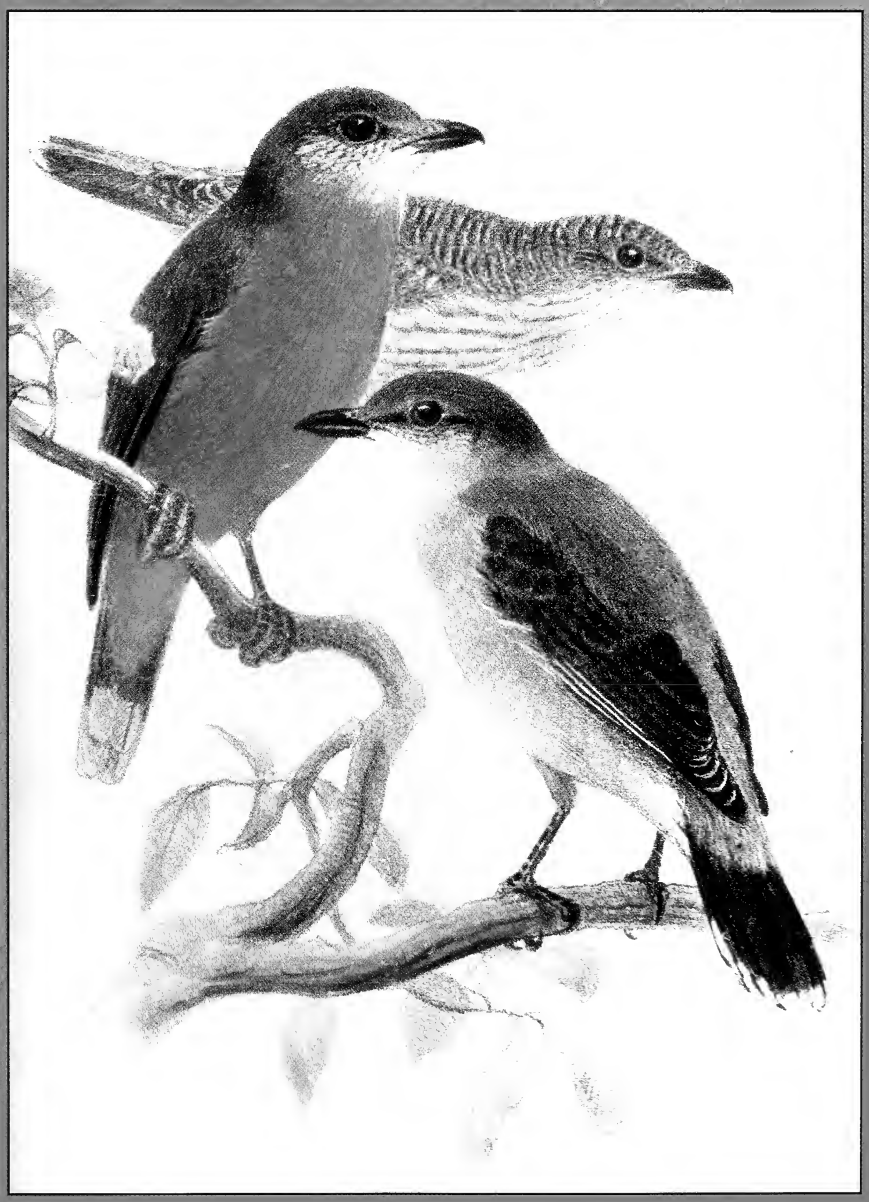
African Bird Club

Bulletin of the African Bird Club

Vol 7 No 1 March 2000



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African Bird Club

The African Bird Club aims to:

- provide a worldwide focus for African ornithology
- encourage an interest in the conservation of the birds of the region
- liaise with and promote the work of existing regional societies
- publish a twice-yearly colour bulletin
- encourage observers to visit lesser known areas of the region
- encourage observers to actively search for globally threatened and near-threatened species
- develop a Conservation Research Fund

Registered Charity No 1053920

ABC Web site

http://www.africanbirdclub.org

Membership of the ABC

Membership of the ABC is open to all and costs, per annum, UK£15 *Individual (Africa & Europe)*, UK£17 *Individual (Rest of the World)*, UK£18 *Family (Africa & Europe)*, UK£20 *Family (Rest of the World)*, UK£8 *Student (Africa & Europe)*, UK£10 *Student (Rest of the World)*, UK£25 *Libraries/Institutions*, UK£25 minimum *Supporting Member*, or UK£300 *Life Member*. To join or for further details please write to the Membership Secretary, African Bird Club, c/o BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0NA, UK.

The Bulletin of the African Bird Club

The *Bulletin of the ABC* provides a forum for news, letters, notices, recent publications, preliminary expedition results, reviews and preliminary or interim publication of studies on African birds by contributors from all parts of the world. Publication of interim results in the *Bulletin of the ABC* does not preclude publication of final results as journal papers either by the ABC or elsewhere. No material should, however, be submitted simultaneously to the *Bulletin of the ABC* and to any other publication.

Notes for Contributors

The ABC welcomes original contributions on all aspects of the birds of Africa. Africa is here defined as the area covered by Collar, N.J. & Stuart, S.N. 1985. *Threatened birds of Africa and related islands: the ICBP/IUCN Red Data Book*, Part 1. Cambridge: International Council for Bird Preservation, namely continental Africa, Indian Ocean islands west of 80°E, eg Madagascar, the Mascarene Islands and Socotra; Atlantic Ocean islands on or east of the mid-Atlantic ridge, eg the Tristan da Cunha group, the Azores and the Canaries.

Contributions will be accepted subject to editing and refereeing by independent referees, where appropriate. The material published is divided into *Papers, Short Notes, News & Comment, Discoveries, Reviews, Literature Gleanings, Recent Reports* and *Letters*. The Editorial Team will be happy to advise authors on the acceptability of material at draft stage if desired.

Submissions

Two copies of contributions should be submitted. Typewritten manuscripts should have double-spaced lines, on one side of the paper only, with wide margins all round. Clear handwritten manuscripts are also acceptable. All submissions will be acknowledged.

Contributions will be accepted in English or French: French summaries, as well as table and figure captions, will be printed for all major papers published in English, and vice versa. Those submitting major papers should supply a summary for translation into English, or French, as appropriate.

If possible, please submit your contribution on floppy disk and state computer (eg IBM compatible PC, Macintosh) and word-processing package (eg Word, WordPerfect) used: please note that Amstrad PCW disks are not acceptable.

When you send your contribution on disk, please do not key anything in ALL CAPS (ie with the CAPS LOCK key depressed) unless the combination always occurs in that form (eg 'USA'). Do not use the carriage return key at the end of lines, and do not right justify the margins. When formatting tables use one tab, and not spaces, between each column. Please always send two hard (printed) copies in addition.

Preferred names

With the current instability over worldwide lists of bird names, authors are requested to follow those used in *Birds of Africa* Vols 1–5. For species not yet covered, please use appropriate regional handbooks and checklists eg Roberts for Southern Africa, Britton for East Africa. Deviation from such works should be noted and the reasons given. The Editorial Team will keep abreast of changes in nomenclature and when an agreed list of African names is available, will consider switching to follow it.

Unless a sketch map is provided as part of the article, the names of places should, if possible, follow those on standard or readily available maps.

(continued inside back cover...)

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News & Comment

Features

Front cover plate

Adult male, adult female and juvenile Mauritius Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina typica by J. Wolf*, originally published as Plate ¯ in *Ibis* New Series 2: 275–280, to accompany a paper by F.P.L. Pollen, and reproduced with kind permission of the British Ornithologists' Union. See pages 59–60 in this bulletin.

Illustrations

Mark Andrews

Photographs

P. Bergier, Bill Clark, Mark Cocker, D.A. Craven, P. Géniez, Frank Hawkins, Fiona Maisels, Gerald L. Ouweneel, Dominic Pia, J. A. Ramos, Roger Safford, Volker Salewski, P. Soto, Kirsty J. Swinnerton, Colin Taylor, M. Thévenot, S. Vén

Editorial

Two important issues were discussed at a meeting of the Editorial Team in August.

Taxonomy and nomenclature used in the Bulletin

It was agreed that we should continue the policy of using the names employed by *Birds of Africa* (*BoA*), and that this policy should apply to English, French and scientific names. In addition, where the species is not included in *BoA* (eg various island endemics covered by the Club but not *BoA*), the names in Dowsett & Forbes-Watson (*Checklist of Birds of the Afrotropical and Malagasy Regions*) should be employed. For those mainland taxa not yet covered by *BoA* (eg various passerines, although we have access to the names to be used in Vols 6 and 7) we recommend that contributors follow a widely available relevant regional work, or Dowsett & Forbes-Watson. The reason for this is primarily that we consider it essential that readers should be able to find out which species is being referred to from a readily available source. It was, however, noted and accepted that taxonomy has moved on since publication of *BoA*, especially from the earlier volumes, and, in particular, some taxa, now widely considered to be species, are treated as subspecies in *BoA*.

Authors should use *BoA* names at all times, or at least include them at the first mention, even if they feel strongly that a different name should be used. If the latter position is adopted please insert the *BoA* name in brackets, at its first mention, either as part of the name itself (eg 'Usambara (Fraser's) Eagle Owl *Bubo* (*poensis*) *vosseleri*') or by noting the *BoA* name afterwards, eg 'Usambara Eagle Owl *Bubo vosseleri* (in *BoA* treated as a subspecies of Fraser's Eagle Owl *B. poensis*)'.

Records of unusual species

Many papers and notes submitted to the Bulletin contain records of range extensions, rarities in the area concerned, or records which are otherwise noteworthy. In many cases these will have already been vetted and accepted by the relevant local Rarities Committee, and no problem exists.

In respect of all records, the Editorial Team agreed that we would not publish any record that had not been accepted by the relevant local body, without a very clear statement to that effect. The one exception is those records noted in the Recent Reports section, which are of course subject to the, clearly stated, proviso that they are not necessarily yet accepted. If in doubt, we shall ask one of the relevant people to referee the paper/note.

We would like to encourage all observers to submit their records to the relevant authority: far too many still get lost in notebooks or observers' minds. In this respect, we will publish names and addresses of these authorities from time to time, updated, as far as is possible, by our regular correspondents. We hope to produce an updated list soon. We regret that we are unable to act as a vetting committee for any area. Once accepted, we shall of course be delighted to publish your records.

The Editorial Team

African Bird Club *Conservation Fund* Update

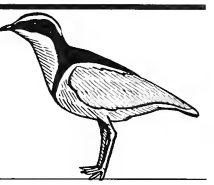
• **One further award has been made from the conservation fund.** Ronald Mulwa received funding to complete his study on the critically threatened Taita White-eye *Zosterops silvanus*.

• **African Red Data Book offer** The ABC has been given 40 copies of the 1985 IUCN/ICBP Red Data Book *Threatened Birds of Africa and Related Islands* to give away to individuals or conservation organisations in Africa. All we ask is that only those people or organisations who would really value a copy are put forward as it will cost the ABC a substantial amount of money to airmail the books to Africa. Nominations should be sent to Rob Lucking at the Club's postal address, or by e-mail to rob.lucking@rspb.org.uk

• **African Bird Club at the Pan-African Ornithological Congress** ABC is planning a significant presence at the next PAOC, which will be held in Kampala, Uganada, in autumn 2000. Several members of Council will be attending and the Club will make available bursaries to African nationals who wouldn't otherwise be able to attend. Funds are limited but we should be able to support several people's attendance, so please only apply if you would otherwise not be able to afford to attend. There are no preconditions to applying, but as this is a scientific conference we are keen that people either give talks or present poster presentations.

For further information, see p. 20 of the Literature Supplement to this Bulletin.

Club News



ABC membership

At the beginning of December 1999 the Club had 1,291 paid up members, including 128 new members recruited this year. The Club now has members in 61 different countries, including 28 in Africa. If you have not already done so, please re-subscribe for 2000 by completing and sending in the membership renewal form enclosed with the last bulletin. Please remember that you will receive no further bulletins until your renewal is received. Also, please note that to save postage costs, credit card subscription payments will not be acknowledged unless specifically requested. Please send membership enquiries to Bill Quantrill at the Club's address or directly by e-mail: wquantrill@msn.com.

Supported and affiliated membership categories

The Supporting Members scheme is a key part of the Club's strategy of encouraging the spread of knowledge and understanding of birds as widely as possible throughout Africa. The scheme enables Africans who would not otherwise have the resources to join, to become members of the Club. The scheme is funded by Supporting Members who pay a minimum of UK£25 to cover their own membership and the subscription of at least one African member. The money they contribute over and above their own subscription is placed in a special fund that is used to cover the membership expenses of African members whom they may have nominated, or who have been nominated by other Club members.

Although we have suggested a minimum of UK£25 to become a Supporting Member, any contribution is welcome. All members of the Club, even if they do not feel able to become Supportng Members themselves, are invited to nominate candidates for supported memberships. Candidates should be nationals of an African country with a genuine interest in wild birds but without the resources to become members in their own right. Africans who think they may qualify are very welcome to put their own names forward, supported by a letter of recommendation from someone such as their employer, teacher or an officeholder in a local wildlife organisation.

The scheme now also includes Clubs who wish to be affiliated with the African Bird Club in African countries where it is difficult for local individuals to become members in their own right. Clubs accepted for membership under the Scheme receive up to six copies of each issue of the bulletin for circulation among their members. Instead of paying a membership fee, Clubs are asked to provide a short annual report on their activities that may be published in the bulletin. Clubs interested in becoming Affiliated Member Clubs are invited to apply to the ABC Secretary giving details of their membership, their constitution or a statement of their objectives and conditions of their membership, and their activities to date.

British Birdwatching Fair 1999

The British Birdwatching Fair was held at Rutland Water in Leicestershire, on 21–23 August 1999, with 100s of exhibitors including conservation organisations, booksellers, optical equipment and bird tour companies, and 1,000s of visitors. The Club again had a stand, where we were able to welcome our many members who visit the fair and also spread word of the Club among the many visitors who may not previously have known about us. Thirteen new members were recruited. The stand was also an opportunity for old and new members to make their selections from the growing range of Club merchandise—total takings came to over UK£1,100. The stand was manned throughout by Council members and other volunteers. Many thanks to all who helped. The Club plans to be present at the August 2000 Fair: if you come to Rutland, do make sure you visit the stand, and should you have an hour or two to spare why not offer to help with its manning. It will be a chance to meet your fellow members and to become more closely involved in helping the Club.

ABC e-mailing list

With our membership scattered in over sixty countries, e-mail provides a quick, convenient and inexpensive means of maintaining contact with our members. We now have e-mail addresses for c33% of the membership, but are sure there are many other members' addresses are not in the Club's records. If you have not already done so, please let the Club Secretary know your e-mail address by e-mailing: wquantrill@msn.com. At the same time, please let the Secretary know if you are willing for your address to be added to the general Club mailing list. As well as using e-mail to communicate with members individually, a general Club mailing list has been compiled, used for sending messages to the membership collectively. The addresses on this list are confidential and not divulged to any outside individual or organisation, and will not be used for commercial purposes. Members are welcome to use this list to circulate their own requests for information or advice, identification queries etc, but not, of course, to send commercial messages. If you have a query or request that you would like to address to the membership please let the Secretary know, either by e-mail at the address given above, or if you do not have e-mail, by post to the Club's usual postal address.

ABC information service update

ABC offers a service to help members with information requests. Perhaps you are planning a trip to Africa and need local advice, or maybe you are in search of an obscure fact about an African species. The Club does not guarantee to find all of the answers but will try to help. The service is free to ABC Members. Contact Keith Betton, who is also the custodian of ABC's journal library at 8 Dukes Close, Folly Hill, Farnham, Surrey GU9 0DR, UK. Tel: +44 1252 724068. Fax: +44-1252 715626. E-mail: kbetton@abta.co.uk.

ABC Representative Scheme

The following is the current list of ABC Representatives:

Australia: K. David Bishop PO Box 6068, Kincumber NSW 2251. E-mail: kdbishop@ozemail.com.au.

Austria: Remo Probst, Radetzkystr. 21/11, A-1030, Vienna. E-mail: remo@zoo.univie.ac.at.

Belgium: Jan Goossens, Vruntebaan 18 2520 Emblem. Tel/fax: +32 3 488 13 71. E-mail: azv@glo.be.

Botswana: Chris Brewster, Matshekge Hill School, Private Bag 24, Bobonong. Tel: 819272. Fax: 819544.

Cameroon: O'Kah Ebwekoh Monya, Mount Cameroon Project, PO Box 437, Limbe.

Canada: Antonio Salvadori, 17 Colborn Street, Guelph, Ontario N1G 2M4. E-mail: rosella@snowhite.cis.uoguelph.ca.

Canary Islands/Spain: Tony Clarke c/o Republica Dominicana, No 61, Barrio de Fatima, 38500 Guimar, Tenerife. E-mail: clarke@arrakis.es.

Denmark: Lars Dinesen, Sjallandsgade 37, 3 tv., 2200 Copenhagen N. Tel/Fax: 35 36 71 64. E-mail: regulus@inet.uni-c.dk.

Egypt: Sherif and Mindy Baha El Din, 3 Abdalla El Katib St. Apt. 3, Dokki, Cairo. Tel/Fax: 3608160. E-mail: 103257.1554@compuserve.com.

Ethiopia: Ato Yilma Dellelegn and Ato Mengistu Wondafrash, Ethiopian IBA Programme, Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society, PO Box 60074, Addis Ababa.

France: Bob and Françoise Dowsett, 12 rue des Lavandes, Ganges, F-34190. E-mail: Dowsett@aol.com.

Finland: Annika Forsten, Hantverkareg 14 D 9, FIN-20100 Åbo. Tel: 40 5150510. E-mail: aforsten@aton.abo.fi.

Gabon: Patrice Christy, BP 2240, Libreville, Gabon. Fax: c/o ECOFAC, 775534.

Ghana: Samual Kofi Nyame, Ghana Wildlife Society, PO Box 13252, Accra.

Hungary: Ákos Hivekovics, 10 Zrinyi Street, H-8756 Nagyrecse. E-mail: tacshun@elender.hu.

Italy: Giuseppe Micali, Via savona 71, Milano MI 1-20144. E-mail: GMicali@USCCMAIL.bms.com.

Kenya: Colin Jackson, c/o Dept of Ornithology, National Museum of Kenya, PO Box 49658, Nairobi.

Magadascar: Frank Hawkins, BirdLife International, BP 1074, Antananarivo 101, Madagascar. Tel: + 261 20 (0)3311 30667 (work), + 261 20 22 31637 (home). E-mail: fhawkins@dts.mg.

Morocco: Jacques Franchimont, Dept Biologie, Faculte des Sciences de Meknes, B P 4010, Beni M'Hamed 50003, Meknes. E-mail: gomac@extra.net.ma.

Namibia: Chris Hines, PO Box 22527, Windhoek.

São Tomé and Príncipe: Angus Gascoigne, CP 289, São Tomé. Fax: 23912 23406.

Seychelles: Adrian Skerrett, Shipping House, PO Box 336, Victoria, Mahé. Fax: 322978. E-mail: maheship@seychelles.net. Or askerret@uk.packardbell.org.

South Africa: Deon Coetzee, PO Box 782937, Sandton, 2146. Fax: 011 884 2739. Tel. 082 490 1212. Steve Evans, PO Box 505, Ngodwana, 1209. Tel: 734 4973.

Switzerland: Matthias Kestenholz, Mattweid 30, 6204 Sempach. E-mail: kestenm@orninst.ch.

Tanzania: Maurus Msuha, PO Box 70919, Dar es Salaam.

The Gambia: Clive Barlow, The Atlantic Hotel, PO Box 296, Banjul. Fax: 227861.

Uganda: Prof. Derek Pomeroy, Makerere University Institute of the Environment and Natural Resources, PO Box 7298, Kampala.

USA (West coast): Joe Thompson, 4070 Sea View Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90065. E-mail: Jcthom1956@aol.com.

Zambia: Pete Leonard, PO Box 630025, Choma, Zambia. Fax: 0 32 20621. E-mail: pleonard@zamnet.zm.

Zimbabwe: John Paxton, Ornithological Association of Zimbabwe, PO Box CY161, Causeway. Fax: 2634 794614. E-mail: birds@harare.iafrica.com.

The ABC Representative scheme aims to support existing members by providing a local point of contact in their region, for example, to answer queries to the Club, to solicit submissions for the bulletin, and possibly to arrange meetings for local members. Existing ABC members can contact their local Representatives in the first instance with queries relating to the Club. ABC Representatives help to recruit new members in their region, for example, by distributing ABC posters and arranging local advertising. In Africa, ABC Representatives help to identify opportunities to invest the ABC Conservation Fund and candidates for the Supported Membership scheme.

The Club aims to appoint many further ABC Representatives. If you are interested in supporting and promoting ABC in your region please contact the Representative scheme coordinator via the Club secretary, Bill Quantrill, at the Club's address or by e-mail: wquantrill@msn.com.

ABC sales items

The following items are currently available from ABC Sales.

1. ABC Sweatshirt featuring an embroidered ABC logo and 'African Bird Club Working for Birds in Africa'; black, navy or bottle-green. Sizes: medium, large, extra-large and extra-extra large: UK£20.
2. Old style ABC Polo shirt featuring an embroidered ABC logo and 'African Bird Club. Working for Birds in Africa', forest-green. Sizes: small and medium only: UK£6.50.
3. New style ABC Polo shirt featuring an embroidered ABC logo and 'African Bird Club. Working for Birds in Africa', bottle-green, navy-blue and black. Sizes: large, extra-large and extra-extra-large only: UK£13.50.
4. New ABC T-shirt featuring Bush Shrikes by Dave Nurney, grey. Sizes: large, extra-large and extra-extra-large only: UK£13.50.
5. ABC T-shirt featuring African Rollers by Mark Andrews, white. Sizes: large and extra large: UK£9.
6. ABC T-shirt featuring Turacos, white. Sizes: extra large only: UK£9.
7. ABC caps featuring an embroidered ABC logo, black, bottle green, red, maroon and navy: UK£7.
8. ABC enamel badge featuring a Slender-billed Curlew design: UK£1.
9. ABC car and telescope stickers: UK£1.
10. ABC bone-china mugs: 2 designs featuring Carmine Bee-eater or Golden-breasted Starlings by Martin Woodcock: UK£7 or UK£12 a pair.
11. Pen, printed with 'African Bird Club' and ABC logo: UK£0.25
12. Pencil, printed with 'African Bird Club' and ABC logo: UK£0.15.
13. White-winged Apalis A4 colour print by Nik Borrow from *Bull. ABC* 2 (2): signed and numbered limited edition of 50 at UK£10; also available unsigned at UK£3.50.

14. Nightjar A4 colour prints by Martin Woodcock from *Bull. ABC* 2 (2): one print illustrates Mountain and Rwenzori Nightjars, the second depicts Black-shouldered and Fiery-necked Nightjars: UK£3.50 each.
15. Locally designed cards on hand-made paper, produced by the paper making co-operative of the BirdLife International-supported Kilum Mountain Forest Project in Cameroon. A selection of five cards in a hand-woven wallet: UK£5.
16. Self-adhesive 're-use envelope' labels featuring ABC logo. UK£1 for 10
17. *Bull. ABC*, volume 1, 1994, number 1 and 2: UK£5 each.
18. *Bull. ABC*, volume 2, 1995, number 1 and 2: UK£6 each.
19. *Bull. ABC*, volume 3, 1996, number 1 and 2: UK£6 each.
20. *Bull. ABC*, volume 4, 1997, number 1 and 2: UK£7 each.
21. *Bull. ABC*, volume 5, 1998, number 1 and 2: UK£7 each.
22. *Bull. ABC*, volume 5, 1998, number 1 and 2: UK£7 each.
22. Azores Trip Report, Sep–Oct 1997 by Willem Steenge and Theo Bakker: UK£6.
23. Cameroon Trip Report, Dec 1994–Jan 1995 by Richard Webb: UK£6.
24. Cameroon Trip Report, Mar–April 1997 by Jon Hornbuckle: UK£4.
25. Cape Verde Trip Report, Mar 1996 by Theo Bakker and Klaas van Dijk: UK£6.50.
26. Ethiopia Trip Report, Dec 1995–Jan 1996 by Richard Webb: UK£7.50.
27. Ethiopia Trip Report, Oct–Nov 1996 by Jon Hornbuckle: UK£4.
28. Ethiopia: In search of endemic birds, Sep–Oct 1997 by Julian Francis and Hadoram Shirihai: UK£10.
29. Ethiopia/Eritrea Trip Report, Mar–May 1998 by David Murdoch: UK£3.
30. The Gambia, 10–17 Sep 1999 by Stuart Sharp: UK£5.00.
31. Birding Ghana, Feb 1996 by Mindy and Sherif El Din: UK£6.50.
32. Ghana Trip Report, Jan–Feb 1997 by Simon Plat: UK£4.
33. Côte d'Ivoire by public transport trip report, Jan–Feb 1995 by Eddie Williams: UK£4.
34. Kenya Trip Report, Feb-Mar 1995 by Mike Hunter and Graham Speight: UK£8.
35. Madagascar and the Comoros, Oct–Nov 1995 by Jon Hornbuckle: UK£4.
36. Madagascar, Nov–Dec 1997 by Chris Bell, Mike Hunter, Dawn Ross and Malcolm Roxby: UK£3.
37. Madagascar (with Mauritius and Réunion), winter 1997–98 by Brian Gee: UK£9.
38. Madagascar Trip Report by Paul Noakes: UK£2.50.
39. Malawi, March 1997 by Jon Hornbuckle: UK£3.
40. Malawi and the Luangwa Valley, Zambia, Jul–Aug 1997 by Henk Hendriks: UK£8.
41. Namibia and the Cape, Nov 1994 by Jon Hornbuckle: UK£4.
42. Birding Sénégal, 10–29 November 1998 by Mindy and Sherif Baha el Din: UK£5.
43. Eastern South Africa and Zimbabwe, Feb–Mar 1997 by Jon Hornbuckle: UK£5.
44. Voyage Naturaliste au Cape Provinces d'Afrique du Sud, Sep–Oct 1997 par Georges et Mireille Olioso: UK£6.
45. Usambara Mountains, Tanzania, Jan–Feb 1996 by Eddie Williams: UK£4.50.
46. Uganda Trip Report, Jun–Aug 1995 by Henk Hendriks: UK£6.50.
47. Wakkerstroom Bird and Nature Guide, by Warwick and Michèle Tarboton: UK£4.
48. Birdwatch Zimbabwe, 1991, by Derek Solomon and Jacko Williams: UK£7.

Postage and packing: please send UK£2 for each UK order, and UK£3 for each overseas surface mail order. For overseas airmail please add UK£1.50 for each item ordered.

Orders: payments should be made in pounds sterling by cheque/postal order (payable to African Bird Club) or credit card. Full credit card details are required, please specify: Visa, Access, Mastercard or Eurocard; card number; cardholder's name (as it appears on card); cardholder's address; expiry date; cardholder's signature; and amount payable. Please be sure to specify your name and address and the full details of your order including quantity, with size and colour where applicable.

Please send your order to African Bird Club, c/o BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0NA, United Kingdom. Enquiries may also be sent to ABC Sales Officer, Moira Hargreaves, at the Club's address or e-mail: Moira.Y.Hargreaves@btinternet.com.

ABC Corporate Sponsorship

Under the terms of the Corporate Sponsorship scheme a minimum payment of UK£300 entitles a sponsor to benefits under the scheme for a five-year period. Corporate sponsors are entitled to a full page advertisement in two bulletins during the five years and can also use the Club's corporate sponsorship logo in adverts and stationery. Contributions under the scheme are allocated directly to the ABC Conservation Fund. Any company or individual with enquiries or suggestions about the scheme should please write to Moira Hargreaves at the Club's address or e-mail: Moira.Y.Hargreaves@btinternet.com.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to BirdLife International for the use of their offices as a mailing address, Alcedo Publishing of Colorado Springs, USA, and Crowes of Norfolk, UK, for their assistance in producing the bulletin.

Africa Round-up

General

Progress in Red-chested Owlet taxonomy

Paul Herroelen and his co-workers have recently reappraised the taxonomic status of the Red-chested Owlet *Glaucidium tephronotum* complex. Although six subspecies have been described, *Birds of Africa* recognises four of these, and the new study just three: nominate *tephronotum* in West Africa (Sierra Leone to Ghana), *pycrafti* in Cameroon and *medje* in Central Africa (from Congo-Brazzaville east to Kenya). The subspecies *lukolelae*, *elgonense* and *kivuense* are all considered synonyms of *medje*. The authors recommend that further work is required, especially on the vocalisations, of the eastern and western taxa to determine whether more than one species might be involved. They also take the opportunity to present information on the species' breeding and moult periods, food and body mass, and habitat, diurnal and altitudinal occurrence.

Source: Bull. Br. Ornithol. Cl. *119, pp 151–162*

Southern Africa

Does Bulwer's Petrel breed on St Helena?

Two pairs of Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii* wings were found at Gill Point, St Helena in February 1995. The possibility that the species may breed on the island (currently it is not known to do so) is discussed in the light of the recent discovery of Bulwer's Petrel breeding well south of the Equator in the Indian Ocean, but for now, more evidence is required.

Source: Bull. Br. Ornithol. Cl. *119, pp 91–94*

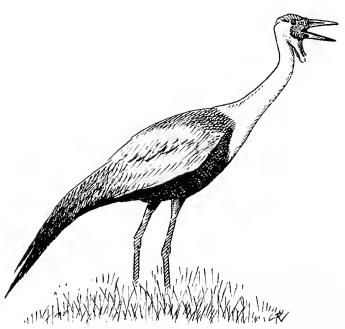
Additions to the Zambian avifauna

Bob Dowsett, the late Dylan Aspinwall and Pete Leonard provide details of 31 species that have either been confirmed to occur (24 species), or may have occurred (seven), in Zambia since 1978. Two of these—White-winged Swamp-Warbler *Bradypterus carpalis* and Lake Tanganyika Weaver *Ploceus reichardi*—were recently documented in *Bull. ABC*, and details concerning others, such as Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*, Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria* and Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan* have also appeared within these pages. Additional records include interesting data on passage of Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor* through the country and seven records of Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*.

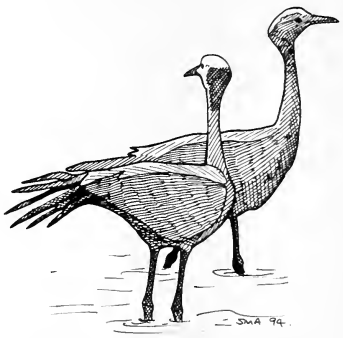
Source: Bull. Br. Ornithol. Cl. *119, pp 94–103*

South African Crane Census

On 24–25 July 1998, the first National Crane Census took place in South Africa. Approximately 750 responses were received from people from all walks of life providing important information to the Eskom / Endangered Wildlife Trust's crane conservation project. All three species of crane in South Africa are threatened and an assessment of their population size is essential to their conservation. Approximately 2,000 Blue *Anthropoides paradisea*, 2,800 Crowned *Balearica regulorum* and 200 Wattled Cranes *Bugeranus carunculatus* were counted. The figures for Blue Crane were higher than expected, which is encouraging news for the national bird. Over 80% of the country's Wattled Cranes were counted reinforcing current knowledge but it is thought that some Crowned



Wattled Crane *Bugeranus carunculatus* by Craig Robson



Blue Cranes *Anthropoides paradisea* by Mark Andrews

Cranes occur in the less populated areas, such as the old Transkei, making this count an underestimate. The crane census continues on an annual basis and further details can be obtained from the Eskom / EWT National Crane Census Conservation Project. Tel/Fax: (0333) 32750 or e-mail: mccrane@iafrica.com.

Source: Crane Link *Nov. 1998 4, pp 2–3*

Poisoning of cranes in South Africa

In South Africa, over 100 reports of poisoned cranes were received by the Poison Working Group in January–October 1999. All were Blue Cranes *Anthropoides paradisea* and the vast majority were killed by the use of diazinon, which is soaked into grain. The group has received many more reports recently and most of these have come from the western half of the country. Although this does not necessarily mean that the rate of crane poisoning has increased dramatically, it is cause for concern for all those involved in crane conservation. The group is actively involved with all issues concerning agrochemical misuse and runs educational programmes for farmers, as well as working closely with relevant government organisations.

Source: Crane Call *October 1999, p. 9*

More crane news....

The Wattled Crane *Bugeranus carunculatus* Conservation Program continues apace but with sad news

over the past year. The five chicks released in March 1998 perished and of the seven chicks available for release later in 1998, three died. The released birds died by hitting powerlines and from poison bait laid down to catch birds for food.Satellite tracking is the way forward in learning about larger birds movements and the transmitters attached to six Blue Crane *Anthropoides paradisea* chicks in early 1998 have provided much useful information concerning this species' movements. This kind of information is unprecedented in landbirds and will be of great use in determining threats and possible solutions to this species' conservation in southern Africa.

Source: Crane Link *1998 4. pp 4–5*

Species recognition for Meller's Duck

Meller's Duck *Anas melleri* has long been considered a subspecies of the Mallard *A. platyrhynchos* but mitochondrial DNA sequencing indicates that it is sufficiently distinct from that species and its nearest geographical congener, Yellow-billed Duck *A. undulata*, to warrant recognition at species level. The DNA work suggests that *A. melleri* may have evolved from a non-dimorphic ancestor, African Black Duck *A. sparsa*. Meller's Duck is restricted to the eastern slope of the central highlands of Madagascar, and, due to continued habitat degradation and inadequate protection for the island's wetlands, is presently regarded as Near-threatened. The declining population is currently estimated at 2,000–5,000 birds, with most recorded at Lac Alaotra. It is hoped that the confirmation of species-level status for Meller's Duck will further the cause for its protection and wetlands in Madagascar.

Source: Biodiversity and Conserv. *7, pp 1313–1323*

Malagasy endemic wildfowl bibliography

H. Glyn Young has recently drawn our attention to the third edition (dated April 1999) of *The endemic wildfowl of Madagascar: an annotated bibliography*. Designed for use by those working on any of the region's endemic wildfowl, further updates are planned and authors of relevant publications and other interested parties are invited to contact the compiler: H. Glyn Young, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Les Augrès Manor, Trinity, Jersey JE3 5BP, Channel Islands. Tel: (+44) 01534 860000; fax: (+44) 01534 860001; e-mail: gyoung@durrell.org.

Source: H. Glyn Young

Natural history notes on Short-legged Ground-Roller

A recent paper in *Ibis* provides many significant new life-history details of the Short-legged Ground-Roller *Brachypteracias leptosomus*, including the first nesting data. The species was studied in the Masoala Peninsula, north-east Madagascar, in October 1996–February 1997. One pair was subjected to particularly close scrutiny: they had a strong pair-bond, spending up to 90% of their time together. A total of 229 prey items were identified, 88% invertebrates and 12% vertebrates. A nest, containing one egg, was discovered in December 1996, just over 18 m above ground in a natural tree cavity. However, the breeding attempt failed when the nest site was occupied by a swarm of Honey Bees *Apis mellifera*. The pair excavated another nest, 22 m above ground, within one week of the failure, from which a single young fledged in March 1997. Incubation lasted 22–26 days and the nestling period was 30 days.

Source: Ibis *141, pp 569–576*

Biodiversity on Mayotte

An important paper, recently published in *Alauda*, by Stevens and Louette provides information on landbird abundance and makes recommendations for the conservation of the avifauna of Mayotte, the easternmost island within the Comoros. The work is based on point counts conducted in October–November 1992, 1993 and 1994. From the resulting data, the authors are able to make comments concerning the preferences of certain species according to a number of variables: forest and non-forest, altitude and rainfall, vegetation structure and size, and relative isolation of different forest plots. It was noted that endemic species strongly preferred forest areas, while endemic subspecies generally favoured non-forest habitat. Specific comments relating to these taxa are presented, as well as for a number of non-endemic species, while the paper concludes with a comparison between the different habitats present on Mayotte and some notes on the conservation of the endemics. The authors suggest that habitat fragmentation may have already reached a critical level on the island, and that preservation of the remaining humid forest is essential to the survival of a number of taxa.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*
by Tim Worfolk

Source: Alauda *67, pp 123–139*

Finnish record in Zambia

A Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*, trapped for food in northern Mwinilunga District, Zambia, in November 1998, provided a new record: ringed in Finland, on 10 May 1998, 7,927 km north of its unfortunate demise, it provided the longest ringing recovery to date for the Scandinavian country.

Source: Zambian Orn. Soc. Newsletter *29, 9, p 3*

Request for Teita Falcon sightings

Recently there have been very few confirmed sightings of Teita Falcon *Falco fasciinucha* from the gorges below the Victoria Falls—a site long considered a stronghold for the species. Observers visiting the area, in Zimbabwe or Zambia, are urged to report all sightings so that an idea of the species' status can be obtained. Particular care should be taken to separate Teita from Peregrine *F. peregrinus* and Lanner Falcons *F. biarmicus*, both of which have increased and breed within the gorge. Records from elsewhere in Zambia are also welcomed. All records should be sent to Pete Leonard, Nansai, Box 630025, Choma, Zambia; e-mail: pleonard@zamnet.zm.

Birds in reserves

Big reserves are better for birds than small areas, and the larger the species, the bigger the reserve needs to be. Although this seems obvious, it is not easy to find data to support this. To fill the gap, the Avian Demography Unit (ADU) of the University of Cape Town started the 'Birds In Reserves Project' (BIRP), which collects bird data from the more than 700 publically-owned reserves in South Africa, as well as from Natural Heritage Sites and private reserves. It helps provide reliable and up-to-date information on the species protected by each reserve. Analysis of the data from 64 reserves in the woodland biome demonstrated that the occurrence of 44% of the 318 species taken into account showed a relationship with the reserve area. For example, only reserves exceeding 200 km^2 regularly supported Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*, Lappet-faced Vulture *Aegypius tracheliotos*, Kori Bustard *Ardeotis kori* and Southern Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus cafer*—all species weighing more than 2 kg. Among small birds, Red-billed Oxpecker was exceptional in that it required reserves of at least 80 km^2—the largest 'area threshold' of all. Birders can participate in BIRP by submitting information on checklists, available from ADU together with more detailed instructions. Contact the Project Co-ordinator, Doug Harebottle, at tel: (021) 650-2330 or e-mail: doug@maths.uct.ac.za.

Source: Africa—Birds & Birding *4 (4), p 76*

Sanderling migration

A Sanderling *Calidris alba* with an Icelandic ring was trapped during a ringing expedition in Namibia, on 19 March 1999. It had been ringed on 26 May 1997 at Sandgerdi, Iceland, 10,200 km from the recovery site. This constitutes the first record of an Icelandic bird in southern Africa. Sanderling breeds in northern Alaska, Canada, Greenland and the Taimyr Peninsula in Siberia. This bird would have been on passage northwards to its breeding grounds, probably in Greenland or possibly even in Canada. Previous recoveries indicate that birds wintering in southern Africa breed mostly in Siberia. Birds from Greenland appear to migrate to western Africa, but it has long been suspected that they may also reach southern Africa.

Source: Africa—Birds & Birding *4 (4), p 21*

Record distance covered by Red-billed Quelea

A female Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*, ringed as an adult at Bishop's Glen, Free State, South Africa, on 23 March 1996 was trapped at Kipushia, Democratic Republic of Congo, on 22 November 1998. The distance between the ringing and recovery sites is 2,545 km, which is the greatest distance known for this species.

Source: Africa—Birds & Birding *4 (3), p 19*

European Bee-eaters behave differently in Africa and in Europe

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* is unusual in having two discrete populations: one breeding in the Palearctic and the other in southern Africa. A three-year study of their respective breeding biologies, conducted by Isabelle Török, has produced some fascinating results, demonstrating that differences between the two populations are much greater than anticipated. African birds, which regularly experience food shortages, rear, on average, only one chick, whereas European birds often produce four. The African population has not yet responded to the shortage of food by laying fewer eggs; many chicks simply die of starvation in the nest. Incubation behaviour is also different: typical incubation shifts in Europe last 10–60 minutes, whereas in Africa shifts of 2–3 hours are normal. Furthermore, in Africa, both parents spend the night in the nest chamber, whereas in Europe only the female does so. An extraordinary phenomenon, perhaps unique among birds, is the substantial difference in incubation period between the two populations: c21–28 days in Europe (relatively normal for a species of this size), but as little as 13 days in Africa. The reduced incubation period could be explained as adaptive in that it shortens the total breeding period, thus minimising the risk of experiencing extreme food shortage. How the birds achieve this remains a mystery.

