

African Bird Club



Bulletin of the African Bird Club

Vol 9 No 2 August 2002

Mount Kupé
Bush-Shrike
photographs

Mauritius Fody

Afrotropical
Sylvia Warblers

Moroccan Rare
Bird Report

Bronze-winged
Courser nest

Plain Swift in
Morocco

Avifauna of
Hwimo, Nigeria

Serengeti
National Park

Temminck's
Horned Lark and
Forbes's Plover in
The Gambia





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
- run the ABC Conservation Programme

Registered Charity No 1053920

ABC Web site

<http://www.africanbirdclub.org>

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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 at the club address below.

Contact ABC

African Bird Club, c/o BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0NA.
email: info@africanbirdclub.org

Further information can be obtained directly from individual council members. Please use the following email addresses or contact them via the club's postal address. With email, replace @... with @africanbirdclub.org, e.g. chairman@africanbirdclub.org will reach the Chairman

Chairman	Phil Atkinson	chairman@africanbirdclub.org
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The Bulletin of the African Bird Club

The *Bulletin of the ABC* provides a forum for news, letters, notices, recent publications, expedition results, reviews and interim publication of studies on African birds by contributors from throughout the world. Publication of results in the *Bulletin of the ABC* does not preclude publication of final results as journal papers either by the ABC or elsewhere. No

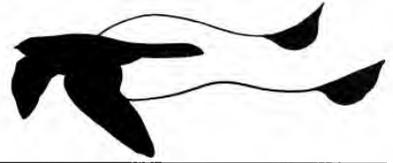
material should, however, be submitted simultaneously to the *Bulletin of the ABC* and to any other publication.

Brief notes for contributors appear elsewhere in this bulletin and further details are available from the editor (editor@africanbirdclub.org).

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Robson, Martin Woodcock*

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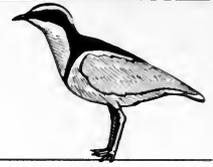
Front cover plate

Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* by Clive Byers

Photographs

*A. van den Berg, P. Bulens, Callan Cohen, A. Le Dru, H. Dufourny,
Nick Garbutt, Guus A. Hak, J. & D. Hook, Paul Manners, Michael
Mills, John Ovenden, E. Rousseau, Roger Safford, Brian Small,
Grahame Stewart, R. Vernon, G. Willem*

Club News



Supported Members

The Club has long had a number of subscriptions available for those who might otherwise be unable to afford the fees. At present this facility is under-subscribed. Those in Africa unable to afford the cost of membership are invited to apply for a Supported Membership, which is allocated for two years, following which it is reviewed. If the recipient finds it useful then they will be encouraged to pay something towards the subscription cost, but if this proves impossible then the arrangement may be furthered for another two years. Those wishing to apply for Supported Membership or wanting to nominate a suitable recipient should contact the Secretary: secretary@africanbirdclub.org.

ABC sales items

The following items are currently available for sale from ABC. All proceeds from sales are used to promote the aims of the Club, UK registered charity 1053920.

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. 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: UK£13.50.
3. New ABC T-shirt featuring Bush-Shrikes by Dave Nurney, grey. Sizes: large, extra large and extra-extra large: UK£13.50.
4. ABC T-shirt featuring Turacos by Mark Andrews, white. Size: extra large: UK£9.
5. ABC caps featuring an embroidered ABC logo, black, bottle green, red and maroon: UK£7.
6. ABC bone-china mugs: two designs featuring Carmine Bee-eater or Golden-breasted Starlings by Martin Woodcock: UK£6 or UK£10 a pair.
7. ABC badge featuring Egyptian Plover design: UK £2.
8. White-winged Apalis A4 colour print by Nik Borrow from *Bull. ABC* 2 (2): signed and numbered limited edition of 50 at UK£7.50; also available unsigned at UK£1.00.
9. 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£1.50 for the pair.
10. 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.
11. *Bull. ABC*, volume 1, 1994, number 1 and 2: UK£5 each.
12. *Bull. ABC*, volume 2, 1995, number 1 and 2: UK£6 each.
13. *Bull. ABC*, volume 3, 1996, number 1 and 2: UK£6 each.
14. *Bull. ABC*, volume 4, 1997, number 1 and 2: UK£7 each.
15. *Bull. ABC*, volume 5, 1998, number 2 only: UK£7 each.
16. *Bull. ABC*, volume 6, 1999, number 1 and 2: UK£7 each.
17. *Bull. ABC*, volume 7, 2000, number 1 and 2: UK£7 each.
18. Azores Trip Report, Sep–Oct 1997 by Willem Steenge and Theo Bakker, 29 pp covering travel, transport, weather, ferry timetables and fares, itinerary and site guides, many maps: UK£5.
19. Birds in the Gaborone Area, Botswana by S J Tyler and W D Borello, 100 pp with detailed species information concerning status and sites where they can be seen, with detailed information on some sites and co-ordinates for all sites: UK£10.
20. Cameroon Trip Report, Dec 1994–Jan 1995 by Richard Webb, 72 pp with sections covering travel, health, weather, references, a detailed itinerary, systematic checklist of 481 species and a 29-pp site guide including 25 maps: UK£6.
21. Cameroon Trip Report, Mar–Apr 1997 by Jon Hornbuckle, 22 pp, useful update to previous report, following similar route, with logistics, sites, itinerary and systematic list of 551 species seen: UK£4.
22. Cape Verde Trip Report, Mar 1996 by Theo Bakker and Klaas van Dijk, 37 pp, details and locations of all 61 species seen over 4 weeks, with useful information on travel and accommodation, and many detailed maps and photographs: UK£6.50.
23. Ethiopia Trip Report, Dec 1995–Jan 1996 by Richard Webb, sections covering travel, health, weather, references, a detailed itinerary, systematic checklist of 478 species and site guide for 30 locations: UK£7.50.
24. Ethiopia Trip Report, Oct–Nov 1996 by Jon Hornbuckle, 31 pp, complement to previous report, with logistics, sites, itinerary and systematic list of species seen, including 30 endemics: UK£4.
25. *Ethiopia: In Search of Endemic Birds*, Sep–Oct 1997 by Julian Francis and Hadoram Shirihai, 45 pp, 47 excellent colour photographs including endemics, with logistics, travel tips, detailed itinerary and systematic list of species seen, including identification notes for Degodi and Sidamo Larks: UK£10.
26. Ethiopia Eritrea Trip Report, Mar–May 1998 by David Murdoch, 280 species seen, short but useful update to our other Ethiopia reports, itinerary and systematic list of all birds and mammals seen, also details of sites in Eritrea: UK£3.
26. The Gambia, 10–17 Sep 1999 by Stuart Sharp, 34 pp including sections on travel/holiday tips, itinerary, brief site descriptions and systematic lists of birds and mammals seen: UK£5.
27. The Gambia, 1–8 Nov 1998 by Gruff Dodd, 26 pp cover trip planning, very detailed itinerary and systematic list of 180 species seen: UK£4.
28. *Birds of Senegambia*, checklist: UK£0.50.
29. Birding Ghana, Feb 1996 by Mindy and Sherif El Din, 39 pp containing sections on orientation, itinerary, some site descriptions, a table of species seen each day, plus extra notes on birding hints and etiquette in Ghana, with more site suggestions: UK£6.50.
30. Ghana Trip Report, Jan–Feb 1997 by Simon Plat, 35 pp complement Birding Ghana report, especially for travel by public transport; with checklist of 220 species, detailed