Source: Africa—Birds & Birding *4 (2), p 29*

Oldest Jackass Penguin

A Jackass Penguin *Spheniscus demersus* found as an emaciated immature at Mossel Bay, South Africa, on 28 August 1972, and released a month later, after having been rehabilitated, was found dead on 25 September 1998 at Bird Island, Algoa Bay. It was thus c27 years old.

Source: Africa—Birds & Birding *4 (2), p 15*

East Africa

Mystery of the Seychelles Scops Owl solved

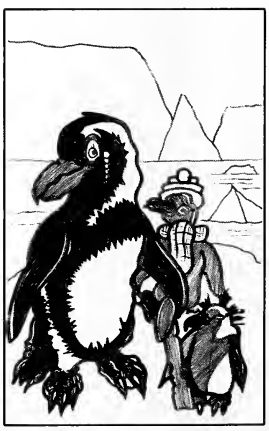
The nesting habits of the critically threatened Seychelles Scops Owl *Otus insularis* have been a mystery since the species was discovered in 1880. In August 1999, a team of researchers from BirdLife Seychelles found the first recorded nest of this species, at an altitude of 440 m, in the Morne Seychellois National Park. The nest, containing a single egg, was within a cavity in a dead Bwa Rouz *Dellenia ferruginea* tree.

Source: The Seychelles Nation

Magpie-Robins increase in number

The world population of Seychelles Magpie-Robin *Copsychus sechellarum* continues to increase due to sustained conservation action by BirdLife Seychelles. At the end of September 1999, the population stood at 81 birds. The continued increase on Fregate Island, the stronghold of the species, is considered to be due to the provision of safe nesting sites and a ban on the use of dangerous insecticides on the island. A large-scale reforestation programme, using mostly native tree species is facilitating the expansion of the population to parts of the island where they have never previously been recorded.

Source: The Seychelles Nation



Jackass Penguin *Spheniscus demersus* by Lee Kirby

Cousin Island grant

In May 1999, Cousin Island Special Reserve benefited from a US$10,000 grant from the British High Commissioners' office in Seychelles. The grant was used to refurbish the two old 'boat sheds', which had been used for many years as a resting area for visitors. The new facilities, built in the Kreol style, include new benches, noticeboards and toilet facilites. Visitors have been enthusiastic about the new style. Lord Selborne, president of the Royal Geographical Society, praised the organisation for building an island-style shelter which blended in well with the natural environment.

Source: BirdLife Seychelles website

Aldabra news

A new project, based at the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, Cape Town, focuses on bird endemism on Aldabra. Lying c500 km north-west of Madagascar and 700 km east of the African coast, Aldabra is the largest coral atoll in the world and has been declared a World Heritage Site. It is home to at least two endemic bird species, Aldabra Drongo *Dicrurus aldabranus* and Aldabra Warbler *Nesillas aldabrana*. The latter has not been seen for more than a decade and is feared extinct. All the other breeding land birds, with the exception of the Pied Crow *Corvus albus*, are currently classified as endemic subspecies, but some may be distinct species and part of the project involves determining their taxonomic status. The flightless rail of Aldabra, currently treated as a subspecies (*aldabranus*) of White-throated Rail *Dryolimnas cuvieri* of Madagascar, will be subject to close scrutiny. It is the only flightless bird in the tropical Indian Ocean and breeds on only three islands within the atoll. The feasibility of translocating some to adjacent Picard Island, where it formerly occurred, will be investigated.

Source: Africa—Birds & Birding *4 (4), p 17*

Mombasa mangrove symposium

A meeting will be held in Mombasa, Kenya, on 7–11 September 2000, dealing with Mangrove macrobenthos and macrofauna. Any paper, directly or indirectly, concerning mangrove fish, birds, mammals, crustaceans, insects, molluscs, or other invertebrates is welcome. Further information and a pre-registration form is available at: http://www.specola.unifi.it/MMM/ or from Marco Vannini, Director of the Museum of Zoology 'La Specola', University of Florence, via Romana 17-50125 Firenze, Italy. Tel: +39 55 2288251 9; fax: +39 55 225325; e-mail: mmm@www.specola.unifi.it.

Source: NEOORN Bulletin Board

Discovery of nest of White-winged Flufftail in Ethiopia

During surveys conducted by a joint team from the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society (the Ethiopian BirdLife partner) and University of Natal Middelpunt Wetland Trust, a nest of the endangered White-winged Flufftail *Sarothrura ayresii* containing three white eggs was found at Berga marsh on 12 August 1999. When the dome-shaped nest was checked again on 17 August, it contained three more eggs. This is the first nest of this rare species to be discovered. The Berga floodplain, which is situated c78 km west of Addis Ababa and 24 km north of Genet, is the second site known to hold the species in Ethiopia; the other being Sululta. These two sites support the world's largest known breeding population of this globally threatened species.

Source: EWNHS Newsletter *July–Sept. 1999, pp 2–6*

West Africa

Bulldozers move into Tanji

The emergency issue in Spring 1999 of *Tanji Talk* describes how the new coastal road has cleared a motorway-width swathe through the Tanji reserve. There is obvious concern about such a move, which threatens the integrity of the reserve. Further information is available from Tanji Birders, 154 Lightwoods Hill, Warley B67 5ED, UK.

Source: Tanji Talk *Spring 1999*

Bulldozers, Tanji reserve
by Lee Kirby

New species of forest-robin described from Central African Republic

Three subspecies of African Forest-Robin *Stiphrornis erythrothorax* are usually recognised, but on a collecting trip to the Central African Republic (CAR), in 1996, several specimens of a new taxon within this complex were obtained for the American Museum of Natural History. A return visit was made in 1998 to collect further material.

Through description of morphological characters, analysis of vocalisation data, and the use of mitochondrial DNA analysis, Pamela Beresford and Joel Cracraft have produced an exemplary description of what proved to be a species new to science, both in its description and in reevaluating species limits, under a phylogenetic species concept, within this (formerly) monotypic genus.

The new species—Sangha Forest-Robin *S. sanghensis*—was discovered in the Dzanga-Sangha Dense Forest Reserve, in Sangha-Mbaéré Prefecture, CAR. It has only been recorded at this locality, where it is common, but further fieldwork may well locate other sites. In the field, it can be separated from other forest-robins by virtue of its deep orange-yellow chin, throat and upper breast, and yellow wash to the belly.

Based on their investigations, Beresford and Cracraft, regard the other three taxa within *S. erythrothorax* as being meritorious of species status: *S. erythrothorax* primarily inhabits lowland forest but also penetrates riverine and savanna habitats, from Sierra Leone to the Niger Delta; *S. gabonensis*, restricted to evergreen coastal forest, from just east of the Niger Delta south to Gabon and east to Cameroon, with a population on Bioko Island, Equatorial Guinea; and *S. xanthogaster*, primarily in lowland forest but also occurring in transitional forest to 1,400 m, from the Dja River, Cameroon east to Sudan, Uganda and west Kenya. The authors conclude with a discussion of the biogeographic implications of their findings; application of the biological species concept, they suggest, has obscured a true understanding of the biogeographic patterns at work within the African continent. More specifically, the discovery and attendant reanalysis highlight the fact that variation within Guineo-Congolian forest birds is still poorly known,

although, perhaps surprisingly, this is the first new avian species discovery from the Congo Basin area since 1966.

Source: American Museum Novitates *1999, no. 3270, pp 1–22*

New bird records in Bénin and Côte d'Ivoire...

Matthias Waltert and Michael Mühlenberg, and their co-workers, have recently presented results of surveys in the Noyau Central, Bénin and the Bossematié area, Côte d'Ivoire. During fieldwork in 1998, 106 species were recorded in the former area, including 15 species previously unreported in Bénin. Thirteen months of fieldwork were conducted in the Bossematié area in south-east Côte d'Ivoire in April 1995–August 1997. Within this period 235 species were recorded including one new country record—Marsh Owl *Asio capensis*—and five species of conservation concern: Green-tailed Bristlebill *Bleda exima*, Brown-cheeked Hornbill *Ceratogymna cylindricus*, Yellow-casqued Wattled Hornbill *C. elata*, Rufous-winged Illadopsis *Illadopsis rufescens* and Sharpe's Apalis *Apalis sharpii*.

Source: Malimbus *21, pp 82–109*

...Equatorial Guinea...

Bob Dowsett and Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire, in a 19-day study of the avifauna of Parque Nacional de Monte Alen, in mainland Equatorial Guinea, recorded 248 species, of which a remarkable 72 were additions to the national list (29 confirmed previously doubtfully included species). A full discussion of the area's avifauna, complete with a coded checklist, appears in a recent issue of *Alauda*; the authors also report on a number of other additions and deletions to the country's avifauna since the publication of their checklist in 1993.

Source: Alauda *67, pp 179–188*

...and elsewhere in West Africa

Short notes presented elsewhere within the same issue of *Malimbus* confirm the presence of Scaly-fronted Warbler *Spiloptila clamans* in Cameroon (at Maroua in December 1996), Perrin's Bush-Shrike *Telophorus viridis* in Gabon (on the Bateke Plateau, east of Leconi, in April 1995), Red-fronted Parrot *Poicephalus gulielmi* in Nigeria (in the Oban Hills, near Aking, in September 1990) and Brent Goose *Branta bernicla* in Sénégal (at Cape Skirring in February 1997).

Source: Malimbus *21, pp 110–115*

Cameroon Ornithological Club

The Cameroon Ornithological Club has been in existence for some time but its journal *Cameroon Birdline* has been erratic in its appearance recently. The latest issue is now out and Dr Roger Fotso, in the editorial, hopes that it is now back on track. He shows how the club has gone from 'a largely benevolent and amateur setting' to a more professional organisation with a permanent office and staff. These have been funded through a UNDP/UNEP grant for biodiversity conservation in Africa and will implement the Important Bird Areas project in Cameroon. The COC needs support more than ever and those interested in joining can contact the club at: Cameroon Ornithological Club, PO Box 13579, Yaoundé, Cameroon. E-mail: coc@camnet.cm.

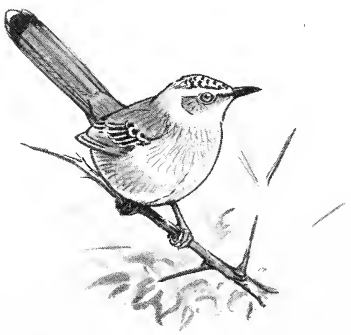
Source: Cameroon Birdline *April–June 1999, pp 1–20*

North Africa

Breeding biology of Canary Islands Stonechat

A recent, well-illustrated, note in *Limicola* documents the early occurrence of a second brood of Canary Islands Stonechat *Saxicola dacotiae*. On 19 February 1996, a female that had already fledged two young was found incubating a second clutch of four eggs that subsequently hatched on 1 March.

Source: Limicola *13, pp 74–79*



Cricket Warbler *Spiloptila clamans* by Mark Andrews

Libyan bird records

Based on a visit in April 1998, Bruno Massa presents observations of 24 species in this little-visited country. Interesting observations included a pair of displaying Lappet-faced Vulture *Aegypius tracheliotos* in suitable breeding habitat (the species is not known to breed in Libya) and the first confirmation of breeding in the country of Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata* and Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra*. It also appears likely that Barn Owl *Tyto alba* and Linnet *Carduelis cannabina* breed in Libya, although these species still require confirmatory evidence.

Source: Bull. Br. Ornithol. Cl. *119, pp 129–133*

Studies of plovers in Morocco

Data from January waterbird censuses, in 1991–1995, highlight the importance of Morocco's Atlantic coast wetlands for several species of plovers, namely Ringed *Charadrius hiaticula*, Kentish *C. alexandrinus* and Grey Plovers *Pluvialis squatarola* for which the country supports significant percentages (29.7%, 13.8% and 4.2% respectively) of the regional wintering population. Comparison with data from the previous three decades indicates that the global populations of these species have increased, partly as a result of the inclusion of Ad-Dakhla bay within the waterbird census programme. The importance of this site was previously unrecognised, but both it and Merja Zerga lagoon, are wetlands of international importance as defined by the Ramsar Convention. The study also noted that numbers of Ringed and Grey Plovers are inversely proportional to those at the Banc d'Arguin in Mauritania.

Source: Alauda *67, pp 161–172*

In the article 'Birding Africa's basement—the Cape to the Kalahari' (*Bull. ABC* 6: 121–132), a common bird name with significant negative political connotations was used. Although this is the name used in *BoA* and it is the directive of the ABC Bulletin editorial team to follow *BoA*, a tiny number of names are now inappropriate. We apologise for any offence this may have caused to any readers.

The Editorial Team

Requests for Information

Colour-ringed Cormorants and Greater Black-headed Gulls from the Black Sea

Almost 1,500 fledgling Cormorants *Phalacrocorax carbo* were colour-ringed during the 1999 breeding season at different colonies in the Sivash, a major wetland between the Black and Azov Seas. The ringing expedition, jointly undertaken by the Azov–Black Sea Ornithological Station (Melitopol, Ukraine) and the Italian Wildlife Institute (INFS, Ozzano Emilia), was funded by the Fishery Directorate of the Italian Ministry of Agricultural Policies, within a project aimed to assess the origin and trend of the Central Mediterranean wintering population of Cormorants. A by-product of the expedition was the colour ringing of 50 Greater Black-headed Gulls *Larus ichthyaetus*. It is not planned to repeat Cormorant ringing in the near future. Therefore, it is extremely important to obtain as many sightings and readings as possible right from the start of the post-natal dispersal. Mauve-pink rings were used on Cormorant and yellow on Greater Black-headed Gull; both ring types are engraved with a combination of black letters. All birds were also fitted with metal rings (Moscow or Bologna). According to existing recoveries, it is most likely that the majority of the Cormorants will migrate to the Middle East and east Mediterranean coasts, possibly as far to the west as Italy and Tunisia. Please report any rings you may observe / read to Nicola Baccetti (INFS, via Ca Fornacetta 9, I-40064 Ozzano Emilia BO, Italy; e-mail: infszumi@iperbole.bologna.it).

Identification of migrating hirundines based on metal composition of tail feathers

As already mentioned in *Bull ABC* 6.2, the Hungarian Action Team for the Conservation of Nature (TACS) would like to solicit the help of ABC members involved in bird ringing programmes in Africa in connection with a project to identify the breeding and wintering areas of migratory hirundines. TACS have developed a method of analysing the presence of 16 different metals in the tail feathers of Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*, which can be matched to the metal composition of the birds' food in the moulting area. TACS are now extending their studies to Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*. Results so far show that it is possible to separate birds breeding in different parts of Europe on the basis of the metal composition in their tail feathers. The team would like to obtain more data from wintering sites. They would therefore be grateful to receive samples of tail feathers from *Riparia riparia* and *Hirundo rustica* specimens netted in Africa (particularly West and central Africa). It is important to stress that tail feathers should only be removed by those familiar with the technique for their removal and are confident that they can do so without harming the birds. Two feathers are required, the second longest from each side of the tail. Those able to assist are invited to send any feathers in plastic bags with a tag reporting the date and place of collection, ring number, age and sex of the bird, and name of collector, to the project assistant (and ABC representative in Hungary), Àkos Hivekovics at the following address: TACS Foundation—Hungarian Action Team for the Conservation of Nature, H-1074 Budapest, Csengery utca 11, Hungary. For further information, comments or enquiries please e-mail: tacshun@elender.hu, or fax: +36 1 461 8008.

Crested Honey Buzzards

ABC member Itai Shani has noted that Crested Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* has been appearing with increasing regularity over Israel. In the past two years there have been almost 20 records during spring migration and 2–3 during autumn, but, as yet, as just one record to the south of the country (in Egypt). He would be grateful for any information anyone may have about where birds passing through Israel overwinter. The species is similar to Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* in behaviour, flight and calls, but is much bulkier with 10% longer wings and up to 15% longer tail. At close range it can be distinguished by its black gular stripe, often ending in a U-shaped black-streaked gorget. In the male, the tail appears black with a broad pale band across the centre. The female's tail is similar to Honey Buzzard except that the innermost bar is broader. The crest is unlikely to be very obvious in birds migrating through Israel, which are of the Siberian race in which the crest is not fully developed. Please send details of any sightings to: Itai Shani, 1 Maraten St, Rehovot 76292, Israel, e-mail: shanii@bgumail.bgu.ac.il.

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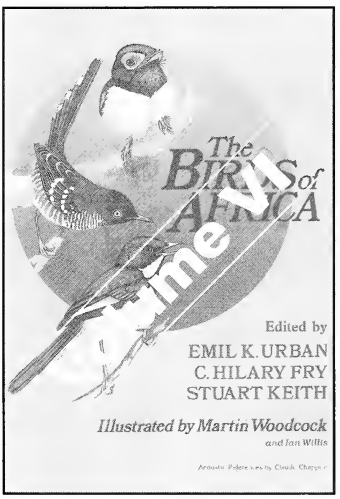

C Hiliary Fry, Emil K Urban and Stuart Keith
Due 15 August 2000. This, the sixth volume in a set of seven, follows the standard taxonomic sequence and deals with songbirds from the babblers to the starlings. 36 stunning colour plates by Martin Woodcock including some iridescent ones!, line drawings by Ian Willis, acoustic references by Claude Chappuis. 704 pages. Hardback ~~**£110.00**~~
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Field identification of Beaudouin's Snake Eagle
Circaetus (gallicus) beaudouini

William S. Clark

Les critères d'identification sur le terrain du Circaète de Beaudouin *Circaetus (gallicus) beaudouini* sont décrits et illustrés avec des photos, et comparés à ceux d'autres circaètes, en particulier le Circaète Jean-le-Blanc *C. (g.) gallicus*, qui fréquente l'aire de distribution du Circaète de Beaudouin pendant l'hiver nordique. Les observateurs en Afrique devraient pouvoir mieux déterminer la distribution réelle du Circaète Jean-le-Blanc en utilisant ces nouvelles informations.

The taxonomic relationship between Beaudoin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus (gallicus) beaudouini*, Short-toed Eagle *C. gallicus*, and Black-breasted Snake Eagle *C. (g.) pectoralis* has variously been characterised as races of a single species (eg *The Birds of Africa*[3]) or as three separate species. Clark[4] discusses why the arrangement as separate species (eg in del Hoyo *et al*[5]) is preferable.

Beaudouin's Snake Eagle is a resident of open woodland and treed savannas of sub-Saharan West and Central Africa but performs short movements north and south in response to wet and dry seasons[5]. Despite statements to the contrary in the literature, they are rather easy to separate in the field from other snake eagles, particularly from the Short-toed Eagle, which occurs throughout the range of Beaudouin's during the northern winter[3,9].

Here I present field marks that will serve to distinguish Beaudouin's Snake Eagle from other snake eagles in the field. No single field guide (eg Kemp & Kemp[7], Barlow *et al*[1], Zimmerman *et al*[12], Serle & Morel[10]) has previously described all these features.

Beaudouin's Snake Eagle

Adults have a brownish-grey head, breast and upperparts, and white belly with a variable amount of narrow dark barring (Fig 1). Some adults possess an extensively white throat and have restricted dark barring on the sides of the breast and flanks (Fig 2). Based on a small sample of specimens, females tend to have a uniformly brown breast (Fig 1), and males a white throat and mid-breast and barring restricted to the flanks (Fig 2). The underwing-coverts appear unmarked at a distance and the underside of the white flight feathers have two narrow dark bands and a wider dark subterminal band (Figs 1 & 2). From below, the tail is pale and has 2–3 narrow dark bands, the subterminal being widest.

Juveniles are overall dark brown, with rather indistinct dark bands in the pale tail from below. The outer primaries have a wide dark area at the tips and the undersides of the pale flight and tail feathers have narrow dark banding (Fig 3).

Serle & Morel[10] is the only field guide to describe correctly, albeit succinctly, the juvenile plumage but does not illustrate it. Likewise, Grossman & Hamlet[6] is the only handbook to do so, but again without an illustration. The juvenile illustration in Kemp & Kemp[7] is incorrect; it appears rufous, more like that of Black-breasted Snake Eagle. Illustrations in other field guides, including those recently published[12] and handbooks[3] are also incorrect; all depict juveniles with a pale head and underparts. This is possibly due to the misidentified specimen of Short-toed Eagle that I found in the tray of Beaudouin's Snake Eagle in the collection of the Natural History Museum, Tring. There were four juvenile specimens in this drawer that were overall dark brown. One of these is the upper specimen in Fig 4.

Short-toed Snake Eagle

Adults have a brownish head, breast, and upperparts and white belly with a variable amount of short, narrow dark barring (Fig 5). Adult males usually possess whitish streaking on the dark breast. (Fig 6). The underwing-coverts have heavy dark markings, and the underside of the white flight feathers have a dusky terminal band and three narrow, often incomplete, dark bands. From below, the pale tail has several wide dusky bands.

Juveniles are similar to adults, except that the breast is more rufous-brown and the belly and underwing-coverts markings are less intense (Fig 7). Some juveniles are overall quite pale, often with a whitish head but nevertheless show some rufous markings on the underwing-coverts (Fig 8).

Black-breasted Snake Eagle

Adults have a blackish-brown head, breast, and upperparts and unmarked white belly. The underwing-coverts appear unmarked, the underside of the white flight feathers has two narrow dark bands and a


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1 Adult Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus* (*g.*) *beaudouini*, The Gambia. Underwing-coverts (at a distance) unmarked and dark band on trailing edge of wing noticeable. Breast and flanks narrowly barred. This individual, most likely a female, has a solid bib. (Bill Clark)

2 Adult Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus* (*g.*) *beaudouini*, The Gambia. Underwing-coverts unmarked and dark band on trailing edge of wing noticeable. Breast and flanks have narrow barring. This individual, most likely a male, has an extensive white throat extending onto the breast. (Bill Clark)

3 Juvenile Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus* (*g.*) *beaudouini*, Sénégal. Appears brown overall, except for silvery undersides to flight feathers and tail. Outer primaries have wide dark areas on tips and underside to flight feathers has narrow dark banding. (Pierre Reynaud)

4 Specimens of juvenile Beaudouin's *Circaetus* (*g.*) *beaudouini* and Black-breasted Snake Eagles *C.* (*g.*) *pectoralis*, Natural History Museum, Tring. Juvenile Beaudouin's (upper) is overall dark brown. Note extensive dark tip on the outer primary. Juvenile Black-breasted (lower) is overall rufous. (Bill Clark)

5 Adult male Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*, Israel. Underwing-coverts heavily marked and band on trailing edge of wing dusky. Breast and flanks have narrow dark barring. Adult male usually has whitish streaks on the dark bib. (Bill Clark)

6 Adult female Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*, India. Underwing-coverts heavily marked, and band on trailing edge of wings is dusky. Breast and flanks have narrow dark barring. Adult female usually has solid dark bib. (Bill Clark)

7 Juvenile Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*, Israel. A pale juvenile with a whitish head. Underwing-coverts possess some dark markings. (Bill Clark)

8 Juvenile Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*, India. Juvenile is usually similar to adult, except breast is more rufous-brown and belly and underwing-coverts less heavily marked. (Bill Clark)

9 Adult Black-breasted Snake Eagle *Circaetus* (*g.*) *pectoralis*, South Africa. Underwing-coverts appear unmarked and dark band on trailing edge of wing is noticeable. Breast and flanks are unmarked, and the solid blackish bib is always present. (Bill Clark)

10 Juvenile Black-breasted Snake Eagle *Circaetus* (*g.*) *pectoralis*, South Africa. Appears overall rufous often with some whitish mottling. Note dark secondaries. (Bill Clark)

11 Second plumage Black-breasted Snake Eagle *Circaetus* (*g.*) *pectoralis*, South Africa. Similar in pattern on underparts to adult Beaudouin's *C.* (*g.*) *beaudouini* and Short-toed Eagles *C. gallicus*, but has dark secondaries and rufous on underwing-coverts. (Bill Clark)

12 Adult Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus*, The Gambia. Overall dark brown with unmarked underside to flight feathers, narrow dark areas on tips of outer primaries, and three narrow white bands on dark tail. (Bill Clark)

wider dark subterminal band, and the white belly lacks dark markings (Fig 9). From below the pale tail has 2–3 narrow dark bands.

Juveniles are overall rufous, often with some white mottling (Fig 10), but can fade to buffy within six months of fledging. The underside of the secondaries appears dark on otherwise pale underwings.

Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus*

Adults are overall dark brown, with three narrow white bands in the tail. The underside of the pale grey flight feathers is unbanded, the outer primaries have narrow dusky tips and greater underwing-coverts are the same pale grey colour as the flight feathers (Fig 12).

Juveniles are similar to adults, but with an additional narrow white band near the tail tip.

Second plumage of snake eagles

Both Black-breasted and Brown Snake Eagles have a distinct plumage between juvenile and adult plumages, as demonstrated by the photographs labelled subadult in Kemp & Kemp[7]. However, I have not seen a specimen nor a printed description of a second plumage for Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, as described and depicted in Kemp & Kemp[7]. Second plumage Black-breasted Snake Eagle is easily separated, in flight, from the similar adult Beaudouin's and Short-toed Eagles by the retained juvenile dark secondaries (Fig 11).

Adult Beaudouin's vs Short-toed Eagle

Adult Beaudouin's Snake Eagle is readily distinguished from Short-toed Eagle by the unmarked underwing-coverts and wide dark band on the trailing edge of the underwing. Compare the snake eagles in Figs 1 and 2 with those in Figs 5–8. Short-toed Eagle has dark markings on the underwing-coverts and a dusky band on the trailing edge of the underwing. The belly is marked with narrow dark barring, wider but not very different from that of adult Beaudouin's Snake Eagle. Another useful field mark is the pale patch on the upperwing-coverts of Short-toed; the upperwing coverts of adult Beaudouin's are uniformly dark. Additionally, the wings appear narrower than those of Short-toed.

Juvenile Beaudouin's vs Brown Snake Eagle

Juvenile Beaudouin's Snake Eagle is overall brown and could easily be (and most likely are) overlooked in the field as Brown Snake Eagle, as, to my knowledge, no field guide illustrates this plumage. It is distinguished from Brown Snake Eagle by the extensive dark tips to the outer primaries, narrow dark banding on the underside of the flight feathers, and the lack of narrow white bands in the tail. Compare the snake eagle in Fig 3 with that in Fig 12. Brown Snake Eagle has narrow dark tips on the outer primaries, lacks banding on the underside of the flight feathers, and has three narrow white bands in the dark tail.

Adult Beaudouin's vs adult Black-breasted Snake Eagle

Adult Beaudouin's is similar to adult Black-breasted but has narrow dark barring on the belly. Compare the snake eagles in Figs 1 and 2 to that in Fig 9. Adult Black-breasted appears blacker on the head, breast and upperparts, and lacks dark barring on the belly.

Juvenile Beaudouin's vs juvenile Black-breasted Snake Eagle

Juvenile Beaudouin's appears similar to juvenile Black-breasted but is overall dark brown compared to overall rufous. Compare the snake eagle in Fig 3 with that in Fig 10 and the specimens of each in Fig 4.

Ranges of Beaudouin's and Short-toed Eagle

The ranges and status of Beaudouin's Snake and Short-toed Eagles in West, Central, and East Africa are uncertain because most field observers have been unable to distinguish them. This fact is mentioned in various regional distribution works (eg Louette[8]), even recent field guides, eg Barlow *et al*[1].

At its eastern limits the range of Beaudouin's has been considered to reach north-east Kenya but not into Uganda[3,5]. However, a valid specimen record[11] and a photographic record (by R Davies) —that I have examined—exist for Uganda. Zimmerman *et al*[12] do not admit any Kenya records, considering those mentioned by Britton[2] to be insufficiently documented.

Using the field marks described and depicted in this article, observers in West, Central, and East Africa should be better able to determine the true range of Beaudouin's Snake Eagle and the winter range of Short-toed Eagle.

Acknowledgements

I thank Clive Barlow for showing me adult Beaudouin's Snake Eagle in The Gambia, Pierre Reynaud for permission to use his photograph of a juvenile Beaudouin's Snake Eagle, Rob Davies for sending me the photograph of an adult Beaudouin's Snake Eagle he took in Uganda, and the National Aviary in Pittsburgh for a grant to fund my raptor fieldwork. R. Davies, R. Demey, R. Dowsett, and J.-M. Thiollay provided helpful comments on earlier drafts.

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Rare birds in Morocco: report of the Moroccan Rare Birds Committee (1995–1997)

Patrick Bergier[a], Jacques Franchimont[b], Michel Thévenot[c] and the Moroccan Rare Birds Committee

Depuis sa création en 1995, la Commission d'Homologation Marocaine a analysé 97 demandes d'homologation d'espèces rares ou mal connues, dont la liste est présentée en annexe. 75 ont été acceptées, qui ont permis de lister cinq espèces nouvelles pour le Maroc: l'Aigle pomarin *Aquila pomarina*, le Pluvier dominicain *Pluvialis dominica*, la Mouette de Franklin *Larus pipixcan*, le Goéland de Béring *L. glaucescens* et la Bergeronnette citrine *Motacilla citreola*. Quatre données de canards et quatre autres de limicoles d'origine néarctique ont été enregistrées. Les observations d'Erismatures rousses *Oxyura jamaicensis* ont été régulières à Douyiet, où la reproduction a été suspectée en 1996; c'est sur ce lac qu'ont été rapportées trois mentions d'hybrides Erismature rousse x E. à tête blanche *O. leucocephala*, en provenance probable d'Espagne. Enfin, les 14 mentions de Faucons de Barbarie *Falco pelegrinoides* ont permis de mieux cerner la répartition de cette espèce, en relation avec celles des différentes races de Pèlerins *F. peregrinus*.

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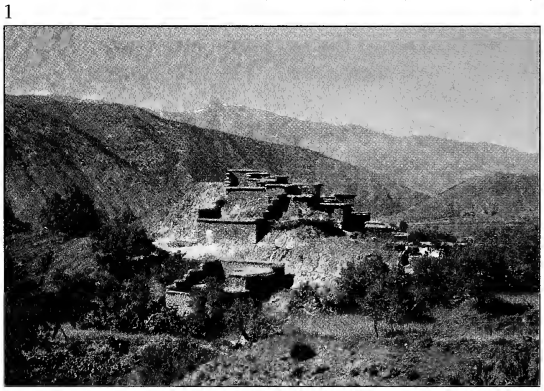

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1 Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*. This bird at the Souss estuary was the 17th Moroccan record. (D.A. Craven)

2–3 Toubkal massif, Western High Atlas, is one of two areas in Morocco where White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer* is known to breed. It also holds several quite localised species in Africa, such as Crimson-winged Finch *Rhodopechys sanguinea* and Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*. (Fig 2. P. Géniez; Fig. 3. P. Bergier)

4 Merja Zerga, Rharb, is one of the major lagoons along the Atlantic coast, attracting 1,000s of migrants and wintering birds. (M. Thévenot)

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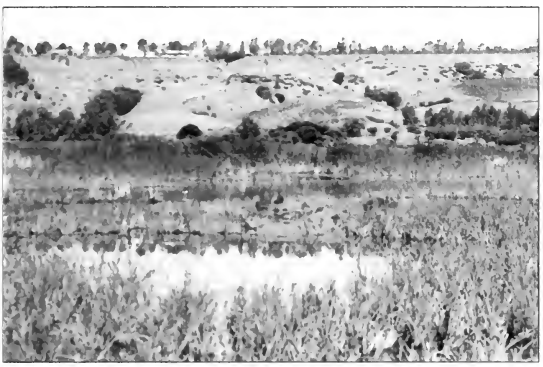

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5 Massa estuary, Souss, produces frequent records of rare birds; nine species included in this report have been observed there. Wintering Cranes *Grus grus* regularly roost there. (P. Soto)

6 The dayet of Merzouga, Tafilalt, is a temporary inland lake c500 km from the Atlantic coast. During wet years it serves as a spring migration stop-over for many birds. Several accidental species have been recorded there, including American Wigeon *Anas americana*, Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*, Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* and Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis*. (P. Géniez)

7. During the 20th century, most marshes in northern Morocco were drained but the Lower Loukkos marshes, Rharb, are still important. Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* and Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus* have been recorded there. (P. Géniez)

8–9 Khnifiss lagoons, Tarfaya, are a major stop-over for migrants on the Atlantic coast. A Brent Goose *Branta bernicla* was recorded there in 1994. (Fig. 8. P. Géniez; Fig. 9. M. Thévenot)

10 Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus minor*, Merzouga, Tafilalt, 17 May 1996. (S. Vén)

Introduction

The Moroccan Rare Birds Committee (MRBC), or Commission d'Homologation Marocaine (CHM), was formed in 1995, and currently consists of nine members (Patrick Bergier, Hugues Dufourny, Ahmed El Ghazi, Jacques Franchimont, Christian Pouteau, Ahmed Sayad, Valéry Schollaert, Michel Thévenot and Rae Vernon).

It aims to gather data on rare or little-known birds in Morocco, and thus to increase current knowledge of the Moroccan avifauna. The full list of species considered by MRBC appears in the appendix and includes true vagrants (ie species with fewer than 30 records), and rare or little-known species whose current status is inadequately known. We strongly urge visiting birdwatchers to submit descriptions of relevant species to the MRBC Secretary: Prof. Jacques Franchimont, Quartier Abbas Lmsahdi, rue n°6, n°22, 50,000 Meknes V.N., Morocco. The first three annual reports were published in *Porphyrio*[2–4]; this paper summarises these reports and provides further details on previous records of rarities in Morocco.

Presentation of data

For all species, the following sequence has been used:

- English and scientific names of species
- Status, according to codes presented in Appendix 1
- Data details: year, MRBC file number, region (see map), place, number of birds involved (one unless otherwise stated), age, sex, other information if applicable, date(s) of observation, recorder(s) name(s).
- Comments

For accidental species, four numbers in brackets follow the status code. The first two indicate the number of records (and number of birds) in the files of the Centrale Ornithologique Marocaine (COM) prior to the creation of the Moroccan Rare Birds Committee (MRBC). The second pair indicate the number of records accepted by the MRBC since its creation in 1995, and the number of birds involved. These records have been published in the reports of the MRBC[2–4]. For rare or little-known species, only the second pair of numbers is given. The systematic list follows the sequence of species for which details are required by the MRBC (Appendix 1).

List of accepted records

Black-browed Albatross *Diomedea melanophris* AV (2/2, 1/1)

1997 (97 14) **Mediterranean coast** Chaffarinas Island, adult, 13 November (J M Igual & J Charco)

Two previous records from the Moroccan Atlantic coast: off Tamri, Haha, on 17 March 1983 (N Dymond & D Coutts) and off Rabat, Zaër, on 13 September 1984 (G Balança).

Madeiran Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma castro* AV/PM? (1/1)

1996 (96 16) **Souss**, Massa estuary, 24 January (M M Hansen *et al*)

Nearest colonies in the Canary Islands and Madeira. Most frequently reported at sea, especially off the Western Sahara coast, and rarely seen close inshore. This bird flew inland along the river from the estuary and had probably been forced inshore by heavy storms during previous days.

Western Reef Heron *Egretta gularis* AV (18/19, 1/1)

1996 (96 14) **Souss**, Souss estuary, dark morph, 18–19 April (L Rogers)

Nearest colonies at Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania. Sporadic records are not unusual and principally involve the dark morph (12 of the 19 records), but white morphs are perhaps under-recorded due to potential confusion with Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*. Records are usually in April–May (12) at various localities along the Atlantic coast, from Dakhla, Wahdi Ad-Deheb, to Oued Bou-Regreg estuary, Rharb.

Great White Egret *Egretta alba* PM, OW (1/1)

1995 (95 12) **Plains of Eastern Morocco**, Sebkha Bou Areg, Nador, adult, 6 November (J Franchimont, F & H Touati Malih)

Pre-1960, just two records on the Rif coast[15] but since the 1960s there have been 36 records, usually of

Table 1. Number of records submitted to MRBC

	1987	1990	1992	1994	1995	1996	1997	Total	Accepted	Rejected
First report	2	2	2	10	18			34	27	7
Second report					4	40		44	31	13
Third report					1	2	16	19	17	2

singles from wetlands on the Atlantic coast as far south as Massa estuary, Souss. Just three inland records: in Dadès-Draa, at Ouarzazate, on 31 March 1967 (B L Sage)[42], at Zagora, on 8 April 1981[37] and in Tafilalt, in December 1989[2]. The 1995 bird was apparently present from 1 October–10 December (D Jerez Abad & R Ramirez Espinar *per* J Franchimont). It probably originated from the increasing European population (nominate *alba*).

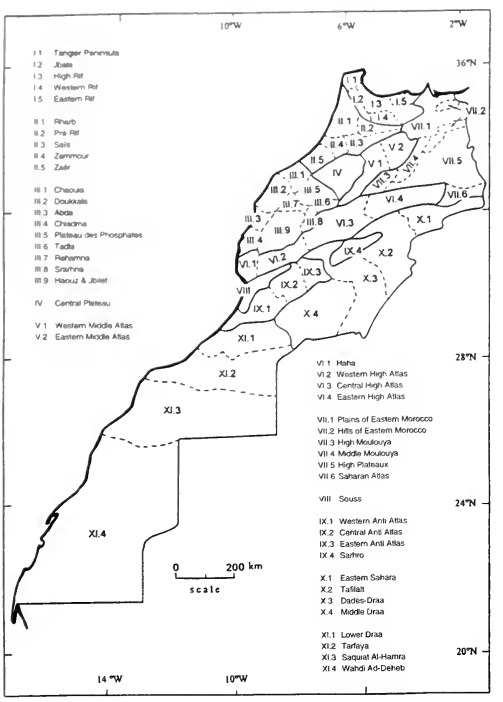
Brent Goose *Branta bernicla* AV (4/14, 1/1)

1994 (94/9) **Tarfaya**. Khnifiss lagoons, photo, 3–4 May (P Geniez & P Soto)

This bird was of the dark-bellied race *bernicla* that breeds on the Russian tundra north to the Taimyr Peninsula and winters in north-west Europe. The date is comparatively late, but birds usually depart their wintering areas in mid-April–mid-May. Previous records include one near Essaouira, Chiadma, on 2 February 1891[15], one in Azzemour Bay, Doukkala, on 21 December 1988 (J Franchimont), up to 10 at Merja Zerga, Rharb, on 29 January–4 February 1992[25] and two at Oualidia, Doukkala, on 4 January–1 February 1992 (N de la Perche). It has been recorded once further south along the Atlantic coast, at Baie de l'Etoile, in extreme northern Mauritania[41].

American Wigeon *Anas americana* AV (3/7, 2/2)

1995 (95/18) **Tafilalt**. Merzouga lake, first-winter male, 30 December (H Dufourny *et al*)



Map showing the regions of Morocco used in this report.

1996 (96/35) **Rharb**. Sidi Bou Rhaba, adult male, 22 December (H Dufourny)

Breeds North America, wintering south along coasts to Central America; regular vagrant to Europe. The 1995 record was 500 km inland. The three previous records are from Massa estuary, Souss: male in January 1978 (C B Casslen), up to three males and two females in late December 1984–late February 1985 (S E Bird, G Balança, S Aulagnier & J P Marfin *et al*) and a male in February 1986 (P Bayle).

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors* AV (13/20, 1/1)

1996 (96/36) **Rharb**. Sidi Bou Rhaba, female, 22 December (H Dufourny)

Breeds North America, winters south to Brazil. The fourth record for Sidi Bou Rhaba: previous records were a pair on 17 March–15 April 1976[7], a male on 20 February–30 March 1990[27] and a pair in early January–16 March 1994[31]. Other records are from Martil on the Mediterranean coast (one record)[9], Merja Zerga, Rharb (one), Sidi Moussa–Oualidia lagoons, Doukkala (two), Massa estuary, Souss (five) and Barrage Lalla Takerkoust near Marrakech, Haouz (one). Records are mainly in January–April (10), with two in October and singles in May and December.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris* AV (9/13, 1/1)

1990 (90/1) **Rharb**. Merja Zerga, adult female, 17 January (M Ameels)

Breeds North America, winters from southern USA to Central America and West Indies. Moroccan records are all in October–March and from the Atlantic coast, from Rharb north to Lower Draa. One inland record, at Barrage Mansour Eddahbi near Errachidia, Tafilalt, in winter 1980–81[10].

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator* WV (1/2)

1995 (95/9) **Rharb**, Larache, Lower Loukkos, two females, 3 January (H Dufourny *et al*)

This species principally winters at sea, more occasionally on inland waters. It is a rare winter visitor to Morocco, with only 35+ records since the 1960s. These birds were apparently present at Oued Loukkos from 25 December 1994 (F Touati Malih & J Franchimont).