- itinerary, and site guides, including coast between Accra and Takoradi, Kakum National Park, Subri Forest Reserve, Kumasi, Tamale, Bolgatanga, Wa and Mole National Park: UK£4.
31. Côte d'Ivoire by public transport, Jan–Feb 1995 by Eddie Williams, 28 pp with several maps, 412 species plus extensive mammal list, local information, itinerary and site guides: UK£4
32. Kenya Trip Report, Feb–Mar 1995 by Mike Hunter and Graham Speight, 90 pp with sections covering travel, health, climate, accommodation, references, a detailed itinerary, systematic list of 693 species, and a 50-pp site guide covering 48 sites, and 28 maps: UK£8.
33. *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Nairobi*, including Nairobi National Park, by Bill Harvey, 32 pp providing a checklist and details of status, frequency, habitat preferences and frequency in Nairobi National Park and Nairobi Arboretum: UK£0.50.
34. Madagascar and the Comoros, Oct–Nov 1995 by Jon Hornbuckle, 'How to see all the birds without a hire car', 34 pp list 186 species in Madagascar including 124 endemics, 79 species in the Comoros, including 17 endemics, with logistics, itinerary, site notes, one map, systematic list of birds and mammals: UK£4.
35. Madagascar, Nov–Dec 1997 by Chris Bell, Mike Hunter, Dawn Ross and Malcolm Roxby, useful update to previous reports on how to find recently re-/discovered species, with full species list including 123 Malagasy endemics, itinerary, brief site guide: UK£4.
36. Madagascar (with Mauritius and Réunion), winter 1997–98 by Brian Gee, 67 pp, 21 maps, 192 species seen in Madagascar, with logistics (including getting around on public transport) site guides (including Montagne d'Ambre, Tsiribihina River, Kirindy Forest) systematic list, advice on guides etc: UK£9.
37. Madagascar Trip Report, October 1998 by Paul Noakes, 14 pp, three maps, a brief report covering over 90% of the endemics: UK£2.50.
38. Malaŵi, March 1997 by Jon Hornbuckle, 17 pp, logistics, sites, seven maps, itinerary and systematic list of 306 species seen: UK£3.
39. Malaŵi and the Luangwa Valley (Zambia), Jul–Aug 1997 by Henk Hendriks, 45 pp, 14 maps, with logistics, site guides, complete systematic list of 370 species, and where to see rare and difficult species: UK£8.
40. Southern Malaŵi and Luangwa Valley (Zambia), Jan 1999 by Nigel Wheatley, includes maps of major towns and sites, maps of Senga Bay and Zomba, sites visited, other sites, systematic list of birds and mammals: UK£7.50.
41. Namibia and the Cape, Nov 1994 by Jon Hornbuckle, 43 pp, logistics, site notes, one map, detailed itinerary and systematic list of species seen: UK£4.
42. Birding Senegal, 10–29 Nov 1998 by Mindy and Sherif Baha el Din, 26 pp, one map, details of travel, accommodation, detailed itinerary, key habitats and sites, and systematic lists of 282 bird species and mammals: UK£5.
43. KwaZulu-Natal and Transvaal, South Africa, 8–21 Oct 2000 by Mike Hunter, 13 pp covering daily itinerary, brief notes for each site and comprehensive list of 327 species: UK£3.
44. Cape Town to The Richtersveld, South Africa, 4–19 May 2001 by Paul Gascoigne and Helen Pooley, 29 pp covering detailed daily itinerary, accommodation information and comprehensive list of 168 species: UK£4.
45. Western Cape and Namibia, Nov 1999–Jan 2000 by Brian Gee, 69 pp covering good general information, detailed site guide with maps and comprehensive species list: UK£9.
46. Cape Province, South Africa, Feb–Mar 1999 by Gruff Dodd, 42 pp covering trip planning, very detailed itinerary and systematic list of 239 species: UK£6.
47. Eastern South Africa and Zimbabwe, Feb–Mar 1997 by Jon Hornbuckle, 35 pp, logistics, site notes, five maps, detailed itinerary including Wakkerstroom, Mkuzi, Umlalazi, Sani Pass, Hwange and Victoria Falls, with systematic list of 529 species: UK£5.
48. Voyage Naturaliste au Cape Provinces d'Afrique du Sud, Sep–Oct 1997 par Georges et Mireille Oliosio, 50 pp en Français: renseignements pratiques, documentation, itinéraire et principaux sites visités. Liste commentée des 246 espèces d'oiseaux vus, aussi mammifères et reptiles, plans des plusieurs sites; also includes an 11-pp itinerary, plus checklist of the 246 birds and 33 mammals in English: UK£6.
49. Usambara Mountains, Tanzania, Jan–Feb 1996 by Eddie Williams, describes how to visit the prime sites using only public transport, 24 pp, with detailed orientation information, site guides, nine maps and a systematic species list: UK£4.50.
50. Uganda Trip Report, Jun–Aug 1995 by Henk Hendriks, 59 pp, sections covering orientation, references, itinerary, systematic checklist of 473 bird and 36 mammal species, and a detailed site guide with ten maps: UK£6.50.
51. *Where to Watch Birds in Uganda*, by Jonathan Rossouw and Marco Sacchi, 110 pp with a section covering general birding in Uganda, 15 main sites are covered with a map and sections on birding, other wildlife, access, facilities and nearby sites; also a systematic checklist covering status at each site: UK£7.50.
52. *Wakkerstroom Bird and Nature Guide* by Warwick and Michele Tarboton, second edn, Mar 1998, detailed description of this fascinating area on border of Mpumalanga (Eastern Transvaal) and KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and what can be seen there; many illustrations: UK£5.
53. Zimbabwe (including parts of Botswana and South Africa), 18 Feb–5 Mar 2000 by Gruff Dodd, detailed account of trip and systematic list covering 382 species: UK£6.
54. *Birdwatch Zimbabwe*, 1991, by Derek Solomon and Jacko Williams, comprehensive guide with detailed descriptions of all main areas with maps, site guides, accommodation directions, checklist and many line drawings: UK£8.50.

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, UK. Enquiries may also be sent to the ABC Sales Officer, Moira Hargreaves at the Club's address or sales@africanbirdclub.org.✉

African Bird Club—summary statement of accounts at 31 December 2000
(A copy of the full statement may be obtained from the Club Treasurer on request)

Income and Expenditure Account—year to 31 December 2001

Main Account

	2001	2000
INCOME		
Subscriptions	16,781	18,192
Other revenue	1,052	1,304
Bank and Building Society interest	612	416
Tax refund	<u>709</u>	<u>534</u>
	19,154	20,446
Less:		
Bulletin costs (including postage)	<u>14,316</u>	<u>15,002</u>
Income before expenses	4,838	5,444
EXPENSES		
General expenses—stationery, telephone, meeting costs etc	3,120	4,605
Participation at PAOC	53	3,551
World Birding Conference	1,410	704
Finance costs—bank charges, depreciation, accountancy etc	<u>1,516</u>	<u>2,165</u>
Total expenses	6,099	11,025
Surplus for year	<u>-1,261</u>	<u>-5,581</u>

Conservation Account (See Note below)

INCOME		
Donations and sponsorship	609	613
Profit on sales of Club merchandise	<u>906</u>	<u>2,523</u>
Total income	1,515	3,136
EXPENDITURE		
Conservation awards made in year	6,371	3,544
Contribution to IBA book launch	<u>2,300</u>	<u>0</u>
Balance for year carried forward	-7,156	-408

Note: Profits on sales of Club merchandise and income from donations and sponsorship have been added to this fund. Amounts paid in the year have been deducted

Balance Sheet at 31 December 2001

	2001	2000
Fixed Assets		
Equipment	584	877
Current Assets		
Stock of goods for resale	2,503	2,753
Bank and Building Society balances	<u>10,053</u>	<u>19,269</u>
	<u>12,556</u>	<u>22,022</u>
Less:		
Current Liabilities		
Subscriptions paid in advance	7,195	8,503
Life memberships	6,360	6,384
Sundry creditors	<u>21</u>	<u>30</u>
	<u>13,576</u>	<u>14,917</u>
Net current assets	<u>-1,020</u>	<u>7,105</u>
Total assets	<u>-436</u>	<u>7,982</u>
Represented by:		
Accumulated Fund brought forward	785	6,366
Surplus for year	-1,262	-5,581
Conservation Fund brought forward	7,197	7,605
Conservation Fund balance for year	<u>-7,156</u>	<u>-408</u>
	<u>-436</u>	<u>7,982</u>

Africa Round-up



scops owl *Otus* sp
by Martin Woodcock

General

Sixth World Conference on Birds of Prey and Owls

This meeting will be held in Budapest, Hungary, on 18–25 May 2003. All those interested in either of these groups are invited to attend the conference, irrespective of whether they are members of the World Working Group on Birds of Prey (WWGBP). Details of the preliminary programme are presented on the WWGBP website www.Raptors-International.de, and any enquiries can be addressed to WWGBP, PO Box 52, Towcester NN12 7ZW, England. Tel & fax +44 (0)1604 862331, e-mail: WWGBP@aol.com or robin.chancellor@virgin.net. Abstracts for posters intended for the conference must be submitted by 1 March 2003. Suggestions concerning the meeting (themes, submission of papers, excursions etc) can be made to any of the above.

Source: *World Working Group on Birds of Prey* in litt. to *African Birding* December 2001

Fieldguide Frontiers: African bird identification resource

Fieldguide Frontiers is an online African bird identification resource located at www.birding-africa.com. Its aim is to provide a forum for discussion of difficult identification problems among African and migrant birds, whether of genuinely

unidentified birds or plumages not given detailed field guide coverage. Many of the species recorded in Africa, especially migrants, are widespread in Europe and some even occur in the Americas and Australia. The site consists of three parts: mystery bird pictures for discussion (updates earlier in the year included an *Acrocephalus* warbler from South Africa, an eagle owl *Bubo* from the Usambaras in Tanzania, a *Buteo* buzzard and a wheatear *Oenanthe*); African Bird Identification competition; and identification articles and features (e.g. on Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*, Angola Swallow *Hirundo angolensis* and Shoebill *Balaeniceps rex*). Submissions, comments and entries are most welcome.

Source: Callan Cohen, Claire Spottiswoode and Peter Ryan in litt. to *African Birding* February 2002

Kelp Gull taxonomy

Frédéric Jiguet has recently conducted an extensive re-examination of Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus* taxonomy. The results of his work suggest the existence of two new taxa within this complex: *L. d. judithae* (from subantarctic islands in the Indian Ocean) and *L. d. melisandae* (from Madagascar), in addition to confirming the validity of *L. d. vetula* and *L. d. austrinus* (from Antarctica and related islands), which have been questioned by some previous authors.

Source: Bull. Br. Ornithol. Cl. 122, pp50–73

New perspectives in relationships among *Streptopelia* doves

The evolutionary history of the genus *Streptopelia* has not previously been examined using rigorous phylogenetic methods. The results of a recent study, conducted by Kevin Johnson and his colleagues, into the phylogenetic relationships of *Streptopelia* and based on over 3,600 base pairs of nuclear and mitochondrial gene sequences, have been published in *Auk*. To test for monophyly of *Streptopelia*, the authors used several other Columbiformes, including *Columba* from both the Old and New Worlds, *Macropygia*, *Reinwarditoena* and the enigmatic Pink Pigeon *Nesoenas mayeri*. On the basis of their analyses, *Streptopelia* (as

currently defined) is not monophyletic; *Nesoenas mayeri* is the sister species of Madagascar Turtle Dove *S. picturata*, resulting in paraphyly of *Streptopelia*. Three main clades of *Streptopelia* were identified by the study: (1) Spotted Dove *S. chinensis* (of Asia) plus Laughing Dove *S. senegalensis*, (2) *S. picturata* plus *Nesoenas mayeri*, and (3) all other species of *Streptopelia*. It is unclear whether these clades form a monophyletic group to the exclusion of Old World *Columba*, but several analyses suggest this. Old World *Columba* species are closely related to *Streptopelia*, with New World *Columba* clustering outside that group. Taxonomic changes suggested by the authors include merging *Nesoenas* with *Streptopelia* and changing the generic name for New World *Columba* species to *Patagioenas*. Vocal similarities between *S. picturata* and *N. mayeri* are striking, given the general diversity of vocalizations in other species.

Source: *Auk* 118, pp874–887

Veles is a valid genus

In a recent paper Nigel Cleere advocates the recognition of the genus *Veles* for the Brown Nightjar *Caprimulgus binotatus*, based on morphological, vocal and behavioural differences. The arguments in favour of *Veles* appear convincing but this taxon's affinities to other nightjars are currently unclear; Cleere suggests it be placed between *Eurostodopus* and *Nyctidromus*.

Source: Bull. Br. Ornithol. Cl. 121, pp278–279

More on chiffchaffs

Recent years have seen European ornithologists tackling the 'problem' of the Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* complex. It is now generally agreed that several species taxa are involved within this group, one of which, Iberian Chiffchaff, is usually accorded the name *P. brehmii*. However, in a recent publication, Lars Svensson demonstrates that *ibericus* has priority because the type specimen of *brehmii* is a *P. c. collybita*, making *brehmii* but a synonym of *collybita*. Svensson also attempts to elucidate the wintering grounds of *ibericus*, variously considered to be low altitudes in Iberia or in the Maghreb, and possibly even further south. He was unable to



Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*
by Mark Andrews

discover any firm evidence for *ibericus*' residency in Iberia, but located two specimens from Mali and, together with colleagues, mist-netted several individuals in southern Morocco in late March and early April 2001, but further data are clearly required to reach a comprehensive understanding of this form's wintering and migration routes and phenology.

Source: Bull. Br. Ornithol. Cl. 121, pp281–296

Individual recognition of African Wood Owls...

A recent study in Kruger National Park, South Africa, has demonstrated that hoot calls of African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii* are sufficiently different to permit the recognition of individuals. Such information can be used for many purposes including determining long-term adult turnover and residency within a given area.

Source: Ibis 144, pp30–39

...and pair recognition among Grey Crowned Cranes

A study conducted mainly in Saiwa National Park, Kenya, investigated the vocal repertoire of Grey Crowned Cranes *Balearica regulorum gibbericeps* for individual, pair and sexual differences. Analyses showed that wild cranes could not be differentiated according to individuals and sexes, but that pair identification was possible in the unison call. Vocal monitoring can, therefore, be used as a tool for monitoring Grey Crowned Crane populations.

Source: Ostrich 72, pp134–139

TWSG News

We occasionally report on items published in *Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group News*. One of the most recent issues (published in December 2001) contains several reports of interest to ABC members, including notes on the current status of Marbled Teal *Marmaronetta angustirostris* and White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala* in Tunisia, record counts of Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* in Sahelian Africa, new records of White-headed Duck in Morocco and other

observations of threatened waterfowl in Tunisia. In separate reports to the TWSG e-mail newsgroup, the discovery of six Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* in Algeria, in March 1997, and over 1,900 Ferruginous Duck in Tunisia, in October 2001, were recently made public. More information about the group and its work can be found on the Internet at <http://www.wwt.org.uk/threatsp/twsg/> or from Dr Baz Hughes at baz.hughes@wwt.org.uk.

Sources: Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group News 13; World Birdwatch 23(4), pp36–7

Conservation Corporation Africa

Vol 3 of the Ecological Journal of Conservation Corporation Africa (see Bull. ABC 6: 88–89 and 8: 6) appeared in 2001. Again reports are furnished from projects in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana and South Africa. As before, large mammals feature predominantly but there is much of ornithological interest, specifically notes on Wahlberg's Eagle *Aquila wahlbergi* breeding activity at Phinda and a preliminary owl survey at Madikwe (both in South Africa). However, many other short notes and interesting sightings reports contain original observations, particularly relating to behaviour and diet (e.g. wood-hoopoes preying on bats). Recent records are presented for many of the reserves. The well-produced volume includes numerous black-and-white photographs, line drawings and the results of a colour photograph competition (which includes a bird section). Conservation Corporation Africa can be reached at Private Bag X27, Benmore 2010, South Africa and via www.cccafrica.com. Orders for the journal can be taken via the web site or by fax: +11 809 4453.

Source: Duncan Butchart in litt. December 2001

Southern Africa and Indian Ocean islands

Leucism in White-chinned Petrel

We regularly report on items contained within *Bird Numbers*, which is a publication of the Avian Demography Unit (University of Cape Town) and the latest issue that we have received contains an interesting short communication, by Pete Ryan, examining the incidence of partial leucism in White-chinned Petrels *Procellaria aequinoctialis* in the Prince Edward Islands, whether this phenomenon is linked to sex and discussing observations of such birds at sea off South Africa. Although white feathers may

appear in any part of this species' plumage, the presence of a white belly patch is the most common feature. One apparently completely white individual has been reported in the literature and others with white patches on the crown and nape, which may pose a confusion risk with Spectacled Petrel *P. (a.) conspicillata* for the unwary or inexperienced, are relatively common in some populations.

Source: Bird Numbers 10(2), pp6–7

Development of Monavale Vlei, Harare temporarily halted

Harare's vleis (dambos) are internationally renowned as the place to search for such specialists as Streaky-breasted Flufftail *Sarothrura boehmi* and Striped Crake *Aenigmatolimnas marginalis*. However, very little of the vlei land is formally protected and recent developments are placing them under unprecedented pressure. More than half of Marlborough Vlei, famous in particular as a breeding ground for the flufftail, has been developed for housing. Fortunately, the wettest, most important area—where the flufftail breeds—is unscathed and Marlborough Vlei Bird Reserve Working Group and BirdLife Zimbabwe have lodged an application with the City of Harare for lease/purchase of this important area. The race to prevent the development of Monavale Vlei—important as a breeding ground for Striped Crake in particular—has been tighter. The private owners of the land planned to use it for greenhouse vegetable and herb production, despite the fact that it is flooded for months. Negotiations between the landowners and Monavale Residents' Environmental Action Group (MREAG) and Environment Africa (previously Environment 2000, headed by the 'Rhino Girl' Charlene Hewitt) for the use of alternate adjacent dry ground appeared to be on course. However, the bulldozers recently appeared and only swift action by MREAG and Environment Africa prevented the loss of this important wetland. The two groups were seeking funding for legal fees to ensure that the area is not developed before alternatives have been explored.

Source: Anthony Cizek in litt. to African Birding December 2001

Little Buttonquail migration in South Africa

A recent paper provides details from South Africa of nocturnal migration of Little Buttonquail *Turnix sylvatica*, which has been little studied previ-

ously. Judging from the numbers found dead and those captured alive, 36 (five in the author's swimming pool!), the scale of the movement, on the nights of 4–5 December 1999, must have been quite considerable.

Source: Bull. Br. Ornithol. Cl. 121, pp 231–233

Cooperative breeding confirmed for the Rockjumper

The breeding ecology and behaviour of the Rockjumper *Chaetops frenatus*, which is endemic to the mountain fynbos of South Africa, have been the subject of a recent three-year study near Cape Town. Breeding groups occupied exclusive 4–11-ha territories, and consisted of a breeding pair and usually 1–2 additional individuals, which were usually, but not exclusively, offspring of the adult pair from the preceding breeding season. Individuals of both sexes participated in territorial defence and alarm calling, and in feeding nestlings and fledglings of the breeding pair. Supernumerary females also assisted with nest-building and incubation. The findings confirm earlier suppositions that Rockjumper is a socially monogamous, cooperative-breeding species, with offspring remaining in their home territory for at least one year during which they assist their parents in raising additional offspring.

Source: Condor 104, pp 188–191

Cape Parrot en route to extinction?

Like most parrots, the Cape Parrot *Poicephalus robustus*, which is usually treated as the nominate form of Brown-necked Parrot, has been suffering from the illicit pet-trade for years. However, since it has recently been given specific status by some researchers, thereby becoming South Africa's only endemic parrot, its plight has dramatically worsened, as collectors are eager to obtain them. The Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease Virus, an avian form of AIDS, is another important threat and the sudden drop in numbers of Cape Parrots in recent years may be attributed in large part to it. The third major threat is habitat loss. The birds are highly dependent on mature yellowwood trees *Podocarpus* spp for food and as breeding sites. Suitable forest patches are found only in the Eastern Cape, southern KwaZulu-Natal and a few in Mpumalanga. In December 2001 a timber company illegally felled more than 100 ancient yellowwoods in the Umzimkulu Valley, Eastern Cape. Some of these trees were estimated to have been close to 1,000 years old. Permits to cut yellowwood are restricted to dead trees, but even



Cape Rockjumper *Chaetops frenatus*
by Mike Hodgson Birdquest

respect of the law would not help the Cape Parrot, as it nests almost exclusively in these dead snags. Fewer than 500 birds remain in the wild. Efforts are being deployed by the Cape Parrot Working Group to save them. Anyone wishing to contribute should contact Dr Colleen Downs (e-mail: downs@nu.ac.za).