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* AV, OB? (69/78, 5/29)

1996 (96/6) **Saïs**, Douyiet, adult male, 13 April (J Franchimont *et al*)
(96/26) **Saïs**, Douyiet, two males and two females, 18 June (J Franchimont & A. El Ghazi)
(96/28) **Saïs**, Douyiet, pair, 23 December (J. Franchimont *et al*)

1997 (97/8) **Saïs**, Douyiet, five males and two females, 3 June (J. Franchimont *et al*)
(97/10) **Saïs**, Douyiet, two males + 13 females, 7 February (J. Franchimont *et al*)

First recorded at Douyiet in spring 1993[32], where now regularly noted and breeding suspected on 18 June

1996. Garrido & Mañez[11] and Torres & Alcalá-Zamora[4] listed all Moroccan records. Reports in spring 1986, between Oued Souss estuary, Souss, and Tan-Tan/Tarfaya area, Lower Draa/Tarfaya, are unconfirmed. All recent records are from Merja Halloufa and Merja Bargha, Rharb (max. 6–12 birds in 1992–1995) and Douyiet, with one record at Barrage Mohamed V, Plains of Eastern Morocco (one male and five females, September 1996)[12], which has not been submitted to the MRBC.

Ruddy x White-headed Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* x *leucocephala* AV (0/0, 3/4)

1996 (96/13) **Saïs**, Douyiet, adult female, 28 March (J Franchimont & A El Ghazi)

1997 (97/9) **Saïs**, Douyiet, two males, 3 June (J Franchimont *et al*)
(97/11) **Saïs**, Douyiet, female, 7 February (J Franchimont *et al*)

White-headed Duck formerly bred in north Morocco but has undergone a dramatic decline; there are only seven records since the 1950s despite an increase in southern Spain in the early 1990s. These four hybrids doubtless originated from Spain.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* AV (24/30+, 1/1)

1997 (97/4) **Souss**, Souss estuary, first-winter female, 3 May (V Schollaert *et al*)

Twenty-four previous records from late September to mid-May with most during spring migration, in March–April.

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina* AV (0/0, 1/1)

1996 (96/24) **Tafilalt**, Merzouga, subadult immature, 18 April (P A Crochet *et al*)

Most migrate on the east Mediterranean route. It is rare in Libya and Tunisia on passage, with most in April–May[8,38]; accidental in Algeria, although once reported nesting there[17]. This is the first record for Morocco.

Barbary (Peregrine) Falcon *Falco* (*peregrinus*) *pelegrinoides* RB poorly known (14/15)

1994 (94/2) **Souss**, Aït Azza, Taroudant, 26 December (G Willem, H Dufourny *et al*)

1995 (95/17) **Tafilalt**, Jorf, 29 December (H Dufourny et al)

1996 (96/7) **Haha**, Tamri. Female subadult, 5 May (V Schollaert et al)
(96/8) **Souss**, 4 km north of Massa estuary, adult male, 7 May (V Schollaert *et al*)
(96/9) **Souss**, Aoullouz adult male, 9 May (V Schollaert *et al*)
(96/10) **Central High Atlas**, Gorges du Dadès, immature, 12 May (V Schollaert *et al*)
(96/11) **Dadès-Draa**, El Kelaa M'Gouna, immature female, 12 May (V Schollaert *et al*)
(96/29) **Dadès-Draa**, Boumalne du Dadès, adult, 12 January (N Anthes)
(96/39) **Eastern High Atlas**, Rich, adult, 26 December (H Dufourny *et al*)
(96/40) **Souss,** Souss estuary, 31 December (H Dufourny *et al*)

1997 (97/1) **Tafilalt**, Erfoud, adult male, 27 April (V Schollaert *et al*)
(97/2) **Tafilalt**, Merzouga, two adults, 28 April (V Schollaert *et al*)
(97/3) **Souss,** Souss estuary, first-winter, 2 May (V Schollaert *et al*)
(97/6) **Moyen Draa**, Mhamid, adult, 26 April (J Franchimont & A El Ghazi)

Observers are encouraged to submit all records of Barbary Falcon to increase knowledge of the relative distributions of this and *F. peregrinus*, as three races of Peregrine breed in Morocco: *F. p. brookei*, *minor* and *atlantic*. Six of the 14 records (Tafilalt, Eastern High Atlas and Middle Draa) come from regions where both *pelegrinoides* and *minor* occur. A record, submitted as *pelegrinoides*, from Merzouga, Tafilalt involved *F. p. minor*. The distribution in Souss is now better documented, as five of the 14 records accepted by the MRBC are from this region.

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* AV (0/0, 1/1)

1997 (97/12) **Souss**, Souss estuary, first-winter first-summer, 21–25 April (H Dufourny, M & P Ridenour)

Breeds in Canada and Alaska, migrating south-east through the West Indies to winter from Bolivia southward. Spring migration follows a more western route, via Central America, the Gulf of Mexico and Mississippi valley. This, the first country record, possibly reached Morocco during the previous autumn.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus* AV (7/12, 2/5)

1992 (92/2) **Souss**, Souss estuary, four, photograph, 27 August (E Sanders)

1995 (95/7) **Souss**, Souss estuary, 9 April (D F Walsh, D A Craven *et al*)

These dates coincide with regular migration periods through France, eg from early April to early June in spring and from late July to mid-October in autumn. A group of four is exceptional in Morocco as well as western Europe.

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus* AV (3/4, 1/1)

1997 (97/5) **Souss**, Souss estuary, adult in breeding plumage, 22–26 April (H Dufourny *et al*)

This is the second record at Souss estuary: one was there on 16 November–25 December 1987 (G Dändliker *et al*, H Lindholm), subsequently at Massa estuary, Souss, in early January–early February 1988 (S Gantlett, N Bostock). The 1997 bird was reportedly present from 30 March (M Forsberg in *Birding World* 10: 135), and was possibly the same as one noted the previous November. Other records are from Massa estuary, two on 5–17 April 1981[37] and Sidi Moussa-Oualidia lagoons, Doukkala, on 5 November 1991[29].

Long-billed / Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus / griseus* AV (1/1, 1/1)

1996 (96/37) **Souss**, Souss estuary, 21 November (A V Harding, P H Lymbery *et al*)

Possibly *L. scolopaceus* but description incomplete. A dowitcher, considered to be *L. griseus*, was at Sidi Moussa–Oualidia lagoons, Doukkala, on 13 August 1982 (W Hoogendoorn). Also recorded as a vagrant at the Strait of Gibraltar[33].

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* AV (4/5, 1/1)

1996 (96/42) **Souss**, Oued Souss estuary, adult in breeding plumage, 16 & 18 June (C Bowden)

Breeds in Canada and Alaska and winters from the southern USA to Tierra del Fuego. This is the fifth Moroccan record and the second at Souss estuary (first was on 4 January 1995; *Birding World* 9: 21–35). Other records include singles north of Kenitra, Rharb, on 22 April 1989 (N J Redman) and at Sidi Moussa–Oualidia lagoons, Doukkala, on 24 October 1982 (P R Gordon) and 5–6 November 1991[34]. It is reported as accidental at the Strait of Gibraltar[33].

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus* AV inshore (8/8)

1994 (94/5) **Souss**, Massa estuary, juvenile, 10 November (P Holt *et al*)

Regular migrant offshore in West Africa but rarely recorded from land. Passage principally in August–September in western Europe; Moroccan records are usually in autumn and winter, from 29 September to 28 January, with just one in spring, on 26 April 1985 (P C Beaubrun).

Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla* AV (3/3, 3/3)

1994 (94/7) **Détroit de Gibraltar**, adult, 14 March (A Hachenberg *et al*)

1995 (95/3) **Souss**, Massa estuary, adult, 5 May (M J Naylor *et al*)

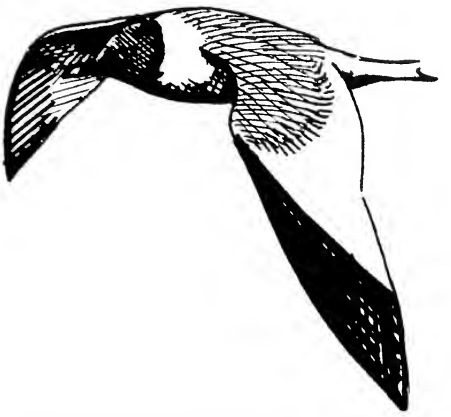
1996 (96/27) **Souss**, Souss estuary, adult, 16 May (H Dufourny *et al*)

A regular but rare vagrant to the Old World from North America. All Moroccan records are from the Atlantic coast; five in spring (14 March–16 May) and one (unconfirmed) record in autumn (14 September 1980)[30]. It is possibly more common on the Atlantic coast than records suggest and more detailed study of gull flocks should produce further records.

Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan* AV (0/0, 1/1)

1994 (94/8) **Souss**, Souss estuary, adult, 8 January (J K Archer *et al*)

Breeds in southern Canada and the USA west of the Great Lakes; winters throughout the USA and south to Patagonia on the Pacific coast. This is the first Moroccan record; it remained until at least late January (J Langbehn).



Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini* by Mark Andrews

Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini* PM, OW (1/1)

1996 (96/31) **Rharb**, Moulay Bousselham, first-winter, 20 January (N Anthes & I Weiss)

Probably regular at sea off the Atlantic coast during migration, in early October–mid-November and April–May. Rarely inshore except after severe gales. The nine records in December–February suggest small numbers may winter off the Moroccan coast.

Bonaparte's Gull *Larus philadelphia* AV (1/1, 1/1)

1990 (90/2) **Souss**, Souss estuary, adult winter, 25–26 January (M Ameels)

Breeds in Alaska and central Canada, wintering on coasts south to Central America and the West Indies. This bird stayed at Souss estuary from 22 January to 14 February at least (*Br. Birds* 84: 7). There is an unconfirmed record from Melilla, Mediterranean coast, in May 1983 (J M Cabo).

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* AV (19/19, 6/7)

1992 (92/1) **Rharb**, Larache, adult, 8 November (J Franchimont *et al*)

1995 (95/4) **Rharb**, Larache, adult, 19 March (R Fairhead *et al*)

(95/5) **Chiadma**, Essaouira, first-summer, 21 April (P Holt *et al*)

(95/10) **Rharb**, Larache, adult, 3 January (H Dufourny *et al*)

1996 (96/22) **Rharb**, Mehdiya harbour, two adults, 18 October (J Franchimont & A. El Ghazi)

(96/38) **Rharb**, Lixus saltpans/Larache, first-winter, 23 December (H Dufourny)

The commonest of the North American gulls in Morocco; it has been regular at salt pans near Larache in recent years. Records come from the entire Atlantic coast and usually concern singles, with most being immatures (20 of 26 birds). Most records are in winter (December–February but eight are in spring (March–May), two in summer (July–August) and two in autumn (October–November). The 3 January and 19 March 1995 records perhaps involved the same bird.

Common Gull *Larus canus* WV (5/5)

1995 (95/23) **Souss**, Massa estuary, immature, 2nd December (H Dufourny *et al*)

1996 (96/12) **Souss**, Souss estuary, adult, 16–17 May (V Schollaert *et al*)
(96/41) **Souss**, Souss estuary, adult, 31 December (H Dufourny *et al*)

1997 (97/13) **Souss**, Souss estuary, adult, 22–25 April (H Dufourny *et al*)
(97/15) **Souss**, Souss estuary, adult, 22 December (J Franchimont *et al*)

Morocco is south of the species' regular wintering range but, since the early 1980s, small numbers, mostly immatures, have been recorded on the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts, and there are also reports from Mauritania (Chott Boul 16°36'N)[10] and possibly Sénégal (Dakar)[15]. Most records are from mid-August to mid-April, thus those on 22–25 April and 16–17 May are noteworthy.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus* AV (12/12, 1/1)

1996 (96/1) **Rharb**, Moulay Bou Selham, second-winter summer, 4 January (H Dufourny *et al*)

This Arctic species is not usually recorded south of 50°N in winter. All records are from the Atlantic coast, between Tangier and Agadir, on 13 October–23 April.

Glaucous-winged Gull *Larus glaucescens* AV (0/0, 1/1)

1995 (95/22) **Chiadma**, Essaouira, adult, photos, 31 January (T Bakker & K van Dijken)

Breeds from the Commander Islands, Kamchatka east to north-west Oregon, USA, through the Aleutian Islands; wintering from the Bering Sea, north of Japan to Baja California and north-west Mexico. This is the first record for Morocco and second or third in the Western Palearctic. A first-winter, ringed in British Columbia, Canada was recovered at Zurich, Switzerland, in early November 1969, is considered to have travelled within an aeroplane undercarriage[51]. The second concerned a third-winter, moulting to adult plumage, photographed at La Restinga, El Hierro, Canary Islands, in February 1992 (see *Birding World* 9: 237). A photograph of the Moroccan bird appeared in *Birding World* 8: 178.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougalii* PM (1/1)

1995 (95/6) **Souss**, Souss estuary, breeding-plumaged adult, 19 April (P Holt *et al*)

This species is presumably regular off the Atlantic coast, as it breeds in the UK and north-west Europe and winters in the Gulf of Guinea. Most records are from the west Saharan Morocco coast[5,15,21,23,24]; there are just 11 records further north, during 10 April to 7 May and 17 August to 17 October.

White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer* BM, PM (2/4)

1995 (95/13) **Western High Atlas**, above Imlil, 22 August (P A Crochet *et al*)

1996 (96/21) **Western High Atlas**, Asni, three, 3 July (B Lamothe)

A rare migrant breeder in Morocco, known principally from the Jbel Toubkal area, Western High Atlas, particularly around Asni. The breeding population is probably very small—estimated at c30 birds or 10+ pairs[2] —and merits a detailed study.

Rock Martin *Hirundo fuligula* RB, BM (1/50+)

1996 (96/3) **Central High Atlas**, Igherm, c50, 18 February (P Yésou)

The status of this species in Morocco is poorly known, due to confusion with Crag Martin *Hirundo rupestris*. Both species have been reported in the southern foothills of the High Atlas, and hybrids may occur there[1], making detailed descriptions essential.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus* (*novaeseelandiae*) *richardi* WV (3/17)

1994 (94/1) **Souss**, Massa, 26 October (P Holt)

1995 (95/19) **Souss**, Massa, 2nd December (H Dufourny, O Tyletten *et al*)

1996 (96/20) **Souss**, Massa, 3 and 5 January, photo, 15 on 4 January (N Anthes & I Harry)

Widespread through India, Central and South-east Asia, Australia and New Zealand. African populations south of the Sahara are now considered a separate species, *Anthus cinnamomeus*. The Central Asian subspecies *richardi* regularly winters in small numbers in Spain and probably Morocco. There are 30 records in Morocco, from the North Atlantic plains and hills (Rharb 10, singles in Saïs and Zaër), Plains of eastern Morocco (three), Souss (12) and West Saharan Morocco (three) as far south as Cap Blanc Peninsula, on the Morocco–Mauritania border[1]. Records are in mid-September–late March. Massa is one of the best localities to find the species; the group of 15 is the largest number ever recorded in Morocco.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* AV (0/0, 1/1)

1995 (95/1) **Rharb,** Lower Loukkos marshes, 3–5 January (H Dufourny *et al*)

Principally breeds between 30° and 80°N in Asia west to eastern Europe, wintering in the Indian subcontinent and South-east Asia, more locally south of the Caspian Sea and in Iran. This is the first record for Morocco and the western half of Africa, although a previous sighting of a female/ first-winter at Merja Zerga, on 4–5 January 1989 (photo in *Birding World* 2: 71) has never been submitted to the MRBC. There are just 10–11 records from Egypt (most in Sinai), singles in Djibouti, in late February 1990 (*Orn Soc. Middle East Bull.* 24: 37–38) and Ethiopia in 1994: Bale Mountains National Park, photographed on 7 January (*Bull. ABC* 1: 29), with sight records from the same area on 15 March and at Hosaina, on 11 November (*Bull. ABC* 2: 62). The first record in southern Africa involved one near Port Elizabeth, South Africa, in May 1998 (*Bull. ABC* 6: 6).

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* AV (12/15, 1/1)

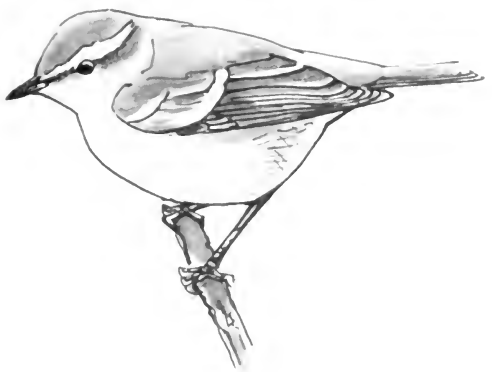
1996 (96/2) **Tafilalt**, Merzouga, 29 February (P Yesou & M South)

All records (except one on 22 January 1990) are in spring, from 4 February–26 April, south of the High Atlas principally in Tafilalt. It is perhaps more common on passage than previously considered, en route from its Sahelian wintering areas to breeding areas in eastern Europe and Asia.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* AV (14/20, 1/2)

1996 (96/33) **Western Middle Atlas** Ifrane, two, 18 January (N Anthes *et al*)

Nine records from northern Morocco, five from Middle Atlas and one from Labiar, south of Goulimine in Lower Draa. Records are from 30 October to 19 February.



Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* by Mark Andrews

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* AV (1/1, 1/1)

1994 (94/1) **Souss**, Massa estuary, 26 October (P Holt)

Breeds in Siberia and Central Asia, and winters from eastern Arabia to South-east Asia; a regular vagrant in western Europe, but poorly documented in Morocco perhaps due to low observer activity in mid-October–mid-November, the key period for this species in western Europe. First seen on 21 October (C Bowden); this is the second Moroccan record. The first was at Immouzer Ida-Ou-Tanane, Haha, on 13 November 1988 (S Dybkajaer *et al*)

Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis* AV (6/17, 1/1)

1995 (95/8) **Tafilalt**, Source bleue de Meski, adult male, 12 April (P Holt *et al*)

Passes through east Saharan Morocco in spring, en route from wintering grounds in south-east Africa[33], but true status inadequately known. The status of all black-and-white flycatchers requires further study. In the Middle Atlas in spring 1964, Ruthke[30] recorded birds with characteristics of *F. semitorquata*. In Algeria, Moali *et al*[22] recently found breeding birds with a very well-marked white collar, considered *F. albicollis cf. semitorquata*, but Svensson & Mild[35] believed these to be extreme or aberrant *F. hypoleuca* or *F. albicollis*, or possibly hybrids between the two species. More recently, Potti & Merino[26] have demonstrated that a significant proportion of males of the Spanish race of Pied Flycatcher *F. h. iberiae*, possess a conspicuous or even full white collar that develops with age.

Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus* AV (11/21, 1/3)

1995 (95/11) **Rharb**, Lower Loukkos marshes, three, 4 January (H Dufourny *et al*)

Principally breeds in central Europe and Asia but also resident in Spain; it has undergone a marked western range expansion since the 1950s. Probably overlooked in Morocco, where perhaps a regular visitor to the north, eg in the marshes of Rharb.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* AV (4/5, 1/3–4)

1987 (87/1) **Saïs**, Jbel Zerhoun, 3–4, including a female mist-netted, 11 November (J Franchimont & E K Mdarhri-Alaoui).

Widespread in Europe, where most populations are partially migratory, but very rare in North Africa[15]. Measurements taken on this female indicate that it was of one of the European subspecies, either *europaea*, *pileata* or *iberiae*. Previous records are from Rharb (male at Charf-Al-Akab, on 6–10 November 1973 and a pair at Perdicaris, on 14 January–8 April 1976[25]), Chaouia (female trapped at Settat, on 12 November 1976[39]) and Zaër (male, on 18 November 1978, P C Beaubrun).

Species of unknown origin

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* AV (2/4, 1/8)

1995 (95/15) **Plains of Eastern Morocco**, Barrage Med V, five, 1 November and 21 December (D Jerez Abad & R Ramirez Espinar)

These birds probably originated from Douyiet, Saïs, where the species has been introduced. The only confirmed record of wild Mute Swans concerns a party of three at Merja Zerga, Rharb, from late December 1983–early February 1984[1].

Records not accepted

Madeiran Storm Petrel *Oceanodroma castro* 1996 (96/17) Souss, Massa estuary, one, 27 January, three, 28 January. **Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* 1996 (96/4) Haha, Tamri, 21 January. **Pink-backed Pelican** *Pelecanus rufescens* 1994 (94/6) Tafilalt, Merzouga, at least six adults, 24 May. **Dark Chanting Goshawk** *Melierax metabates* 1996 (96/19) Souss, Igoudar, juvenile, 8 January. **Levant Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter*

brevipes 1996 (96/5) Saïs, Meknès, 3 April. **Tawny Eagle** *Aquila rapax* 1996 (96/18) Souss, Igoudar, subadult, 8 January. **Spanish Imperial Eagle** *Aquila (heliaca) adalberti* 1994 (94/10) Plains of Eastern Morocco, 8 km west of Moulouya estuary, 16 and 18 October. **Saker** *Falco cherrug* 1996 (96/15) Tafilalt, Merzouga, 23 April. **Barbary (Peregrine) Falcon** *Falco (peregrinus) pelegrinoides* 1995 (95/16) Saïs, Meknès, 29 July–21 August. 1995 (95/20) Western High Atlas, Imlil, 21 August. 1996 (96/23) Tafilalt, Merzouga, 17 May. 1996 (96/25) Doukkala, Cap Beddouza, immature, 23 April. **Baird's Sandpiper** *Calidris bairdii* 1996 (96/34) Tafilalt, Merzouga, 17 May. **Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus* 1996 (96/30) Souss, Massa, 3 and 28 January. **Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus* 1995 (95/14) Tangérois, Punta Ceres, 4–5 adults, 23 August. **Rock Martin** *Hirundo fuligula* 1994 (94/3) Souss, Souss estuary, 9 November. 1996 (96/32) Lower Draa, Abeïno, three, 6 January. **Richard's Pipit** *Anthus (novaeseelandiae) richardi* 1997 (97/16) Souss, Massa, 2 June. **Aquatic Warbler** *Acrocephalus paludicola* 1987 (87/2) Souss, Massa estuary, 1 February. **Icterine Warbler** *Hippolais icterina* 1995 (95/21) Lower Draa, Aouinet Torcoz, 28 August. **Collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicollis* 1997 (97/7) Central High Atlas, Tizi-n-Tichka, adult female, 1 May. **Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos* 1995 (95/2) Western High Atlas, Oukaïmeden, 1 January.

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Appendix 1. List of bird species for which a description should be submitted to the Moroccan Rare Birds Committee

The following list is extracted from a complete list of the birds of Morocco (M. Thévenot) and includes those species which occur (or have occurred) and for which details should be submitted to MRBC. Status abbreviations are as follows:

RB	Resident
BM	Breeding migrant
OB	Occasional breeder
FB	Former breeder
PM	Passage migrant
WV	Winter visitor
OW	Occasional winter visitor, otherwise known as a migrant (BM, PM)
AV	Accidental visitor (fewer than 30 records)
F(AV)	Former accidental visitor (not recorded since 1899)
?	Indicates doubt concerning status immediately preceding the question mark

If more than one category is applicable to a species, they are presented in order of importance.

Struthio camelus	Ostrich, Autruche d'Afrique	FB, AV?
Gavia stellata	Red-throated Diver, Plongeon catmarin	AV
Gavia arctica	Black-throated Diver, Plongeon arctique	AV
Gavia immer	Great Northern Diver, Plongeon imbrin	AV
Podiceps auritus	Slavonian Grebe, Grèbe esclavon	AV
Diomedea melanophris	Black-browed Albatross, Albatros à sourcils noirs	AV
Fulmarus glacialis	Fulmar, Fulmar boréal	AV
Pterodroma mollis	Soft-plumaged Petrel, Pétrel soyeux	AV
Bulweria bulwerii	Bulwer's Petrel, Pétrel de Bulwer	AV
Puffinus gravis	Great Shearwater, Puffin majeur	PM
Puffinus puffinus	Manx Shearwater, Puffin des Anglais	PM
Puffinus assimilis	Little Shearwater, Petit Puffin	AV
Oceanites oceanicus	Wilson's Storm-petrel, Océanite de Wilson	PM, OW
Pelagodroma marina	White-faced Storm-petrel, Océanite frégate	AV
Oceanodroma leucorhoa	Leach's Storm-petrel, Océanite culblanc	PM, WV
Oceanodroma castro	Madeiran Storm-petrel, Océanite de Castro	AV/PM?
Sula leucogaster	Brown Booby, Fou brun	AV
Sula capensis	Cape Gannet, Fou du Cap	AV
Phalacrocorax africanus	Long-tailed Cormorant, Cormoran africain	AV
Anhinga melanogaster	Darter, Anhinga roux	AV
Pelecanus onocrotalus	White Pelican, Pélican blanc	AV
Botaurus stellaris	Eurasian Bittern, Butor étoilé	PM, FB, OW
Egretta gularis	Western Reef Heron, Aigrette gorge blanche	AV
Egretta alba	Great White Egret, Grande Aigrette	PM, OW
Mycteria ibis	Yellow-billed Stork, Tantale Ibis	AV
Phoenicanaias minor	Lesser Flamingo, Petit Flamant	AV
Dendrocygna bicolor	Fulvous Whistling Duck, Dendrocygne fauve	AV
Cygnus olor	Mute Swan, Cygne tuberculé	AV
Cygnus cygnus	Whooper Swan, Cygne chanteur	AV
Anser fabalis	Bean Goose, Oie des moissons	AV
Anser albifrons	White-fronted Goose, Oie rieuse	AV
Anser caerulescens	Snow Goose, Oie des neiges	AV
Branta leucopsis	Barnacle Goose, Bernache nonnette	AV
Branta bernicla	Brent Goose, Bernache cravant	AV
Plectropterus gambensis	Spur-winged Goose, Plectroptère de Gambie	AV
Aix galericulata	Mandarin Duck, Canard mandarin	AV
Anas americana	American Wigeon, Canard Siffleur d'Amerique	AV
Anas discars	Blue-winged Teal, Sarcelle soucrourou	AV
Anas smithii	Cape Shoveler, Canard du Cap	AV
Aythya collaris	Ring-necked Duck, Fuligule à bec cerclé	AV
Aythya marila	Greater Scaup, Fuligule milouinan	AV
Melanitta fusca	Velvet Scoter, Macreuse brune	AV
Bucephala clangula	Common Goldeneye, Garrot à oeil d'or	AV
Mergus albellus	Smew, Harle piette	F(AV)
Mergus serrator	Red-breasted Merganser, Harle huppé	WV

Mergus merganser	Goosander, Harle bièvre	AV
Oxyuro jamaicensis	Ruddy Duck, Erismature rousse	AV, OB?
Oxyuro leucocephala	White-headed Duck, Erismature à tête blanche,	FB, AV
Haliaeetus albicilla	White-tailed Eagle, Pygargue à queue blanche	AV
Necrosyrtes monachus	Hooded Vulture, Vautour charognard	AV
Gyps rueppellii	Rüppell's Vulture, Vautour de Rüppell	AV
Aegypius tracheliotos	Lappet-faced Vulture, Vautour oricou	AV, FB
Aegypius monachus	Black Vulture, Vautour moine	AV, FB
Circus macrourus	Pallid Harrier, Busard pâle	AV
Melierax metabates	Dark Chanting Goshawk, Autour-chanteur sombre	RB
Aquila pomarina	Lesser Spotted Eagle, Aigle pomarin	AV
Aquila clanga	Spotted Eagle, Aigle criard	AV
Aquila rapax	Tawny Eagle, Aigle ravisseur	RB
Aquila heliaca	Imperial Eagle, Aigle impérial	AV, FB, OB
Falco vespertinus	Red-footed Falcon, Faucon kobez	AV
Falco cherrug	Saker Falcon, Faucon sacre	AV
Falco (peregrinus) pelegrinoides	Barbary Falcon, Faucon de Barbarie	RB
Numida meleagris	Helmeted Guineafowl, Pintade sauvage	FB
Turnix sylvatica	Little Button Quail, Turnix d'Afrique	RB
Porzana porzana	Spotted Crake, Marouette pontuée	PM, OW
Porzana carolina	Sora Crake, Marouette de Caroline	AV
Porzana parva	Little Crake, Marouette poussin	PM
Porzana pusilla	Baillon's Crake, Marouette de Baillon	PM, BM OW
Crex crex	Corncrake, Râle des genêts	PM, OW
Porphyrio alleni	Allen's Gallinule, Talève d'Allen	AV
Anthropoides virgo	Demoiselle Crane, Grue demoiselle	FB
Ardeotis arabs	Arabian Bustard, Outarde arabe	RB
Rostratula benghalensis	Greated Painted Snipe, Rhynchée peinte	AV
Glareola nordmanni	Black-winged Pratincole, Glaréole à ailes noires	AV
Charadrius pecuarius	Kittliz's Sand-Plover, Pluvier pâtre	AV
Pluvialis dominica	American Golden Plover, Pluvier dominicain	AV
Chettusia gregaria	Sociable Plover, Vanneau sociable	AV
Vanellus leucurus	White-tailed Plover, Vanneau à queue blanche	AV
Calidris tenuirostris	Great Knot, Grand bécasseau maubèche	AV
Calidris melanotos	Pectoral Sandpiper, Bécasseau tachète	AV
Calidris maritimo	Purple Sandpiper, Bécasseau violet	AV
Limicolo falcinellus	Broad-billed Sandpiper, Bécasseau falcinelle	AV
Gallinago media	Great Snipe, Bécassine double	PM, WV
Limnodromus scolopaceus	Long-billed Dowitcher, Limnodrome à long bec	AV
Numenius tenuirostris	Slender-billed Curlew, Courlis à bec grêle	OW
Tringa flavipes	Lesser Yellowlegs, Petit chevalier à pattes jaunes	AV
Xenus cinereus	Terek Sandpiper, Bargette de Terek	AV
Actitis macularia	Spotted Sandpiper, Chevalier grivelé	AV
Phalaropus tricolor	Wilson's Phalarope, Phalarope de Wilson	AV
Phalaropus lobatus	Red-necked Phalarope, Phalarope à bec étroit	AV
Stercararius longicaudus	Long-tailed Skua, Labbe à longue queue	AV
Larus atricilla	Laughing Gull, Goéland atricille	AV
Larus pipixcan	Franklin's Gull, Mouette de Franklin	AV
Larus sabini	Sabine's Gull, Mouette de Sabine	PM, OW
Larus philadelphia	Bonaparte's Gull, Mouette de Bonaparte	AV
Larus cirracephalus	Grey-headed Gull, Mouette à tête grise	AV
Larus delawarensis	Ring-billed Gull, Goéland à bec cerclé	AV
Larus canus	Common Gull, Goéland cendré	WV
Larus argentatus	Herring Gull, Goéland argenté	WV
Larus glaucoides	Iceland Gull, Goéland à ailes blanches	AV
Larus hyperbareus	Glaucous Gull, Goéland bourgmestre	AV
Larus glaucescens	Glaucous-winged Gull, Goéland de Béring	AV
Lorus marinus	Great Black-backed Gull, Goéland marin	WV
Sterna dougallii	Roseate Tern, Sterne de Dougall	PM
Sterna paradisaeo	Arctic Tern, Sterne arctique	PM, OW
Sterna anaethetus	Bridled Tern, Sterne bridée	BM
Sterna fuscata	Sooty Tern, Sterne fuligineuse	AV
Rhynchops flavirostris	African Skimmer, Bec-en-ciseaux d'Afrique	AV
Uria aalge	Common Guillemot, Guillemot de Troïl	AV
Oena capensis	Namaqua Dove, Tourterelle à masque de fer	FB, AV
Psittacula krameri	Rose-ringed Parakeet, Perruche à collier	AV/RB?
Coccyzus americanus	Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Coulicou à bec jaune	AV
Bubo bubo hispanus	Eurasian Eagle Owl, Hibou grand-duc	RB?
Asio flammeus	Short-eared Owl, Hibou des marais	WV, PM
Apus unicalor	Plain Swift, Martinet unicolor	AV/WV?, OB
Apus caffer	White-rumped Swift, Martinet cafre	BM, PM
Eremopterix nigriceps	Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark, Alouette-moineau à front blanc	RB
Hirundo fuligula	Rock Martin, Hirondelle du désert	RB, BM
Anthus (novaeseelondiae) richardi	Richard's Pipit, Pipit de Richard	WV
Anthus petrosus	European Rock Pipit, Pipit maritime	WV
Motacilla citreola	Citrine Wagtail, Bergeronnette citrine	AV
Prunella modularis	Dunnock, Accenteur mouchet	WV
Oenanthe isabellina	Isabelline Wheatear, Traquet isabelle	AV
Turdus pilaris	Fieldfare, Grive litorne	AV
Locustella fluviatilis	River Warbler, Locustelle fluviatile	AV
Acrocepholus paludicola	Aquatic Warbler, Phragmite aquatique	PM
Hippolais icterina	Icterine Warbler, Hypolais ictérine	AV
Sylvia sarda	Marmora's Warbler, Fauvette sarde	AV
Sylva curruca	Lesser Whitethroat, Fauvette babillarde	PM, OW
Phylloscopus proregulus	Pallas's Warbler, Pouillot de Pallas	AV
Phylloscopus inornatus	Yellow-browed Warbler, Pouillot à grands sourcils	AV
Phylloscopus fuscatus	Dusky Warbler, Pouillot brun	AV
Regulus regulus	Goldcrest, Roitelet huppé	AV
Ficedula parva	Red-breasted Flycatcher, Gobemouche nain	AV
Ficedula albicallis	Collared Flycatcher, Gobemouche à collier	AV
Panurus biarmicus	Bearded Tit, Panure à moustaches	AV
Aegithalos caudatus	Long-tailed Tit, Mésange à longue queue	AV
Parus cristatus	Crested Tit, Mésange huppée	AV
Tichodroma muraria	Wallcreeper, Tichodrome échelette	AV
Remiz pendulinus	Penduline Tit, Rémiz penduline	AV
Lanius collurio	Red-backed Shrike, Pie-grièche écorcheur	AV
Corvus corone	Carrion Crow, Corneille noire	AV
Lagonosticta senegala	Red-billed Firefinch, Amarante du Sénégal	AV
Vireo olivaceus	Red-eyed Vireo, Viréo à oeil rouge	AV
Serinus citrinella	Citril Finch, Venturon montagnard	AV
Carduelis flammea	Common Redpoll, Sizerin flammé	AV
Carpadacus erythrinus	Scarlet Rosefinch, Roselin cramoisi	AV
Pyrrhula pyrrhula	Bullfinch, Bouvreuil pivoine	AV
Plectrophenax nivalis	Snow Bunting, Bruant des neiges	AV
Emberiza citrinella	Yellowhammer, Bruant jaune	AV
Emberiza pusilla	Little Bunting, Bruant nain	AV
Emberiza melanocephala	Black-headed Bunting, Bruant mélanocéphale	AV

Appendix 2. Possible accidental visitors to Morocco
Species for which one or more records have been claimed but not confirmed (AV?).

Gavio adamsii	White-billed Diver, Plongeon à bec blanc	AV?
Podiceps grisegena	Red-necked Grebe, Grèbe jougris	F(AV)?
Diomedea exulans	Wandering Albatross, Albatros hurleur	AV?
Phaethon aethereus	Red-billed Tropicbird, Grand Phaëton	AV?
Sula dactylatra	Masked Booby, Fou masqué	AV?
Pelecanus rufescens	Pink-backed Pelican, Pélican russâtre	AV?
Ixobrychus exilis	Least Bittern, Petit Blongios	AV?
Alopochen aegyptiacus	Egyptian Goose, Oie d'Egypte	AV?
Accipiter brevipes	Levant Sparrowhawk, Epervier à pieds courts	AV?
Porzana marginalis	Striped Crake, Marouette rayée	AV?
Burhinus senegalensis	Senegal Thick-knee, Oedicnème du Senegal	AV?
Charadrius leschenaultii	Greater Sand-Plover, Pluvier de Leschenault	AV?
Calidris pusilla	Semipalmated Sandpiper, Bécasseau semipalmé	AV?
Micropalama himantopus	Stilt Sandpiper, Bécasseau à échasses	AV?
Gallinago stenura	Pintail Snipe, Bécassine à queue peinte	AV?
Limnodramus griseus	Short-billed Dowitcher, Limnodrome à bec court	AV?
Alle alle	Little Auk, Mergule nain	AV?
Streptopelia roseogrisea	Pink-headed Dove, Tourterelle rieuse	AV?
Strix woodfordii	African Wood Owl, Chouette africaine	AV?
Caprimulgus eximius	Golden Nightjar, Engoulevent doré	AV?
Caracias abyssinicus	Abyssinian Roller, Rollier d'Abyssinie	AV?
Luscinia luscinia	Thrush Nightingale, Rossignol progné	AV?
Oenanthe pleschanka	Pied Wheatear, Traquet pie	AV?
Locustella certhiola	Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler, Locustelle de Pallas	AV?
Acrocephalus palustris	Marsh Warbler, Rousserolle verderolle	AV?
Phylloscopus schwarzi	Radde's Warbler, Pouillot de Schwarz	AV?
Ficedula semitorquata	Semi-collared Flycatcher, Gobemouche à demi-collier	AV?
Passer luteus	Golden Sparrow, Moineau doré	AV?
Serinus canaria	Canary, Serin des Canaries	AV?
Emberiza leucocephalos	Pine Bunting, Bruant à calotte blanche	AV?

The Mauritius Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina typica*: from egg to adult

Roger Safford

Le nid, les oeufs, les oisillons et les plumages juvénile, sub-adulte et adulte de l'Echenilleur de Maurice Coracina typica sont décrits et illustrés. Contrairement aux autres espèces d'échenilleurs de la région afrotropicale et malgache, les plumages du mâle et de la femelle de l'Echenilleur de Maurice sont nettement différents et le jeune connaît un développement lent mais avec des plumages colorés. En cela, il ressemble à deux espèces d'échenilleurs australasiens.

The cuckoo-shrikes are a widespread group of passerines characteristic of the Old World tropics and some adjacent temperate regions. Traditionally, they have been placed within the Campephagidae, most species in the genus *Coracina*. Despite their relative familiarity to birdwatchers, the family is comparatively little known but available information suggests a peculiarly slow[7] and colourful development of the young. The *Birds of Africa* family summary[1] notes that the nestling is usually white, replaced by plumage similar to the adult female following the first moult. In most species, the female appears like a duller version of the male, so such a sequence is not unexpected. However, some species outside continental Africa show very well-marked sexual colour differences, and it might be doubted that such males would bear an immature plumage quite unlike the one either before or after it.

The Mauritius Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina typica* is one such strongly sexually dichromatic species, which forms a species pair with the similar *Coracina newtoni* of Réunion; they differ mainly in vocalisations and the underparts plumage of adult females (barred brown on white in Réunion, plain orange-rufous in Mauritius). This note complements a paper[6] on the biology of the Mauritius species, principally by presenting the first photographs of the nest, eggs, and nestling and juvenile plumages. Only a poor, monochrome illustration of the nest and eggs has been previously published[2], although the juvenile was correctly illustrated in 1866[5], with an accurate description appearing more recently[1]. For completeness, the beautiful, 1866 painting of the juvenile, together with the adults, is reproduced as the front cover to the bulletin.

Nest and eggs

The nest (Fig. 1) is a very shallow cup, almost a platform, of fine twigs, lacking a soft lining but with lichen flakes attached to the outer part. The eggs are pale green, much speckled with brown, and typical clutch size is 2–3.

Nestlings

Incubation lasts c24 days, and the nestlings are largely pinkish and white, with darker areas hinting at the future plumage pattern (Fig. 2).

Juvenile

The young fledge after 24 days. The attractive juvenile plumage is very unlike any adult plumage, due to the buff feather edgings and pinkish underparts with fine darker streaking (Figs. 3–4 and front cover).

Sub-adult

Juvenile body plumage is lost within c2 months of fledging, to be replaced by orange-brown feathers above and rich orange-rufous below. However, in at least some males, the underparts become partly whitish.

Adult

Mauritius Cuckoo-Shrike appears not to gain full adult plumage until the complete moult at the end of the first complete breeding season, over a year after hatching. The adult male is grey above and greyish white below, with blackish wings, while the brown and orange female resembles the sub-adult (see front cover).

The plumages therefore do, indeed, follow the sequence predicted by *Birds of Africa*[1]. Females quickly gain an adult-like plumage, whereas males take over a year to do so, changing from pale and scaly, through brown and orange, to grey and black. The slow development, typical of the family, is also shown to apply to the Mauritius species: the period from egg-laying to fledging occupies c50 days, and, in the brood that I followed most closely, juvenile dependency lasted at least three months. Other Mauritian passerines, including the larger Mauritius Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes olivaceus*, develop more swiftly, supporting the idea that this is a characteristic of cuckoo-shrikes rather than an adaptation to the Mauritian environment.

Figure 1. Nest and eggs of Mauritius Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina typica*, Brise Fer forest, Mauritius, November 1991 (Colin Taylor)

Figure 2. Nestlings of Mauritius Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina typica*, Brise Fer forest, Mauritius, November 1991 (Colin Taylor)

Figure 3. Juvenile Mauritius Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina typica*, Brise Fer forest, Mauritius, January 1991 (Roger Safford)

Figure 4. Juvenile Mauritius Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina typica*, Brise Fer forest, Mauritius, January 1991 (Roger Safford)

The sexual dichromatism is itself worthy of comment. The male plumage is unexceptional for *Coracina* but the female is unlike any Asian or African *Coracina* species. However, two Australasian species, the Slender-billed Cicadabird *Coracina tenuirostris* and Grey-headed (or Black-tipped) Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina schisticeps* are similar[4]. The similarity might indicate a common origin for Mascarene and Australasian birds, or be due to convergence; if the latter is the case, the reason is mysterious. Furthermore, in both Australasian species, females are barred below like Réunion Cuckoo-Shrike in some races, but have plain underparts like the Mauritian species in others[3]. Therefore, plumage differences between the two Mascarene species are similar to those between subspecies in Australasia. However, vocalisations are sufficiently distinct to justify maintaining the Mascarene species pair as full species.

Acknowledgements

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Azores Bullfinch *Pyrrhula murina*

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Le Bouvreuil des Açores *Pyrrhula murina* constitue une forme très distincte, qui se trouve dans l'est de l'île de São Miguel, Açores. Le plumage des deux sexes est pratiquement identique et ressemble à celui de la femelle du Bouvreuil pivoine *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* d'Europe continentale, le mâle ayant toutefois les flancs et l'abdomen parfois légèrement teintés de fauve rougeâtre. L'espèce était localement abondante et causait des dégâts considérables aux vergers pendant le 19ème siècle, mais elle est devenue rare après 1920. L'effectif actuel d'environ 120 couples est essentiellement confiné à de la végétation indigène qui a été réduite et envahie par des plantes exotiques agressives. L'espèce niche de mi-juin à fin-août. Les oiseaux se déplacent en fonction de la fructification des plantes dont ils se nourrissent, qui comptent 37 espèces (dont 13 sont importantes). Vers la fin de l'hiver ils subsistent largement de bourgeons du houx endémique *Ilex perado*. Des mesures de conservation ont été prises à partir de 1995, à la suite de l'octroi d'une subvention LIFE de l'Union Européenne ayant pour objectif de rétablir et d'améliorer la forêt de lauriers indigène, et en particulier les plantes indigènes qui sont indispensables au Bouvreuil des Açores.

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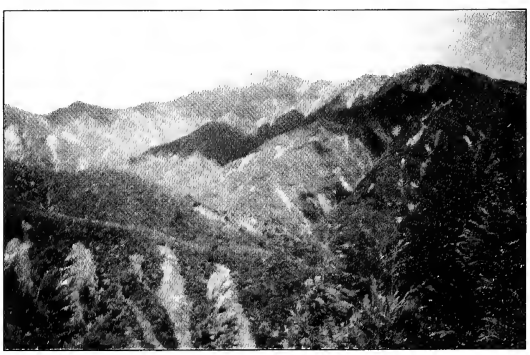

4

1–2 Azores Bullfinch *Pyrrhula murina*, São Miguel, 1992 (J. A. Ramos)

3 Nest of Azores Bullfinch *Pyrrhula murina*, São Miguel, 1992 (J. A. Ramos)

4 Habitat of Azores Bullfinch *Pyrrhula murina*, São Miguel, 1992 (J. A. Ramos)

Introduction

Azores (or São Miguel) Bullfinch *Pyrrhula murina* (local name of Priôlo) is a very distinct form, which has only ever been known to occur at the east end of the island of São Miguel in the Azores archipelago (Portugal). Godman[4], who discovered the species, described it as one of the characteristic birds of mountainous areas on the island. The present population, of c120 pairs, is confined to the largest fragments of native vegetation (Macaronesian Laurel Forests). At the end of the last century it had a wider range and was regarded as a pest in orange orchards, being easily taken for museum collections[1]. Native vegetation has been cleared for pasture and or forested with the exotic Japanese Red Cedar *Cryptomeria japonica*. The remaining fragments have been invaded by aggressive exotic plants: *Pittosporum undulatum*, *Hedychium gardnerianum* and *Clethra arborea*. Azores Bullfinch is now considered Endangered by IUCN[5] and is included within the Portuguese Red Data Book[3]. It is also included in Annex I of the European Union's Wild Birds Directive. In 1995, the local forestry service initiated a programme (with European Union funding) in an attempt to restore and expand the area of laurel forest and increase the population of Azores Bullfinch[11].

Plumage

Azores Bullfinch differs markedly from its mainland counterpart. The sexes are virtually identical in coloration, although males sometimes possess a slight reddish-tawny suffusion on the vent and flanks[8]. The traditional method of ageing Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*—colour differences in the greater coverts[7]—is difficult to apply in Azores Bullfinch because adults have buffish-edged coverts too, unlike the greyer tones in mainland Bullfinch. Male Azores Bullfinches are significantly larger than females[14].

Population and habitat

Two main areas of native vegetation are present within the range of the Azores Bullfinch: the largest, centred on the Pico da Vara summit, where birds are resident, and Salto do Cavalo, in the west of the range, where it has been observed in September–December[12]. The population was estimated at 30–40 birds in the late 1970s[6], 100 pairs in 1989[2] and 60–200 pairs in 1991–1996[12] (pers. obs.).

Native vegetation is always preferred but there are seasonal variations in habitat selection: in summer, birds utilise bare ground, short vegetation and forest edges, including exotics, within 200 m of native forest. In January–April it is less catholic and virtually confined to native vegetation[12]. Changes in habitat can be explained by seasonal variation in food resources between habitats: birds move from area to area following the fruiting of food plants. Therefore, the species is more mobile in summer, crossing areas of mature forest to reach areas with herbaceous plants. Colour ringing has demonstrated that longer movements (up to 3 km along streams) occur in May, with birds descending from c700 m to 300 m to feed on herbaceous seeds[12].

Breeding and feeding

The species' behaviour in May and early June—bill caressing and twig display—indicates pre-breeding activity. Females with brood patches occur in mid-June–late August, suggesting a later and shorter breeding season than that of the mainland Bullfinch[13]. Adults moult from September onward. I found two nests in 1992. The first was located in a low plantation (<5 m height) of *C. japonica* and the second within an area of *C. arborea* and native forest, but both were placed on a *C. japonica* tree at c3 m above ground. Nests were alike, consisting of an outer layer of twigs of *C. arborea* and *Erica azorica* and an inner layer of rootlets, grass and moss (Fig 2). The progressive appearance of juveniles in the field suggests two young are usually raised.

Azores Bullfinch is a granivorous–herbivorous bird, consuming foods from at least 37 different plant species, of which 13 are known to be important. In summer, birds take herbaceous seeds (*Polygonum capitatum*, *Prunella vulgaris*, *Leontodon filii*), in autumn seeds of fleshy fruits (*Rubus* sp., *Vaccinium cylindraceum*, *Leicesteria formosa*), in winter tree seeds (*Clethra arborea*) and fern sporangia (*Woodwardia radicans*, *Culcita macrocarpa*), and in spring flower buds (*Ilex perado*), fern sporangia (*Osmunda regalis*), fern fronds (*Osmunda regalis*, *Pteridium aquilinum*) and moss tips[10]. Fern fronds and moss tips are only taken when other foods are scarce[9]. Native plants comprise the majority of the diet in August–September and April. In this month the species appears heavily dependent on flower buds of *I. perado* (with few or no alternative foods available). Seeds of *C. arborea* are ignored (presumably because they are too dry and indigestible) once flower buds reach a length of c2.8–3.0 mm[13]. Seeds of other exotic species are very rarely consumed, especially *C. japonica*, because the species cannot extract the seed from its cone. Therefore, Azores Bullfinch may face food shortages in late winter, because *I. perado* is present at relatively low densities and most flower buds have already been consumed[10].

Conservation

The laurel forest around the Pico da Vara summit (the stronghold of Azores Bullfinch) has been designated a Natural Forest Reserve by the Regional Government of the Azores. It was also designated a Special Protection Area by the Azorean Government under the EU Wild Birds Directive. The control of invasive exotics and planting of native species, raised in nurseries, began in early 1995 following the approval of a EU LIFE grant. The main aim of this project is to re-establish and improve the laurel forest, to ensure and maintain a viable population of Azores Bullfinch in the long term.

Hints for visitors

Azores Bullfinch is easiest to see in May–September, along the mountain road from Nordeste to Povoação, near Miradouro da Serra da Tronqueira: birds feed along this road and adjacent openings on seeds of herbaceous plants, especially *P. capitatum* (which forms a small carpet of pink flowers). In September–November it is possible, although more difficult, to see juveniles near Salto do Cavalo (above Furnas), and beyond Miradouro da Ponta da Madrugada, on the coast road from Nordeste to Povoacão.

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Recent observations of some bird species previously considered uncommon or rare in Ethiopia

S John Farnsworth[a], Richard F Coomber[b], Phil Jones[c], Steve C Madge[d], Richard Webb and Mike Witherick[f]

Des données ornithologiques récentes pour l'Ethiopie sont présentées. Elles ont été obtenues de sources non publiées et se rapportent à des espèces considérées antérieurement comme peu communes ou rares. Les données sont examinées en tenant compte de publications régionales antérieures et des conclusions préliminaires concernant la distribution et le statut actuel de ces espèces sont présentées.

Recent ornithological visits to Ethiopia are providing additional information on distribution, period of occurrence and population which clarify and amplify earlier regional publications. Our observations from recent visits presented some initial uncertainties due in part to available summary information being located in various publications not usually carried in the field, some of which do not distinguish between present-day Ethiopia and Eritrea. We present recent previously unpublished data obtained by ourselves and other ornithologists travelling independently, principally to the West Highlands, Rift Valley and South-east Highlands of modern Ethiopia. The data relate to Palearctic and intra-African migrants, and resident (including endemic) bird species previously considered uncommon or rare. The observations include range extensions for several residents and consolidation of migration and overwintering periods; four Palearctic migrants apparently new to Ethiopia (Subalpine *Sylvia cantillans*, Rüppell's *S. rueppelli* and Spectacled Warblers *S. conspicillata*, and Cretzschmar's Bunting *Emberiza caesia*) are not included, but will be described separately (see also Recent Reports, this issue).

The data are prefaced by brief extracts from earlier regional publications in order to indicate our increasing knowledge of, eg status and distribution. Brief reference is also made to some other (largely unconfirmed) recent reports in *Bull. ABC*, to comments in *The Birds of Africa* Vols 1–5[18], *The Birds of the Western Palearctic* (*BWP*)[7], *The Handbook of the Birds of the World* Vols 1–5[10] and *Important Bird Areas of Ethiopia*[17] where these clarify our own observations. In the species accounts, the authors' observations are usually not identified but those of other contributors are acknowledged, comments on distribution in adjacent countries are also presented where this clarifies our data.

Unusually heavy rains in autumn 1996–early 1997 are considered likely to have benefited the number and extent of some water-dependent species at that time. Extensive fires in Awash National Park in 1996 are considered likely to have subsequently modified the avifauna in that region.

Nomenclature and sequence principally follow *The Birds of Africa*[18] and Zimmerman *et al*[5] for most other species (taxonomic deviations from the first-named are indicated in the introductory comments to the particular species accounts). Following many differences in spelling of place names and localities encountered in the literature and elsewhere, we have opted to use *A Traveller's Reference Map (No 758) of Ethiopia* 1:2,000,000 (first edition) as it appears to be widely available and inexpensive. Hence, we have not included a general locality map in these notes.

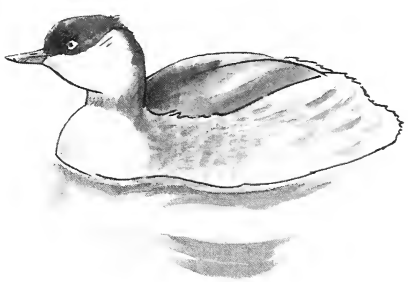
The original intention in preparing our notes was to clarify recent occurrence status etc for the benefit of others intending to travel to the more accessible parts of Ethiopia. The present more detailed treatment is intended to be of wider interest.

Species accounts

Podiceps nigricollis **Black-necked Grebe**

Considered uncommon, a possible Palearctic migrant[1] and resident, with breeding records[19]. *P. n. gurneyi* is a local, erratic breeder in Kenya[20].

1988: one at Lake Shalla on 13 November. 1996: two



Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*
by Mark Andrews

at Lake Ziway on 30 January with 30 at Lake Abijatta on 16 October; 25 in Abijatta–Shalla NP on 21 October (DM) with several there on 27 November (JT), two at Debre Zeit on 20 November with one there on 30 November and 10 at Lake Abijatta on 24 November. 1997: recorded at Lake Chelekleka (just north of Debre Zeit) on 16 March and at Lake Abijatta on 19 March.

Butorides striatus Green Heron

B. s. atricapillus frequent to common, although uncommon at alkaline lakes[19]. Fairly common resident in Kenya, scarce at Lake Turkana due to falling water levels[20].

Our observations indicate that it is probably more frequent at Rift Valley lakes and Awash NP (perhaps due to increased observer coverage) as affected by more unusual rainfall patterns.

Egretta gularis Western Reef Heron

Common on Red Sea coast of Eritrea, but rare at alkaline lakes[19]; and considered a vagrant (= fewer than 5 records)[1]. Uncommon non-breeding visitor to Kenya[20].

1988: one at Blue Nile rapids, Lake Tana on 8 November. 1994: one at Blue Nile rapids, Lake Tana on 24 January. 1996: one grey individual at Lake Basaka on 20 November.

Recent observations indicate current status as uncommon at inland lakes (see also *Bull. ABC* 2: 61).

Ciconia nigra Black Stork

Uncommon to frequent, rare in highland grasslands[19]; Palearctic migrant mid-October–late January, overwintering[1]. Regular Palearctic migrant in small numbers October–April in Kenya[20]; uncommon migrant October–April in Sudan[12].

1988: singles near Bahar Dar (Lake Tana) on 8 November, near Awash NP headquarters on 11 November and between Goba and Shashemene on 18 November. 1995: recorded at Bokol Mayo on 26 December and Melka Guba on 27 December. 1996: two near Shashemene on 3 February and between Shashemene and Goba on 20 October; singles between Goba and Wendo Genet on 3 November (DM), northern Awash NP on 25 November (JT) and Shashemene on 26 November with two near Dinsho on 29 November. 1998: singles at Debre Zeit on 16 March and in Bale Mts on 23 March.

Recent observations indicate migration period mid-October–late March; overwintering.

Ciconia episcopus Woolly-necked Stork

C. e. microscelis uncommon resident[19]. Fairly common in coastal Kenya[20].

1995: recorded in Jema Valley on 17 December. 1996: recorded north of Arba Minch on 2 January; singles at Koka Dam on 24 October and at Awasa on 29 November (JT).

Platalea leucorodia Eurasian Spoonbill

P. l. leucorodia (synonymous with *P. l. archeri*) common on Red Sea coast but rare (?) at alkaline lakes[19]; Palearctic migrant (no dates)[1]; uncommon to locally common in Ethiopia[19]. Scarce migrant in Kenya, thought to represent nominate Palearctic race, but *archeri* from the Red Sea coast also possible[20]; *leucorodia* uncommon in east Sudan[12].

1988: one at Lake Koka on 12 November.

Tadorna ferruginea Ruddy Shelduck

Uncommon to rare on tarns and marshes to 3,700 m[19]; Palearctic migrant mid-August–early February[1]; breeds Sanetti Plateau in Bale Mts[18].

1995: two on the Sanetti Plateau on 23 December. 1996: two pairs above Goba at c4,000 m on 21 October; five in Bale NP on 30 October (DM) with three on Sanetti Plateau on 27 November. 1997: pair above Goba on 24 March and 17 November. 1998: 1–2 pairs on Sanetti Plateau on 23 March.

Anas sparsa African Black Duck

A. s. leucostigma frequent to common, but uncommon on larger freshwater lakes/rivers; usually on forested streams[19]. Uncommon and local on mountain streams in Kenya[20].

1988: three on Sululta Plains on 6 November, one at Bahar Dar on 7 November and two just west of Goba on 15 November. 1994: singles on Sanetti Plateau on 2 February and just west of Goba on 4 February. 1996: pair on Wabe Shabele river on 3 February, pair at Gefarsa Reservoir 20 km north-west of Addis Ababa on 12 October with two there on 14 October (DM) and pair on 23 November (JT); 10 in Bale NP on 30 October with six there next day and 10 between Goba and Wendo Genet on 3 November (DM); three by Akaki bridges on 20 November. 1997: one on a highland stream, without bankside vegetation, between Dodola and Adaba at c3,000 m on 25 March, appearing to have a high sediment load following recent intense rain, but probably with little domestic effluent; 3–5 at two locations on stream (apparently polluted by domestic effluent but with bankside vegetation) near the Ghion Hotel in central Addis Ababa on 30 March; singles on roadside stream near Dinsho on 16 and 18 November. 1998: one on Wabe Shebele river between Shashemene and Dinsho on 22 March with a pair there on 24 March.

Indicates a wider range of fluvial habitat (perhaps due to increased observer coverage) although apparently mainly above c1,800 m.

Aythya nyroca Ferruginous Duck

Uncommon[19]; Palearctic migrant early October–late April, overwintering uncertain[1]. Scarce Palearctic migrant (occasional small influxes) November–March in Kenya[20]; rare migrant October–April in Sudan[12].

1988: one at Lake Chelekleka on 9 November. 1994: one at Lake Ziway on 24 January. 1996: two at Lake Chelekleka on 20 November. 1998: male at Lake Chelekleka on 15 March.

Recent observations suggest overwintering.

Oxyura maccoa Maccoa Duck

Common to locally abundant, but uncommon at larger freshwater lakes/rivers[19]. Rather uncommon and local

resident in Kenya[20].

1988: one at Lake Chelekleka on 9 November. 1994: 15 at Lake Abijatta on 30 January and two at Lake Chelekleka on 26 January. 1996: two at Lake Hora (Debre Zeit) on 30 January; two males at Lake Chelekleka on 20 November. 1998: pair at Lake Chelekleka on 15 March and male at Debre Zeit the same day.

Pernis apivorus Honey Buzzard

Rare (no recent records)[19]; Palearctic migrant early October–early November, overwintering uncertain[1]. Uncommon Palearctic migrant October–April in Kenya, mainly east of the Rift Valley[20]; uncommon migrant October–November and April–May in Sudan[12].

1996: 2–3 between Ziway and Mojo on 30 November (JT). 1997: one at Gefarsa Reservoir on 15 March, two between Addis Ababa and Mojo on 18 March, singles at Wendo Genet on 26 March and in Awash NP on 28 March.

Recent observations indicate current status as Palearctic migrant early September–late March (perhaps due to increased observer coverage), and possibly overwintering.

Pernis apivorus/ptilorhyncus honey buzzard sp.

1988: 1–2 flushed from large trees at Awasa on 14 November.

In view of the lack of specimens from Ethiopia, the possibility of Crested Honey Buzzard *P. ptilorhyncus* cannot be eliminated, especially as winter records now exist for Arabia and small numbers appear to migrate into East Africa through the Middle East[5,15,16].

Machaerhamphus alcinus Bat Hawk

M. a. anderssoni rare, no confirmed breeding records[19]. Uncommon and very local resident, few Kenyan breeding records[20].

Some (perhaps all) recent records of Bat Hawk from Awash NP could refer to Grey Kestrel *F. ardosiaceus* which hunt bats at and even just after dark along the river by the park headquarters (SCM, see also *Bull. ABC* 3: 61 and 5: 72 for records of Bat Hawk from Wendo Genet and Lake Awasa).

Circaetus gallicus Short-toed Eagle

Uncommon[19]; Palearctic migrant mid-September–mid-April, overwintering[1]. Vagrant in Kenya[20].

1994: two between Bahar Dar and Tissisat Falls on 25 January. 1995: singles between Negele and Yavello on 27 December and between Yavello and Jinka on 28 December. 1996: singles in Awash NP on 21 November and near Shashemene on 26 November with two in Rift Valley between Wendo Genet and Lake Ziway on 31 November.

Recent observations indicate regular migrant/overwinterer.

Circaetus (*g.*) *pectoralis* Black-breasted Snake Eagle

Uncommon to rare[19]. Uncommon, but widespread in Kenya[20].

1988: singles in Awash NP on 10 November and north of Awasa on 14 November. 1994: singles at Lake Ziway on 29 January, Lake Langano on 31 January and near Wendo Genet on 5 February. 1996: two at Lake Abijatta on 16 October; one there on 21 October (DM); three in Awash NP on 23 October, singles there on 26 October and 24–26 November (JT); singles between Mega and Negele on 28 October and at Wadera on 29 October (DM). 1997: singles 15 km south-west of Ziway on 19 March, at Langano on 20 March (same?) and near Ziway on 27 March, with two in Awash NP on 29 March and one there on 22 November. 1998: three near Awasa on 20 March, two in Awash NP on 26 March and one there on 27 March.

Recent observations indicate regular presence in the Rift Valley.

Circaetus cinereus Brown Snake Eagle

Uncommon to rare[19]. Widespread and fairly common in Kenya, few breeding records[20].

1988: singles in Awash NP on 11 November and east of Shashemene on 18 November. 1994: one between Nazeret and Awash on 26 January. 1995: one at Sof Omar on 22 December. 1996: singles at Arba Minch on 2 January, Langano on 30 January (SB), in Awash NP on 18 and 19 October, between Arba Minch and Yavello on 26 October (DM), and between Nazeret and Awash on 23 November. 1998: one in Awash NP on 27 March.

Circaetus cinerascens Smaller Banded Snake Eagle

Uncommon to rare resident[19]. Breeding suspected January–February in north-east Africa[14]. Scarce and very local in riverine woodland in Kenya, no East African breeding record[20], locally common in south-east Sudan[12].

1988: one at Awasa on 15 November. 1994: one at Lake Awasa on 1 February. 1996: one at Lake Awasa on 23 October (DM); two near Wendo Genet on 29 November (JT). 1997: singles on east side of Lake Awasa at dusk on 21 March, and above Wendo Genet quarry mid-morning on 26 March (same?).

Accipiter brevipes Levant Sparrowhawk

Range, habitat and numbers obscure[19]. Rare Palearctic migrant, November–December, in Kenya[20] and uncommon, late September–late April, in east Sudan, where probably overlooked[12].

1996: one near Langano on 18 October (RFC, MW).

Accipiter minullus African Little Sparrowhawk

Uncommon resident, with breeding records[19]. Nominate race local and uncommon in Kenya, with *tropicalis* in coastal lowlands[20].

1994: one at Debre Libanos on 23 January. 1995: recorded between Melka Guba and Negele on 27 December. 1996: singles above Wendo Genet on 23 October and Awash NP on 25 October; Awash NP on 17 October (DM) and College of Forestry, Wendo Genet on 26 November (JT).

Accipiter nisus European Sparrowhawk

Nominate race uncommon to rare[19]; Palearctic migrant in December, overwintering uncertain[1], although

subsequently reported to winter in west Ethiopia[11]. Nominate is scarce migrant in Kenya, November–February, without recent records[20] and uncommon through Sudan in September–April[12].

1988: one north of Awasa on 15 November. 1995: recorded Jema Valley on 17 December. 1996: singles in Bale Mts on 3–4 February, Lake Awasa on 19 October and Goba on 22 October.

Recent observations indicate presence of migrants in mid-October–early February.

Accipiter rufiventris Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk

A. r. perspicillaris uncommon to rare, mainly in highland areas[19]. Nominate is local and uncommon resident in Kenya[20].

1988: two above Goba on 16 November, with one on 17 November. 1995: singles south of Goba on 22 December and on Sanetti Plateau on 23 December. 1996: singles above Goba on 28 November and near Dinsho on 29 November. 1997: singles above Goba on 24 March and 17 November; pair mating near Debre Libanos on 10 November. 1998: male at Debre Libanos on 16 March.

Accipiter melanoleucus Black Sparrowhawk

Nominate uncommon in Ethiopia[11] and widespread in Kenya[20].

1978–9: seen occasionally near Wendo Genet (LS). 1988: singles at Hilton Hotel, Addis Ababa on 7 November and Awash NP on 11 November. 1995: singles between Sululta and Jema gorge on 17 December and at Genale river on 23 December. 1996: singles at Gefarsa reservoir on 27 January and Wendo Genet on 7–8 February and 24 October; Lake Awasa on 23 October (DM) and near Addis Ababa on 23 November (JT). 1997: singles above Goba on 24 March and Wendo Genet on 26 March.

Buteo oreophilus Mountain Buzzard

Frequent to uncommon resident[11]. Fairly common resident in montane forest in Kenya[20].

1988: three over Harenna Forest on 17 November. 1996: at least two pairs above Goba on 4–5 February; two in Harenna Forest on 2 November (DM) and at least three pairs in Bale Mts forest on 27–28 November. 1997: singles in Bale Mts on 23–24 March and at Wendo Genet on 26 March, and in Bale NP on 17 November (GB). 1998: two in Bale Mts on 23 March with singles there on 24 March and at Wendo Genet on 25 March.

Buteo rufinus Long-legged Buzzard

Uncommon Palearctic migrant from late November–late March, some overwintering[1,20], and rare migrant, in October–April, in Kenya[20] and uncommon in November–March in Sudan[12].

1996: singles at Debre Zeit on 30 January and Lake Awasa on 2 February, and two between Dodola and Goffer on 29 November. 1997: one near Dinsho, at c4,000 m, on 25 March.

Aquila pomarina Lesser Spotted Eagle

Palearctic migrant during September, but overwintering uncertain[1]. Recorded late October–early April in Kenya[20] and considered uncommon in Sudan, in February–April[12].

1988: two near Debre Libanos on 6 November and near Wendo Genet on 19 November, and one near Goba on 19 November. 1994: one near Bahar Dar on 25 January. 1997: singles at Lake Chelekleka on 16 March, near Ziway on 20 March, near Awasa on 21 March and over Addis Ababa on 30 March; and at Lake Langano on 12 November and near Goba on 16 November. 1998: one near Langano on 19 March.

Recent observations indicate migration during September–late March (perhaps due to increased observer coverage), with overwintering possible.

Aquila heliaca Imperial Eagle

Uncommon, with no recent records and status rather obscure[19]. Migrants recorded in March, but overwintering uncertain[1]. Scarce in Kenya, principally in the Rift Valley, during November–March[20] and rare in Sudan in January–March[12].

1988: singles at Lake Langano and Lake Abijatta on 13 November. 1996: one on the Sululta Plains on 15 October (DM) and an adult at Lake Abijatta on 24 November. 1997: one in Bale Mts, at c 3700m, on 17 November. 1998: one near Dinsho on 24 March.

Recent observations of this declining species indicate migration during mid-October–late March (perhaps due to increased observer coverage), and possible overwintering.

Aquila wahlbergi Wahlberg's Eagle

An intra-African migrant[19] that breeds, including around Addis Ababa, in September–October[18]. A widespread, migratory species in Kenya, principally present in August–April[20] and uncommon in December–April in Sudan[12].

1995: recorded between Negele and Melka Guba on 27 December. 1996: singles over Jema Gorge, at Debre Libanos, on 19 November, at Dinsho on 29 November and at Wendo Genet on 30 November (SCM / D Forsman). 1997: one near Lake Langano on 13 November (GB).

Our records presumably refer to individuals wintering north and east of their breeding areas.

Aquila verreauxii Verreaux's Eagle

Uncommon, breeds up to 4,100m[19]. Uncommon but widespread resident in Kenya[20].

1988: pair over Jema Gorge, near Debre Libanos, on 6 November and one over Harenna Forest on 17 November. 1994: two at Wendo Genet on 5 February. 1995: singles at Goba on 22 December and Blue Nile gorge on 31 December. 1996: two at Debre Libanos on 14 October, singles over Jema Gorge on 19 November, above Goba on 28 November and near Dinsho on 29 November. 1997: one above Goba on 24 March. 1998: one above Goba on 23 March.

Hieraaetus spilogaster **African Hawk Eagle**
Uncommon to rare resident[19], recorded near eastern borders with Somalia[4]. Local and uncommon in Kenya[20].

1995: two between Filtu and Bokal Mayo on 25 December. 1996: two in Nechisar NP on 24 October (DM).

Hieraaetus pennatus **Booted Eagle**
Palearctic migrant late October–mid-March, some overwintering[4]. Uncommon, but regular and widespread, Palearctic migrant, mainly late October–early April in Kenya[20].

1988: one Hilton Hotel, Addis Ababa on 5 November. 1994: singles near Debre Libanos on 23 January and Lake Chelekleka on 26 January. 1995: one at Mt Fantale on 20 December. 1996: singles at Debre Libanos on 28 January and Wendo Genet on 7 February, three at Debre Zeit on 13 October (RFC), three at Sululta Plain and Debre Libanos on 19 November, singles in Awash NP on 22 November, between Lake Langano and Awasa on 25 November and Shashemene on 26 November. 1997: singles at Debre Zeit on 16 March and Wendo Genet on 26 March with two (dark and intermediate phases) between Dinsho and Shashemane on 18 November.

Recent observations indicate regular migrant mid-October–late March, overwintering.

Hieraaetus (*dubius*) *ayresii* **Ayres' Hawk Eagle**
Uncommon to rare, range uncertain[19]. Scarce and local resident in Kenya[20].

1988: pair at Wendo Genet on 18 November. 1996: singles above Goba on 21 October, at Debre Zeit on 17 October (DM) and at Debre Libanos on 19 November when a strange barred *Buteo*-like eagle soared out over the cliffs showing characteristics of juvenile plumage: identified by D Forsman from notes taken at time of observation.

Stephanoaetus coronatus **Crowned Eagle**
Frequent in upland forest and lowland subtropical humid forest, rare elsewhere, no breeding record[19]. Uncommon and local resident in Kenya[20]: known from Immatong Mts in Sudan[12].

1996: pair displaying on 7 February and in October. 1998: two adults and an immature in March.

All observations from the same area, in forest east of Awasa. Details of exact locality withheld at request of observers; local breeding presumed.

Falco ardosiaceus **Grey Kestrel**
Uncommon (?), habitat and numbers uncertain[19]. Uncommon resident in west Kenya[20].

1994: singles hunting bats at Awash NP on 27–28 January. 1996: singles in Awash NP on 1 February and 18 October (DM), hunting bats at Awash NP headquarters on 21 November and on a roadside pole north of Awasa on 25 November; perched in *Acacia* by Lake Awasa just south of Awasa on 29 November (JT). 1997: one in *Acacia* just south of Awasa on 15 March.

Falco concolor **Sooty Falcon**
Common to frequent in Red Sea waters (Dahlak Islands)[4]. Presumed Palearctic migrant but no evidence (fewer than one individual per year)[4]. Regular passage migrant in small numbers in central, east and south-east Kenya, late October–early December and (sporadically) late February–early May[4].

1997: two between Dinsho and Shashemene on 18 November (GB).

Recent observations indicate occasional autumn passage at least late October–mid-November (see also *Bull. ABC* 4: 50 for autumn record from Bale NP).

Falco cuvieri **African Hobby**
Uncommon to rare (mainly west Ethiopia?)[4], with breeding records[4]. Uncommon resident mainly in west Kenya[20]; rare in Sudan[12].

1994: singles in Awash NP on 28 November and at Lake Abijatta on 30 January. 1996: one between Arba Minch and Yavello on 26 October (DM).

Falco peregrinus **Peregrine Falcon**
Nominate and race *minor* uncommon: range, status, numbers and habitat unclear[4]. Palearctic migrant (no dates), overwintering uncertain[4]. In Kenya, *minor* uncommon but widespread breeding resident. Palearctic *calidus* present October–March[20].

1988: singles at Gefarsa Reservoir on 5 January and Sanetti Plateau on 16–17 November considered to be *minor*. 1996: singles at Debre Zeit on 30 January (SB) and 13 October, and north-west of Dinsho on 22 October, Ghion Hotel, Addis Ababa on 14 October, and Awash NP on 19 October (DM) and 21 November, with two at Lake Langano on 23–24 November. 1997: 2–3, 3 km west of Debre Libanos on 17 March; one at Lake Langano on 13 November, three on Sanetti Plateau on 17 November, two between Dinsho and Shashemene on 18 November and two at Wendo Genet on 19 November (GB). 1998: three near Debre Libanos on 16 March.

Recent observations not allocated subspecifically considered to be *peregrinus*.

Falco (*p.*) *pelegrinoides* **Barbary Falcon**
Passage migrant/winter resident[4]. Uncommon to rare migrant, October–March (?), in Sudan[12].

1988: singles in Awash Gorge on 10–11 November thought to be *pelegrinoides* (SCM).

Porphyrio alleni **Allen's Gallinule**
Uncommon to rare intra-African migrant, which breeds[9,19]. Local and usually uncommon in Kenya[20].

1995: one at Lake Awasa on 29 December. 1997: five on east side of Lake Awasa, near Awasa, on 22 March.

Porphyrio porphyrio **Purple Swamphen**
Race *madagascariensis* is uncommon to rare resident; breeding records require confirmation[19]. Local and uncommon in Rift Valley in Kenya, declining recently due to habitat loss and introduction of *Myocastor*

coypus[20].

1996: juvenile at Lake Ziway on 26 November (JT). 1997: 25 on east side of Lake Abijatta on 19 March; one near the Awasa Fishing Cooperative on 15 November.

Gallinula angulata Lesser Moorhen

Rare, no breeding record[1]. Intra-African migrant on both permanent and temporary waters in Kenya[20].

1996: three near Lake Ziway bund on 23 November (SCM) with at least one there on 26 November (JT) and 30 November (SCM, JT).

Bugeranus carunculatus Wattled Crane

Frequent to common in highland grasslands, streams and marshes, but uncommon in broad-leaved, tall grass savanna[19], but currently seen only irregularly and in very small numbers at Tefki, Debre Zeit, Akaki and in Bale Mts (*Bull. ABC* 1: 29). Population estimated in 100s mid-1980s to mid-1990s[1].

1988: pair at Lake Abijatta on 13 November and on Sanetti Plateau on 16–17 November. 1995: one on Sanetti Plateau on 1 June (ED). 1996: six recorded in October (RFC), three in Bale NP on 30 October (DM) with two pairs on Sanetti Plateau on 29 November. 1997: three in Bale NP on 17 November (GB). 1998: pair on Sanetti Plateau on 23 March.

See also *Bull. ABC* 1: 29 and 3: 61 for records from Bahar Dar and near Chagne.

Heuglin's Bustard *Neotis heuglinii* by Mark Andrews

Neotis heuglinii Heuglin's Bustard

Uncommon to frequent[19]. Confined to the east side of Lake Turkana in Kenya[20].

1995: 2–3 at 3 km and 4 km west of Fejeje on 29 December.

Microparra capensis Lesser Jacana

One specimen from Lake Zwai, on 20 June 1962[19], and considered a vagrant (fewer than five records)[9]. Very local and uncommon in Kenya[20]; rare in Sudan[12].

1996: one at Lake Ziway on 5 January and two there on 30 January. 1997: two near Ziway bund on 20 March; two on east side of Lake Awasa, near Awasa, on 21 March; singles near Ziway bund on 11 and 13 November. 1998: one at Lake Ziway on 17 March, and two there on 19 March.

Recent observations indicate current status as local but uncommon at some Rift Valley lakes.

Burhinus oedicnemus Stone Curlew

Nominate and *saharae* uncommon to rare[19]; subsequently revealed to be a Palearctic migrant, late October–early March, overwintering[1]. Nominate is scarce Palearctic migrant, October–March, mainly in north Kenya[20].

1996: two in Awash NP on 25 October; one at Lake Abijatta on 27 November (JT).

Pluvialis (*dominica*) *fulva* Lesser (Pacific) Golden Plover

Rare at alkaline lakes; Palearctic migrant late April–mid-January, not overwintering, mainly in autumn[1,19]. Almost annual Palearctic migrant in East African coastal lowlands, flock of 57 in December 1985 considered exceptional[20].

All records at Lake Abijatta. 1988: 19 on 13 November. 1996: 61 (all in winter plumage) on 16 October; six on 21 October (DM) and 15 on 24 November. 1997: 84 on 21 March (all, but one, in winter plumage) may represent the largest group recently recorded in north-east Africa at an inland alkaline wintering passage location; 81 on 12 November (all in winter plumage). 1998: 74 (all in winter plumage) on 18 March.

Recent records indicate annual Palearctic migrant mid-October–late March (perhaps due to increased observer coverage), possibly overwintering at Lake Abijatta.

Calidris temminckii Temminck's Stint

Uncommon to rare[19]. Palearctic migrant early September–late December and early February–late May, not overwintering[1]. Local but regular Palearctic migrant October–April, mostly in the Rift Valley, in Kenya[20].

1988: two at Filowha Springs, Awash NP on 10 November with singles at Lake Ziway on 12 November and Lake Langano on 13 November. 1994: four at Bahar Dar on 24 January and Lake Chelekleka on 26 January, three at Lake Koka on 29 January with four at Lake Ziway on 29 January and one there on 5 February, two at Lake Abijatta on 30 January and one at Dinsho on 3 February. 1996: singles at Lake Ziway bund on 30 January, Lake Abijatta on 31 January and Lake Awasa on 2 February, two at Gefarsa Reservoir on 18 November and singles at Lake Ziway on 23 and 30 November, with 2–3 there on 26 November (JT). 1997: two at Lake Chelekleka on 16 March, one at small seasonal lake, near Lake Koka on 18 March, 11 near Ziway bund on 20 March, one at Gefarsa Reservoir on 8 November, four at Lake Ziway on 11 November and five there on 13 November. 1998: three at Gerfarsa reservoir on 14 March, 20 at Lake Chelekleka on 15 March, 30 at Lake Ziway on 17 March and 40 there on 19 March, 100 at Lake Abijatta on 18 March and six at Lake Awasa on 20 March.

Recent observations indicate regular passage through Rift Valley, spring migration perhaps as early as late January, overwintering uncertain.

Calidris alpina Dunlin

Uncommon[19]. Palearctic migrant late August–early March, overwintering, a few oversummering[1]. Rare Palearctic

migrant in Kenya, presumed to represent the nominate race[20]; common in Sudan[12].

1988: one at Lake Abijatta on 13 November (SCM).

Xenus cinereus **Terek Sandpiper**

Uncommon to rare at larger freshwater lakes/rivers and alkaline lakes[19]. Palearctic migrant mid August–early November and early April–late May, not overwintering[1]. Palearctic migrant late August–April in Kenya, a few first-year birds regularly remain all year[20].

1988: one at Lake Abijatta on 13 November. 1997: 2–3 on east side of Lake Abijatta on 19 March.

Recent observations indicate autumn migration until mid-November and spring migration as early as mid-March, perhaps overwintering.

Larus ichthyaetus **Great Black-headed Gull**

Palearctic migrant mid-December–mid-March, overwintering[1], with 32–111 birds wintering in the mid-1970s[10]. Uncommon Palearctic migrant December–March in Kenya at a few locations, rare elsewhere[20].

1994: one, probable first-winter, at Bahar Dar on 24 January, 10 at Lake Ziway on 29 January and 15 there on 5 February; one at Lake Abijatta on 30 January. 1996: one at Awasa on 4 January; five at Lake Abijatta on 31 January, singles at Lake Awasa on 1–2 February and Abijatta NP on 21 October (DM). 1998: two adults at Lake Ziway on 17 March with adult and first-winter there on 19 March, 22 at Lake Abijatta on 18 March.

Recent observations indicate migration period mid-October–late March (perhaps due to increased observer coverage), overwintering.

Larus (*argentatus*) *cachinnans* **Herring (Yellow-legged) Gull**

Uncommon Red Sea coast of Eritrea[19], but vagrant in Ethiopia[9]. Could reach East Africa[20].

1988: adult at Lake Ziway on 12 and 19 November had characteristics of nominate (SCM). 1996: adult at Lake Abijatta on 27 November had characteristics of nominate (SCM). 1997: at least one adult just south of Ziway bund on 18 and 20 March, at c100m showed relatively pale grey wings, with white trailing edges in flight, pale yellow legs and large yellow bill with gonydeal spot. Appeared larger than adjacent, very dark-winged Lesser Black-backed Gull *L. fuscus* resembling the nominate race; initially allocated as *L. heuglini* mainly on apparent size, but, due to the relatively pale grey wings, tentatively retained as *cachinnans* (race not allocated). One on east side of Lake Abijatta, near entrance track, on 19 March (darker grey wings than Ziway individual of 18 and 20 March, bill appeared less heavy, with gonydeal spot) was considered to be a winter-plumaged adult, but race not assigned.