Sources: Africa—Birds & Birding 7(1), pp 16–17;
Newsletter of BirdLife South Africa 5(1), p 32

New Internet resources for South Africa

Early 2002 witnessed the joint launch of two new South African birding Internet resources, the Zululand Birding Route and the Cape Birding Route. Together, they provide birders with all the necessary information to plan productive and enjoyable visits to the two most endemic-rich birding and diverse regions of South Africa. Zululand, in northern KwaZulu-Natal Province on the tropical east coast of South Africa, and the Cape, comprising the arid west from Cape Town to the Kalahari, are two key African birding regions with high levels of avian endemism as well as overall high diversity, in addition to superb landscapes, big game, and excellent infrastructures. The Zululand and Cape Birding Route websites not only represent a considerable source of detailed birding, practical and ecotourism information for these regions, but also supply a unique planning tool for maximising the success of a visit to either region. Specific features include detailed information on finding the key specials, suggested routes for combining key sites most efficiently, contacts with local guides, and an extensive listing of birder-friendly accommodation. The Cape Birding Route also includes the full text of the recent bird-finding guide, *Essential Birding in Western South Africa: Key Routes from Cape Town to the Kalahari* (see review Bull. ABC 8: 69–70), which is available free of charge online and cross-linked to relevant birding accommodation.

The relevant URL's are <http://www.capebirdingroute.org> and <http://www.zululandbirdingroute.co.za>.

Source: Duncan Pritchard, Pat Brenckley and BirdLife Zululand (Zululand Birding Route) and Callan Cohen, Claire Spottiswoode, Peter Ryan and Eve Holloway (Cape Birding Route) in litt. to *African Birding* February 2002

SAFRING becomes AFRING

As previously reported (Bull. ABC 9: 8) it was planned to change the name and content of *SAFRING News* to *AFRING News*, and we have recently received the inaugural issue of this publication, which is the journal of the South African Bird Ringing Unit. While southern Africa features prominently in this first publication, the content ranges as far afield as Tanzania (and even Lebanon), and with time the journal should achieve its aim of becoming continent wide in its coverage. Further information on the South African Bird Ringing Unit can be found on the Internet at www.uct.ac.za/depts/stats/adu.

Source: AFRING News 30, pp 1–52

Attempt to clarify Scarce Swift's affinities

Scarce Swift *Scoutedenapus myioptilus* is a rather enigmatic species of uncertain affinities within the Apodidae whose nest has never been found. As a nest can provide useful clues to a species' evolutionary relationships, Charles Collins and Abasi Jana organised a trip to the Aberfoyle area of eastern Zimbabwe in January 1999, to find a nest and learn more about this bird. On the ridge of Mt Domwe, at 1,400 m, 10–15 Scarce Swift were seen and their distinctive metallic clicking calls heard. Two pairs appeared to have been breeding in fissures in rock outcrops along the ridge in September. After a grass fire in October they moved to other fissures in a lower and largely inaccessible rock face. Although the actual nests were not seen, establishing that the species was using rather large fissures and not just narrow cracks as do *Apus* swifts is important. However, further research into its breeding biology is needed to elucidate Scarce Swift's relationships.

Source: Africa—Birds & Birding 6(6), pp 18–19

More White Storks satellite-tagged

Following the successful tracking by satellite of five White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* fledglings from Tygerberg Zoo, near Cape Town, South Africa, during

2001, Prof Peter Berthold, who heads the Vogelwarte Radolfzell in Germany, and his colleagues allocated eight new tracking devices to Tygerberg Zoo. These were fitted to fledglings in November–December 2001. As with the first five birds, the movements of these young storks can be viewed on the Avian Demography Unit website (www.aviandemographyunit.org). The first five all crossed the borders of South Africa, one reaching as far as Burundi. After it had injured a wing, probably in a collision with a powerline, it was taken to a police station there on 14 September. News of its ‘arrest’ by suspicious police was widely reported.

Source: Africa—Birds & Birding 7 (1), p 74

Honeyguide and Papyrus Yellow Warbler

The latest issue of *Honeyguide*, the journal of BirdLife Zimbabwe, which we have seen, as always contains much of interest to birders in southern Africa. In addition to the usual series of short notes devoted to interesting behavioural and other observations, there are papers on sunbird movements in the Eastern Highlands and an interesting review, by Tony Tree, of the occurrence of Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* in Zimbabwe and neighbouring countries. Some of the datasets presented in Tony’s paper, such as the relative seasonal occurrence of males and females at different localities, are only rarely gathered for this species, and should prove useful in future efforts to examine patterns of habitat use and requirements for this semi-nomadic bird. Finally, there is an interesting contribution to our understanding of the taxonomy of Papyrus Yellow Warbler *Chloropeta gracilirostris*, which corrects a number of errors in a recent volume of *The Birds of Africa* and principally draws attention to the existence of a west Kenyan population, which appears to represent an undescribed taxon and, indeed, even exhibits differences that compromise the widely accepted differences appertaining to the genus *Chloropeta*. Further research into this interesting subject is clearly required.

Source: Honeyguide 47, pp 123–228

Ground roller systematics

Relationships among the five extant members of the ground rollers, a family endemic to Madagascar, have recently been studied using several

mitochondrial genes. Mean divergences between the five species were high, at 11%. For several species, samples were available from widely separated geographic regions and intraspecific sequence divergence was proven to be low. Unweighted and weighted parsimony and maximum-likelihood analyses consistently recovered monophyly of the family, a sister relationship between Brachypteraciidae and Coraciidae, and monophyly of one of three currently recognised ground roller genera (*Atelornis*). At the base of the Brachypteraciidae clade, the authors of the study were unable to fully resolve relationships between *Uratelornis* and two species currently placed in *Brachypteracias*. Because of the uncertainty of basal nodes in their phylogenetic reconstructions, Kirchman and his colleagues recommend returning Scaled Ground Roller *Brachypteracias squamigera* to the monotypic genus *Geobiastes*. The high levels of divergence among ground rollers are similar to those found in other avian groups endemic to Madagascar.

Source: Auk 118, pp 849–863

New species of mouse lemur in Madagascar

Few ABC members can probably claim no interest in mammals and certainly even fewer visitors to Madagascar can fail to be impressed by its remarkably diverse assemblage of lemurs (40+ species). A recent news item in *Oryx* reports the discovery of not one but three new species of mouse lemur, *Microcebus berthae*, *M. sambiranensis* and *M. tavarata*, of which the former weighs just 30 g, and thus qualifies as the world’s smallest primate. The newly described species, all from dry forests, bring the number of mouse lemurs to seven.

Source: Oryx 36, p 6

South Atlantic Ocean

Gough Island’s birds studied

Gough Island, a World Heritage Site in the mid-South Atlantic Ocean, 2,800 km west of Cape Town and 425 km south of Tristan da Cunha, is one of the most important seabird islands in the world. This extremely remote island of c6,800 ha provides breeding sites for millions of penguins, albatrosses and petrels, among which are several species listed as threatened. As surprisingly little is

known concerning the conservation status of birds on Gough, the British government funded a joint project between the FitzPatrick Institute and the UK-based Royal Society for the Protection of Birds which resulted in the first year-round visit of two ornithologists to Gough. The main objective was to establish methods for long-term monitoring of species of global conservation concern. During their 13-month stay, ornithologists Erica Sommer and Richard Cuthbert set up monitoring protocols, established population estimates or indices for key species and conducted ecological research. Tracking of breeding Tristan Albatrosses *Diomedea dabbenena*, a recently recognised, endangered species, considered distinct from Wandering Albatross *D. exulans*, revealed that the birds range widely across the temperate Atlantic from the edge of the continental shelf off South America to that off southern Africa. That even large chicks were apparently unsafe from attacks by introduced House Mice *Mus musculus* (which have evolved increased body size on Gough and may weigh more than 50 g) is serious cause for concern. Other seabirds were even more affected, with mouse predation constituting a significant cause of mortality for chicks of Atlantic Petrel *Pterodroma incerta*.

Source: Africa—Birds & Birding 6 (6), p 17

East Africa

Monitoring biodiversity for site management planning in eastern African wetlands

The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) has been awarded a grant by the UK’s Darwin Initiative for the Survival of Species (part of the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs) to help conserve East African wetlands and their biodiversity. The project will also serve the interests of local people and organisations in East Africa by underpinning the sustainable use of valuable water resources. The wetlands of East Africa contain a high level of biodiversity, supporting internationally important populations of threatened species. Social and economic changes have resulted in considerable loss and degradation of many wetlands in this region, and numerous sites, species and habitats are threatened. WWT’s Darwin project, ‘Monitoring

Biodiversity for Site Management Planning in Eastern African Wetlands', will establish a wetland monitoring scheme for the entire East African region and a database for the information it generates, using the existing African Waterbird Census as its foundation. The project will also provide training within key organisations on how to use data from the monitoring scheme for biodiversity conservation and the development of site management plans.

A partnership of 11 organisations has been established to deliver the project: WWT, Wetlands International and organisations from nine East African countries, namely Kenya, Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. The project will build and maintain capacity in the monitoring of wetland biodiversity in East Africa, by: developing a wetlands database and query tools, and deliver this, together with the necessary computing equipment, to the nine partner countries; providing training in the use of the database for developing site management plans and to fulfil obligations under international conventions and agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention; launching the Eastern African Wetland and Waterbird Monitoring Scheme (EAWMS), based on the activities of the African Waterbird Census, but with a regional identity to encourage participation by individuals, organisations and governments; and putting training into action, by supporting the development of a wetland site management plan in each of the nine partner countries.

Later in 2002, an East African national will take up a ten-month internship at WWT Slimbridge to learn how the UK's Wetland Bird Surveys (WeBS) operate, and, in conjunction with WWT staff, develop a wetlands database as well as training materials to be used in training activities in the East African region in year two. The new EAWMS will also be launched in year two. In the final year, further training will take place in the region, and the data currently available will be used to develop a wetland site management plan in each of the participating countries. For more information contact: Dr Mark O'Connell, Project Supervisor (mark.oconnell@wwt.org.uk) or Dr Seb Buckton, Project Coordinator (seb.buckton@wwt.org.uk).

Source: Dr Seb Buckton in litt.
May 2002

Japanese-funded project to save flamingos in Kenya...