Recent observations indicate migration period for *cachinnans* at least mid-November–late March (perhaps due to increased observer coverage), overwintering possible. Further observations required.

Larus (*fuscus*) *heuglini* **Lesser Black-backed (Heuglin's) Gull**

Frequent to common (the commonest gull inland)[19]. Palearctic migrant early September–late May, overwintering, a few oversummering[1]. *L. heuglini* regular or semi-regular visitor to Kenya, November–March[20]; vagrant inland in Sudan[12]; recorded mid-November–mid-March in Somalia, birds regarded as *heuglini* presumed to be of the form *taimyrensis*[4].

1988: adult and probable immature at Lake Ziway on 12 and 19 November (SCM). 1994: adult at Lake Ziway on 5 February (SCM). 1996: near-adult at Lake Ziway on 25 November (SCM).

Recent observations indicate migration period for *heuglini* at least mid-November–early February (perhaps due to increased observer coverage), overwintering possible. Further study of *Larus* spp. is desirable.

Sterna hirundo **Common Tern**

Palearctic migrant late September and February–mid-May, not overwintering[1]. Common to abundant Palearctic migrant along the east Kenya coast, scattered records from some Rift Valley lakes, nominate race and *tibetana* appear to be represented[20].

1997: one at Lake Ziway on 11 and 13 November. 1998: one at Lake Ziway on 17 March with four there on 19 March.

Recent observations indicate autumn migration period late September–mid-November in the Rift Valley.

Chlidonias hybridus **Whiskered Tern**

Frequent to uncommon, although uncommon to rare on Red Sea coast; no breeding record[19]. Palearctic migrant early October–early November and early January–late May, not overwintering[1]. Race *delalandii* is a local resident, breeding opportunistically in Kenya[20].

1995: recorded at Lake Basaka on 20 December. 1996: recorded at Lake Langano on 3 January, eight at Debre Zeit on 13 October; 50 in Abijatta NP on 21 October, with 20 at Lake Awasa on 22 October, increasing to 50 next day (DM); two at Gerfasa Reservoir on 18 November, two at Lake Chelelleka on 23 November and eight at Lake Ziway on 30 November. 1997: two at Lake Abijatta on 12 November and Lake Ziway next day (GB).

Recent observations indicate migrants present during early October–late May, possibly overwintering; occurrence in the Rift Valley extended into West Highlands.

Chlidonias niger **Black Tern**

Uncommon at inland waters[19]. Palearctic migrant early May–mid-June[1]. Rare migrant in Kenya[20].

1994: one at Lake Ziway on 29 January (bill slightly longer than *C. leucopterus*, darker above especially on rump, blackish shoulder patches forming noticeable patch at sides of breast) (SCM).

Turtur abyssinicus **Black-billed Wood Dove**

Common to abundant resident, but no breeding record[19].

1994: singles near Awash NP headquarters on 28 January and near Arsi Negele on 31 January. 1997: one near Ziway on 27 March. 1998: one at Lake Awasa on 20 March.

Indicates a possible eastward range extension (perhaps due to increased observer coverage).

Tyto alba Barn Owl

Race *affinis* uncommon, unaccountably rare in many areas[18]. Two records in north-east, on the Somali border[4]. Widely but sparingly distributed in Kenya[2]; uncommon in Sudan[12].

1994: pair roosting in hotel garden at Awasa on 31 January.

Otus scops Common Scops Owl

Nominate race uncommon[1]. Palearctic migrant mid-October–late March, overwintering. Scarce Palearctic migrant November–March in Kenya, most records involve nominate or *pulchellus*, pale birds referable to *turanicus*[2].

1996: singles at Awasa on 1–2 February.

Asio (*otus*) *abyssinicus* (African) Long-eared Owl

Uncommon to rare resident, breeding possible[1].

1988: two at dusk at Dinsho on 10 November. 1996: two between Kofele and Dodola on 2 January; singles between Wendo Genet and Goba on 3 February and 3 November (DM), and at Goffer on 26 November (nest nearby). 1997: two in *Eucalyptus* between Kofele and Dodola on 23 March.

Caprimulgus nubicus Nubian Nightjar

Race *tamaricus* common in north-east (breeding possible) and *torridus* common (?) in south-east and Rift Valley (no breeding record)[1]. Widespread at 600–1,250 m north and east of the Kenyan highlands[2].

1988: female almost captured by hand in Awash NP on 11 November, identified by tail feather details (SCM).

Caprimulgus stellatus Star-spotted Nightjar

Nominate and race *simplex* uncommon, apparently in deserts, but very little known[1]; *simplex* locally common, mainly in north Kenya, some records may refer to nominate[20].

1994: one seen well on ground in Awash NP on 28 January. 1995: two at Fejeje on 29–30 December. 1996: singles in Nechisar NP on 1 January and 24 October (DM). 1997: several calling and one seen in Awash NP on 28–29 March.

Prodotiscus zambesiae Green-backed Honeybird

Race *ellenbecki* is uncommon resident[9] and fairly common in woodland in Kenya[20].

1988: two at Wendo Genet on 19 November.

Prodotiscus regulus Wahlberg's Honeybird

Uncommon, no breeding record[19]. Local and uncommon, mainly in south Kenya[20]; uncommon in Sudan[12].

1988: one at Bahar Dar on 8 November. 1996: two at Wendo Genet on 4 January; singles in Harenna Forest on 2 November and Wendo Genet on 4 November (DM).

Jynx torquilla Northern Wryneck

Uncommon[18]. Palearctic migrant early September–mid-December and mid-January–early April, overwintering[1]. Scarce Palearctic migrant in Kenya, only 14 records 1969–1992[20].

1994: singles at Lake Langano on 30 January and Awasa on 1 February. 1996: singles at Ghion Hotel, Addis Ababa on 11 February and 14–15 October (DM), with two there on 18 November; one at Awasa on 29 November (JT).

Jynx ruficollis Rufous-breasted Wryneck

Race *aequatorialis* uncommon, breeding possible[19]. Nominate uncommon resident, presence erratic in many areas in Kenya[20].

1988: singles at Awasa on 14 November and near Lake Ziway on 19 November. 1994: one at Goba on 3 February. 1995: singles Jema escarpment on 17 December and between Addis Adaba and Dinsho on 21 December. 1996: four at Awasa on 2 February, two at Ziway on 15 October, singles at Awasa Fishing Cooperative on 19 October, Sululta Plain on 15 October (DM), Ziway on 26 November and Awasa on 29–30 November (JT). 1997: singles at Debre Zeit on 16 March and 9 November, and Awasa on 15 November. 1998: one between Ziway and Langano on 19 March, three at Awasa on 21 March and one above Goba on 23 March.

Dendropicos namaquus Bearded Woodpecker

Uncommon to frequent resident, which breeds[9]. Nominate race widespread but uncommon in west and central Kenya, *schoensis* local and uncommon on north Kenya Mts[20].

1995: singles north of Awash on 18 December and Awash on 19 December. 1996: two at Lake Langano on 17 October, Abijatta NP on 21 October (DM) and Awash NP on 21–22 November, and singles at Lake Langano on 24 January and Awash NP on 25 November (JT). 1997: one near Langano on 19 March and two there on 12–14 November, and one in Awash NP on 20 November (GB). 1998: four at Lake Langano on 18 March.

Mirafra cantillans Singing Bush-Lark

Race *marginata* in north-east (breeding), *chadensis* in west (no breeding record) of uncertain abundance[19]. Birds in north should perhaps be examined more closely as to subspecies[2]. In Kenya, *marginata* locally common, but records from Sudanese border may represent eastern population of *chadensis*[20].

1994: 11 between park entrance and caravans in Awash NP on 28–29 January. 1996: singles in Awash NP on 18 October (DM) and near Filowha Springs on 21 November, with three in same area on 22 November. 1997: several in grassy scrub in Awash NP on 28–29 March; relatively common there on 20–22 November. 1998: relatively common in Awash NP on 27–28 March.

Mirafra albicauda White-tailed Bush-Lark

First and second records for Ethiopia confirmed[2]. Uncommon resident in Kenya[20]; uncommon and local in east Sudan[12].

1996: one in Nechisar NP on 1 January, and two there on 25 October (DM).

See *Bull. ABC* 3: 62 for earlier records in Nechisar NP.

Heteromirafra sidamoensis Sidamo Lark

Endemic; status indeterminate[6]. Resident[9].

1995: one photographed 13 km SE of Negele on 24 December (RW). 1996: two between Mega and Negele on 28 October and at Sidamo Junction on 29 October (DM).

See *Bull. ABC* 2: 62, 3: 139 and 5: 72, 143 for additional records near Negele and on the Liben plains.

Hirundo megaensis White-tailed Swallow

Endemic, frequent in the south, breeding possible[19]. Rare[6].

1996: three on the Arero Track on 27 October (DM).

See also *Bull. ABC* 3: 62, 139 for records at Bodji-Kelefe and first discovery of a nest, near Yavello.

Delichon urbica Common House Martin

Frequent to uncommon Palearctic migrant late July–early May, overwintering[1]. Nominate race fairly common in Kenya, September–November and late March–April[20].

1996: one in Awash NP on 10 February and six at Goba on 21October; two in Awash NP on 18 October and 10 there next day, four between Mega and Negele on 28 October and 20 at Sidamo Junction on 29 October (DM); two over Addis Ababa on 19–20 November and in Awash NP on 21 November. 1997: recorded near Langano on 20 March and Wendo Genet on 26 March; eight at Lake Chelekleka on 9 November and four in Bale NP on 16 November, with 16 there on 18 November (GB). 1998: three near Awasa on 20 March and 10 in Awash NP on 28 March.

Motacilla citreola Citrine Wagtail

Schollaert[14] in reporting the third Ethiopian record summarised previous African occurrences: 10–11 in Egypt, one in Djibouti and one in Morocco. Since then, an earlier record in Morocco has come to light and one has been recorded in South Africa.

1994: first-winter at Dinsho pool on 1–4 February.

The fourth record. Apparently a scarce Palearctic migrant mid-November–mid-March, probably overwintering.

Anthus leucophrys Plain-backed Pipit

Races *omoensis* in west and south (breeding), *zenkeri* in south (no breeding record), *saphiroi* in south-east (breeding), but all of uncertain abundance; apparently does not occur below c900m[19]. Locally common resident, *zenkeri* west of Rift Valley, *goodsoni* in central Kenya[20].

1996: two between Debre Zeit and Ziway on 30 January and in same area on 16–17 October, two in Awash NP on 18 October and 10 there on 19 October, four between Mega and Negele on 28 October and 20 at Sidamo Junction on 29 October (DM); one near Lake Abijatta on 27 November (JT). 1997: one showing characteristics of *omoensis* 3 km west of Debre Libanos on 17 March; similar-plumaged bird seen briefly on Ziway bund on 19 March; 50 at Wendo Genet on 26 March, singles at Langano on 20 March, Gefarsa Reservoir on 8 November and Lake Chelekleka on 9 November, several between Shashemene and Goba on 16 and 18 November. 1998: one at Lake Langano on 18 March.

Further observations useful to clarify relative distribution of this species and (larger) Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis*.

Luscinia luscinia Thrush Nightingale

Palearctic migrant late August–late October and late March–late April, not overwintering, more common in autumn[1]. Widespread, common to abundant east of Rift Valley in Kenya[20].

1996: recorded on six dates in October at various locations, with one at Lake Langano on 25 November. 1997: one at Lake Langano on 14 November and two in Awash NP on 21 November (GB).

Autumn migration appears to extend at least until late November in the Rift Valley (overwintering?).

Luscinia svecica Bluethroat

Races *svecica* and *magna* rare to uncommon, abundance and distribution poorly known[19]. Palearctic migrant late August–mid-May, overwintering[1].

1997: one just north of Ziway bund on 20 March.

Irania gutturalis Irania

Occurs in Western Highlands, but distribution and abundance poorly known[19]. Palearctic migrant in mid-August–mid-October and early March–mid-April, not overwintering, passage mainly in the spring[1]. Locally common November–early April in Kenya[20].

1995: one between Key Afer and Turmi on 29 December. 1997: one in *Acacia* near main road between Nazeret and Awash on 2 March.

Records indicate autumn migration may extend to late December in the south (overwintering?).

Cossypha natalensis Red-capped Robin-Chat

Race *intensa* frequent to uncommon, no breeding record, poorly known[19] and common intra-African migrant in Kenya late April–November, *hylophona* breeds uncommonly in south[20].

1995: three in Nechisar NP on 31 December. 1996: one in the hotel grounds at Awasa on 19 October.

Oenanthe pleschanka / *O. p. cypriaca* Pied Wheatear / Cyprus Pied Wheatear

Pied Wheatear common, *cypriaca* uncommon to frequent (?)[19]. Palearctic migrant early September–early May, overwintering[1]. Pied Wheatear occurs October–March in Kenya, often common[20]; *pleschanka* uncommon October–March, *cypriaca* rare October–March (?) in north Sudan[12].

1996: single *cypriaca* at Langano on 17 October and between Wendo Genet and Goba on 22 October. 1997: one *cypriaca* near Debre Zeit on 16 March; three *cypriaca* near Gefarsa reservoir on 16 November and one near Awasa on 14 November (GB).

Cercomela dubia **Sombre Rock-Chat**

Uncommon to frequent (?), no breeding record, very poorly known[19].

1995: three on Mt Fantale on 19 December. 1996: three in Awash NP on 18 October. 1998: four near Awash NP on 26 March.

Zoothera piaggiae **Abyssinian Ground-Thrush**

Uncommon (?), not well known[19]. Uncommon resident of forest at 2,000–3,300m in Kenya, *piaggiae* west of Rift Valley, *kilimensis* to the east, *rowei* in south[20].

1995: one at Dinsho on 21 December and two at Goba on 23 December. 1996: 2 at Wendo Genet on 4 January, with one there on 7 February, one above Goba on 4–5 February, two in Bale NP on 31 October, and singles at Wendo Genet on 4 November (DM) and 30 November. 1997: one between Adaba and Dinsho on 23 March, several above Goba on 24 March, one above Wendo Genet on 26 March. 1998: 2 near Dinsho on 22 March.

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus **Sedge Warbler**

Rare to uncommon[19]. Palearctic migrant mid-September–late April, overwintering[1]. Palearctic migrant November–early May in Kenya[20].

1994: two at Bahar Dar on 24 January, one at Lake Chelekleka on 26 January, and four at Lake Ziway on 24 January and 5 February. 1995: one Harenna Forest on 23 December. 1996: singles at Lake Awasa on 1–2 February, west edge of Lake Ziway on 17 October and 20 October (DM), and recorded there on 26 November (JT) with three on 23 and 30 November; recorded at Lake Chelekleka on 24 November and on east side of Lake Awasa on 29–30 November (JT). 1997: several at Lake Chelekleka on 16 March and west edge of Lake Ziway on 20 March, with four there on 11 November; several on east side of Lake Awasa on 21–23 March with 20 there on 14 November and six on 15 November. 1998: c6 at Lake Awasa on 20–21 March.

Recorded recently in varying numbers at wetlands, suggesting current status as a relatively common Palearctic migrant/winter resident in the Rift Valley.

Acrocephalus arundinaceus **Great Reed Warbler**

Races *arundinaceus* and *zarudnyi* frequent (?) in north-east, but rare inland, distribution and abundance not well known[19]. Palearctic migrant mid-September–mid-May, overwintering[1]. Both *arundinaceus* and *zarudnyi* also occur, November–April, in Kenya[20].

1996: three at Lake Ziway on 30 November. 1997: one at Lake Awasa on 15 November.

Hippolais icterina **Icterine Warbler**

Uncommon (above 1,200m)[19]. Palearctic migrant early–late September and early–mid-April, not overwintering[1]. Uncommon, October - April mostly in or west of Rift Valley in Kenya[20]; uncommon August–September in Sudan[12].

1996: Recorded at four sites in October (RFC, MW). 1997: singles at Wendo Genet on 23 March and at Ziway on 24 March.

Recorded recently in small numbers in the Rift Valley, suggesting migration periods early September–late October and late March–mid-April.

Sylvia curruca **Lesser Whitethroat**

S. c. curruca uncommon to frequent, *blythi* common[19]. Palearctic migrant mid-September–mid-December and mid-January–early May, but not overwintering[1].

1988: frequent, recorded in small numbers at Debre Libanos on 6 November, Bahar Dar on 8 November, Lake Abijatta on 13 November, Lake Langano on 14 November, Awasa on 15 November, Wendo Genet on 19 November (all apparently nominate). 1995: singles in Jema Valley on 17 December and Awash on 19 December. 1996: two in Abijatta–Shala NP on 3 January, singles at Debre Zeit on 29–30 January, Langano on 31 January and Lake Awasa on 2 February and recorded at Ziway, Langano, Awasa and Awash NP in mid- to late October; singles in Abijatta NP on 21–22 October; two at Lake Awasa on 22 October, with four there on 23 October and one between Awasa and Nechisar NP on 24 October (DM); two near Filowha Springs on 22 November and five at Arsi Negele on 25 November (all apparently nominate). 1997: singles at Ziway on 18 and 27 March, and 11 November, two at Langano on 19 March, with one there on 21 March and up to six on 12–14 November, three at Awasa on 22 March, with up to four on 15–16 November, singles at Wendo Genet on 20 November, and the Awash river on 21 November. 1998: singles at Ziway on 17 March and at Awasa on 21 March.

Frequent in Rift Valley during known migration periods, some appearing to overwinter (perhaps due to increased observer coverage).

Cisticola juncidis **Zitting Cisticola**

Race *uropygialis* is resident and breeds[9]; local in Kenya, rarely above 2,000 m[20].

1995: two at Awash on 19 December. 1996: singles in Awash NP on 9–10 February, 19 October (DM) and 25 November (JT), with several there 21–23 November.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina* by Mark Andrews

1998: two on Sululta Plain on 14 March and six in Awash NP on 27 March.

Apalis flavida Yellow-breasted Apalis

Races *viridiceps* uncommon (?) (no breeding record), *malensis* uncommon to frequent (breeding)[19]. Of the races occurring in Kenya, *flavocincta* (formerly *malensis*) in north[20].

1995: recorded widely in December (RW). 1996: two on Arero Track on 27 October and one at Wadera on 29 October (DM).

Phyllolais pulchella Buff-bellied Warbler

Uncommon[19]. Fairly common resident in south-west Kenya[20].

1996: singles at Debre Zeit on 30 January, Langano on 31 January and Awasa on 2 February, widespread in *Acacia* woodland and thornveld in October; five in Awash NP on 19 October, singles at Lake Ziway on 20 October and in Abijatta NP on 21 October, with two there on 22 October, two at Lake Awasa on 22 October, with four there on 23 October, one between Arba Minch and Yavello on 26 October and two at Wadera on 29 October (DM); one at Nazeret 20 and 23 November, frequent in *Acacia* near Lake Langano and at Awasa 24–26 November, four at Wendo Genet on 30 November; also at Debre Zeit, 30 November–1 December (JT). 1997: recorded in *Acacia* between Ziway and Awasa 19–22 March, locally common during November wherever *Acacia* present. 1998: recorded daily in Rift Valley 17–22 March.

At least locally common, particularly in *Acacia*-dominated areas (some degradation due to human activity appears to be taking place).

Parisoma lugens Brown Parisoma

Frequent, no breeding record[19]. Race *jacksoni* local and uncommon resident at 1,600–2,400 m in Kenya[20].

1988: two of the nominate race at Addis Ababa airport car park on 7 November, two *griseiventris* in Goba Forest on 17 November. 1994: two *lugens* at Wendo Genet on 5 February, six *griseiventris* in Goba Forest on 2 February. 1996: two at Wendo Genet on 3 January; singles at Wendo Genet on 4 November (DM) and Ghion Hotel, Addis Ababa on 24 November (JT), one *lugens* at Wendo Genet on 29 November and five *griseiventris* in Goba Forest on 28 November. 1997: single *lugens* at Wendo Genet on 26–27 March. 1998: pair between Goba and Shashemene on 24 March.

Endemic *griseiventris* appears to be frequent in tree heath and hypericum forest above Goba, whereas nominate (*Acacia*-haunting) *lugens* occurs in Rift Valley, suggesting a degree of speciation may have occurred (a similar situation existing elsewhere in Africa) (SCM).

Salpornis spilonotus Spotted Creeper

Race *erlangeri* uncommon to locally frequent, usually above 1,500 m, not well known[19]. Race *salvadori* scarce and very local in north-west Kenya, and is one of the country's most endangered species[20].

1984: one at Debre Zeit on 10 January and two at Lake Awasa on 18 January. 1996: two at Awasa Fishing Cooperative on 2 February, singles at Debre Zeit on 13 October, Lake Awasa on 19 October and Awasa on 20 October; three at Lake Awasa on 23 October (DM) and one near Awasa on 29 November (JT). 1997: singles in *Acacia* at the Fishing Cooperative and near Awasa on 22 March, and Wendo Genet on 19 November. 1998: singles at Awasa on 20–21 March.

Lanius minor Lesser Grey Shrike

Uncommon to frequent[19]. Passage migrant late March–mid-May, not overwintering, passage mainly in the spring[1]. Common and widespread Palearctic passage migrant late March - early May in Kenya, occasional in autumn, southward migration largely to the west[20].

1995: one in Awash NP on 19 December. 1996: six near Awash NP on 24 October (RFC).

Recent observations indicate southward migration late October–late December.

Lanius (*excubitor*) *meridionalis* Southern (Great) Grey Shrike

Race *leucopygos* frequent in north-east (breeding), *aucheri* frequent in west and north-east (passage migrant?), *buryi* rare in Rift Valley (passage migrant), and *pallidirostris* uncommon to frequent (?) (passage migrant)[19]. Palearctic migrant mid August–mid-March, overwintering[1]. One sight record of *pallidirostris* in north Kenya, in an area usually mapped as part of Sudan[20].

1994: two *pallidirostris* in Awash NP on 27 January, with four *pallidirostris* and two *aucheri* there on 28 January, two *pallidirostris* and two *aucheri* between Awash and Metahara on 29 January, with one *aucheri* at Lake Langano on 30 January. 1996: singles in Awash NP on 8–10 February, with 10 there on 24–26 October; one there on 18 October, two on 19 October (DM) and singles on 24–25 November (JT); one *aucheri* and eight *pallidirostris* there on 21 November, with four *pallidirostris* on 22 November, single *pallidirostris* near Modju on 23 November and Lake Abijatta on 24 November. 1997: recorded at Langano on 19 and 21 March, c10 in Awash NP on 21–22 November, of which 3 *pallidirostris* on first date (GB).

Lanius senator Woodchat Shrike

Race *niloticus* uncommon to frequent (?), appears to winter in lowlands, migrates through highlands[19]. Palearctic migrant late August–mid-May, overwintering[1]. In Kenya, *niloticus* uncommon November–March[20].

1994: three at Bahar Dar on 24 January, 12 between Bahar Dar and Tissisat Falls on 25 January, 16 between Nazeret and Metahara on 26 January, but absent from Awash NP on 27–28 January, 35 between Modju and Lake Langano on 29 January, two at Lake Langano on 30 January and Lake Abijatta on 30 January, 21 between Shashemene and Modju on 5 February. 1995: singles in Awash NP on 19 December and Nechisar NP on 31 December. 1996: singles near Koka Dam on 15 October, and in Awash NP on 17 and 19 October (DM); three near Nazeret on 20 November, common in Awash NP (due to recent fires?), two near Goffer on 26 November and

one near Lake Ziway on 30 November. 1997: singles near Awasa on 21 March and near Lake Abijatta on 12 November; four near Awash NP on 20 November, with five in NP on 21–22 November (GB).

Oriolus auratus **African Golden Oriole**

Frequent (west) to uncommon (central and south), rarely above 1,800 m, distribution poorly understood[19]. Intra-African migrant[1]. In Kenya, *notatus* non-breeding migrant from southern tropics, mainly April–August, and *auratus* from northern tropics[20].

1996: singles at Lake Awasa on 23 October (DM) and 30 November (JT).

Oriolus oriolus **Eurasian Golden Oriole**

Nominate race frequent (Eritrea) to uncommon[19]. Palearctic migrant early September–late October and late February–mid-May, not overwintering[1]. Passage October–December and late March–April in Kenya[20].

1988: singles in Awash NP on 11 November and Lake Langano on 13 November, with two at Awasa on 14 November. 1996: recorded on six days between 12 and 20 October mainly from Rift Valley, except one in Addis Ababa on 12 October; two at Awash NP on 22 November and one at Awasa on 26 November.

Autumn migration appears to extend to at least late November (perhaps due to increased observer coverage).

Corvus (*ruficollis*) *edithae* **Dwarf Raven**

Frequent (apparently hybridises with *C. albus* in south-east Highlands), but rare in west Highlands[19]. May form separate species within *C. corax* species-group[1]. *C.* (*ruficollis*) *edithae* locally common throughout north Kenya, possibly not conspecific with extralimital *C. ruficollis*[20]; uncommon in south-east Sudan[12].

1996: one at Ziway on 23 November, with four there on 30 November, four on Arero Track on 27 October, 20 between Mega and Negele on 28 October, 10 at Sidamo Junction on 29 October, two in Bale NP on 31 October, four between Goba and Wendo Genet on 3 November (DM). 1997: recorded in Bale Mts 23–25 March. 1998: relatively common around Goba, with 12 on 22 March.

Onychognathus blythii **Somali Starling**

Frequent to common, associated with rocky areas, occurs south Highlands (?)[19]. Mapped as ? in central Ethiopia[13].

1996: four above Goba on 21 October. 1997: five above tree line near road above Goba on 24 March. 1998: one between Shashemene and Goba on 22 March, 12 in Bale Mts on 23 March, with two there on 24 March.

Recent observations confirm presence in Bale Mts, extending likely period there to at least mid-March–late June.

Onychognathus salvadorii **Bristle-crowned Starling**

Uncommon (?), rarely above 1,200 m[19]. Locally common below 1,300 m in central and north Kenya, north to the Sudanese and Ethiopian borders[20].

1994: one in Awash NP on 27 January. 1995: five at Bokol Mayo on 25 December. 1996: two in Awash NP on 19 October (DM).

Cosmopsarus regius **Golden-breasted Starling**

Uncommon to frequent resident, with breeding records[9]. Fairly common and widespread resident, mainly east of Rift Valley in Kenya[20].

1995: recorded between Mega and Negele, at Bokol Mayo, between Negele and Melka Ghuba and between Yavello and Konso in late December. 1996: six between Arba Minch and Yavello on 26 October and 20 between Mega and Negele on 8 October (DM).

Ploceus taeniopterus **Northern Masked Weaver**

Uncommon, no breeding record, not well known[19]. Apparently restricted to near Lakes Baringo and Bogoria in central Kenya[20].

1996: two at Awash NP on 25 October (RFC).

Mandingoa nitidula **Green-backed Twinspot**

Race *chubbi* is uncommon and poorly known[19], and an uncommon and local resident in Kenya[20]; common in south Sudan[12].

1995: female at Wendo Genet on 30 May (ED). 1997: pair at Wendo Genet on 19 November.

Lagonosticta rubricata **African Firefinch**

Race *hildebrandti* frequent (?), although rare in highland and grassland above 1,800 m, no breeding record[19], and uncommon but widespread resident in west and central Kenyan highlands[20].

1995: two in Jema valley on 17 December and one north of Arba Minch on 31 December (RW). 1996: two at Wendo Genet on 4 November (DM) and pair near Lake Chelekleka on 24 November (JT).

Vidua chalybeata **Village Indigobird**

Race *ultramarina* frequent to uncommon, breeding possible[19]. In Kenya, race *centralis* rather uncommon, *amauropteryx* is coastal[20].

1995: two in Jema valley on 18 December and at Melka Ghebdu on 18 December, with one at Awash on 19 December. 1996: singles in Awash NP on 9–10 February and six near Debre Zeit on 13 October; two at Melka Ghebdu on 16 October, with singles in Abijatta NP on 21 October and between Awasa and Nechisar NP on 24 October (DM). 1997: male and several presumed females at Debre Zeit on 16 and 29 March; seen on 10 days during November throughout the Rift Valley. 1998: four at Lake Chelekleka on 15 March.

Estrilda paludicola **Fawn-breasted Waxbill**

Race *ochrogaster* locally abundant (west) to uncommon, no breeding record (along streams at 1,200–2,100 m)[19] and *paludicola* local and generally uncommon in west Kenya[20].

1996: two at Awasa on 4 January, with pair there on 1 February (SB).

Estrilda charmosyna **Black-cheeked Waxbill**

Uncommon, no breeding record, not well known[19]. Local in Kenya[20]; rare in south Sudan[12].

1995: one north of Awash on 18 December, two between Filto and Bokal Mayo on 23 December and one

at Lake Stefanie on 31 December, 1996: two at Lake Langano on 17 October with one there next day; two between Arba Minch and Yavello on 26 October (DM); also recorded in Awash NP on 25 November (JT).

Serinus xantholaemus **Salvadori's Serin**

Endemic; near-threatened[6]. Although rare, probably sufficiently widespread to be at no risk[4].

1995: two at Sof Omar on 22 December. 1996: four at Sof Omar on 1 November (DM).

Serinus flavigula **Yellow-throated Seedeater**

Endemic, uncommon (?), poorly known, no breeding record[19]. Status indeterminate[6].

1996: at least one pair feeding recently fledged juveniles at Melka Ghebdu on 6 January; two in Awash NP on 18 October (DM).

Serinus donaldsoni **Northern Grosbeak-canary**

Nominate race uncommon to frequent, breeding possible, not well known[19]. Scarce and local below 1,600 m in north Kenya: sometimes considered conspecific with *S. buchanani*[20].

1995: three at Fejeje on 30 December. 1996: one in Awash NP on 22 November (J Wijpkema *per* SCM).

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Fall of Palearctic migrants at Aldabra atoll

Michael Betts

Aldabra atoll, Seychelles, is situated at the northern end of the Mozambique Channel, c400 km north-west of Madagascar and 600 km east of southern Tanzania, the nearest point of the African mainland. Apart from its unique native landbird fauna and internationally important seabird populations, Palearctic migrants occur, probably annually (although records are incomplete), particularly in March, but are few in number[1].

On 22 March 1999 a violent storm passed over the atoll in the late afternoon from the north-west, an event repeated the following afternoon with greater ferocity and heavy rain. On both occasions the high winds lasted no more than 90 minutes, although poor visibility and rough seas persisted beyond nightfall. Both systems could be seen advancing and had very narrow fronts. Wind speeds were probably c 40–50 knots on the second occasion (personal estimate).

On the morning of 24 March, with the weather still unsettled but much calmer, a few Barn Swallows *Hirundo rustica* and a Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* were present around the Research Station on the north-west coast. A Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava lutea* was then found, followed by more Barn Swallows and Spotted Flycatchers, a Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* and a European Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*. Over the next week, scheduled monitoring visits to other parts of the atoll produced a complete tally of: at least 50 Barn Swallow, 13 Spotted Flycatcher, five Red-backed Shrike, five European Golden Oriole, one Yellow Wagtail, two European Roller *Coracias garrulus* and four Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus*. A swift *Apus* sp., was also seen, but views were only sufficient to indicate that it lacked a white rump and was too pale for the most likely candidate, *A. apus*. The flycatchers, shrikes and most swallows disappeared within a few days as skies cleared and the wind became a steady south-easterly. At least one of the rollers and the bee-eaters remained for a week or so. Large numbers of unidentified dragonflies and the butterflies *Danaus chrysippus* and *Hypolimnas misippus* (both widespread African species[3]) also appeared during this period.

All six bird species have been recorded previously on Aldabra[1]. Although Barn Swallow is a near-annual migrant to Seychelles (principally Aldabra) the maximum number of birds noted previously was eight. None of the previous 19 records of Spotted Flycatcher in Seychelles involved more than two birds, and the same applies to the previous 18 records of European Roller. There have been 18 previous records of Yellow Wagtail. Blue-cheeked Bee-eater has been recorded 10 times in parties of up to four birds. Red-backed Shrike and European Golden Oriole are real rarities, with only two records of the former (both in March, singles on Aldabra and the neighbouring atoll of Cosmoledo) and five of the latter—again all singles, two of which were on Aldabra (A Skerrett pers comm).

The migrants were well scattered, with for instance four European Golden Oriole in the extreme south-east of the atoll. Searching was unsystematic due to the large land area: less than 5% of the atoll's 15,500 ha, which is for the most part scrub covered, was visited during the period, making it impossible to guess at the true number of individuals and species involved. There is no other known instance of such a fall of migrants in Seychelles (A Skerrett pers comm). Pressure is generally high during the South-east monsoon (May–October), bringing the strongest winds in September but abnormally high winds have occurred before during the North-west monsoon, in February–March [2]. It seems likely, assuming one of these narrow-track, fast-moving systems has hit the atoll when migrants are moving northward along the East African coast, that similar events have previously gone undocumented.

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New breeding records of African River Martin *Pseudochelidon eurystomina* and Rosy Bee-eater *Merops malimbicus* in Conkouati Reserve, Republic of Congo

Fiona Maisels[a] & Alick Cruickshank[b]

L'observation de colonies rapprochées d'Hirondelles de rivière (Pseudolangrayen d'Afrique) *Pseudochelidon eurystomina* et de GuÃ³piers gris-rose *Merops malimbicus* dans la Réserve de Conkouati, République du Congo, souligne l'importance de la conservation de cette aire protégée. Les terriers des hirondelles avaient en effet apparemment été occupés par une colonie de GuÃ³piers gris-rose l'année précédente, un phénomène qui a déjà été signalé.

Introduction

Few breeding sites are known for African River Martin *Pseudochelidon eurystomina*. It has been recorded breeding along the Congo and lower Oubangui Rivers and at one site, on the coast, in the Gamba area of Gabon[9], where Christy & Alexander-Marrack noted c800 birds in five colonies. One of these colonies was thought to be an old Rosy Bee-eater *Merops malimbicus* site that was being re-used by the martins[9]. Another site in Gabon (Animba), had up to 600 adults and it was reported that Rosy Bee-eater had nested there the previous year[1]. Only six breeding colonies of Rosy Bee-eater were known prior to 1984[7]. Subsequently, Christy & Alexander-Marrack found the colony at Gamba, Gabon, mentioned above[9]. On the Cabinda coast they were noted to breed following arrival in May[7], and in Gamba the birds were still entering burrows in mid-October[9].

Conkouati Reserve

Among protected areas, Conkouati Reserve probably contains the highest habitat diversity in Congo. It encompasses an area from the Atlantic Ocean to Niari Plain, and includes lagoons, freshwater lakes, littoral forest, littoral and inland savannahs, sublittoral forests on dry ground, marsh forests and closed tropical forests[3,7,8]. A body of work on the fauna and flora of the region, with particular reference to the possible effects of timber and mineral extraction, was produced in the early 1990s, concentrating on the Kouilou basin, to the south of the reserve[4]. Conkouati has been identified as an Important Bird Area (IBA)[5], and it is also an important conservation area for several large mammals on the Red Data List and on Appendix I of CITES[2,10,11].

The coastal area of the reserve is, like the Kouilou coast to the south and Gabon (Gamba area) to the north, relatively undisturbed by human activity. The littoral consists of a mosaic of woodland and grassland, mangrove forest and numerous inlets and lagoons. Littoral savannah at the mouth of the Conkouati lagoon was investigated by the authors on foot. Here, the soil is white sand and the herbaceous vegetation consists of short sparse grass. Common trees are *Manilkara obovata* and *Feigimanra africana*.

New colonies

In early October 1996, in the littoral of Conkouati Reserve a colony of African River Martin was found in a flat sandy area with sparse grass. Nearby was a similar colony of Rosy Bee-eater (Fig 1). The martins numbered several 100s and the bee-eaters 1,000–1,500. Both colonies were surrounded by littoral woodland and scrub.

Our description of the martin colony is very similar to those described by Alexander-Marrack[1] and Christy & Alexander-Marrack[9]: it was a roughly circular area c100 m across, with many burrows. The birds were actively excavating, with sand being constantly sprayed out of several burrows. Occasionally the birds flew around calling and many were catching yellowish flying insects over the colony. Our guide mentioned that, the previous year, the burrows had been occupied by a Rosy Bee-eater colony. The current bee-eater colony was larger—c150 m across—and was also very active, with birds excavating and flying around frequently. Finally, there was an uninhabited colony which local people informed us had also held bee-eaters the previous year. All these sites were within c2 km of each another.

Conclusions and conservation importance of the site

These observations, at a previously unknown site, lend further weight to the suggestion that African River Martin utilises old Rosy Bee-eater burrows. The

date of digging activities for both species (October) was at the end of the rainy season (as at Gamba and Animba in Gabon[1,10]). These breeding records underline the conservation importance of Conkouati Reserve.

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Figure 1. Rosy Bee-eater *Merops malimbicus* colony, Cokouati Reserve, Republic of Congo, October 1996 (Fiona Maisels)

Obituary
John Hamel Elgood

1909–1998

John Elgood was born at Dulwich on 16 June 1909. He was educated at Whitgift Middle School and St Catherine's College, Cambridge. He taught at Regent Street Polytechnic and was from there recruited for the new University of Ibadan. His early interest was marine biology but he soon realised the ornithological potential of Ibadan and was leading bird walks and lecturing on birds. He had a pact with Ronald Keay (at that time Chief Conservator of Forests) that he would teach Ronald birds in exchange for instruction on flora.

He saw a need for a small guide on birds and in 1960 brought out his *Birds of the West African Town and Garden*. This stimulated interest in birds and in 1964 the Nigerian Ornithologists' Society was formed with John as Secretary, Hilary Fry as Editor of the *Bulletin* and myself as Treasurer. John remained as Secretary and we produced regular bulletins until 1989, when the society metamorphosed into the West African Ornithological Society and John was appointed Vice-President.

John found and described a new species of *Malimbus* (*ibadanensis*), some of the work being done in his own garden. He produced a checklist *The Birds of Nigeria* in 1964 (British Ornithologists' Union, London) and when this went out of print he organised a team to produce a second edition in 1994 (BOU, Tring). The first book printed by Ibadan University Press was *Animal Classification* by Joe Webb and John Elgood and in 1964 John produced *Certificate Biology for Tropical Schools*.

John and his wife Peggy toured frequently in Nigeria and stayed with us in Kano many times. In 1962 he went with a team to Bornu to investigate the *Quelea* problem. He often told the story of how in an expedition after a certain bird he got the bird but lost his trousers in the process. He had a great sense of humour and was very popular with his students and kept up with some of them (by now professors themselves) for many years.

John returned to England in 1965 and taught at Goldsmiths' College and the American University in Sussex. He was asked back to Nigeria and did a spell at Ahmadu Bello University (Zaria) and Lagos University. He helped with examinations in Rhodesia twice and taught for six months in Papua New Guinea. He came out to stay with me in Kano again in 1970 and produced a report on the wetlands between Hadejia and Nguru for Kano State Department of Agriculture. This led to the area being officially opened as a Wetland Reserve by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands.

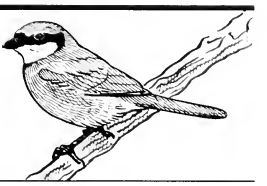
John was an active member of the British Ornithologists' Union and British Ornithologists' Club serving on the Council of both societies. He was also a frequent lecturer in the Bournemouth Science Society.

John would have thoroughly approved of his memorial service in Highcliffe Methodist Church. We entered the church to the sound of bird-song on tape (one of his daughters threatened a questionnaire at the end of the service) and the service sheet was encircled by exotic birds holding glasses of wine. We have all lost a great friend. ?

R.E. Sharland

This obituary first appeared in *Malimbus* 21: 74–75 (1999) and is reproduced here with the kind permission of the editor, Alan Tye, and author, Bob Sharland.

Discoveries



First record of Little Crake *Porzana parva* in The Gambia

Andreas Ranner, Graham Tebb and Markus Craig

Le 11 décembre 1998 une femelle ou un oiseau de première année de la Marouette poussin *Porzana parva* a été observé dans un marais près de Sapu, Gambie. Ceci représente la première mention de l'espèce pour le pays. Une description de l'oiseau est présentée. Cette observation cadre bien avec l'opinion récente selon laquelle la Marouette poussin hiverne de façon dispersée en Afrique de l'Ouest, et il est possible qu'on la rencontre plus régulièrement en Sénégambie.