A programme initiated in Kenya with funds from the Japanese government to improve the quality of water in Lake Nakuru is protecting flamingos from lethal heavy-metal pollution, according to a study by Japanese scientists. The study, conducted by researchers drawn from the Lake Biwa Research Institute and the Yamashina Institute for Ornithology in Japan, demonstrated that the project had contributed greatly in addressing issues of environmental pollution. In their report, the researchers reported the facilities for water supply and sewage-treatment are very important for the future conservation of the lake's catchment area. 'The sewerage project appears to be helping to prevent organic contamination and heavy-metal pollution, but treatment for heavy metals is outside the original purpose of the sewage works' said Shigeo Tsujimura of the Lake Biwa Research Institute, one of the team members. The study, funded by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), in conjunction with the Kenya Wildlife Service, aimed at finding the project's impact on the natural environment of Lake Nakuru. In recent years, it has been suggested that the plant plankton on which the flamingos feed might be under pressure from organic contamination and heavy-metal pollution. The heavy-metal pollution, the researchers said, might have also contributed to the massive deaths of flamingos in Kenya in recent years.

Lake Nakuru, one of the alkaline soda lakes that dot Kenya's Rift Valley, draws many tourists because of its fame as a flamingo habitat, and is protected under the Ramsar Convention and as a National Park. But the lake has been facing a major threat due to encroaching human activities such as farming and industrial growth in the nearby town of Nakuru, Kenya's fourth-largest city. Kenyan wildlife officials state they have been working together with the Japanese and the UNEP since 1997 to protect wetlands at Lake Nakuru. 'The lake has been under increasing pressure from rapid urbanisation and other human activities, which have had negative effects' said Robert Ndetei, a senior research scientist in the wildlife service. Japanese officials initiated a new

programme last June, under the Special Assessment for Project Sustainability, to handle waste management. The first phase was completed in 2001 and studies for the second phase are still underway.

The number of migrant birds using Lake Nakuru is strongly influenced by conditions in other surrounding soda lakes, such as Bogoria and Baringo. There are about five million flamingos in Africa, of which at least 3.5 million are in East Africa. According to an official document obtained by Kyodo News, Kenya received some 4,984 million yen in 1987 from the Japanese government toward improving the water quality in Lake Nakuru. Some reports claim that between 1993 and 1995, 60,000 flamingos died in Kenya in bizarre incidents (see *Bull. ABC* 9: 9 but see item 'Mass dying of flamingos questioned' below), dealing a major blow to the country's tourism industry, and since 1996, there has been rapid deforestation in the vicinity of Lake Nakuru, affecting the water inflow into the lake.

Source: Kyodo News Service,
14 May 2002

...mass dying of flamingos in Kenya questioned

In reaction to reports about mass dying of flamingos at Lakes Nakuru and Bogoria (see *Bull. ABC* 9: 8), Alfred Owino, research scientist at the Department of Ornithology of the National Museums of Kenya, expresses the view that these reports are not based on fact and are raising unnecessary alarm. He argues that the numbers of flamingos that frequent the great lakes of East Africa are known to fluctuate periodically, and although deaths have been reported at some sites in Kenya in the past, no mass die-offs have been detected. Each January since 1990 waterbird numbers have been monitored and the available data do not reveal evidence of an overall decline in numbers of flamingos. Between 1992 and 2001, numbers at Lake Bogoria fluctuated, for Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor*, between 174,106 (in 1996) and 1,070,095 (in 1999), and for Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber* between 229 (in 1993) and 18,540 (in 2001). Results for other lakes are also available and the Department of Ornithology is always pleased to provide such information (e-mail: kbirds@africaonline.co.ke).

Source: Africa—Birds & Birding
7 (1), p 10

New site for Udzungwa Forest Partridge

The globally threatened Udzungwa Forest Partridge *Xenoperdix udzunguensis*, which was previously considered restricted to the Udzungwa Mountains of Tanzania, has recently been discovered in Mafwemiro Forest, 150 km to the north of known localities. The new population is isolated and apparently morphologically distinct from that in the Udzungwa Mts.

Source: World Birdwatch 23 (4), p 5

West Africa

The impacts of war on forested areas

War may have positive, if usually short-term, effects on the conservation of natural resources and, regrettably, Africa has seen almost 20 such civil conflicts within the most recent 40 years. A recent paper by Dirk Draulans and Ellen Van Krunkelsven analyses the impacts of the ongoing civil war on forests in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The authors noted some benefits to wildlife, most notably the collapse of the country's wood industry. However, other developments were much less favourable, and the authors highlight the increasing number of people reliant on wood for fuel and bush-meat for food, the increasing numbers of soldiers and refugees within forested areas, and continued hunting, e.g. for ivory, as particularly important and adverse effects upon the environment. Nonetheless, Draulans and Krunkelsven argue that in-country conservation efforts should continue, despite the troubled domestic situation, and offer some suggestions for appropriate actions and priorities.

Source: Oryx 36, pp 35–40

Raptors in Guinea

An April 1984 to September 1986 study of raptors in Republic of Guinea provided welcome new distributional information for several species including: Palm-nut Vulture *Gypobierax angolensis*, Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*, Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus*, Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates*, Ovambo Sparrowhawk *Accipiter ovampensis*, African Goshawk *A. tachiro* and Secretary Bird *Sagittarius serpentarius*.

Source: Dr Aleksander Numerov in litt. 2002

New observation of São Tomé Grosbeak

São Tomé Grosbeak *Neospiza concolor* is a globally threatened species currently classified as Critical due to the paucity of records: three 19th-century specimens and three or four sight records in the 1990s. Richard Rolfe and Nigel Simpson visited São Tomé between 8 and 10 August 2000. During a visit to Monte Café, in scrubby bushes just above the coffee plantations, at an altitude of 800–1,000 m, they observed a large finch with all the features of the grosbeak. Their guide, from Mistral Voyages, immediately identified the bird as *Neospiza concolor*. RR and NS returned to the same place early on 10 August and obtained excellent views of São Tomé Oriole *Oriolus crassirostris*, which is also listed as globally threatened (Vulnerable), but made no further observations of the grosbeak. This record of São Tomé Grosbeak, while requiring confirmation, is the first outside of lowland, closed-canopy forest, and future visitors to the island are encouraged to search for the species in the area and attempt to confirm the observation.

Source: Nigel Simpson in litt. to BirdLife International, 2001

Malimbus

We regularly report on the contents of *Malimbus*, the journal of the West African Ornithological Society, both in these pages and within the annual Literature Supplement. Members of ABC with a specific interest in the birds of West Africa are encouraged to support the society (and receive its excellent biannual publication) by contacting the Treasurer, Robert E. Sharland, at 1 Fisher's Heron, East Mills, Fordingbridge, Hampshire SP6 2JR, UK. The latest issue that we have



São Tomé Grosbeak *Neospiza concolor* by Mark Andrews

seen, although comparatively slim, contains the usual mix of papers (among them a contribution discussing the size, distribution and isolation of the West African Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* population, notes (including the first records of Scarce Swift *Schoutedenapus myioptilus* and Grass Owl *Tyto capensis* on Mt Cameroon) and reviews.

Source: Malimbus 23, pp 77–120

North Africa and Atlantic Islands

New counts of Marbled Teal in Tunisia

During Important Bird Area monitoring work in southern Tunisia, on 2 February 2002, more than 1,493 Marbled Teal *Marmaronetta angustirostris* were recorded at three wetlands: at least 1,300 were at Blidette (33°34'N 08°51'E), 176 at Machiouha (33°33'N 08°58'E, an area that has apparently not previously been visited by ornithologists), and 17 at Zlalla (33°29'N 08°54'E). These observations suggest that large numbers of the species may regularly use south Tunisian wetlands in winter (eg over 2,200 were counted in late December 1996 and over 1,400 in mid-March 1999).

Source: Hichem Azafzaf in litt. to African Birding, May 2002

Notes on birds of the Fezzan desert, Libya

During a field trip to the Fezzan desert in south-west and extreme western Libya in January 2001, some interesting data were gathered on the avifauna, including the first record of Houbara Bustard *Cblamydotis undulata* for this rarely visited area.

Source: Alauda 69, pp 553–554

American Black Duck breeds on the Azores

A visit to Lagoa Branca, on Flores, in late August 2000 revealed the presence of five American Black Duck *Anas rubripes*, including two pure-bred juveniles. Full descriptions were taken of all the individuals and it appears that this record is the first breeding by a pair of pure American Black Ducks in the Western Palearctic; there have been a number of previous instances of the species producing offspring through interbreeding with Mallard A.

platyrhynchos, in England and Wales. American Black Duck has been recorded on at least four previous occasions at the same locality since 1998.

Source: Dutch Birding 24, p 12

African Crake found on Canary Islands

An African Crake *Crex egregia* was picked up in a weakened state in a park on Tenerife, Canary Islands, on 23 November 2001. It was taken into

care but died the next day. On plumage characteristics the bird was considered to be an adult. This record is the first for the Canary Islands and for the Western Palearctic.

Source: Birding World 15, pp 60–61

Canaries Robin conundrum

The central Canarian race, *superbus*, of European Robin *Erithacus rubecula* has recently been demonstrated to differ vocally, as well as morphologically, from nominate *rubecula* which

occurs on El Hierro, Gomera and La Palma, as well as on the Azores and Madeira. *E. r. superbus*, on the other hand, is restricted to Gran Canaria and Tenerife, and perhaps deserves specific status. It is worth noting that early ornithological visitors had already recorded the striking dissimilarity in the voice of these central Canarian robins, as long ago as the mid-19th century. ♀

Sources: Dutch Birding 23, pp 140–146; World Birdwatch 23, p 3

Requests for Information

Ringers in Africa can help...