During 6 to 21 December 1998, a group from BirdLife Austria, led by Clive Barlow, undertook a birdwatching tour of The Gambia. On the evening of 11 December 1998 we visited a marshy area with extensive reedbeds near Sapu (Central River Division). The central part of this marsh is composed of a closed stand of bulrush *Typha* sp. surrounded by flooded areas, principally of sedge *Carex* sp. The edge of the marsh is heavily grazed by cattle. At the edge of the bulrush, small pools, partially covered with vegetation such as water lilies, were scanned for the different rail species known to be present (eg African Crake *Crex egregia*, Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostris*, Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*, Allen's Gallinule *Porphyrio alleni* and Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*). Soon, we noticed a small crake *Porzana* sp., on some floating leaves. The bird presented three series of extended views in the open before disappearing inside the thick bulrush cover. Identification as a female or first-winter Little Crake *P. parva* was straightforward as all the relevant field marks had been seen well in good light. Several of the 14 observers present had previous field experience of the species in Austria and/or Hungary.

Description

The following identification criteria were noted. Obviously smaller than Allen's Gallinule and marginally smaller than Black Crake. Structure and coloration were those of a typical small *Porzana* sp. in female or first-winter plumage. Primaries noticeably longer than the tertials and several primary tips visible. Primaries clearly extended beyond the tail, which was almost constantly held cocked. Breast and upper belly pale yellowish brown, and chin and throat whitish. Wings held lowered, thereby concealing the pattern of the flanks and vent. Lores and ear-coverts very pale yellowish brown; eye dark and supercilium whitish. Crown finely streaked dark. Wings uniform brown (with no white markings or any other discernible pattern), scapulars and tertials black with pale brown fringes and mantle blackish, streaked pale brown and some white. No fine white vermiculations were seen, as in Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*. Short green bill with a darker base and a barely discernible trace of red. Legs greenish.

Discussion

Little Crake breeds from western Europe (rare and isolated occurrences) across the Western Palearctic to west Xinjiang, north-west China. Due to its secretive behaviour, its wintering areas are poorly known. It winters south of the Mediterranean in northern, western and eastern Africa (south to Kenya and Uganda, with one, single observer, record in Zambia[2]), in parts of Arabia and in southern Asia from Iraq to Pakistan and north-west India[5–7]. However, definite records from this large area are few. In West Africa, the species has been recorded on several occasions along the Sénégal river in September–January[1], in northern Nigeria in December[8] and southern Niger in September, October and January. It has also been recorded as either a vagrant or an uncommon vistor to Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. There are no previous records from The Gambia[1,3]. This record represents another piece in the jigsaw puzzle of the species' winter range. It is probably not unlikely that Little Crake is a regular winter visitor to remaining suitable habitat in Sénégal and The Gambia, underlining the importance of the safeguarding of such sites in the region. ☐

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A possible new taxon of rock thrush *Monticola* sp. from the limestone karst region of western Madagascar

Carl G. Jones and Kirsty J. Swinnerton

L'observation, en juin 1995, d'un monticole inconnu et de son nid dans la réserve naturelle du Tsingy de Bemaraha, ouest de Madagascar, est décrite. Le plumage du mâle est intermédiaire entre ceux du Monticole de forêt *Monticola s. sharpei* et du Monticole de la montagne d'Ambre *M. s. erythronotus*, taxons récemment traités comme espèces distinctes par plusieurs auteurs. La population de Bemaraha a été découverte en 1994; des observations supplémentaires ont été faites en 1998. Les différences avec *sharpei* et *erythronotus* sont décrites dans une note supplémentaire.

During June 1995, as members of a malacological expedition to the Tsingy de Bemaraha Nature Reserve, an area of limestone karst in western Madagascar, we established a base at the south edge of the reserve by the Manombolo River and close to Bekopaka village. From here we made sorties into the surrounding areas to look for snails but also taking the opportunity to look for birds and explore caves[3].

Late in the afternoon of 18 June 2 km north of the village of Kinajao, 11 km north-east of Bekopaka (19°24'S 44°48'E) we located a male rock thrush *Monticola* sp. perched on a boulder near the entrance of a cave. The light was poor and we were unable to get good views. Since we were aware that no rock thrushes had been recorded from the reserve[1] and it was outside the known range for all the Malagasy *Monticola* taxa[2,5], we returned next morning to obtain better views of the bird. We relocated a pair of rock thrushes near to the area of the original sighting. The female was furtive and skulking, being difficult to keep in view for more than brief periods. The male, by contrast, was relatively confiding and perched prominently on bushes and rocks that, to judge by the accumulation of droppings, were regularly used. Both birds were seen at distances down to 2m in good light. We were able to compare the birds with illustrations and descriptions of rock thrushes in Langrand[4]. The male did not match any of the taxa described, although the female was not, from our observations, separable from those of the Forest Rock Thrush *Monticola sharpei sharpei* and Mt. Amber Rock Thrush *M. s. erythronotus*.

The birds were on the edge of the Tsingy reserve next to the large limestone wall that, at this point, was c40 m high and were frequenting an area of scrub and disrupted canopy forest growing out of a steep boulder field at the base of the cliff.

We kept one or both of the birds in view for most of the two-hour observation period. They kept out of direct sunlight and spent much of the time actively foraging. The male caught a pale green caterpillar, c2.5 cm long, that it beat against a branch before consuming it. A hawk-moth, c5 cm long, was unsuccessfully attacked by the male and both birds were seen to descend to the ground to take small unidentified food items. Both were silent except for a brief quiet warble given by the male.

Two old nests in rocky recesses that we found were believed to belong to this pair. Both were a loose weave of roots and stems lined with leaves. The first nest was c25 cm in diameter and 12.5 cm deep and the

cup, which was positioned toward the rear of the nest, was c10 cm across. The nest was set in a recess 45 cm wide and deep and 25 cm high above the nest. The second nest was similar but larger, an oval shape, c37.5 x 45 cm, again with the cup toward the rear of the nest, near the wall of the rocky recess.

We compared our photographs and field descriptions with study skins at the Natural History Museum (Tring). Details of the female agreed with those of Forest and Mt. Amber Rock Thrushes, as we had noted in the field. The male, however, possessed characteristics of both (Sinclair & Langrand and Morris & Hawkins' recognise both as species-level taxa). The intense russet-coloured ventral plumage and the grey-blue head are similar to *erythronotus* while the dorsal colouring of grey-blue, becoming russet on the rump, is characteristic of *sharpei*. This record provides a record of what may be a new taxon of *Monticola* rock thrush in Madagascar.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Owen Griffiths who organised this expedition and the other team members, Greg Middleton and Vincent Florens. The staff of UNESCO Madagascar, particularly the Principal Co-ordinator Noeline Raondry made this field trip possible. Dr Robert Prys-Jones, Bird Section, The Natural History Museum, Tring, allowed us to examine the bird skins in his care.

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Gerald Durrell Endemic Wildlife Sanctuary, Black River, Mauritius.

Frank Hawkins has commented as follows. 'This population was first discovered in November 1994, by Ramanitra Narisoa Andriamboavonjy, while conducting field studies in Bemaraha. Brief details of the sighting were published (Ramanitra, N.A. 1995. Inventaire préliminare de l'avifaune du Tsingy de Bemaraha. *Working Group on Birds in the Madagascar Region Newsletter* 5 (1): 7–10). In July 1998, the ZICOMA team made a visit to this area and trapped a female *Monticola* (see plates 3–5), from which a blood sample was taken. Observations of its behaviour were made, as was a tape-recording of the song. A Malagasy student is now working on the taxonomy of Malagasy rock thrushes based on song structure, and we also await the results of DNA analysis of the blood samples. The important distinctions between this taxon and that of *M. sharpei* are: males have considerably less blue on the throat than *sharpei* and thus resemble *M. erythronotus* (see Morris & Hawkins'), except that they have a blue rather than reddish mantle, and the lower back is more rufous than in *erythronotus*. Both sexes are also much redder on the tail than *M. sharpei* (again like *M. erythronotus*). The female is rather more rufous than female *sharpei*, especially in the wide upper-breast band, although *sharpei* are rather variable in this feature. The female lacked the whitish upper-breast streaks of *sharpei*, another feature similar to *erythronotus*. However this population is much further removed from *M. erythronotus* than from *M. sharpei*, so it is very unlikely to be closely related to *erythronotus*.'

Captions for photos on page 54.

1 Male rock thrush *Monticola* sp., Kinajao, western Madagascar, 18 June 1995 (Kirsty J. Swinnerton)

2 Dorsal view of male rock thrush *Monticola* sp., Kinajao, western Madagascar, 18 June 1995 (Kirsty J. Swinnerton)

3–5 Views of adult female rock thrush *Monticola* sp., Bemaraha National Park, Madagascar, July 1998 (Frank Hawkins)

6–7 Rock thrush *Monticola* sp. nest, Kinajao, western Madagascar, 18 June 1995 (Kirsty J. Swinnerton)

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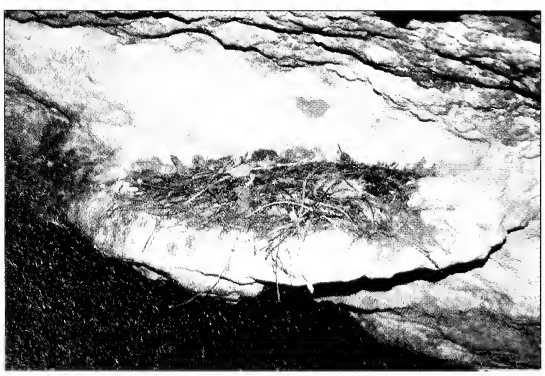

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Short Notes

An observation of Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei* in Uganda

Adriaan J. Dijksen and Gerard L. Ouweneel

Le 8 février 1999 les auteurs, accompagnés de six autres observateurs, ont observé un Goéland railleur *Larus genei* au Lac Katwe, Queen Elizabeth NP, dans l'ouest de l'Ouganda. Les caractéristiques de l'oiseau ont pu être examinées dans d'excellentes conditions et des photos ont été prises. Dans la récente check-liste du pays le Goéland railleur n'est mentionné que pour le lac Victoria[2]. En Ethiopie et au Kenya, il s'agît d'une espèce rare, que l'on retrouve sur les lacs salés de la Vallée du Rift[3,5].

In the late afternoon of 8 February 1999, together with Ian Davidson, Paul Goldring and four Dutch birders, the authors visited Lake Katwe, Queen Elizabeth National Park (QENP) in western Uganda. Some maps indicate that Lake Katwe is connected to Lake Munyanyange, which is considered to be a potentially internationally important waterfowl area, due to the large numbers of wintering Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*. Both lakes are saline.

During our visit, c550 Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* with some (possible) Heuglin's Gull *Larus fuscus heuglini* were resting on the north-west bank of Lake Katwe, as was a flock of c60 Gull-billed Tern. Grey-headed Gull *Larus cirrocephalus* was also present. At 16.00 hrs, GLO directed his fellow observers' attention to the presence of a Slender-billed Gull *L. genei* among the Gull-billed Terns. When the flock flew, the Slender-billed Gull landed in the water c10 m offshore. Subsequently it swam toward the bank and joined some Grey-headed Gulls. We were able observe the bird, an adult in winter plumage, under excellent conditions. AJD and GLO took a number of photographs, one of which is presented here to document the occurrence.

Larus genei is relatively common on the coasts of North and West Africa. Urban *et al*[3] mention it as a vagrant in Nigeria, Sudan, Kenya and Ethiopia. For Ethiopia, Urban & Brown[4] report Slender-billed Gull as rare to scarce on the coast and at Rift Valley salines. Zimmermann *et al*[5] mention *Larus genei* as a scarce Palearctic migrant to Kenya with regular observations on Lake Turkana and Lake Nakuru. Rossouw & Sacchi[2] mention that the species has been observed on Lake Victoria near Kampala: birds were first found in this area, by Julius Aranitwe and Achilles Byaruhanga (of Nature Uganda) while undertaking waterbird surveys, in 1997. A flock of c55 birds, some in breeding plumage, was present at Lutembe Bay, by the Entebbe–Kampala road, on 28 June 1997 and subsequently, on 25 June 1999, a single roosting flock of c200 was observed, and 15–20 photographed, in the same place (J Linsdell *in litt* to G Kirwan, May and July 1999).

Adult winter Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei*, Lake Katwe, Uganda, 8 February 1999 (Gerald L. Ouweneel)

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Unidentified green turaco in Ethiopia

Detlef Robel

Un touraco appartenant au complexe *Tauraco persa* a été observé près de Sodere, dans les monts Bale, Ethiopie, le 19 novembre 1996. Il s'agissait soit d'un Touraco vert *T. persa* soit d'un Touraco à bec noir *T. schuetti*, l'identification précise n'ayant pas été possible. Aucun de ces deux taxons n'avait été observé en Ethiopie auparavent.

On 19 November 1996, I was driving from the Bale Mountains through a forested area toward Sodere. I made a stop at c3,000 m and heard some loud calls resembling the distant barking of a dog, which can be transcribed as *vuh, vuh, vuh, vuh, vuh*. After a short pause, it called again. I located it sitting on the side branch of a large tree and immediately recognised it as a typical *Tauraco* with a greenish body, violet-blue wings and reddish primaries. The tail was concealed by the tree trunk but I had a clear view of the relatively short, greenish rounded crest, fringed white, the dark red bill and red orbital ring. In front of the eye there was a round white spot and a narrow but clear white line ran from below the eye to behind the eye.

I was immediately reminded of Green Turaco *Tauraco persa*, which is familiar to me from visits to West Africa. However, I could not eliminate Black-billed Turaco *T. schuetti*, which breeds in Central Africa, of which the race *emini* is fairly common in southern Sudan[6]. The short crest supports identification as this species, but the bill and wing colours do not, as *T. schuetti emini* apparently has green wings[3].

The turaco I encountered thus belonged to the superspecies *Tauraco persa*, which was considered a single species by Moreau[5]. Fry *et al*[3] recognise three species within this complex: *Tauraco persa*, *T. schuetti* and Fischer's Turaco *T. fischeri*. Alternatively, Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett[2] also accord specific status to Livingstone's Turaco *T. livingstoni*, Knysna Turaco *T. corythaix* and Schalow's Turaco *T. schalowi*, an approach followed by Sibley & Monroe[7], Turner *et al*[8] and del Hoyo *et al*[4]. In view of these unresolved taxonomic questions, I will not attempt to assign the Ethiopian bird specifically, beyond that it belonged to the *Tauraco persa* complex. Neither *Tauraco persa* or *T. schuetti* has previously been recorded in Ethiopia[1,9] (J S Ash *in litt*).

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Waldrapp (Northern Bald Ibis) *Geronticus eremita* reintroduction workshop

Chris Bowden

The report has just been published from the joint workshop, hosted by the Moroccan Ministry of Eaux et Forets, with support from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (UK BirdLife International partner) and German Technical Assistance (GTZ) project, entitled *International workshop on a strategy for the rehabilitation of Northern Bald Ibis (Geronticus eremita)*, held in Agadir in March 1999. The 34 participants came from nine countries, and included all the main specialists in Waldrapp ecology and rehabilitation.

The objectives were to clarify what is known and what the problems have been with previous unsuccessful reintroduction attempts, so that future

efforts can make full use of that experience, and pose no threat to the remaining wild birds whose conservation remains the highest priority. The gaps in current knowledge were highlighted, and criteria developed for site selection, release methods, the source of birds for release, post-release procedures and success criteria. The following summary was prepared.

Workshop Communiqué

1. An analysis of the current status of the critically endangered wild population of Waldrapp was undertaken. It was concluded that the unique Souss–Massa population is currently stable but is not increasing.
2. As a priority it was agreed that the 1997 action plan for the conservation of Waldrapp in the Souss–Massa region is regularly updated and implemented.
3. The possibility of supplementing the Souss–Massa population was considered and rejected, for the time being, as the risks were considered unacceptable.
4. The only chance to increase the number and range of Waldrapp in a significant manner is by reintroduction. It was recommended that the purpose of any reintroduction programme should be to create additional, self-sustaining wild populations, thereby removing it from the IUCN critically endangered list. It was noted that, as there is no urgency for reintroduction, and in view of the fact that a detailed and tested release method has not yet been identified, caution is urged. However, it is urgent to intensify research on release methods and to test them to gain sufficient experience.
5. It was recognised that there are two distinctive populations, an eastern and a western form and that their respective ranges should be respected. In view of the highly successful captive-managed western population, sufficient birds can be made available for potential programmes over the next 10–20 years.
6. On the basis of the IUCN/SSC Reintroduction Specialist Group (RSG) recommendations, the workshop developed specific guidelines for Waldrapp. The latter must be regularly updated in the light of experience and followed by any programmes involving release/ reintroduction.
7. In order to ensure international co-ordination and co-operation, it was decided to create the International Advisory Group for Bald Ibis (IGANBI) with the following Terms of Reference:

- receive propositions for all Waldrapp release/re-introduction projects.
- review propositions according to the IUCN and workshop guidelines, and a potential Bald Ibis Action Plan. The group will seek advice from other experts if appropriate (only advice, not permits).
- ensure information exchange/information centre (+ annual newsletter, web site).
- advise if required.
- submit proposal to IUCN (RSG).
- encourage adapted scientific research to close gaps.

The workshop gave the opportunity for the presentation of previously unpublished material on the causes of extinction from former sites, on the problems of long-distance erratic movements of released birds, of veterinary and behavioural considerations for the wild population, and the genetic and stock considerations of the birds proposed for release. Two proposed methodologies were presented and critically assessed, a 'hand-rearing method' and an 'aviary release'.

Copies of the 50-page report are available by e-mail from: Chris.Bowden@rspb.org.uk.

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Brief report on a pilot study on the effects of forest fragmentation: interactions between seed dispersers and trees whose seeds are dispersed by animals

N. J. Cordeiro

In June 1998, I was able to undertake a preliminary examination of the impact that forest fragmentation may have on the recruitment of animal-dispersed trees. This study was performed in the East Usambaras, Tanzania, where many fragments are separated from continuous forest in the plateau region around Amani. The bulk have been isolated for at least 80 years by tea plantations, as well as by cultivation[5,6]. Newmark[6] demonstrated that fragmentation has led to reduced diversity of understorey forest birds in this area.

which served as a basis for this pilot study. A major objective was to evaluate whether losses of frugivorous animals, due to forest fragmentation, leads to reduced recruitment of seedlings and juveniles of animal-dispersed tree species.

Due to isolation and associated factors, eg reduction of available habitat, it was predicted that some animal-dispersers have probably succumbed to local extinction in small, more isolated, fragments. In contrast, larger fragments and continuous forest probably have more intact frugivore assemblages. Loss or reduced densities of dispersal agents in tropical sites are predicted to have an enormous negative impact on the recruitment of dispersal-dependent tree species[2-4]; however, few studies have adequately addressed this issue, especially in Africa. Outcomes of local extinctions of dispersal vectors, or minimal dispersal of seeds by fewer individuals in small fragments, could ultimately lead to graveyards where many adults survive while seedlings and juveniles suffer high mortality due to density-dependent effects[1]. Larger fragments and continuous forest appear healthier due to the presence of more intact frugivore assemblages.

I conducted vegetational transects, with the assistance of A Mndolwa (Amani Botanical Garden botanist), in different sized fragments (two <10, one 30, and one 520 ha), and continuous forest (c4,000 ha of submontane forest). Trees were enumerated in several size classes, from seedling (dbh <1 cm) to adult stages (dbh >50 cm). Tree species were divided into non-animal- and animal-dispersal categories based on observations of diaspores, a literature review and consultation with botanical experts (e.g. J Lovett).

For animal-dispersed trees, juveniles are proportionately fewer than adults in smaller fragments (<10 ha), whereas the reverse is true at larger sites (>30 ha). If non-animal-dispersed species exhibited similar patterns to animal-dispersed species, this would indicate that abiotic factors introduced by fragmentation may explain these results. This was not true, and non-animal-dispersed trees generally had more juveniles in proportion to adults at all sites, indicating 'healthy' recruitment irrespective of fragmentation. To further support this, comparing seedling and juvenile densities of both dispersal categories across sites was essential. These data also indicated that recruitment decreased as a function of decreasing fragment size for animal-dispersed trees, whereas non-animal-dispersed trees showed the opposite trend.

Although the loss of dispersal agents could explain these patterns, other biotic effects such as enhanced seed predation in the smaller fragments could also have increased mortality of seedlings and juveniles of animal-dispersed trees. At present, it appears that biotic effects from fragmentation are impacting the fate of animal-dispersed trees. However, a more in-depth study will be undertaken in the near future, with particular emphasis on obligate bird and primate frugivores, which are believed to be more vulnerable to fragmentation[1,5]. Furthermore, additional sites will be covered and the dispersal effectiveness of different agents will be evaluated for focal tree species across sites. Lastly, an outcome of the ensuing project is a planned collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania (through M Msuha) to conduct field training workshops for students interested in animal-plant interactions and conservation.

Acknowledgements

I am extremely grateful to the ABC Conservation Fund for its support and to the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) and East Usambara Catchment Forest Project for permission to conduct this pilot study. B Amritanand, J Bates, L Bennun, J Brown, C Challange, S Johansson, A Mndolwa, E Nashanda, H Nguli, W Newmark, B Patterson, T Poulson, D Stotz, E Tarimo, and members of my UIC lab are thanked for their help on various matters associated with this project. Lastly, I am indebted to H Howe for his overall guidance.

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African birds in traditional magico-medicinal use—a preliminary survey

Mark Cocker

Malgré le fait que l'usage magico-médicinal d'oiseaux en Afrique sub-Saharienne joue un rôle important dans la formation des attitudes envers les oiseaux et la nature en général, le sujet a été largement négligé par les environnementalistes. L'article donne un aperçu préliminaire de la collecte et la vente commerciale de peaux d'oiseaux destinées à cette fin, basé sur des recherches effectuées pendant un voyage de sept semaines au Bénin et au Cameroun. L'auteur examine la nature du commerce d'objets magico-médicinaux, l'échelle à laquelle il est pratiqué et ses implications éventuelles pour la conservation. Une liste des espèces trouvées sur les marchés africains est présentée et une attention particulière est accordée aux croyances sur lesquelles ces pratiques sont basées.

In the commercial markets of any one of the West African countries on the Atlantic coast between latitudes 5°W and 15°E you can encounter stalls displaying a profusion of animal skins and body parts. Strong smelling, swarming in flies but often arranged to create a macabre and compelling spectacle, the skins form part of magico-medicinal practices that are also current elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa. These ancient indigenous traditions may be rooted in the very origins of agrarian society on the continent. Yet today, in order to supply this cultural demand, 1,000s, possibly hundreds of thousands, of birds of at least 80 species are being killed. The harvest may eventually have some bearing on the future conservation status of some species involved. Certainly the practices are a key factor in shaping African attitudes toward birds and other wildlife. Despite this, the magico-medicinal use of birds has been largely neglected by ornithologists. This paper presents some of the results of a seven-week trip to West Africa to investigate the subject[3].

The paper has five principal aims: i) to provide a preliminary sketch of the geographical area in which the practices are important; ii) to identify species already known to be caught and killed for such purposes; iii) to sketch the cultural rationale and specific beliefs that underpin some of the traditions; iv) to suggest the possible conservation implications of the trade; and v) to act as a baseline statement on the subject, alert other birders to its potential significance and hopefully encourage them to submit observations and findings to the author. It should therefore be read as much as a plea for further information as a statement of what is actually known.

Bird markets in West Africa

The most accessible and compelling source of evidence for the traditional use of wild birds is the sections of local markets devoted to their sale. These skin-and-bone stalls are a routine component of markets in many towns and cities. Some of them, such as Bé in Lomé, Togo have apparently become famous tourist attractions, and the vendors' insistence on payment for tourist photographs and video footage may be an important part of their overall financial return.

The skins stalls are widely found in four countries—Ghana, Togo, Bénin and Nigeria—and are commonly known as 'fetish markets'. (However, this is potentially misleading on two counts. Firstly, the skins stalls are never separate entities distinct from the general market. They may well all be grouped together but that compartmental structure is typical of African markets. Secondly, birds operate as part of a much wider range of religious and magico-medicinal rituals than those defined by the word 'fetish' and 'fetishism'. These terms are applicable mainly or even entirely to those West African countries where voodoo was, or remains, an important part of traditional religious life, such as Togo and Bénin.) Use of birds as medicine has also been recorded in Cameroon, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco (Gerhard Nikolaus *in litt*) and South Africa, while bird skins may also be a regular feature of market life in Niger (Joost Brouwer *in litt*), Mali and Chad.

I visited stalls in four main Béninois markets—at the capital Porto Novo, Bohicon, Abomey and Cotonou. (I also searched for skins stalls in the markets at Bamenda and Douala, in Cameroon, but found only limited evidence of a trade in birds. The main items for sale were individual feathers that may be harvested from moulting birds.) All four Béninois markets are permanent daily features of town life, although each location has a special market-day when there is a greater volume of both buyers and vendors. This applied as much to the skins stalls as to the other types of market produce. It appears that individual bird-

skin vendors, if not permanently present at the principal regional market, travel to smaller outlying towns and villages to attend their special market-day. However, by visiting a major town on its main market-day one could ensure coverage of almost all the skin dealers in that particular region.

It is worth noting that to anyone unaccustomed to these places a fetish market can be unsettling. Each stall comprises an assembly of skulls and skins arranged in a powerful, if often rather disturbing, display that can include horse and hyena heads, crocodiles, dried snakes and monkey skulls. The presence of so much slowly decomposing flesh, crudely preserved with only ash or salt, makes for a very unhealthy background odour and a super-abundance of flies. However, surveying the markets is one of the best ways to assess the volume of birds being killed and to identify the species currently being used. The stall holders can also be important sources of information on both the methods of capture and the cultural beliefs that underpin the exploitation of birds.

A note of caution should be introduced at this early stage. Not all skins stalls welcome interest from non-locals and this is especially the case in southern Nigeria. People of European background should be particularly receptive to the wishes and sensitivities of stall holders and their customers, and preferably approach the markets with a local person (Anne Nason *in litt*). Anyone planning to investigate skins stalls in other countries should operate on a precautionary principle and exercise similar discretion.

It was interesting to note that, in Bénin, the dealers were almost without exception young men and youths, with an occasional older male. Stalls were never attended by women, which is noteworthy given that much of Béninois commercial life is conducted by females. It was also notable that medicinal stalls selling herbs, bark and stones or crystals—further items in Africa's traditional pharmacopoeia—were also attended by women. Only the bone and skins stalls were a male preserve. This may be because of female taboos against contact with certain animal products, such as tortoises, whose carapaces are a regular feature in the markets. Although some of the dealers, particularly in Dantokpa, were resident merchants with permanent market pitches and business cards, others may be itinerant Muslim 'Alfas', traditional Islamic medicine men who range across West Africa to ply their trade as far afield as Sénégal and Mali (Patrick Claffey *in litt*).

Bird assemblies accounted for approximately a third of all items on display, although sometimes a stall would have no more than random and unidentifiable bundles of feathers. However, others had impressive collections of birds, involving 100s of individual skins of up to 20 different species. Some were in a poor state of preservation and can be difficult to identify. It may well also suggest that they have been on sale for a long period. In fact, during all the time I spent in the markets not a single purchase or even a prospective customer was noted. Indeed, I was often the only interested observer. It is possible that the six-month 'shelf life', suggested by Mark Taylor and Jeremy Fox, for skins in the market in Lomé, Togo, is a conservative estimate[10].

International structure of skin trade

The absence of information on rates of sale needs to be balanced against the solid fact that traded animal parts can be transported large distances, in some cases crossing international borders. This suggests the strong financial incentives underpinning the whole business. For example, the heads of three Spotted Hyenas *Crocuta crocuta* and parts of two Chimpanzees *Pan troglodytes* were noted in Cotonou, with another chimpanzee in Porto Novo market. Yet, wild populations of the former occur no closer than c500 km distant, while the latter specimens must have travelled at least from Nigeria or Ghana. Similarly, a skin of a Red-chested Owlet *Glaucidium tephronotum* has been found in Bohicon market, Bénin, yet the species' known range comes no closer than central Ghana (Patrick Claffey *in litt*). Equally, Great Blue Turaco *Corythaeola cristata* does not occur in the Dahomey Gap, yet a head of this species was found in Dantokpa market in Cotonou.

Bird species occurring in African markets

The following list principally comprises species noted by the author in Bénin and Cameroon. The birds found in Bénin are followed by notes on their status based on the forthcoming *BOU Checklist of the Birds of Bénin* by Patrick Claffey[4]. Also listed are other bird species found in markets and recorded in published literature or documents[5] or personally reported to the author (Gerhard Nikolaus *in litt*). These are marked with an asterisk and are followed by the country in which they were located.

Ostrich *Struthio camelus** (South Africa)
Shy Albatross *Diomedea cauta** (South Africa)
White Pelican *Pelecanus onocratalus** (South Africa)
Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax** (Togo)
Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*—abundant
Western Reef Heron *Egretta gularis** (Togo)
Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta** (South Africa)
Hadeda *Bostrchyia hagedash** (South Africa)
Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita** (Morocco, 1969)
White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata** (South Africa)

Ducks Anatidae—usually just heads and involving only domestic varieties, including some identifiable as Muscovy Ducks.
Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*—common and widespread
Black Kite *Milvus migrans*—common and widespread
Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*—common and widespread
African White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*—uncommon
European Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus** (Morocco 1969)
White-headed Vulture *Aegypius occipitalis** (South Africa)
Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*—common in the south
Shikra *Accipiter badius*—most common small raptor
Red-necked Buzzard *Buteo auguralis*—common
Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax** (South Africa)
Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus* (Cameroon)
Common Kestrel *Falco tinnuculus*—common
Lanner *Falco biarmicus** (Morocco 1969)
Double-spurred Francolin *Francolinus bicalcaratus*—abundant
Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*—(probably domesticated) in wild not uncommon but probably declining
Lesser Moorhen *Gallinula angulata*—rare with only few records
Blacksmith Plover *Vanellus armatus** (South Africa)
Grey-headed Gull *Larus cirrocephalus** (South Africa)
Pigeons Columbidae (usually feral or domesticated)
Senegal Parrot *Poicephalus senegalus*—abundant
Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus*—status uncertain, Béninois population possibly a product of escaped cagebirds. Nearest known wild population in Nigeria.
Green Turaco *Tauraco persa*—not uncommon
Great Blue Turaco *Corythaeola cristata*—no records for Bénin
Purple-crested Turaco *Musophaga porphyreolopha** (South Africa)
Violet Turaco *M. violacea*—common
African Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis*—not uncommon
Senegal Coucal *Centropus senegalensis*—common
White-browed Coucal *C. superciliosus** (South Africa)
African Grass Owl *Tyto capensis** (South Africa)
Barn Owl *T. alba*—common
Marsh Owl *Asio capensis*—rare resident
White-faced Scops Owl *Otis leucotis*—common
Spotted Eagle Owl *Bubo africanus** (South Africa)
Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum*—common
Red-chested Owlet *G. tephronotum*—no records for Bénin
Little Owl *Athene noctua** (Morocoo 1969)
African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii*—(Cameroon)
Nightjar sp. *Caprimulgus* sp.
Red-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus ruficollis** (Morocco 1969)
Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis*—common
African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ceyx picta*
African Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima** (South Africa)
Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*—common
Abyssinian Roller *Coracias abyssinica*—common
Blue-throated / Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus gularis / glaucurus*—common
Hoopoe *Upupa epops** (Morocco 1969)
Abyssinian Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus abyssinicus*—uncommon, probably confined to northern national parks
Southern Ground Hornbill *B. cafer** (South Africa)
African Pied Hornbill *Tockus fasciatus*—common
African Grey Hornbill *T. nasutus*—common
Trumpeter Hornbill *Ceratogymna bucinator** (South Africa)
Brown-cheeked Hornbill *C. cylindricus*—uncommon resident
Bearded Barbet *Lybius dubius*—common
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus*—common
Golden-tailed Woodpecker *Campethera abingoni** (South Africa)
Grey Woodpecker *Dendropicos goertae*—common
Barn / Ethiopian Swallow *Hirundo rustica / aethiopica*
White-breasted Cuckoo-Shrike *Coracina pectoralis*—not uncommon
Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*—abundant
Robin-Chat sp. *Cossypha* sp.
African Thrush *Turdus pelios*—common
Black-headed Bush Shrike *Tchagra senegala*—common
White Helmet-Shrike *Prionops plumatus*—common
Pied Crow *Corvus albus*—not uncommon but local
Vieillot's Black Weaver, western race *Ploceus nigerrimus castaneofuscus*—not uncommon
White-billed Buffalo-Weaver *Bubalornis albirostris*—rare resident, single record
Red Bishop sp. *Euplectes* sp.—common
Paradise Whydah sp. *Vidua* sp.

Commercial value of bird skins

With assistance from a Béninois ecology graduate, Patient Coubeou, it was possible to penetrate the potential disparity in prices for tourists and for local people and to assess skin values with some degree of accuracy. Large birds of prey and owls were usually offered for c1,000 francs (CFA) each (UK£1)—a price that did not fluctuate too widely from location to location, and even between two countries. However, values apparently changed according to season. In the wet season, when conditions made catching difficult and or the birds themselves were perhaps scarcer, a Black Kite might go up from its dry season price of CFA 300 francs to a wet season high of approximately CFA 700. This was the price paid to the catcher, after which a market seller would add his profit margin. Condition was another factor that influenced price, the charge to the customer increasing if the skin was of high quality. To put these values in context, skilled tradesmen in Bénin earn a daily wage of around CFA 2,000.

Methods of capture

Bird skins and parts came from two principal suppliers: a) *adventitious collection* by amateurs—ie the child with a catapult—who then sold on items either to the market vendors directly or to professional hunters with guns; or b) *organised collection* by professional hunters. West Africa has an important and highly organised market in bushmeat and hunters working in this trade also shoot or trap items for magico-medicinal use.

The means of capture involved four principal methods. *Shooting*—this varied from a stone or comparable missile thrown by hand or catapult, to a bow and arrow or a gun. Both locally made and imported firearms were observed or reported to be in use by hunters. *Traps*: these included simple baited snares where the bird's feet become caught in a noose. Live examples of individual Black Kite, Marsh

Harrier, Red-necked Buzzard, Barn and White-faced Scops Owls were all on offer in Béninois markets. Another method described by a medicine man in north-west Cameroon and almost certainly used in Bénin (where small gin traps, mainly for the capture of Cane Rats *Thryonomys* sp., were frequently observed) and intended to catch owls or birds of prey, involved open-jaw spring-release traps placed on a suitable tall flat-topped perch, like a tree stump, and baited with a small chick. The bird lands to take the lure, triggers the release mechanism and is immediately caught in the steel teeth of the trap. *Gum*: a third method of entrapment involves the use of a form of gum obtained from some species of parasitic plant (glue obtained from mistletoe is a method still used to trap birds in the Mediterranean region) smeared on a series of fine bamboo wood slivers. The bird of prey lands in the centre of these fine stakes to take the chick bait and as it flaps its wings immediately becomes glued to the sticks and unable to fly. *Capture at the nest*: this method used for hole-nesting birds involves entrapping the bird in the nest cavity. In the case of kingfishers, a family apparently prized for medicine in the Bamenda Highlands of Cameroon and in Bénin, the nest hole is blocked up with mud when the birds are observed to have entered. Several hours later the suffocated bird is dug out.

An historical context for the use of birds in traditional medicine

In Europe, North America and Australasia the conventional attitude toward the use of wild-caught animals in systems of traditional medicine tend to be negative. Typically, the widespread media images of Tigers *Panthera tigris* slaughtered to supply a highly lucrative Asian market has caused deep Western antagonism toward traditional Chinese medicine—the final destination for the bones and body parts of this critically endangered felid. Similarly, the widely-publicised depletion of African and Asian rhinoceros species because of the demand for horn and its supposed aphrodisiacal properties is vehemently and justifiably condemned in the West.

But before the urge to moralise overcomes any reader of European background we should first recall that the magico-medicinal use of animals was once a routine part of Western culture. Those traditions had very ancient roots and held currency among some of the region's most distinguished intellectuals, even if some of the remedies now appear extraordinary, if not ludicrous. Typically incomprehensible is an ancient Greek belief that staring directly into the eyes of a Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus* could cure a sufferer from jaundice. The philosopher and historian Plutarch wrote 'such is the nature and such the temperament of the creature that it draws out and receives the malady which issues like a stream, through the eyesight'. Bird trappers even kept their Stone Curlews hooded in order that potential customers could not obtain the cure for free![9]

The same principle of sympathetic magic led medical practitioners of the classical world to assume that eating owls' eyes or the contents of eagles' gall bladder would improve eyesight, while Nightingales' *Luscinia megarhynchos* tongues could enhance an individual's vocal abilities. The brains of a crane were deemed a powerful aphrodisiac, while vulture's liver was sovereign against gout, indigestion and cataracts[9]. And such examples of presumed medicinal properties could be extended across much of Europe's avifauna.

For modern ornithologists, liberated by the rational strictures of science, it is even more unnerving to discover that these medical recipes retained their shelf life long in to the early modern era. In the late 17th century Sir Thomas Browne, himself a founding father of the study of wildlife in Britain, described the sale of Rooks' *Corvus frugilegus* livers in Norwich as a cure for rickets[2]. Francis Willoughby, a naturalist of comparable standing to Browne, recommended a recipe for epilepsy that involved an ounce of white wine and castor oil mixed with the carcasses of 100 swallows[1]. Having read of these historical magico-medicinal traditions, one cannot avoid a sense of *déjà vu* on discovering basketfuls of Ethiopian Swallows *Hirundo aethiopica* for sale as medicine in the Dantokpa market of Cotonou.

The point needs repeating: the principles of sympathetic medicine, involving the use of birds and bird parts, have been applied the world over. Indeed, the universal character of these systems reminds us of a common heritage shared by all human communities. It is with this fact firmly in mind that one should approach current African practices, ie with a degree of understanding and sympathy, although not necessarily with outright approval.

Specific uses of birds in African traditional medicine

It was impossible to establish the individual uses of every different bird found in the markets of Bénin. However, several examples are given to indicate the infrastructure of beliefs that underpins their capture and sale for magico-medicinal purposes.

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird

In Bénin this species is widely viewed as an auspicious bird, a bringer of good luck and health. Musicians, dancers, singers and those generally involved in the

manipulation of speech especially prize it. The bird is known in northern Bénin as *le musicien*, 'the musician'. The bird is common and widespread in Bénin but was only noted in any number on the skins stalls in the Cotonou market, Dantokpa. However it is apparently also important amongst several northern Béninois tribes. The bird is fried to a charred cinder and then ground up, either to be added to a drink or mixed with other food or added to African soap that is then used for washing. It is thought to enhance the musical or vocal performance and is highly prized as a medicine prior to ceremonies and celebrations (Patrick Claffey pers comm). In Dantokpa a stall holder indicated that this was the single most valuable species he held, and suggested a price of around CFA 5,000 (UK£5), a large sum in Béninois terms.

Owls

Of all birds occurring in West African markets the most important species are owls. In Béninois markets they regularly comprise more than 50% of the entire bird skins on any one stall. They are deeply feared as omens of ill health, death and bad luck. In fact, in Cameroon, the pidgin English name for the owl is 'witchbird', a title expressing a link between this bird family and witchcraft that is widespread across sub-Saharan Africa. In Malawi, for example, Heimo Mikkola conducted surveys into attitudes toward owls and found that 80% of interviewees thought owls were evil birds[7,8].

It is thought that witches have the capacity to metamorphose into owl form in order to go about their business undetected. That particular belief straddles many cultural strata within African society, from the most highly educated to village level.

It is this central role in witchcraft that makes the owl such powerful medicine and accounts for its status as the most common bird in West African markets. Its uses are various, eg those who practise black magic to harm or attack their enemies utilise owl parts in their aggressive spells. However, working on the same principle as a vaccination, traditional African doctors also use owls to fight fire with fire, and protect their own clients from the presumed harmful effect of another sorcerer's owl magic. Thus, people eat parts of the owl's body, notably the heart (I was told in Cameroon that this could be sold for a price comparable with the bird's entire skin—around CFA 1,000), or burn and grind the feathers to powder to add to herbal medicines. Owl feathers and flesh are also made into amulets and worn on the body as protective medicine. It is believed that any witch in owl form or possibly any owl controlled for witchcraft purposes would immediately die on contact with a person bearing an owl talisman.

Once again, it is valuable to recall that both the owl's status as a bird of ill omen and its intimate connection with witchcraft is not an exclusively African phenomenon. Similar beliefs are still widespread in South and North America among indigenous communities, and the same complex of ideas was current in Europe well into the early modern period. Indeed, vestiges of these beliefs apparently persisted in parts of rural Europe until the 1950s, when Barn Owls were routinely nailed spread-eagle on farm buildings to ward off storms, lightning and the evil eye (Eric Burnier pers comm).

Attitudes toward wildlife by those involved in magico-medicinal practices

It goes without saying that the people involved with the magico-medicinal trade and use of birds show little or no reticence in what they are doing. On the contrary, the vendors of skins, the traditional doctors and their patients, which includes some educated to university level, usually believe implicitly in the value of the practices. (In fact the placebo effect of this form of ritual, which their wholehearted trust implies, is one possible benefit of the therapy.) In Bénin I found that any reticence to allow me to examine or discuss traditional medicine was usually an economic matter and their doubts were easily overcome by financial payment.