Researchers at the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in the UK require feathers from Winding Cisticola *Cisticola galactotes* and Lesser Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris* from locations throughout Africa. The stable isotope ratios in feathers will be determined and used to develop a stable isotope map for African wetland sites. The stable isotope ratios in feathers reflect those of the environment in which they were grown, and will vary with area and latitude throughout Africa. These species have been chosen as they are (at least locally) common and, together, their ranges cover much of sub-Saharan Africa. In many areas they are also largely resident, so should have grown their feathers near the trapping site. Isotope ratios from Winding Cisticola and Lesser Swamp Warbler feathers will be compared with feathers from a range of migrant warblers that breed in Europe but winter and moult in Africa. The RSPB is particularly interested in comparing isotope ratios with those of Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* feathers collected in Europe, but grown in Africa, as the wintering site(s) of this species are currently unknown.

Only one feather per bird is needed, usually rectrice five. If you may be able to help, please contact Dr Debbie Pain, RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, or e-mail Debbie.Pain@RSPB.org.uk, tel: +44 (0) 1767 680551; fax +44 (0) 1767 692365, who can discuss the project in more

detail, and send sampling instructions and sample bags.

New recorder for the Cape Verde Islands

From 1 January 2002, Tony Clarke has taken up the position of Recorder for the ongoing reports on birds from the Cape Verde Islands (updating BOU Check-list 13), four of which have been published so far. Visitors to the Cape Verdes are asked to send their trip reports and species lists to Tony Clarke, Calle República Dominicana, N.º61B, Barrio de Fátima, 38500 Güímar, Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain, or by e-mail to clarke@arrakis.es. It is still possible to obtain reprints of the second and fourth reports or photocopies of the first and third. Requests for these should be directed to Dr. Cornelis J. Hazevoet, Museu Nacional de Historia Natural, Rua de Escola Politécnica 58, 1250-102 Lisbon, Portugal, or by email to hazevoet@fc.ul.pt. In addition, details of all observations of Cetacea (both sightings and strandings) in the Cape Verdes will be gratefully received by Cornelis Hazevoet at the above address. Photographic evidence will also be welcomed. A complete overview of cetacean occurrences in the archipelago was recently published by Hazevoet & Wenzel (*Contrib. Zool.* 69: 197–211, 2000). The cooperation of visitors to the archipelago will be much appreciated and all contributors will be acknowledged.

Weaver colour communication project

Staffan Andersson, of Göteborg University, is seeking blood samples and

carotenoid-pigmented nuptial feathers from West African species and subspecies of weavers of the genera *Euplectes*, *Malimbus* and *Ploceus*. He requires these samples for a study of the ecology and phylogeny of carotenoid-based colour communication in members of these genera. He already has samples from many East and South African grassland species. For the blood samples, a few drops from a wing vein in buffer or 99% EtOH will be sufficient. For the feathers, he requires 5–7 yellow or red display feathers, stored dry and dark, preferably in coin envelopes. He would like to establish contact with ringers and birders in the West African region who may be able to help. He can provide advice on methods and a kit of the necessary equipment—tubes, capillaries, feather envelopes etc. Staffan is planning a collecting trip to at least one Gulf of Guinea country (probably Cameroon or Gabon) and São Tomé in late 2002, mainly in search of West African *Euplectes* species and Golden-backed Bishop *E. aureus* on São Tomé. As many other Ploceinae as possible will be mist-netted, measured and sampled. He will also be seeking to identify accessible sites for a longer term study of these species. Anyone interested in assisting, organising (and perhaps guiding) this trip, or able to offer advice on sites, timing etc is asked to contact Staffan Andersson, Assistant Professor, Animal Ecology, Dept of Zoology, Göteborg University, Box 463, SE-405 30 Göteborg, Sweden. E-mail: staffan.andersson@zoo.gu.se. Fax: +46 31 416729. Phone: +46 31 7733647. ♀

African Bird Club

CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

ABC Conservation Fund

The ABC Conservation Fund supports small conservation projects in Africa. To date, Conservation Awards totalling over UK£10,000 (US\$15,000) have been made. These awards embraced a wide range of activities in five countries, from environmental education projects to research on endangered species.

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Spring Bulletin	15 January
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African Bird Club *Conservation Fund Update*

African Bird Club Conservation Fund Update

At the AGM in March 2002 Rob Lucking stepped down as chairman of the ABC Conservation Committee, and the members of the committee and Council would like to thank him for all his hard work in making the Fund such a success over the past few years. We welcome Stephanie Tyler, who has now taken over the role.

Applications for funding during 2002 and 2003 can be made at any time, and the committee will consider any project that has a conservation, education or capacity-building element. Awards generally do not exceed US\$1,000 although an exception may be made in exceptional circumstances. Further information can be obtained from the Club's web site or by e-mailing conservation@africanbirdclub.org.

Two reports have been received from completed projects, full details of which will appear in future Bulletins. Both of these are preliminary surveys of areas of potential conservation importance.

An avifaunal survey of the Mau Narok/Molo Grasslands in Kenya

The Mau Narok/Molo Important Bird Area (IBA) holds some of the most important of Kenya's unique high-altitude grasslands. These are home to restricted-range species such as Sharpe's Longclaw *Macronyx sharpei* and Aberdare Cisticola *Cisticola aberdare*, both of which are classi-

fied as Endangered. In September 2001, Kariuki Ndang'ang'a and Ronald Mulwa from the National Museums of Kenya visited the site with support from ABC. Grasslands in Kenya are very swiftly disappearing as they are cleared to make way for cultivation. This IBA, and the birds within it, are therefore under threat and the visit aimed to map the area, and determine the quantity and quality of the remaining grassland.

The researchers also used this opportunity to train three members of the Kinangop Grasslands site support group, and also to make contacts for the creation of a site support group for the Mau Narok Molo grasslands. They found that large-scale cultivation of barley and winter wheat is a major threat, and grasslands only covered approximately one-third of the IBA. Despite this, significant numbers of Sharpe's Longclaw were found, but the cisticola was only discovered at three sites. The IBA still retains its importance and retention of the remaining grasslands is seen as essential.

Preliminary survey of the biodiversity of Itu wetlands in south-east Nigeria

The village of Ebok in Cross River state, Nigeria, is justly famed for its massive roost of Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*, which in some years has exceeded one million birds. It was thought to be the only such roost in Nigeria. Following reports from local residents in Itu (Akwa Ibom state) of recent sightings

of a large congregation of swallow-like birds during the dry season, ABC and the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) funded an expedition to the area, which was undertaken by a joint team from the NCF and the Center for Wetlands and Waste Management Studies, University of Uyo, and aimed to identify the birds at Itu, estimate their numbers, document the other avifauna of the area and further inventory the region's flora.

The investigation confirmed the existence of a large Barn Swallow roost holding at least 15,250 birds, making it the second-largest such roost in Nigeria. All of the local people, with whom discussions and interviews concerning the roost were held, emphatically stressed that the peak of avian activities in the wetland occurred later in the dry season. This indicates that the number of swallows and avian diversity may increase during that period.

The area has special biological importance, and its flood dynamics and flora are important to local people in various ways, but while the area is an important flood bay for the Cross River, its natural ecosystem and vegetation are under severe threat. Burning, grazing by Fulani herdsman, logging, invasion by waterhyacinth *Eichhornia crassipes* and erosion (a result of uncompleted infrastructure projects and which has reduced the extent of the wetland through silting) are all significant threats. (📄)

Corrigendum to *Bull. ABC* 9 (1)

The note 'First record of Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* in The Gambia' (*Bull. ABC* 9: 45) unintentionally overlooked the observation of a Red-

footed Falcon included in a recent paper (King, M. 2000. Noteworthy records from Ginak Island, The Gambia. *Malimbus* 22: 77-85), predat-

ing the sighting of 1 March 2001 documented in the note. The first published record of this species in The Gambia is thus from Ginak Island, on 3 November 1999. (📄)

First photographs of Mount Kupé Bush-Shrike *Telophorus kupeensis* in the wild

Callan Cohen and Michael Mills

The striking Mount Kupé Bush-shrike *Telophorus kupeensis* is one of the world's rarest birds and a flagship species for bird conservation in West Africa. Described by William Serle from the slopes of Mount Kupé in 1951, it went undetected until its rediscovery there in 1989 by Duncan McNiven. Concern for the tiny population due to continued forest destruction prompted the launch of the Mount Kupé Forest Project by BirdLife International in 1991. Now run by WWF, the project involves the local community in forest conservation, education and ecotourism development.

The project led to a number of surveys and studies of the critically endangered Mount Kupé Bush-Shrike. Only seven pairs were found despite years of intense work, but exploration of adjacent mountains recently led to the discovery of small numbers at two nearby forest sites. Nonetheless, despite the many visits by ornithologists and birders to the area, probably no more than 25 individuals of this elusive species have ever been found. Recent records from the nearby Bakossi Mts by Chris Wild, Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire and Bob Dowsett prompted us to visit the area in March 2002. Although our visit was brief, two pairs of bush-shrikes were located in the Edib region. One pair was observed for nearly three hours foraging in the mid-

strata of primary forest, and extensive sound-recordings and videotape were obtained. The videograb images presented here are the first photographs of the species in the wild; the only other photograph is of a mist-netted bird in the hand.

The highlands of Cameroon are one of Africa's most important Endemic Bird Areas, harbouring 25 endemic bird species (another two occur on Bioko-Fernando Po, a tiny offshore territory of Equatorial Guinea). These include many elusive and charismatic species such as the bush-shrike, Mount Cameroon Francolin *Francolinus camerunensis* and Bannerman's Turaco *Turaco bannermani*. The little-explored Bakossi Mts potentially hold the largest population of the bush-shrike, as well as many other montane Cameroon endemics such as White-throated Mountain-Babbler *Kupeornis gilberti*. Access difficulties have preserved this extensive wilderness that is only now starting to receive the conservation attention that it deserves. ♀

Birding Africa, 21 Newlands Road, Claremont, Cape Town, 7708, South Africa; and Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch, 7701, South Africa.