I also found that skin sellers often openly displayed prize exhibits with a degree of pride. Live birds were handled in the most brutal fashion. Stall holders removing owls from cages to show me, routinely broke feathers and I suspect would have broken the bird's limbs to extract it more easily. No attempt is probably made to keep live birds in a healthy state and a live captive Marsh Harrier I saw on 20 January 1999 was dead by the 22 January.

Conservation implications of traditional African magic and medicine

Almost all the birds found on skin stalls in Bénin are described as common or not uncommon in Claffey's forthcoming checklist[4]. Only five species are listed as uncommon or are more scarce—African White-backed Vulture, Lesser Moorhen, Marsh Owl, Brown-cheeked Hornbill and White-billed Buffalo-Weaver. Two other species—Red-chested Owlet and Great Blue Turaco—have never been recorded live in the country. However, there is no evidence that the specimens found on skins stalls originated in Bénin.

The level of harvest is probably relatively small and in Bénin as a whole probably does not exceed a six-figure total within a year. However, the number of

skins at any one time is probably not fewer than a five-figure total. And, taking into account the fact that bird-skin markets routinely occur across four West African countries, Ghana, Togo, Bénin and Nigeria, one can assume that the annual trade certainly involves tens, possibly hundreds of thousands of birds. Much additional research is necessary to establish rates of usage and the scale of the market.

At present a number of issues need to be considered. The pressure imposed by the magico-medicinal market on certain families of birds may be quite considerable. Owls are an obvious example. Their central importance in traditional practices means that they are often the most numerous item in a market. Individual stalls in Bénin sometimes held as many 50 skins, mainly Pearl-spotted Owlet. It must be the case that owl populations are partially controlled by the large off-take, if seldom entirely eradicated. This could become a much more significant issue if other pressures were brought to bear. For example, if this magico-medicinal harvest were to combine with the widespread use of non-specific agrochemical pesticides, then the long-term effect could be greater.

The deep taboo attached to owls in Africa also presents a serious cultural challenge to anyone interested in their conservation. Six species found on the African continent are currently listed as Red Data species or as Near-Threatened. Policies designed for their conservation need to take account of this profoundly negative public image and also the ongoing harvest of owls for traditional medicine, which is probably transcontinental in character.

There are a number of species already seriously affected by habitat loss that also feature strongly in traditional African medicine. Hornbills are the best example. Brown-cheeked Hornbill is listed as a Near-Threatened Species. Forest clearance may represent the single most important factor in this depletion, but the annual harvest for medicinal usage should not be overlooked. Hornbill casques were found in all the main Béninois markets although some of the species involved do not occur in this area and must be imported products. Equally a medicine man in north-west Cameroon, where *Ceratogymna* hornbills do not occur either, told me that he had paid CFA 5,000 for one casque he showed me. That figure is a considerable inducement for hunters to maintain the traffic.

Another species recurrent on Béninois skins stalls was the Abyssinian Ground Hornbill. Given the bird's low recruitment rate and the low density where it does occur, one may surmise that throughout West Africa it is seriously affected by the harvest for traditional medicine. In Bénin itself it is believed not to occur outside the national parks in the far north.

Acknowledgements

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Figure 1. A large stall in Cotonou's Dantokpa Market, with a wide range of animals represented. Note the chimpanzee skulls on the far left, with a horse's skull on the far right and the large number of birds in the middle of the display (Mark Cocker)

Figure 2. These 15 Yellow-fronted Tinkerbirds *Pogoniulus chrysoconus* probably represent the most valuable bird items in Dantokpa Market, although the dealer's suggested price of 5000 CFA (c UK£5) may have been inflated. All the birds, which include four African Pygmy Kingfishers *Ceyx picta* are consumed in order to bring good luck or general well being (Mark Cocker)

Figure 4. This collection of swallow skins in Dantokpa market, Cotonou was the only occasion that this family was found in any West African market. Their magico-medicinal purpose was not established (Mark Cocker)

Figure 3. Although live birds such as this Red-necked Buzzard *Buteo auguralis* are occasionally encountered in the markets, no attempt is made to keep such an individual alive and it is destined, very shortly, to join the stallholder's rank of dried skins (Mark Cocker)

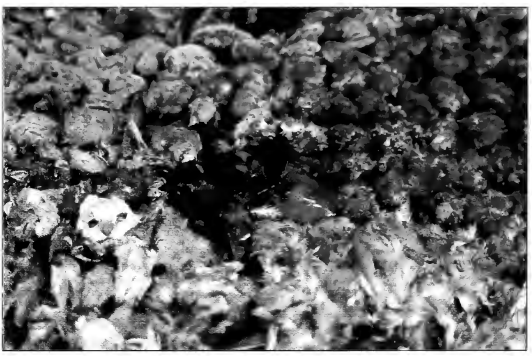

Figure 5. A substantial, and motley, collection of bird skins in Dantokpa Market, Cotonou. There are numbers of parrots, at least two species of turaco and a hornbill species, probably African Pied Hornbill *Tockus fasciatus* (bottom right), but the vast majority are owls of at least two species, Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum* and White-faced Scops Owl *Otus leucotis*. The high proportion of owls is typical of many stalls (Mark Cocker)

New breeding records of the Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala* in Côte d'Ivoire

Volker Salewski and Silke Schmidt

Des observations sur la parade et la nidification du Martin-chasseur à tête grise Halcyon leucocephala, faites de février à mai dans le Parc National de la Comoé, Côte d'Ivoire, sont rapportées. Contrairement à ce qui a été publié à ce sujet, l'espèce semblerait nicher régulièrement dans le pays; ceci pourrait résulter d'une extension de son aire de reproduction.

Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala* is widespread in sub-Saharan Africa where it inhabits all types of woodland, wooded and bushed grassland, riverine thickets, cultivation and forest edge. It is absent from southern parts of the continent and does not penetrate forest zones in western and central Africa. The species is sedentary at equatorial latitudes but an intra-African migrant at higher ones[8]. Recoveries of adults ringed in Ethiopia have been made in Uganda (960 km) and Kenya (1,750 km)[1]. One ringed in Malawi was recovered in Zaïre (1,430 km)[11]. In West Africa the species is recorded from every country and is an intra-African migrant with breeding records in Sénégal, Gambia (listed as resident), Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Togo and Nigeria. In Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Bénin it is considered a migrant without definite breeding records[6]. Its migration was studied in detail in Nigeria by Skinner[12] who found it to be a dry season breeding visitor to the south of the country and a wet season visitor to the north. In the southern Guinea savannah breeding commences in late January, and in the northern Guinea savannah breeding occurs in mid-March–mid-June. Both populations move north once the young fledge[7] which may imply a three-stage migration with pre-breeding migration northward, a post-breeding migration farther north and post-moulting migration southward[8,12]. A similar migration pattern is known for *H. l. pallidiventris* in southern Africa[3].

In Côte d'Ivoire, Thiollay[13] listed Grey-headed Kingfisher as an African migrant widespread in the Guinea savannah in the dry season but only occurring north of 09°N in June–October. This was repeated by Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire[5] despite the fact that Demey & Fishpool[4] described a breeding population near Grand Bassam on the coast. In Comoé National Park the species was considered a non-breeding migrant occurring during November to May[2]. Here, we describe new breeding records in the country.

New breeding records

In October 1994–April 1997, VS regularly stayed in Comoé National Park, north-east Côte d'Ivoire. The habitat is principally northern Guinea savannah with gallery forest along larger rivers and isolated forests of varying size within the savannah. Grey-headed

Figure 1. Nesting hole of Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala* in the bank of the Comoé River, Comoé National Park, 2 April 1999 (Volker Salewski)

Figure 2. Juvenile Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala*, Kongo River, Comoé National Park (Volker Salewski)

Kingfisher was observed almost daily from November and was still present in the area when VS departed in late April. It was suspected that the species might be breeding as courtship behaviour, as described by Fry *et al*[7], was observed on several occasions but no nests were found.

In 1998–99, we visited Gué Auto, in the north of Comoé National Park, regularly at two-week intervals from early October to mid-December and in early February–late April. Grey-headed Kingfisher was noted from early December. During 1999 several birds were seen daily by the Comoé River. They were very active and called frequently. Courtship behaviour and intraspecific aggression were observed several times in February–March. On 2 April, a bird appeared to fly out of a hole in the river bank and on the following day, when the hole (Fig 1) was observed for a longer period, a bird was seen to enter it. It remained inside for c3 mins. During this time it excavated sand and was evidently working on the hole. On 20 April, two additional active holes in the river bank were found with adults seen to leave them, while on 21 April, two juveniles that had probably fledged recently were observed on the gallery forest edge. These locations were all within c300 m of each other.

Southern parts of the park were visited just for a few days. On 16 April an adult was observed near the mouth of the river Kongo carrying a large insect, indicating that it was feeding young and a juvenile was mist-netted there (Fig 2). On 17 April, one flew out of hole in the bank of the nearby river Comoé. A few kilometres to the south, near the mouth of the river Lola, an active hole was found. It was within a larger hole, probably dug by an Aardvark *Orycteropus afer*, as has been described by Clancey & Herremans[5]. Additionally, on 4 May, three Grey-headed Kingfishers showing courtship behaviour were observed near Bouaké.

Discussion

These observations demonstrate that breeding of the Grey-headed Kingfisher in Côte d'Ivoire is not rare or restricted to the coastal population described by Demey & Fishpool[4]. The discovery of several nests and evidence of other breeding pairs at various latitudes (our observations spanned 07°42'N–09°16'N) demonstrate that the species is a breeding migrant, occasionally at high density, in Comoé National Park. Other active holes, where we did not observe the species, may have been occupied by either Blue-breasted *H. malimbica* or Pied Kingfishers *Ceryle rudis*, which are also common in the park. In Nigeria, a density of only one pair per 0.5–1 km of river bank was found[8].

Grey-headed Kingfisher is a conspicuous and attractive species. In Comoé National Park observations by several ornithologists during 1965 to 1980 led to the first species list for the area being produced[12]. For this reason, it appears unlikely that nesting at high density would have been overlooked and these breeding records may therefore indicate a genuine range extension. Elsewhere in West Africa the species is a scarce breeder in countries at comparable latitudes, eg Liberia[9] and has not been recorded to breed in countries to the north of Cote d'Ivoire such as Burkina Faso and Niger[10]. In Ghana it is known (many pairs) at Kpandu (07°00'N) which is further south than Comoe National Park but the location lies on the edge of the Dahomey Gap where there is a different climatic regime[10].

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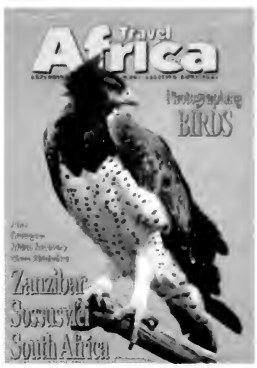

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Recent Reports

These are largely unconfirmed records published for interest only; **all dates refer to 1999 unless otherwise stated**. We thank all birders who have sent in their records and urge them to submit full details to the relevant national or regional organisations. It is suggested that observations of each species be compared with relevant literature to set new data in context and that observers who are unfamiliar with the status of birds in a particular country refer to R.J. Dowsett's (1993) Afrotropical avifaunas: annotated country checklists (in: R.J. Dowsett and F. Dowsett-Lemaire. *A Contribution to the Distribution and Taxonomy of Afrotropical and Malagasy Birds*. Tauraco Research Report 5. Liège: Tauraco Press) or more recent or appropriate sources before submitting records.

Azores

A **Fea's Petrel** *Pterodroma feae* was seen from a ferry on 9 August, one was heard calling around the cliffs of a small island on the night of the same day, and one was trapped there two nights later, when a second bird was also heard calling. This appears to be the second individual to be trapped on the Azores, the first being at the same site a few years previously. A **Sooty Tern** *Sterna fuscata* was in the same area on 9–12 August (*MB* per *Birding World* 12: 363).

A suite of North American species was recorded in September–October. A **Double-crested Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax auritus* was in Madalena Harbour, Pico, on 25–26 September. On Flores, there were seven **American Wigeons** *Anas americana* on 5–7 October, at least two drake **American Black Ducks** *A. rubripes* on 19 September, and two **Blue-winged Teals** *A. discors* on 18 September. Waders at Cabo da Praia quarry, Terceira, included two juvenile **Semipalmated Plovers** *Charadrius semipalmatus* on 13–17 September and one on 2–3 October, a **Semipalmated Sandpiper** *Calidris pusilla* on 12 September, and two on 2 October, and a juvenile **Least Sandpiper** *C. minutilla* on 2 October. Also there were an adult **White-rumped Sandpiper** *C. fuscicollis* on 13 September, four adults and two juveniles on 2–3 October, with another at São Roque do Pico Harbour, Pico, on 29 September. Also at Cabo da Praia quarry, Terceira, were up to seven **Pectoral Sandpipers** *C. melanotos* on 13–17 September, and at least five juveniles on 2–3 October, and the second **Short-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus griseus* for the Azores on 13–17 September. A juvenile **Upland Sandpiper**

Black-shouldered Nightjar *Caprimulgus nigriscapular*, Tunku Bolon, The Gambia, 29 November 1998 (Dominic Pia)

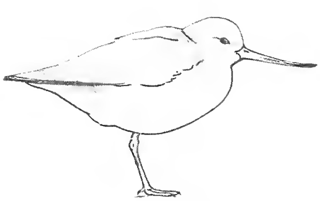
Black-bellied Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis*, Kotu sewage ponds, The Gambia, 3 December 1998 (Dominic Pia)

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*, Mandinata, The Gambia, 27 November 1998 (Dominic Pia)

Bartramia longicauda was at Ribeira Grande, Sao Miguel, on 3 October. A juvenile **Solitary Sandpiper** *Tringa solitaria* was at Cabo da Praia quarry, Terceira, on 12 September. Two **Spotted Sandpipers** *Actitis macularia* were found on Terceira on 13–17 September and another on 2 October, whereas single juveniles were on Fajal, Pico and Sao Jorge and two on Flores during 21 and 29 September. There were also two juvenile **Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes* at Faja dos Cubres, Sao Jorge, from 29 September until 1 October, with another juvenile at Lagao Azul, Sao Miguel, on 5–7 October. Finally, a first-winter female **Magnolia Warbler** *Dendroica magnolia* and a **Bobolink** *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* were on Flores on 21–22 September (*SP* per *Birding World* 12 407).

Botswana

An **Ayres' Hawk Eagle** *Hieraaetus ayresii* was seen at Mogobane, in the south-east, on 21 January. A **Long-crested Eagle** *Lophaetus occipitalis* at Gaberone in February–April, and one at Talana on 30 April are the first records in south-eastern and eastern Botswana; all previous records are from the major river floodplains in the north, where the species is not uncommon. An estimated 70 **Lesser Moorhen** *Gallinula angulata* were noted at five pans near Bobonong, east Botswana, in early January, following heavy rains in December 1998. A **Three-banded (Heuglin's) Courser** *Cursorius cinctus* was observed at Kasane on 10 January; a pair reared three chicks there in 1998. A flock of 45–50 **Collared Pratincoles** *Glareola pratincola* was at Bokaa Dam, on 15 January; this species is rarely recorded in the south-east. Seven **White-fronted Plovers** *Charadrius marginatus*, including an incubating adult, were at Shashe Dam on 20



Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* by Mark Andrews

September 1998. A total of 11 **Black-tailed Godwits** *Limosa limosa* were recorded at several localities in the north, east and south-east in December 1998–February 1999, with nine at Mea Pan on 30 January being the largest group. Single **Green Sandpipers** *Tringa ochropus* were reported from [illegible], east Botswana, on 27 September 1998 and 7 March. A pair of **Senegal Coucals** *Centropus senegalensis* was recorded at Francistown in November 1998 and in June 1999; there are very few records away from the northern wetlands. **Horus Swift** *Apus horus* was apparently breeding along the Limpopo River at [illegible] and along the [illegible] River in [illegible], both in eastern Botswana; there is one previous breeding record, along the Chobe River [illegible]. Nine **African Pygmy Kingfishers** *Ceyx picta* were trapped along the Limpopo River at Seleka Ranch, 10 October 1998–March 1999.

A total of 11 **South African Cliff Swallows** *Hirundo spilodera* was seen at three localities in Khutse Game Reserve and Central Kalahari Game Reserve on 1–5 December 1998 during a period of cold, wet weather. Large aggregations of **Common House Martin** *Delichon urbica* were reported from eastern Botswana: c2,000 at Bobonong on 29 November 1998, c10,000 at Letsibogo Dam on 16 February, and 5,000–7,000 at the same locality on 23 March. Twenty five **European Reed Warblers** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* were trapped at Phakalane, south east Botswana, in December 1998–April 1999, including two ringed there in 1997. Six more were trapped at Selebi Phikwe, in December 1998–January 1999, and another 12 at Francistown, in January–February. Single **Indian Mynas** *Acridotheres tristis* were reported from Bobonong in November 1998 and January 1999 (*all* per *CBr*).

Records recently accepted by the Records Subcommittee of the Botswana Bird Club include the following. **Corncrake** *Crex crex*: one at Talana, east Botswana, on 16 January 1999; third accepted sight record. **African Finfoot** *Podica senegalensis*: one at Shashe Dam on 18 August 1998; first record away from the Chobe and Limpopo River systems. **Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus*: one at Kasana on 2 March 1998. **Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*: one at Mogobane, south-east Botswana, on 21 January 1999. **Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus*: singles along the Chobe River on 8 November 1998 and [illegible] December 1998. **Grass Owl** *Tyto capensis*: one at Gaberone Dam on 27 [illegible] 1998; third record for Botswana. **Bradfield's Swift** *Apus bradfieldi*: [illegible] Valley, south-east Botswana, on 18 April 1998; first [illegible] record. **River Warbler** *Locustella fluviatilis*: singles near Kasane on 27 December 1998 and 9 January [illegible]. **Bushveld Pipit** *Anthus caffer*: [illegible], south-east Botswana, on 1 May 1998; fourth accepted record. **Cuckoo Finch** *Anomalospiza imberbis*: three males and two females at Nogatsaa, Chobe National Park, on 5 December 1998; fourth accepted record. **Red-headed Quelea** *Quelea erythrops*: small flocks [illegible] February–April 1999 [illegible], north Botswana (*all* per *CBr*).

Burkina Faso

Two new species for the country were recorded in the extreme north-east in [illegible]. **Kordofan Bush Lark** *Mirafra cordofanica* was discovered [illegible]; the first for this species. Two groups of **Desert Larks** *Ammomanes deserti* with a probable juvenile were found near Markoye on 18th; the birds were much darker than the nearest known subspecies and apparently constitute a hitherto undescribed form (*JB*, *GO*, *PO*).

Cameroon

A leucistic **White-chinned Prinia** *Schistolais leucopogon* was found in the company of normal individuals near Yaounde on 9 November; the bird was entirely white with contrasting dark bill and eyes (*KYN*). Further research on the distribution of the endemic **Bamenda Apalis** *Apalis bamendae*, carried out by the Cameroon Important Birds Areas Project in June, found the species at 14 new localities. A **Black-collared Apalis** *Apalis pulchra* was observed at Nkambe, north of Oku, at 1,200 m, apparently the lowest altitude for this species ever to be recorded (*ML*).

Canary Islands

Two **Red-billed Tropicbirds** *Phaethon aethereus* were seen at Caleta de Fustes, Fuerteventura, on 25 March. Records from Tejina Ponds, Tenerife, during 10 to 21 April included

a **Great Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris*, a **Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*, 16 **Black-crowned Night Herons** *Nycticorax nycticorax*, two **Squacco Herons** *Ardeola ralloides* still there on 2 May, with three more at Adeje Reservoir, also on Tenerife, on 18 May), a **Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*, a **Little Crake** *Porzana parva*, two **Baillon's Crakes** *P. pusilla*, and at least five **Spotted Crakes** *P. porzana*. **Ruddy Shelducks** *Tadorna ferruginea* bred at Embalse de Los Molinos and Rosa de Catalina Garcia on Fuerteventura. The fifth **Short-toed Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus* for the islands was seen at Monte del Agua, Tenerife, on 7 April. An immature **Bonelli's Eagle** *Hieraaetus fasciatus* was at the same site on 17 April (approximately the fifth record and first for Tenerife); the Bonelli's Eagle first seen on El Hierro on 3 March remained until at least 18 March, and a second was there on 6 March. Ninety **Stone Curlews** *Burhinus oedicnemus* were counted at Embalse de los Molinos, Fuerteventura, on 7 September. On Tenerife, single **American Golden Plovers** *Pluvialis dominica* were at Las Galletas on 12–17 April and at Amarilla Golf Course on 14 September. Juvenile **Pectoral Sandpipers** *Calidris melanotos* were recorded at Fraile Reservoir on 14–15 September, at Valle Molina reservoir on 20 September, with two there on 22 September, and two more at Golf del Sur on 17 September. A juvenile **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** *Tryngites subruficollis* was at Fraile Reservoir on 14–15 September and, presumably the same, at Amarilla Golf Course on 17 September. A **Roseate Tern** *Sterna dougallii* was at Las Galletas on 8 April. The first **Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava* of the race *feldegg* (sometimes treated as a separate species, **Black-headed Wagtail**) for the islands was found on Lanzarote in mid-April. Two **Brown-throated Sand Martins** *Riparia paludicola* were seen at Puerto del Carmen, Lanzarote, on 17–18 June (all *TC & EGR* per *Birding World* 12: 192, 230, 363).

Cape Verde Islands

About five **Leach's Storm-petrels** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* flew north between Sal and São Nicolau, on 4 March; although probably a not uncommon winter visitor in Cape Verde seas, this species is only rarely reported. An adult **Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* was at São Vicente sewage farm on 31 January–8 February and another adult was at Sal Rei, Boavista, on 24 February. The first **Western Reef Egret** *Egretta gularis* for Raso was found on 5 March; other records, from Boavista, include one at Ribeira do Ervatão on 10 October 1998, one at Rabil lagoon on 5 November 1998, and one near Curral Velho on 21 February. Five **Intermediate Egrets** *Egretta intermedia* were at the mouth of Ribeira da Torre, Santo Antão, on 13 April, and again five (presumably the same birds) between Ribeira da Garca and Cha da Igreja the next day. The claim of the **Great Egret** *Egretta alba* from Boavista on 9 March (cf. *Bull ABC* 6: 153) could not be accepted because the description and poor photograph did not exclude Intermediate Egret. No **Purple Herons** *Ardea purpurea* of the endangered endemic form *bournei* were present in the colonies at Boa Entrada and Bayuca, Santiago, during four visits in February–March, but one was seen in flight at Boa Entrada on 7 March. **Eurasian Spoonbills** *Platalea leucorodia* were recorded from São Vicente, Sal and Boavista. Five male and four female **Common Teals** *Anas crecca* stayed at the sewage farm, São Vicente, on 22–27 January.

The only report received of **Black Kites** *Milvus migrans* of the endangered endemic form *fasciicauda* was of a single in the Ribeira Grande area, Santo Antao, on 12 March. Female **Eurasian Marsh Harriers** *Circus aeruginosus* were seen at Ribeira do Paul, Santo Antao, on 1 February, Ribeira da Madama, Sal, on 30 September 1998 and near Santa Monica, Boavista, on 20 March. Records of the rare and vulnerable endemic form *madens* of **Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus* demonstrate that it occurs in small numbers throughout the archipelago. A **Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* was at Porto Grande, Sao Vicente, and two were there on 19 January–14 March, with one still present on 19 April. **Pied Avocets** *Recurvirostra avosetta* were reported from São Vicente (two, 31 January), Sal (one, 8 October 1998) and Boavista (one, February). A **Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii* at Rabil lagoon, Boavista, on 16 March, constitutes the second record for the Cape Verdes. Single **Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* were at Ribeira da Madama, Sal, on 13–17 October 1998, and at Ribeira do Rabil, Boavista, on 31 October 1998. A **Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata* was at Ponta do Sol, Santo Antão, on 1 February, and another at Raso on 21 April. A **Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* was at Rabil lagoon, Boavista, on 20 March. The first **Lesser Yellowlegs** *T. flavipes* for the Cape Verdes was photographed on the south-east coast of Boavista on 17–21 March 1999. Single **Green Sandpipers** *T. ochropus* were recorded at the São Vicente sewage farm on 8 February, and at Ribeira do Ervatão, Boavista, on 10 October 1998. The first **Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularia* for the archipelago was still present at the São Vicente sewage farm on 1–2 March. An immature **Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus cachinnans* was at Porto Grande, São Vicente, on 19 January, and one was at the sewage farm on 20 April. The first **Roseate Tern** *Sterna dougallii* for the Cape Verdes was picked up in exhausted condition on the beach at Santa Maria, Sal, on 11 April 1998, and was released after photographs were taken. A **Little Tern** *Sterna albifrons* was at Rabil lagoon, Boavista, on 9 March. A **European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur* was at Ribeira do Rabil, Boavista, on 1 October 1998. The discovery of an adult **Hoopoe Lark** *Alaemon alaudipes* feeding two young in the nest on Sal, on 27 October 1998 provides the first proof of breeding on the island. The first **Bar-tailed Larks** *Ammomanes cinctura* for Brava were recorded on 13 February. A flock of c25 **Black-crowned Sparrow-Larks** *Eremopterix nigriceps* was found near Palhal, Brava, on 13 February; birds seen singing and displaying on Sal on 28–29 October 1998 constitute the first indication of breeding on this island. Records of **Common Sand Martins** *Riparia riparia* include one at the São Vicente sewage farm on 8 February, two north of Santa Maria, Sal, on 1 October 1998, and another there on 21 April. A **Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica* was also there on 24 March. A **Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava* was photographed at the same locality on 17–19 October 1998. One or two **White Wagtails** *Motacilla alba* were at the São Vicente sewage farm on 22–31 January, and one stayed at Santa Maria on 28–29 October 1998.

The first **Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros* for the Cape Verdes was a male at Santa Maria, Sal, on 29 October 1998. The second

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*, also a male, was at the same locality on 16 October 1998. The first **Whinchats** *Saxicola rubetra* were found at Terra Boa, Sal, and just north of there on 30 September 1998. Singing **Blackcaps** *Sylvia atricapilla* observed at Boavista indicate that a small breeding population now exists on the island. **Spotted Flycatchers** *Muscicapa striata* were sighted at Terra Boa, Sal, on 30 September 1998, and at Palmeira, on 17 October 1998. At least one pair of **Village Weavers** *Ploceus cucullatus* was seen at Mindelo, Sao Vicente, on 17 April; a small population appears to have become established on the island; this species presumably arrived ship-assisted, although deliberate introduction cannot be excluded (*all* per *CJH*).

Black-headed Bee-eater *Merops breweri* by Mark Andrews

Côte d'Ivoire

A survey undertaken in Marahoué National Park in early 1998 discovered the first **Black-headed Bee-eater** *Merops breweri* for the country. Firsts for the park included **Black-headed Rufous Warbler** *Bathmocercus cerviniventris* and **Nimba Flycatcher** *Melaenornis annamarulae* (*PCy & TS* per *LF*).

An immature **European Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* was noted at Bouaké, on 25 October 1998; this species is infrequently recorded in the country. An adult and a juvenile **Red-chested Swallow** *Hirundo lucida* seen at Grand Bassam on 28 November 1998 constitute the southernmost record for Côte d'Ivoire (*GM*).

In 1999, a black morph **Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* was claimed from Comoé National Park on 23–24 March. Up to 11 adult **Yellow-billed Storks** *Mycteria ibis* were found at the country's only known breeding colony in Comoe National Park, in February–March. On 11 March, a **Marabou Stork** *Leptoptilos crumeniferus* was on one of the nests; on the next visit, on 25 March, the colony was deserted. Two or three **Pallid Swifts** *Apus pallidus* were north of Bouaké on 28 March and more than 10 in a huge flock of Common Swifts *A. apus* in Comoe National Park, on 11 April. Also in the Comoe, 3–5 **Grey-rumped Swallows** *Pseudhirundo griseopyga* were found in a huge flock of Red-chested Swallows *Hirundo lucida* on 21 April; there appear to be only two published observations of this species for the country. Two **Sedge Warblers** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* observed in the Park on 8 February adds further weight to the suggestion that the species is probably a regular migrant to the country (*LS*).

Egypt

A **Great Snipe** *Gallinago media* was at Lake Qarun on 8 March 1998; the species is a scarce spring migrant through the country (*GK* per *Sandgrouse* 21: 100).

Ethiopia

Two **Spectacled Warblers** *Sylvia conspicillata* south of the hotel at Lake Langano on 16 October 1996; two immature **Subalpine Warblers** *S. cantillans* seen in good light in the same area the next day, and several **Cretzschmar's Buntings** *Emberiza caesia* associating with Ortolan Buntings *E. hortulana* on the western edge of Lake Chelekleka on 16 March 1997, would appear to constitute first records of these species for Ethiopia (*RC & MW*).

Black Swift *Apus barbatus slatteni* by Mark Andrews

Gabon

Two **Broad-billed Sandpipers** *Limicola falcinellus* were at the mouth of the Moka River on 3 September. A **Brown Nightjar** *Caprimulgus fossii* was heard along the Libermidia River, 35 km from Makokou, on 27 August. Good views were obtained of two **Fiery-necked Nightjars** *C. pectoralis* at Lekoni on 31 August; this species was discovered in Gabon only in 1998 (*Bull ABC* 6: 160). At least one **African Black Swift** *Apus barbatus* was in the company of Horus Swifts *A. horus* near Bongoville on 1 September; the race could not be ascertained but probably was *sladeniae*, the form known from Angola to Cameroon and Bioko and sometimes considered a separate species, Fernando Po Swift. A **Willcocks's Honeyguide** *Indicator willcocksi* was along the Belinga road on 25 August. A pair of **Red-chested Swallows** *Hirunda lucida* appeared to be breeding in an arboreal Ndjole on 20 August; this constitutes a range extension for this species only recently discovered in Gabon. A **Black-throated Apalis** *Apalis jacksoni* was heard en route to Bokaboka and another a male at Bokaboka on 26 August; these would constitute the second and third records for the country, the first having been made in the same area in 1993 (cf. *Malimbus* 17: 28). Two separate **Red-capped Crombecs** *Sylvietta ruficapilla* were found at Lekoni on 30 August and 1 September; these would constitute the third and fourth records for Gabon. A pair of **Sousa's Shrike** *Lanius souzae* with two juveniles in the nest were also at Lekoni on 30 August; this species is rarely recorded in Gabon, where it is at the edge of its range. At least three **Perrin's Bush Shrikes** *Malaconotus viridis* were in the same area on 2 September (*AB*).

The Gambia

Notable records from November 1998 include an immature **Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus* and a **European Griffon Vulture** *Gyps fulvus* between Georgetown and Basse on 30th, a **Steppe Eagle** *Aquila nipalensis* at Mandinata on 27th, a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** *Tryngites subruficollis* at Kauur on 29th; all were photographed. Photographs were also taken of the first **Black-bellied Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna autumnalis* for Africa (erroneously named *D. arborea* in *Bull ABC* 6: 154).

at Kotu sewage ponds on 3 December and of the **Black-shouldered Nightjar** *Caprimulgus nigriscapularis* seen at Tunku Bolon on 29 November and 3 December (*SA, AMK, DP, JS*).

A BirdLife Austria trip on 6–21 December 1998 produced the following interesting records. Nine **Northern Gannet** *Sula bassana* were seen off the coast at Tanji on 15th. A **Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus* at Bund Road, Banjul on 19th was the first there for at least five years. The seventh record of **White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia* for the country was a bird near Soma on 10th. A pair of **African Pygmy Geese** *Nettapus auritus* with eight chicks was found near Kuntaur on 10th. No less than 35 species of birds of prey were seen, the highlight being an adult **Ayres' Hawk Eagle** *Hieraaetus ayresii* on the main road 75 km south east of Banjul on 9th, the seventh record for The Gambia. The first **Little Crake** *Porzana parva* for The Gambia was found near Sapu on 11th (see pp 51–52). An adult **Kelp Gull** *Larus dominicanus* at Banjul on 7th was the first acceptable record away from Tanji, on the same day two first-winter **Yellow-legged Gulls** *Larus cachinnans* were also at Banjul. An **African Collared Dove** *Streptopelia roseogrisea* was at Yundum on 17th. A late **White-rumped Swift** *Apus caffer* flew by west of Belel on 10th. A **Northern Anteater Chat** *Myrmecocichla aethiops* at Ker Serigne on 16th was only the second modern record of this species for the Western Division (*CB, MC, AR, GT*).

A **Pel's Fishing Owl** *Scotopelia peli* was at Tendaba on 13 December 1998 (*AB*). A **Brown-necked Raven** *Corvus ruficollis* was photographed at Banjul on 25 May and stayed for c2 weeks (*MPW*).

Ghana

During the World Birdwatch on 3 October, the Ghana Wildlife Society and the Wildlife Clubs of Ghana recorded 150 species; amongst these were 164 **Roseate Terns** *Sterna dougallii* at Muni Lagoon (*JSs*).

Kenya

A pair of **Baillon's Crake** *Porzana pusilla* with four fluffy young was seen at Thika on 6 June. A **Wahlberg's Honeybird** *Prodotiscus regulus* at Buffalo Springs on 9 June appears to be just outside its known range. A **Somali Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella somalica* and a **Southern Grosbeak Canary** *Serinus buchanani* on the Narok plains on 20 June were also away from their main range (*NB*).

An adult **Heuglin's (Red-breasted) Wheatear** *Oenanthe (bottae) benglini* was discovered at Kapedo, c100 km north of Lake Baringo, on 13 August; this species is known only from extreme north-west Kenya, with vagrants recorded from Lake Turkana and Kisumu. Also there were one male and two female **House Sparrows** *Passer domesticus indicus*; this represents a considerable further range extension (*NR*).

Madagascar

An adult **Thick-billed Cuckoo** *Pachycoccyx audeberti* seen at Isalo National Park on 1 August constitutes the first definite record of this very rare bird away from the eastern humid forests; there are, however, similar unreported sightings (C. Hawkins pers. comm.). An exceptionally early adult **Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* was seen at Bedo, near Kirindy, on 18 September. In Andramomena Special Reserve, a **Western Tylas Vanga** *Tylas (eduardi) albigularis*, one of the rarest western forest birds, was seen on 12 September (*RHD & HDH*).

Madeira

Records from mid-May include 66 **Bulwer's Petrels** *Bulweria bulwerii* seen from the Porto Santo–Funchal ferry on 13th, two **Little Egrets** *Egretta garzetta* at Funchal on 11th, and two **Pallid Swifts** *Apus pallidus* among 150 **Plain Swifts** *A. unicolor* at Funchal on 15th (*JSt* per *Birding World* 12: 230).

During a cruise between the Selvagens, Madeira and Tenerife, from 26 July to 6 August, six **Fea's Petrels** *Pterodroma feae* were observed near the Desertas breeding site and about four **Zino's Petrels** *P. madeira* were heard at night at their breeding site on Madeira (*EGR* per *Birding World* 12: 314).

Soft-plumaged Petrel *Pterodroma mollis* by Ian Lewington

Mauritania

Two **Purple Swamphen** *Porphyrio porphyrio* were seen near Rosso on 9 March; this species does not figure on Dowsett's (1993) list, although it is considered to be relatively common in the extreme south of the country by Lamarche (1988, Liste commentée des oiseaux de Mauritanie. *Etud. Sahariennes Ouest-Afr.* 1(1): 1–164); other observers (Bengtsson 1997, *Malimbus* 19: 96–96) have also reported it more recently. A **Zebra Waxbill** *Amandava subflava* noted at Rosso the next day appears to constitute the first record for the country; it is known to occur on the other side of the Sénégal River, in northern Sénégal (*GM*).

Morocco

In April, at least one **Houbara Bustard** *Chlamydotis undulata* was seen at the Tagdilt Track on 22nd. Two adult **Audouin's Gulls** *Larus audouinii* (with 180 **Ruddy Shelducks** *Tadorna ferruginea* and 161 **Marbled Ducks** *Marmaronetta angustirostris*) were at El Mansour Lake, Ouarzazate, 260 km inland, on 18th (the species was also noted at this locality in April 1997; these are the only inland records for Morocco; *Dutch Birding* 21: 174). A first-summer **Ring-billed Gull** *Larus delawarensis* was at Essouira on 29th. At Oued Souss estuary, an adult and a first-summer **Common Gull** *L. canus* were observed on 25–29th, and three adult **Roseate Terns** *Sterna dougallii* on 27th. Two **Lesser Crested Terns** *S. bengalensis* were at Oued Massa on 25th. A summer-plumaged **Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus* was found at Oued Souss on 25–28th. At least one male **Desert Warbler** *Sylvia nana* was singing just north of Merzouga on 21st. Finally, 35 **Brown-necked Ravens** *Corvus ruficollis* were counted at Merzouga on 20th (*HD & MMK* per *Birding World* 12: 192).

In May, the second **American Golden Plover** *Pluvialis dominica* for Morocco was at Oued Souss estuary on 16–17th. Also there were seven **Slender-billed Gulls** *Larus genei* on 2nd, two **Little Gulls** *L. minutus* and two **Common Gulls** *L. canus* throughout the month, 14 **Lesser**

Crested Terns *Sterna bengalensis* on 15th, and a **White-winged Black Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus* on four dates. At Oued Massa, 16 **Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus*, three of which were ringed at Coto Donana, Spain, were recorded, as well as 60 **Marbled Teal** *Marmaronetta angustirostris*, and three **White-winged Black Terns** *Chlidonias leucopterus* on 23rd (*CB*).

The **Northern Bald Ibis** *Geronticus eremita* population produced more fledglings than in any of the previous five years (*CB*).

Notable records from September include the following. Three males and a female **White-headed Duck** *Oxyura leucocephala* at Douyiet, near Fès, on 20th and 28th. A juvenile **Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos* at Bas-Loukkos marshes, Larache, on 17th is the eighth record for Morocco. An adult **White-rumped Sandpiper** *C. fuscicollis* in winter plumage was at Barrage de Idriss Premier on 21st. Sixteen **Black-crowned Sparrow-Larks** *Eremopterix nigriceps* were found in Oued Jenna near Asswerd in Western Sahara on 8th, c. 180 km north of the Mauritanian border, on 8th (*VS*).

Nigeria

A **Grey-headed Bristlebill** *Bleda canicapilla* and a female **Buff-throated Apalis** *Apalis rufogularis* were in remnant forest in the Ayu Hills, Kaduna State, on 25 September. For both species, this appears to be only the second site in northern Nigeria after Kagoro, c30 km to the north-west, on the southern slopes of the Jos Plateau (*MH*).

São Tomé & Príncipe

A **Black-bellied Storm-petrel** *Fregetta tropica* was seen between the Tinhosas and Príncipe on 17 July. At least two **Madeiran Storm-petrels** *Oceanodroma castro* were seen from the Lagôa Azul lighthouse, north-west São Tomé, on 15 July, and three on 25 July. An adult **Masked Booby** *Sula dactylatra* was on Tinhosa Grande on 20 July. A **Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*, a rare migrant to the archipelago, flew to a roost on Príncipe with some **Western Reef Egrets** *Egretta gularis* on 19 July. Three immature **Pomarine Skuas** *Stercorarius pomarinus* were observed for several hours from the Lagôa Azul lighthouse on 25 July (*VS & GW*). The first **African Pygmy Goose** *Nettapus auritus* for the archipelago was seen at Micolo, on the north coast of São Tomé, on 15 July (*PR*).

Sénégal

In January–February, several groups of **White Storks** *Ciconia ciconia* were observed near Toubakouta, just north west of The Gambia, with a flock of 52 mostly adults, on 8 and 13 January; this species is recorded mostly from the Senegal delta and flocks of this size have become exceptional. A colony of several thousand pairs of **Red-headed Quelcas** *Quelea erythrops* was found in the wet valley of the Dikoveur in the same area, in July–September 1998, although the species was previously only recorded in small groups in the southern part of the country. This large colony appears to have become established in the 1970s, but disappeared in the years when no millet was planted (*BA*).

Seychelles

The **Long-tailed Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax africanus* that arrived at Aldabra on 26 January and was the first for the Seychelles (cf. *Bull ABC* 6: 150) was subsequently joined by others, and by 8 June there were at least 30 present. Speculation that this might be the first stage of a natural colonisation was crushed by a decline thereafter, the last sighting of a single bird, being on 31 August. Meanwhile in the granitic islands, a Long-tailed Cormorant took up residence in the main Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* colony of Seychelles on Hodoul Island; it was first sighted on 28 July and was still present at the end of October. A **Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*, present at Picard, Aldabra, on 14–18 October at least, was the second record for Seychelles and the first for the nominate race (the previous record being *africana*). A flock of 11 **Wattled Starlings** *Creatophora cinerea* at Picard, Aldabra was the third report for Seychelles (*AS*).

Socotra

In May, the first two breeding colonies known for **Jouanin's Petrel** *Bulweria fallax* were located on Socotra, and a singing **Hume's Owl** *Strix butleri* was found at Sho'ab on 23rd (*PS* per *Dutch Birding* 21: 227–230).

South Africa

A **Little Shearwater** *Puffinus assimilis* was picked up from the beach at St Francis Bay, Eastern Cape, on 12 March; the bird, which died later that day, was preserved as a skin and proved to be of the subspecies *elegans*, a Southern Hemisphere breeder and a very rare non-breeding visitor to the seas off the Cape's south and west coasts (*CL* per *Africa—Birds & Birding* 4 (4): 24). A **Bush Blackcap** *Leptopsis nigricapillus* stayed in a Johannesburg garden in June 1998, c300 km away from its normal range and habitat of mistbelt and montane forest (*GS* per *Africa—Birds & Birding* 4 (4): 29).

Uganda

Four **Nahan's Francolins** *Francolinus nahani* were seen together in Bradonga Forest on 28 July; another two were found in Mabira Forest on 10 August. An immature **Brown-chested Plover** *Vanellus superciliosus* was at Kajansi fish farm on 23 July and two non-breeding adults in Queen Elisabeth National Park on 2 August. Excellent views of a pair of **White-naped Pigeons** *Columba albinucha* were obtained in Kibale Forest on 31 July. A **Rufous-crowned Roller** *Coracias naevia* found near Buhoma on 6 August would appear to be an unusual record for the area. Two adult **Green Broadbills** *Pseudocalyptomena graueri* with a juvenile were at Ruhija on 7 August. A pair of **Puvel's Illadopsis** *Illadopsis puveli* with at least one juvenile was observed at Kanyo Pabidi on 25 July. Also there was a **Black-eared Ground Thrush** *Zoothera camaronensis*. A singing **Kivu Ground Thrush** *Zoothera tanganjicae* (treated as conspecific with Abyssinian Ground Thrush *Z. piaggiae* in *BoA*) was heard at Buhoma on 4 August and another was near Ruhija on 8 August. Three pairs of **Chapin's Flycatcher** *Muscicapa lendu* were found at Buhoma on 5

Green Broadbill *Pseudocalyptomena graueri* by Mark Andrews

August and their undescribed song recorded. A male **Ituri Batis** *Batis ituriensis* was in the canopy in Budongo on 28 July (*NB*).

Zambia

Highlights from the period January–June 1999 include the following. In January large numbers of **Allen's Gallinules** *Porphyrio alleni* were present including c100 at Huntley Farm in Chisamba. A **Lesser Grey Shrike** *Lanius minor* there at the end of the month was a late bird. Three **Denham's Bustards** *Neotis denhami* were at Ndola airport on 10th and in Kitwe there were four **Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* at Mindolo Dam on 17th and 5–6 on 23rd at Macadamia Fish Farm where there was also a **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*. In Lochinvar National Park several **Streaky-breasted Flufftails** *Sarothrura boehmi*, four **Corncrakes** *Crex crex*, 10 **Black-winged Pratincoles** *Glareola nordmanni*, 269 **Wattled Cranes** *Bugeranus carunculatus* and an **Olive-tree Warbler** *Hippolais olivetorum* were seen and a **Dwarf Bittern** *Ixobrychus sturmii* nest was found. In Choma were regular **Streaky-breasted Flufftails** *Sarothrura boehmi*, a **Corncrake** *Crex crex*, a **River Warbler** *Locustella fluviatilis* and, perhaps most unexpected, an immature **Western Banded Snake-Eagle** *Circaetus cinerascens*. In Kafue were a **Pied Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta* and a **Striped Crake** *Aenigmatolimnas marginalis*, and in the Luangwa Valley a single **Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata*.

In February another **Corncrake** *Crex crex* and a **Slaty Egret** *Egretta vinaceigula* were found on 22nd near Livingstone, and regular **Streaky-breasted Flufftails** *Sarothrura boehmi* were still in Choma, along with **Collared Flycatchers** *Ficedula albicollis* and **European Reed Warblers** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*. In the Luangwa Valley 1,000 **Abdim's Storks** *Ciconia abdimii* drifted north on 21st and **Cardinal Quelea** *Quelea cardinalis* were seen on 9th. In March, **European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus*, **Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus* and **European Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus* were all seen around Mongu and another **European Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus* was in Lusaka on 7th. A singing **River Warbler** *Locustella fluviatilis* was near Mazabuka on 20th.

River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis* by Mark Andrews

In April, an **African Emerald Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx cupreus* was found in a **Common Bulbul** *Pycnonotus barbatus* nest near Livingstone at the beginning of the month. In Choma, a singing male **Green Indigobird** *Vidua codringtoni* was found on 10th and was seen regularly for the next few weeks. Species found on the Matabele Plain on 20th included **Slaty Egret** *Egretta vinaceigula*, **Black-rumped Buttonquail** *Turnix hottentotta*, **Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*, **Greater Kestrel** *Falco rupicoloides*, **White-bellied Bustard** *Eupodotis senegalensis* and several species of larks including the endemic subspecies *barti* of **Pink-billed Lark** *Spizocorys conirostris*. Near Simungoma both **Tit-babblers** *Parisoma subcaeruleum* and **Scaly-feathered Finches** *Sporopipes squamifrons* were found in significant numbers and showed signs of breeding. In the north, several pairs of **Margaret's Batis** *Batis margaritae* were found near Kabompo Gorge.

In May, Zambia's fourth **Kori Bustard** *Ardeotis kori* was near Livingstone on 28th. In the Luapula valley common birds included **Angola Swallows** *Hirundo angolensis*, which were preparing to breed, and **Madagascar Bee-eaters** *Merops superciliosus* that were migrating north. In June, **Fischer's Sparrow-Larks** *Eremopterix leucopareia* were seen in Eastern Province and late migrants included **Red-capped Robin-Chats** *Cossypha natalensis* in Lower Zambezi National Park and **Woodland Kingfishers** *Halcyon senegalensis* in South Luangwa National Park where a **Palm-nut Vulture** *Gypohierax angolensis* was found in the Manzi area (*all* per *PL*).

Zimbabwe

Over 2,000 **Collared Pratincoles** *Glareola pratincola* were found at a single roost on a small island near the eastern border of Mana Pools National Park in May; although the species is common in the Zambezi Valley, this appears to be an unusually large flock (*BR* per *Africa—Birds & Birding* 4 (4): 20).

Records were collated by Ron Demey from contributions supplied by Stephen Andrews (SA), Ashley Banwell (AB), Clive Barlow (CB), Mark Bolton (MB), Nik Borrow Birdquest (NB), Chris Bowden (CB), Chris Brewster (CBr), Patrice Christy (PCy), Tony Clarke/ Canarian Nature Tours (TC), Pascale Compaoré (PC), Richard Coomber (RC), Markus Craig (MC), Robert J. Dowsett (RJD), Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire (FDL), Hugues Dufourny (HD), Lincoln Fishpool (LF), Cornelis J. Hazevoet (CJH), Mark Hopkins (MH), Guy Kirwan (GK), Marc Languy/ Cameroon IBA Project (ML), Pete Leonard (PL), Alistair McKay (AMK), Michael McKee (MMK), Guy Manners (GM), Babacar Ndao (BN), Kevin Yana Njabo/Cameroon IBA Project (KYN), Georges Oneda (GO), Dominic Pia (DP), Andreas Ranner (AR), Nigel Redman Birdquest (NR), Eduardo Garcia del Rey/Ares Ecotours (EGR), Peter Roberts (PR), Brendan Ryan (BR), Volker Salewski (VSl), Valéry Schollaert (VS), Tom Schulenberg (TS), Gavin Selfe (GS), John Silvester (JS), Jez Simms (JSs), Adrian Skerrett (AS), John Smart (JSt), Peter Symens (PS), Graham Tebb (GT), Colin Urquhart (CU), Gilles Willem (GW), Martyn Philip Wilson (MPW), Mike Witherick (MW) and from Birding World, Dutch Birding, Sandgrouse *and* Africa—Birds & Birding.

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Reviews

Ethiopia. In search of endemic birds

Julian E. Francis and Hadoram Shirihai. 1999. 46 pp + 24 pp of colour photographs. J. E. Francis, 65 Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1HS. ISBN 0 9534762 0 1. UK£10.00 (including postage).

Although the title might suggest a 'where-to-watch' guide, this new publication is actually a trip report, covering the period 6 September–2 October 1997. The authors recorded an impressive 490 species, just over 60% of the 805 species known from Ethiopia (*sensu stricto*, i.e. after Eritrea's independence in 1993). Of these, 16 are endemic to Ethiopia, with perhaps another still to be described ('Ethiopian Cliff Swallow' from the Awash River gorge waterfall area). For the present report, however, all of the c35 Abyssinian endemics (including Eritrea, but excluding Djibouti Francolin *Francolinus ochropectus*) are considered. As a birding country, Ethiopia has remained relatively unknown. The country's avifauna faces many threats and many sites are in urgent need of protection (see S Tilahun *et al* (1996) *Important Bird Areas of Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: EWNHS). Work is in progress on an atlas for both Ethiopia and Eritrea, for which all visitors are requested to submit their records, either to John Ash (Godshill Wood, Fordingbridge, Hants SP6 2LR, UK) or John Atkins (c/o FCA (Addis Ababa), King Charles Street, London SW1A 2AU, UK).

Francis & Shirihai's report opens with a seven-page introductory text, covering trip details, general information on the country and its (endemic) birds and several up-to-date practical tips. Most of these are very useful, but information on the necessary paperwork (visas, international airport departure taxes, etc.) is rather brief. Nothing is said concerning the huge crocodiles along the northern shore of Lake Chamo, no hotel addresses are given, and *tej* (the local honey brew), *injera* (huge bread-like mats) and *wat* (spicey stews) remain unexplained.

The itinerary covers 4.5 pages, listing the 10 main areas visited with the most important bird species recorded at each. It also highlights the most interesting records for most of the days spent birdwatching.

The main list covers all bird species recorded during the trip (numbered 1–490), listed according to van Perlo's sequence (*Collins Illustrated Checklist of the Birds of Eastern Africa*, 1995). It therefore commences with Secretarybird *Sagittarius serpentarius*, followed by the grebes, herons, etc., and thus includes the odd sequence *Vidua fraseginthus–Estrilda–Fraseginthus–Vidua* on p. 38. For most species only list number, English and scientific name and dates recorded are given, but all endemics as well as 15 other species of special interest (including some not seen by the authors) receive c10 (occasionally up to 35) lines of text. Peculiar omissions, however, are the Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* and the red-billed Emeated Pytilia *Pytilia afra (phoenicoptera) lineata* from the Blue Nile Lake Tana region. Subspecies are only mentioned in a few cases and therefore it remains unclear if the short-toed larks in the Jemmu Valley were Erlanger's Lark *Calandrella erlangeri* (separated from *C. cinerea* by Sibley & Monroe, *Distribution and Taxonomy of Birds of the World*, 1990, p. 653).

The 50 colour photographs are excellent without exception (as usual from Shirihai) and illustrate 45 different species, including 19 of the c35 endemics. Unfortunately, the printing quality is below par and not all endemics are shown (e.g. Yellow-fronted Parrot *Poicephalus flavifrons*, Abyssinian Woodpecker *Dendropicos abyssinicus* and White-billed Starling *Onychognathus albirostris*), which I would have preferred over the well-known African Fish-Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*, Kori Bustard *Ardeotis kori*, Abyssinian Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus abyssinicus* and Carmine Bee-eater *Merops nubicus*. Nevertheless, it contains unique shots of Salvadori's *Serinus xantholaemus* and Ankober Serin *S. ankoberensis* and beautiful portraits of five different lark species, Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* and African Harrier-Hawk *Polyboroides typus*.

Furthermore, a full colour map of the southern part of Ethiopia is included, covering the entire trip route and including most (but not all) sites mentioned in the text, as well as altitudes, roads, rivers, lakes and National Parks. The booklet closes with a two page appendix detailing the identification of Degodi *Mirafra degodiensis*, Gillett's *M. gilletti* and Sidamo Larks *Heteromirafra sidamoensis*, another two pages listing the 51 species of mammals recorded and a limited bibliography. However, a dated line illustrating the authors' route and a gazetteer would have been helpful, but after all, this is not a detailed site guide but only a travel report, albeit an excellent and exemplary one, and a must for everyone visiting this magnificent and inviting country.

Oscar van Rootselaar

A Field Guide to Zambian Birds not found in southern Africa

Dylan Aspinwall and Carl Beel. Zambian Ornithological Society, Lusaka. 1998. 106 pp. 24 colour plates and many distribution maps. No price provided.

This small book aims to provide information concerning those species of birds occurring in Zambia that are not covered in the various field guides to southern Africa. A brief introduction describes the country and its habitats, and provides two maps, one portraying towns and infrastructure and the other physical features, notably swamps and rivers, and protected areas for wildlife. The rest of the book is divided into three parts. Part 1 consists of the maps, short texts and colour illustrations for 118 species on a Zambian list prepared in 1987 by Bob Dowsett, that were not included in *Roberts' Birds of southern Africa* (fifth edition). The texts for each species are succinct, covering each species' size, how it differs from closely related and similar species, its preferred habitat, voice and abundance. The maps,which present data (based on 30' squares) gathered in the on-going Zambian Atlas Project, are especially helpful.

Part 2 is the texts and maps, but no illustrations, for a further 18 species. These have been included for a variety of reasons, often because the race in Zambia is regarded by some taxonomists as a separate species (eg the long-tailed race of Neddicky *Cisticola fulvicapilla*), or because the species has not been admitted to, or may be excluded from, the southern African list. Some recent additions to the Zambian list are also included. Throughout Parts 1 and 2, species are cross-referenced to Roberts' numbers (sixth edition) and or to numbers in the relevant volume of Mackworth-Praed & Grant. Page numbers in *Birds of Africa* are also given for those species already covered by the five published volumes. Part 3 is a checklist of the birds of Zambia with rather cumbersome but useful coding for occurrence, status, abundance, detectability, habitat and distribution. Repeated use of the codes should help users of the guide, but with 65 codes (37 for habitats alone) to chose from you will require a remarkable memory!

The illustrations in Part 1, by Gabriel Ellison, add to the book's attractions but she has had a difficult array of species to paint and some pages inevitably have a curious mix of species—one page covers a cuckoo-shrike, a longclaw and three species of swallow. I found the illustrations generally rather stiff and old-fashioned, perhaps because they were painted from museum specimens. The shape and posture of many birds are not quite right, so the jizz of many of her subjects has not really been captured. Grimwood's Longclaw *Macronyx grimwoodi* is for example, depicted in a strange hunched attitude rather than the typical upright posture of a longclaw. Despite these criticisms, the careful detail of plumage and eye colour will assist identication.

Although largely completed before the untimely death of the senior author, efforts have been made by the second author and members of the Zambian Ornithological Society to make the lists as complete and up-to-date as possible. Two recent discoveries in Zambia, the Lake Tanganyika Weaver *Ploceus reichardi* and White-winged Swamp-Warbler *Bradypterus carpalis*[1], are both included in Part 2. However, the inclusion of Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* and Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan* on the Zambian list, were too late for publication. One species in Part 2, Brown-chested Wattled Plover *Vanellus superciliosus*, has now been deleted from the Zambian list, while several species in Parts 1 and 2, eg Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*, previously unknown south of the Zambezi, have now been recorded in South Africa.

In the absence of a current guide on the birds of Zambia, this book is a must for any birdwatcher resident in, or visiting, Zambia. Armed with Newman's or the SASOL *Guide to the Birds of southern Africa* as well as this one, he she should be able to identify virtually all the species likely to be seen in that country.

Reference

1 Leonard, P. & Beel, C. 1999. Two new resident birds in northern Zambia. *Bull. ABC* 6: 56–57.

Stephanie J. Tyler

The Birds of Southeastern Madagascar

Steven M. Goodman, Mark Pidgeon, A. F. A Hawkins and Thomas S. Schulenberg. 1997. 132 pp, 19 black-and-white photographs. Fieldiana (Zoology) 87, Publication 1487. Available from Field Museum of Natural History, Library—Publications Division, Roosevelt Road at Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60605-2498, USA. US$40.

This excellent publication, printed on high-quality paper, part of the *Fieldiana* series of zoological contributions, should be required reading for those with a strong interest in the Malagasy avifauna. Following a number of introductory sections outlining the authors' study sites, their geology, climate, human impacts, habitat types, and the fieldwork methods and terminology employed, the main body of the report is reached. Accounts for 189 bird species known to occur in the area are presented. Data, much of which amplifies our current knowledge, on natural history, breeding biology, weights, soft-part colorations, diet and vocalisations, among other subjects, are included. The analysis and discussion section examines the following subjects 'General Overview of the Regional Avifauna', 'Relative Densities of Birds Based on Mist-netting', Elevational Distribution of Birds', Utilization of Sisal Plantations by Birds', 'Faunistics and Biogeography' and 'Conservation Problems in Southeastern Madagascar'. For those birding visitors to Madagascar whose interest goes beyond mere identification, this publication, despite the relatively high price, should be an essential purchase.

Guy M. Kirwan

Birds of Kenya and northern Tanzania

Dale A. Zimmerman, Donald A. Turner and David J. Pearson. 1999. 576 pp, 124 colour plates, many distribution maps. Helm (A. & C. Black), London, UK. UK£16.99.

This is a paperback field guide version of the highly acclaimed handbook written by the same authors and published under the same title in 1996. The earlier work was subject to a full review in *Bull. ABC* 4: 48–49. However, there are several key differences between the two that strongly justify ownership of both books. Most important is the fact that the new one is less than half the price of the old handbook and, at under 1kg, it is also less than half the weight, making it a much more portable and practical investment.

In order to accommodate the slimmer format, the species accounts and distribution maps have been necessarily cut by about a half, and all but the most essential features have been jettisoned from an original 50-page introductory section. Yet Dale Zimmerman's high-quality plates are intact, albeit at a reduced size, and if anything the colour reproduction is truer and the figures sharper.

For any birder interested in East Africa the parent book is a must. This new portable version is also a massive advance on anything previously available, and one would normally be tempted to suggest that it will be the standard work to the region for years to come. However this would be overlooking the fact that a long-awaited field guide to the birds of East Africa by Terry Stevenson and John Fanshawe is due in 2000. Since this forthcoming book covers all of the sub-region, including Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and southern Tanzania, and as sneak previews of the plates suggest a work of outstanding quality, birders without pressing needs and limited budgets may want to wait for the new title and then weigh up their options. What an extraordinary embarrassment of riches we birders now enjoy!

Mark Cocker

Birds of Somalia

J.S. Ash and J.E. Miskell, illustrations by M. Woodcock. Pica Press 1998. 336 pages, 5 plates, 24 black and white photographs, numerous maps. Hardback UK£40.

There can be few ABC members who have not, at one time or another, dreamt of visiting the Horn of Africa. Ongoing political problems continue to frustrate those of us keen to do so and this excellent book, a comprehensive follow-up to the authors' *Birds of Somalia, their habitat, status and distribution* will add to this frustration.

A short introduction sets the scene, providing a brief snapshot of the ornithological history of the country and setting out some of the difficulties facing the authors as they attempted to study the birds of the country. The accompanying map, showing the squares that have been visited, evidences their incredible achievement; of the 208 (259 cover the entire country) half-degree squares visited, the authors personally conducted fieldwork in no less than 161 of these, 62% of the total.

The introduction is followed by a series of colour plates featuring 26 endemic or near-endemic species and races, and a copy of the illustration of the endemic Warsangeli Linnet *Acanthis johannis* from the dusk jacket. Larks feature heavily in the illustrations, with 11 species being included, among which are such rarely illustrated species as Obbia Lark *Spizocorys obbiensis* and Archer's Lark *Heteromirafra archerii*. The illustrations of those species with which I am familiar appear accurate, but with many of the species covered being familiar in the field to few people other than the authors it is difficult to pass a wider judgement.

Three colour maps featuring topography, vegetation zones and geology and a series of eight introductory chapters follow the colour plates. The introductory chapters, including contributions from six additional authors, cover vegetation and soils, a historical review of ornithology in Somalia, geology, climate, bird and wildlife conservation, bird migration, breeding seasons and a review of the treatment of species. As expected, the introductory section is both readable and informative, providing an excellent insight into the subjects covered. The accounts are liberally sprinkled with a selection of photographs of habitats and ornithological pioneers in Somalia.

The General Treatment of Species section provides background information on the individual species accounts, including a summary of data, an explanation of the accompanying lists, order and nomenclature, status, distribution, habitat, topography and climate, sources of data and the format of species within the lists.

The individual species accounts—654 species in total—comprise the bulk of the book and provide information on all species recorded in the country up to the end of 1996. Each account includes a distribution map detailing sightings, specimens and breeding records, and a short text provides information on status, numbers occurring, range etc. This text, although necessarily concise, is informative and in many cases lists additional references providing more detailed information. The maps are supplemented by lists of species recorded offshore (six), species requiring confirmation (33 including, perhaps controversially, Buulo Burti Boubou *Laniarius liberatus*, which the authors do not consider to be a proven species), hybrids (two), species recorded in Somalia mapping squares, but within Kenya, Ethiopia or Djibouti (13) and endemics (seven).

Additional chapters cover Bird Ringing in Somalia, detailing the numbers of all species ringed in Somalia and recoveries, including birds from Germany, Iran and Ukraine, a glossary, a gazetteer, a summary of English and Italian names, and a map depicting the position of the main towns and villages. The gazetteer features 185 localities and includes the modern Somali name, either English or Italian names, geographical co-ordinates and the map square.

The book concludes with a bibliography listing 564 references and bears testimony to the amount of research undertaken by the authors, and an index listing both scientific and vernacular names. Although the £40 price tag may deter some potential purchasers, the authors and Pica Press should be congratulated on the production of an excellent book, which deserves a place on the bookshelves of anyone with an interest in African birds. Roll on the Ethiopian equivalent.

Richard Webb

Starlings and Mynas

C. Feare and A. Craig. Illustrated by B. Croucher, C. Shields and K. Komolphalin. 1998. 285 pp, 32 colour plates and many distribution maps. A & C Black, London, UK. UK£32.

This book makes a pleasing addition to the Helm Identification Series, following the by now well-established and well-known format of earlier volumes. It covers the 114 species of the family Sturnidae recognised by the authors, of which 51 (including introductions) are wholly or partially African in the sense that the word is used by this *Bulletin*, and to which the comments that follow are almost entirely restricted.

The first 30 or so introductory pages provide a concise review of aspects of the taxonomy, biogeography, ecology, behaviour and reproductive biology of the family, concluding with a section on the interactions between starlings and *Homo sapiens*. The longest of these sections ('The Starling Family') is devoted to a review of generic limits within the group and, importantly, presents a re-assessment by Adrian Craig of the African forms as a result of analyses by him and others of the structure of melanin granules in feathers, which are the cause, rather than pigments, of the wonderful iridescent colours shown by many species, as well as of skeletal characters. This review has subsequently appeared in more detail in *Ostrich*. A phylogenetic tree of relationships among the genera is proposed. The main novelties arising from this work are i) Sharpe's *Pholia sharpii* and Abbott's Starlings *P. femoralis* are transferred from *Cinnyricinclus* (which therefore retains only Amethyst Starling) to the genus *Pholia*; ii) Ashy Starling *Spreo unicolor* is moved to *Spreo* while the hitherto congeneric Golden-breasted Starling *Lamprotornis regius* becomes a *Lamprotornis*, as a consequence of which *Cosmopsarus* is sunk (another consequence, the authors' anticipate, is the debate this is likely to provoke); iii) *Lamprotornis* is further reinforced by the addition of the four 'glossy' members from *Spreo* (Superb *L. superbus*, Shelley's *L. shelleyi*, Hildebrant's *L. hildebrandti* and Chestnut-bellied *L. pulcher*), which leaves *Spreo* with just four grey or grey and white birds—Pied *S. bicolor*, Fischer's *S. fischeri*, White-crowned *S.*

albicapillus and the aforementioned Ashy; iv) *Lamprotornis* does, however, lose two species—Purple-headed Glossy *Hylospar purpureiceps* and Coppery-tailed (Glossy) *H. cupreocauda*, which are now placed within the genus *Hylopsar*.

With nothing more to go on than some relatively casual experience of at least some of these species in the field, my gut reaction is that many of these changes appear plausible and are worthy of further investigation. Certainly, Coppery-tailed and Purple-headed Glossy Starlings have never struck me as 'typical' *Lamprotornis* while the proposed separation of *Pholia* from *Cinnyricinclus* 'feels' right.

Turning to the more tangible matter of the plates that follow, it is quickly apparent from the diversity of styles that they are the work of more than one artist. To my eye, the quality of these varies from the uninspiring to the excellent, with the African species coming off well. Many species are only given an illustration of a single individual while sexually dimorphic species and those with obviously different juvenile plumages get two. There are also smaller flight illustrations of those species with distinctive wing colorations. The stunning metallic plumages of the glossy starlings often seem, along with those of male sunbirds, amongst the hardest to reproduce accurately. Here, however, the artist responsible (we are not told which of the three) is to be congratulated as he has captured them extremely convincingly. Neither these nor the others appear regimented, but are presented in a variety of poses and against a variety of backdrops; some of the former are extremely evocative, some of the latter odd. Thus, the habitat that Long-tailed Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis caudatus* is set against looks like no part of the Sahel I have ever seen, while Chestnut-winged Starling *Onychognathus fulgidus* hopping amongst leaf-litter looks downright peculiar (the text correctly states it is confined to forest canopy). There are a few inaccuracies, too, in the birds themselves: the eye of Purple Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis purpureus* isn't as large or as yellow as it should be, nor is the strange bulge in the forecrown at the base of bill sufficiently pronounced, suggesting that the artist had trouble believing the bird looks as wonderfully weird as it does. (And why, on the same plate, has the exquisite Emerald Starling *Lamprotornis iris* been reproduced to a different, smaller scale from the other three species shown?) Still on eye colour, Bronze-tailed Glossy Starling *L. chalcurus* is shown with a yellow eye (as it is also said to be in the text) when it should be orange-red (see Barlow *et al.*[1]).

Distribution maps, together with brief descriptions of the distribution and of the birds themselves, appear on the pages facing the plates. The maps, at least for those species with which I am most familiar, seem relatively accurate (with an exception mentioned below). It is noticeable here that those species which are restricted to the southern third of the continent are shown on a base map limited to Africa south of the Equator and their distributions are hence shown in more detail than those species confined to East or West Africa for which the base map is the entire continent, plus Arabia, even if the bird concerned is confined to Principe or Socotra!

The species texts are divided into sections entitled Field Identification, Description (which includes treatment of subspecies), Measurements, Voice, Distribution and Population, Habitat, Food and Feeding, Behaviour and, in some cases, Principal References. For the Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* this runs to over six pages; for Coppery-tailed Starling it is not much more than half a page (while for a number of Asian taxa it is not even that), illustrating how little is known about some species. The authors appear to have mined the literature well (there are over 20 pages of references at the end of the book) with facts and observations thoroughly referenced in the text.

The species treatment adopted here for African taxa is, unlike the generic one, conservative. There is one exception to this; the West African forms (from western Sudan westwards) of Red-winged Starling *Onychognathus morio* are separated as Neumann's Red-winged Starling *O. neumanni*. We are not told why the authors have made this decision, nor how the two species differ from each other. Indeed, the entire treatment of *O. neumanni* appears strange. It is given species number 104 while *O. morio* is 94 so they appear remote from each other both in the text and on the plates. One has to dig deep into the paragraph on *Onychognathus* at the beginning of the book to be told that *neumanni* was 'formerly treated as a race of *O. morio*' but for the reasons why it is treated so no longer, one is referred to Craig (1988). This reference proves to be to a paper published in *Bonner zoologische Beiträge*. Now, at the risk of accusations of chauvinism, I would have thought this source was not so widely available that a repetition of the justification for this split was unwarranted. It has certainly not, in the 10 or so years since publication, been adopted anywhere in the West African sub-region, so far as I am aware. Finally, the map for *O. neumanni* is at odds with the distribution given for the species in the text; the latter correctly includes Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, while the former omits these.

Nevertheless, this is cavilling and does not detract from the overall depth and quality of the scholarship that has gone into this publication. I certainly think the authors will succeed in their stated main aim, that of stimulating further research and debate on all matters starling. Stunning birds, excellent book.

References

1. Barlow, C., Wacher, T. and Disley, T. 1997. *A Field Guide to the Birds of The Gambia and Senegal.* Mountfield: Pica Press.
2. Craig, A.J.F.K. 1997. A phylogeny for the African starlings (Sturnidae). *Ostrich* 68: 114–116.

Lincoln Fishpool

A Sound Guide to Nightjars and related nightbirds

Richard Ranft and Nigel Cleere. 1998. 73-minute CD with 14 pp booklet. Pica Press, The Banks, Nr. Roberstbridge, East Sussex TN32 5JY. ISBN 0-300-07580-4. UK£14.99.

This CD and booklet are designed to accompany the recent monograph *Nightjars* (Cleere & Nurney, Pica Press, 1998; reviewed in *Bull. ABC* 6: 70–71). The CD has a playing time of 73 minutes, with 99 tracks but no announcements. The recordings include 107 of the 119 species treated in the monograph. The booklet contains a short but informative introduction, and then lists the recordings, stating the type of vocalisation (for example, song or flight call), locality, year and recordist. Of the 27 African nightjars, only three are missing: voices of Golden

Caprimulgus eximius and Star-spotted *C. stellatus* are described in the monograph but no recordings were available, whilst no vocalisations of Nechisar Nigthjar *C. solala* are known. For Collared Nightjar *C. enarratus*, only nest calls were available (the song remains undescribed); for Prigogine's *C. prigoginei*, a song that might prove to be of this virtually unknown species is usefully presented. For the remaining 22 species, a song is included for all, with an additional call for 14. The quality of the recordings is generally excellent. Since most encounters with these birds start with a vocalisation, and many get no further, this is a very worthwhile production, and I hope that authors of future monographs (and past ones, eg *Rails* and *Pittas and Broadbills*?) on vocal but hard-to-see families will follow this lead.

Roger Safford

A Sound Guide to the Birds of North-West Africa

Jean C. Roché and Jerome Chevereau. CEBA Sound Guides. 71-minute CD with booklet in French and English. Available from Wildsounds, Cross Street, Salthouse, Norfolk NR25 7XH, UK. Price unknown.

This sound guide to birds of north-west Africa is a corrected and enlarged CD version of the gramophone records produced by Jean Roche in 1967. It covers 52 species, most of them typical of the Maghreb region, whilst a few that also occur in Spain (e.g. Dupont's Lark *Chersophilus duponti*, Rufous Bush Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes*), but which could be thought of as being Maghrebian are included. The distinctive songs and calls of a number of north-west African forms of more widespread taxa, for example Blue Tit *Parus caeruelus*, Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* and Tawny Owl *Strix aluco*, have wisely also been included. It is, however, rather disappointing that it has not been possible to include recordings of Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita*, Arabian *Ardeotis arabs* and Houbara Bustards *Chlamydotis undulata* and Algerian Nuthatch *Sitta ledanti*.

The recordings vary in length between 31 seconds for Marsh Owl *Asio capensis* and 2 minutes 24 seconds for that most evocative of desert species, the Hoopoe Lark *Alaemon alaudipes*. A five-minute introductory track records the sounds of Merzouga Lake. All recordings are of a high quality and a particular favourite of mine is the flock of thousands of migrating Pin-tailed Sandgrouse *Pterocles alchata* in the Dra Valley.

The accompanying booklet has both English and French text and includes brief notes on the species typical of the four basic climatic zones in the region, birds' adaptations to climate and variations in population size and annual invasions. The commentaries on the species recordings make interesting reading although I did find the number of typographical errors in the English translation distracting. A scattering of black-and-white illustrations add little and I would question the need for their inclusion here.

This sound guide will be useful listening for anyone visiting the region.

Chris Bradshaw

Bird Song of Zambia

R. Stjernstedt. Privately produced. Three cassette tapes. Available from Wildsounds, Cross Street, Salthouse, Norfolk NR25 7XH, UK. UK£23.50 (UK & EC), UK£20 (non-EC) plus postage & packing; each volume UK£8.95 (UK & EC), UK£7.62 (non-EC) plus postage & packing.

The set consists of a series of three cassette tapes, which contain the vocalisations of 415 species of birds to be heard in Zambia. They are divided up into one, which has the songs of the non-passerines, with two tapes having calls of passerine birds. One tape is devoted to those birds, which in a southern African and east African context, only occur in central Africa and Zambia and for these the songs of 94 species are given. Some of the recordings have been made by other people and in countries other than Zambia and full acknowledgement and geographical details are given on the enclosed leaflet, which is tightly packed into the cassette cover. This leaflet contains information on the sequence in which the songs are given, including the Zambian and Roberts' number, the common and scientific name, where and when the recordings were made and, in some cases, interesting ecological information concerning the recording itself. Bob Stjernstedt provides his own narration and each call is introduced using the English and scientific name of the species concerned.

The quality of the recordings is good and they are 'real' in terms of background noise not being edited out in the studio, and this adds a feel of authenticity to them and, in my opinion, does not detract from the recordings in any way. For example the rooster calling in the background of the cut of Natal Nightjar *Caprimulgus natalensis* confirms that this recording was made early in the morning. The lengths of the cuts vary and calls have not been repeated in order to fill up the cassettes which in most cases have a blank portion at the end. I have used these tapes extensively, they work well and illustrate the differences on a subcontinental scale in the songs of some of our bird species. There are some interesting comparisons to be made with other available bird-call tapes on the market. For example the call of Collared Palm Thrush *Cichladusa arquata* on this set of tapes invokes an almost immediate response from local birds on the Zambezi river, while that given on the set of Gibbon (1991), taped in Malawi, elicits no reaction from these birds at all. The calls of Natal Nightjar, from Natal, on Gibbon (1991) have a much slower tempo than that on this set of tapes, although the Zambezi birds react positively to the slower call of the Natal birds. This demonstrates that we have a long way to go in understanding the scope and scale of variation in the songs of some species. I had some difficulty with the leaflets in terms of folding them up and packing them away nicely with the cassette in their cases. They are not waterproof and any moisture (water or sweat) dripped onto them causes the ink to run with disastrous consequences. I had to break the record tabs on my cassettes to prevent accidental over-recording, but this is a simple and quick procedure that should be done when the tapes are purchased. These tapes have been produced outside of a recording studio and Bob Stjernstedt has done a great job given the constraints under which the recordings were compiled. They are essential field equipment for anyone contemplating work north of the Zambezi, and are also useful south of the river, particularly in Zimbabwe.

Kit Hustler

Photospot: Helmet Vanga

Roger Safford

Helmet Vanga *Euryceros prevostii* is one of a handful of Malagasy endemic birds considered to be restricted to lowland and lower montane rainforests of north-east Madagascar. Until recently, its best-known haunts were Marojejy Strict Nature Reserve and the Masoala Peninsula, but visiting Marojejy was forbidden without special permission and exploring unprotected, roadless Masoala constituted quite an expedition. This meant that this most astonishing bird went unseen by most birdwatchers visiting Madagascar.

Things have changed. Both Marojejy and Masoala are now National Parks, and permits are easily available, making visits much easier than they were before. It was at Marojejy that Nick Garbutt discovered the nest where he took the wonderful photographs reproduced here. A further development has been the discovery in the 1990s of nesting Helmet Vangas in Mantadia National Park[2], close to Perinet and only a few hours drive from Antananarivo; the species has long been known from this region but very rarely seen until recently.

Why do Helmet Vangas possess such uniquely arched and coloured bills? They are birds of primary rainforest, often joining mixed-species flocks containing other large vangas, but few life history details are known. They mainly eat large insects, but of 98 food items brought to young in a nest on Masoala, 14 were snails, five lizards, five spiders and two crabs[1]. Many items are caught by sally-gleaning (F. Hawkins pers. comm.). It is difficult to imagine how such a diet and foraging technique could account for the most striking bill, as many passerines with (as far as we know) similar diets, such as cuckoo-shrikes, shrikes and probably other vangas, manage with something much smaller. This question, therefore, remains unanswered, but the answer might perhaps be sought in the species' breeding behaviour.

References

1. Graetz, J. 1991. Nest observations of the Helmet Vanga *Euryceros prevostii*. *Newsletter of the Working Group on Madagascar Birds* 1: 2.
2. Powzyk, J. 1995. Exceptional observations in Mantadia National Park. *Newsletter of the Working Group on Madagascar Birds* 5 (2): 4.

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Figures 1–2 (on back cover). Helmet Vanga *Euryceros prevostii*, Marojejy National Park (Nick Garbutt)

Notes for contributors *(...continued from inside front cover)*

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Authors are asked to follow the conventions used in The *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* and to refer to a recent issue for guidance.

dates: 23 September 1993 (note the order, no comma, not 23rd).

names of birds: use the vernacular name for birds, followed by the scientific name, viz White-necked Raven *Corvus albicollis* (with hyphen, no comma, no parentheses, no author's name). Underline for italics if you submit typed or handwritten copy, but please format with italics if you submit your contribution on disk with accompanying hard copy. Only the first (generic) name should have an initial capital. English names of birds and other animals require initial capitals except after a hyphen (eg White-headed Vulture, Black-backed Jackal), but for group names use lower case for initial letter (eg bustards, grows). Both English or French and scientific names should be given when the species is first mentioned, thereafter only one name, preferably the English or French, should be used.

units: use metric units with the following abbreviations: length (mm, cm, m, km); area (m², ha); mass (mg, g, kg); time (s, min, hr, day, month, year). Time of day should be given in the 24-hour clock form (eg 06.30 hr). Speed (m/s, km/hr). The time system used should be the zonal time closest to solar time. Except at the beginning of a sentence or when ten or less, numbers should be given as numerals, not spelled out. All fractions should be decimalised and written as numerals.

punctuation: full points (= full stop, period) should be omitted from well-known initials, such as ABC, and also from 'eg', 'ie', and 'et al'. Include a full point after each initial of person's name. Quotation marks, if used, should be single, not double".

references: these should be indicated in the text by superscript Arabic numbers corresponding to the numbers in the reference list. For example: '...confirming earlier work[1]. Lack & Webb[2] stated that...' or 'eg Safford et al.[3]'. Reference lists should be in alphabetical order, and appear at the end of the paper or short communication, following the format below.

• authors' family name(s) followed by a comma, then initials, each followed by a full point.

• names of publications should be given in full, or for journal titles, abbreviated according to the 4th edition (1960) of the World List of Scientific Periodicals and the supplementary lists published since then by the British Union Catalogue of Periodicals (if in doubt, give the title in full), and underlined for italics in typescript.

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• books: after author(s), year of publication and title, give the town followed by the publisher.

eg for a journal:

> Safford, R.J., Duckworth, J.W., Evans, M.I., Telfer, M.G., Timmins, R.J. and Zewdie, C. 1993. The birds of Nechisar National Ethiopia. *Scopus* 16: 61–80.

eg for a book:

> Mackworth-Praed, C.W. and Grant, C.H.B. 1973. *The Birds of West and Central Africa*, Vol 2. London: Longman.

eg for a chapter in a book:

> Kroodsma, D.E. and Baylis, J.R. 1982. A world survey of evidence for vocal learning in birds. In Kroodsma, D.E. and Miller, E.H. (eds) *Acoustic Communication in Birds*, Vol 2: 311–337. New York: Academic Press.

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PhD theses that are under a publication embargo, or otherwise unavailable for general reference, may not be quoted in the text. References should be made either as 'Halliday (unpublished)' if it is Halliday's own work, or as 'Halliday (pers comm)' if information is being quoted by another author.

Verify references before submitting your paper and check the typescript and proofs carefully for errors in the references. If you refer to a paper that you have not actually seen, you should indicate where you have seen it quoted by adding as much at the end of the reference in the list, eg (quoted by 4).

tables: each table should be prepared on a separate piece of paper, and be thoroughly checked. Use '0' for a zero reading, '-' for a missing value. Titles of tables should be self-explanatory. Figure legends and table headers will be given in French and English.

diagrams: should be clearly drawn in ink without shading. Original black and white photographs and line illustrations should not be larger than A4 (297×210 mm). Line illustrations should be on good quality white paper or board, or on tracing material; lettering should preferably be marked lightly in pencil. All illustrations should have the author's names and figure numbers clearly marked on the back. Where there is any doubt, the upper margin of the illustration should be indicated.

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Figure 1.2 Helmet Vanga *Eurycerus prevostii*, Marojejy National Park (Nick Garbutt)