Figures 1–2. The first photographs taken in the wild of Mount Kupé Bush-Shrike *Telophorus kupeensis* (Callan Cohen and Michael Mills)

Status of the critically endangered Mauritius Fody *Foudia rubra* in 2001

Rina K. Nichols^{1,b}, Peter Phillips², Carl G. Jones³ and Lance G. Woolaver^{4,c}

Le Foudi de Maurice *Foudia rubra* est une des neuf espèces d'oiseaux forestiers encore présents sur l'Île Maurice. La population a diminué principalement à cause de la déforestation et de la prédation par des mammifères introduits. Entre 1975 et 1993, les effectifs du foudi sont passés de 260 à 120 couples, ce qui représente une diminution de 55%. En 1998–2001, période de la présente étude, aucun changement dans le nombre d'oiseaux n'a été noté par rapport à 1993. Dans le noyau central de sa distribution, l'espèce a connu une expansion vers le nord, mais une des sous-populations situées en dehors de cette zone a continué à régresser. En 2001, la population entière était concentrée sur moins de 17 km². Entre 1993 et 2001, le nombre de territoires en forêt indigène a diminué de 20%. De nouveaux territoires ont été découverts dans des habitats exclusivement exotiques, ce qui n'avait pas été rapporté auparavant et semble représenter un changement réel ou une augmentation du nombre d'habitats utilisés depuis 1993. Si les populations dans ce genre d'habitat s'avéraient viables, les chances de survie de l'espèce augmenteraient de façon significative, vu le fait que la végétation indigène continue de se dégrader.



1



2



3



4

- 1–2. Male Mauritius Fody *Foudia rubra*, Pigeon Wood, Mauritius, December 1991 (Roger Safford)
3. Male Mauritius Fody *Foudia rubra* (Nick Garbutt/NHPA)
4. Female Mauritius Fody *Foudia rubra*, Pigeon Wood, Mauritius, December 1991 (Roger Safford)

Introduction

Since the arrival of humans on Mauritius in the 1600s, over half the endemic vertebrate species have become extinct³. Only nine endemic bird taxa remain on the island, eight of which are threatened^{1,9}. Mauritius Fody *Foudia rubra* is a forest-living weaver. Formerly more abundant throughout the island, the population is now restricted to a small area of south-west Mauritius. Reasons for the decline of Mauritius Fody include large-scale clearance of native habitat, degradation of native ecosystems by introduced plants and animals, and depredation by introduced mammals. Currently, the two main problems are lack of habitat and nest predation^{4,9}. At best 5% of native forest remains on Mauritius, most in a very degraded state¹⁰. Nesting success is extremely poor (c6%) over most of the range, and predation by introduced monkeys *Macaca fascicularis* and rats *Rattus rattus* cause 83–95% of nesting failures¹¹.

Mauritius Fody is currently classified as Critical¹. During the first intensive study of Mauritian passerines in 1973–75, the fody was recognised as endangered. Fewer than 260 pairs remained in a small area in the south-west¹. An attempt was made to introduce Mauritius Fody to Réunion in 1975 but this was unsuccessful². A second census, conducted in 1989–1993, found that both distribution and numbers had decreased by 55%, to 104–120 pairs within a 14.7-km² area⁹. From November 1998 to March 2001, the Mauritius Fody population was re-surveyed to determine its current status. This paper reports the findings of that survey.

Methods

Study area

The forest of south-west Mauritius consists mainly of areas of exotic vegetation, degraded native forest and softwood tree plantations (Fig 1). The most common introduced plant species in areas of exotic and degraded native vegetation include *Psidium cattleianum*, *Ligustrum robustum walkeri*, *Ravenala madagascariensis*, *Syzygium jambos* and *Rubus alceifolius*. Six small *Cryptomeria japonica* groves are located between Montagne Cocotte and upper Combo, the largest being a 6-ha area known as Pigeon Wood. Pétrin and Gouly are nature reserves with small areas of native dwarf forest. Tree plantations consist mainly of *Pinus ellioti* and to a lesser extent *Eucalyptus robusta*, with small areas of *Cryptomeria*, *Araucariaspp* and *Callistemon citrinus*. These plantations were established in 1970–75 and replaced a marshy dwarf forest rich in endemic *Pandanus*.

Census technique

Territory mapping permitted direct comparison with the 1993 survey. During the breeding season, which

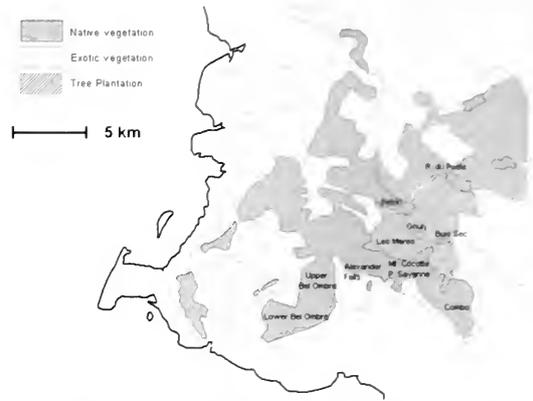


Figure 1. Map of south-west Mauritius with vegetation types and area names referred to in the text (adapted from Safford¹⁰).

Table 1. Coverage of areas surveyed between 1998 and 2001.

Area	Hours	Effort (hr/km ²)	Assessment of coverage
Rivière du Poste	30	15	Good
Bel Ombre	75	9.4	Good
Pétrin	40	23	Good
Gouly	24	13.3	Good
Alexandra Falls	21	6.8	Fair
Montagne Cocotte–Piton Savanne	180	30	Good
Combo	96	24	Good
Les Mares	176	58.6	Good
Bois Sec	20	7.6	Fair

extends from September to March¹², males are very vocal in their territories and 3–4 long visits normally reveal all of the birds². The census was undertaken in November–March 1998–99, and September–March 1999–2000 and 2000–01. Starting with the areas of highest density found by Safford⁹, territorial birds were located and their territories mapped. In areas of high density, separate territories could be distinguished by locating disputing individuals or pairs, birds with distinctive markings, and pairs exhibiting nesting behaviour. Distinguishing territorial birds was most effective during dawn chorus (04.30–06.30 hrs). The total number of territories was estimated by extrapolation from the number of territories found and the amount of available habitat in south-west Mauritius.

Coverage

Coverage varied due to the patchy distribution of the population (Table 1). The coverage categories followed those of Safford⁹. Coverage was considered 'good' when total effort in an area exceeded 8 hr/km². Any area with effort below this was considered to have received 'fair' coverage. Greater than 75% of pairs were believed to have been located in areas that received

good coverage, and at least 50% of pairs were believed to have been found in areas subject to fair coverage. All areas containing the highest fody densities received good coverage. Outlying areas received variable coverage, although most pairs were probably located. No area of suitable habitat was believed to have been missed.

Results

Distribution in 2001

The core Mauritius Fody sub-population occurred between Alexandra Falls and Upper Combo, extending north to Pétrin. Smaller outlying sub-populations occurred at Bel Ombre and Rivière du Poste (Fig 2). The survey located 95 territories, resulting in a total estimated population of 108–122 pairs. See Table 2 for summary.

Population status and structure: 1975 to present

Between 1970 and 1975 extensive areas of native vegetation in south-west Mauritius were felled to make way for tree plantations. Cheke estimated 247–260 pairs of Mauritius Fody in 1975¹, but noted a drastic decline in numbers in 1978. The population was re-estimated at 150–170 after concluding that the high densities recorded in 1975 were an artefact of birds being displaced during forest clearances². From 1975 to 1993 the population declined to between 104 and 120 pairs⁹. The present study found that total numbers have not changed since 1993, with 108–122 pairs estimated in 2001.

The distribution of the Mauritius Fody population has contracted significantly since 1975 (Fig 2). In 1975, the fody's range consisted of a single core area that held over half the total population, and five smaller sub-populations¹. Since 1975, the distribution has become increasingly concentrated within a single core sub-population. In 2001, more than 90% of the total population was restricted to an area of 15 km². The remaining two outlying sub-populations were found within areas of less than 1 km² each.

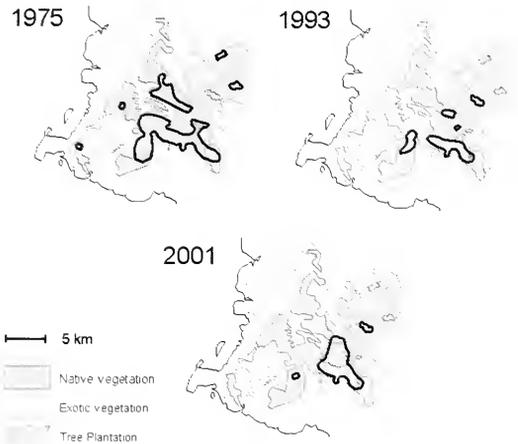


Figure 2. Map of south-west Mauritius showing range of Mauritius Fody *Foudia rubra* (within solid black line) in 1975, 1993 and 2001. Data for 1975 and 1993 are reproduced from Cheke¹ and Safford⁹. In 1975 the small island of native vegetation at Rivière du Poste was not surveyed.

Outlying sub-populations

The number and distribution of territories in Rivière du Poste have remained relatively unchanged since 1993. The Bel Ombre sub-population has shown a consistent decline over the past 25 years. Numbers have decreased from 43 pairs in 1975², to 20–25 pairs in 1993⁹, and five pairs in 2001. The habitat in Bel Ombre is dominated by degraded native vegetation. Of the 15 territories found in Bel Ombre in 1993, nine were in degraded native forest (which did not include any exotic plantations). None of these nine territories was found in 2001. Bel Ombre contains two small plantations of exotic pine *Pinus elliotti*, each approximately 500 m². One plantation is located in Upper Bel Ombre and the other is 2 km to the south. The five Mauritius Fody territories found in Bel Ombre in 2001 were situated around and within the southern plantation of *Pinus elliotti*.

Table 2. Distribution of the Mauritius Fody *Foudia rubra* population in 1992–93 and 2000–01. Data for 1992–93 are from Table 2 in Safford⁹.

Area	Pairs found in 1992–93	Pairs estimated in 1992–93	Pairs found in 2000–01	Pairs estimated in 2000–01
Outlying sub-populations				
Rivière du Poste	4	4–5	4	4–5
Bel Ombre	15	20–25	5	5
Core sub-population				
Pétrin	5	5	5	5
Gouly	2	2	2	2
Alexandra Falls	1–4	2–4	3	4–5
Montagne Cocotte–Piton Savanne	55–56	65–72	49	60–65
Combo	4	6–7	4	5–6
Les Mares	0	0	21	21–24
Bois Sec	0	0	2	2–5
Total	86–90	104–120	95	108–122

Core sub-population

The number of territories in Pétrin, Gouly, Alexandra Falls and Combo did not change between 1993 and 2001, although minor shifts in distribution took place. The population between Montagne Cocotte and Piton Savanne appears to have decreased by 5–10% over the same period. The most notable change in the core sub-population has been the expansion north into exotic vegetation. Twenty-one new territories were found in the Les Mares pine plantation. This expansion has linked the birds at Pétrin and Gouly (which in 1993 were isolated sub-populations) to the core population. Les Mares had been recently clear-cut of native vegetation when Cheke surveyed in 1975, and by 1993 still did not support any Mauritius Fody territories^{8,9}. The same areas where territories were mapped in 2001 were repeatedly and thoroughly checked in 1993, but no territories were found (R J Safford pers comm). Encouraged by the discovery of the new territories at Les Mares, it was decided to survey Bois Sec, which had similar habitat. The area surveyed at Bois Sec included the small patch of remaining native forest and extended 500 m into the pine plantation surrounding the native forest. Two fody territories were located in the Bois Sec pine plantation west of the native patch.

Habitat use

Changes in habitat use by Mauritius Fodies are best examined in terms of three main habitat types: (1) exotic tree plantations (dominated by pine but also including *Cryptomeria* and *Eucalyptus*), (2) native forest with exotic tree plantations (either as isolated groves or edges of larger plantations), and (3) native forest without exotic tree plantations. Twenty percent fewer territories were

found in native forest without exotic plantations in 2001 than in 1993 (Fig 3), resulting in only 19 pairs remaining in such habitat. The sub-population of Bel Ombre has lost all its territories from native forest without exotic tree plantations. Territories in this habitat type have also disappeared from Montagne Cocotte. The most noticeable change in habitat use has been the influx of pairs into pine plantation at Les Mares. Twenty-four percent of territories were found in exclusively pine habitat (Fig 3). Nine active Mauritius Fody nests were found within the pine plantation of Les Mares. This use of exclusively exotic vegetation has not previously been found, and we are convinced that it represents a genuine shift in habitat use since 1993. There have been no major changes in the percentage of territories found in other habitats.

Discussion

Nest predation by introduced mammals is a major factor limiting bird populations in Mauritius^{4,8}. The loss of territories at Bel Ombre and not at Rivière du Poste is probably the result of differential predation rates. The Bel Ombre area consists primarily of degraded native vegetation, whereas Rivière du Poste is a small patch of native vegetation within an extensive tree plantation. Plantation trees are less attractive to nest predators, primarily rats and monkeys, compared with native trees which provide ample fruit and invertebrates, the predators' staple diet. Safford¹¹ estimated that at least half of the Mauritius Fodies nested in exotic trees where rates of nest predation were lower than in native habitats. Frith⁶ found that the Red Forest Fody *F. eminentissima aldabrana* on Aldabra nested in exotic coconut trees due to lower predation rates. It is likely that the territories at Rivière du Poste have persisted because they are

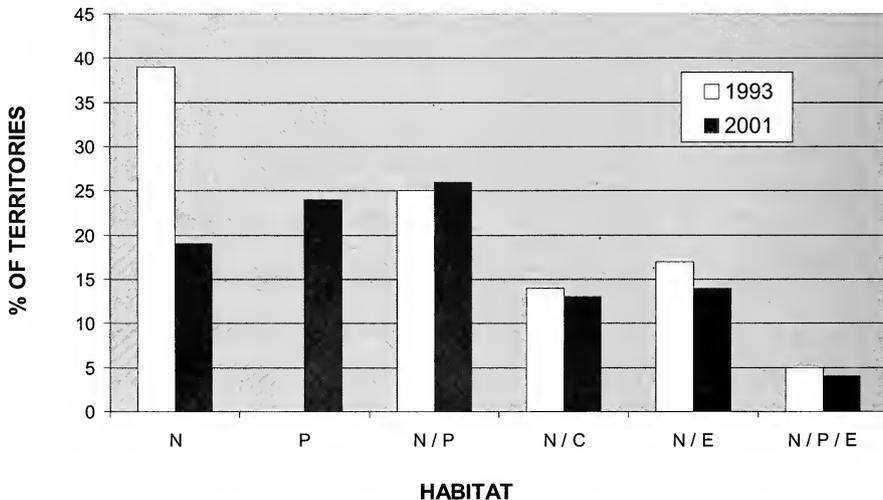


Figure 3. Percentage of Mauritius Fody *Foudia rubra* territories found in Native (N) and *Pinus* (P) forest and in habitats mixed with *Cryptomeria* (C), and *Eucalyptus* (E) in 1993 and 2001. The 1993 figures were determined by referring to territory maps in Safford⁸.

centrally located within a large pine plantation. Monkeys have been observed foraging in *Pinus*, but only on a seasonal basis⁸. During the present study, monkey sightings were significantly more numerous in native habitat. On one occasion a group of three monkeys was observed travelling 100 m into the northern pine plantation at Upper Bel Ombre. The pine trees in this plantation were in poor condition, with several open areas that could easily be searched by predators, which may explain why fody territories have disappeared from this area. In contrast, the southern pine plantation at Bel Ombre, where fody territories persisted, had a denser, more uniform area of pine that may be less easily searched by nest predators.

Previously, the use of exotic habitat by Mauritius Fodies only occurred when adjacent native vegetation was available for feeding^{7,2}. It was previously noted that native vegetation might not be essential for fodies, provided alternate habitat provided suitable substitutes^{4,7}. Observations of fodies probing *Pinus* trees for invertebrates and nectar feeding on *Callistemon citrinus* demonstrate that ample feeding opportunities exist within exotic pine plantations (pers obs)¹⁷. The finding of nine active fody nests at Les Mares confirms that nesting occurs within exclusively exotic habitat (pers obs). This is not unexpected as several other fody species also use exotic habitat for feeding and nesting. Madagascar Red Fody *F. madagascariensis* has been introduced and is common on almost all of the western Indian Ocean islands, where it utilises forest types not present on Madagascar. On Grande Comore, Red Forest Fody *F. eminentissima consobrina* can be found in plantations of introduced coconut, mango and jackfruit⁷. On Rodrigues, where there is very little remaining endemic vegetation, Rodrigues Fody *F. flavicans* inhabits areas of exclusively exotic habitat (pers obs, A Impey pers comm)¹⁵.

It is unknown where the birds occupying Les Mares plantation originated, but it is highly unlikely that the new territories belong to birds from the contracting sub-population of Bel Ombre. There has been no large-scale deforestation or any habitat alteration since 1993 to forcibly displace established birds. Mauritius Fody pairs are highly territorial and sedentary^{4,12}. It therefore appears most likely that these new territories were established by dispersing juveniles rather than adults.

Safford¹³ considered that the population in the core area was highly dependent on birds dispersing from Pigeon Wood. This may still be the most likely scenario. Mauritius Fodies nesting in native vegetation outside Pigeon Wood have had very low nesting success¹¹. These may be sink areas where fody mortality exceeds production¹³. Pairs in Pigeon Wood successfully produced more than 30 fledglings annually between 1989 and 1993^{8,13}.

Pigeon Wood is likely to be the only area with a fody production rate sufficiently high to account for this substantial increase of birds into Les Mares. Birds using pine plantations, such as Les Mares, may also have a comparatively higher nesting success than those in adjacent native forest, as speculated by Safford¹¹. This could have important implications for Mauritius Fody populations nesting in plantations but requires confirmation based on productivity studies within plantation areas.

No Mauritius Fodies were found in Les Mares in 1993, yet this area held 20% of the total Mauritius Fody population in 2001. One explanation may be that the trees were unsuitable for nesting or feeding in 1993. However, tree height and canopy cover of the pines has not markedly changed since 1993 (M Allet, National Parks and Conservation Service, Mauritius, pers comm). Invertebrate communities in the plantation may have increased in abundance over time, therefore making the area more suitable for fodies now. Another possibility may be that Mauritius Fodies in Pigeon Wood have fledged more young since the inception of a predator control programme in 1991. Due to the critical status of the endangered Pink Pigeon *Columba mayeri*, a permanent poison grid (using the anticoagulant Brodifacoum) was established in the *Cryptomeria* grove to reduce rat numbers. The rat control programme appears to have benefited the nesting success of the Pink Pigeon (K Swinnerton, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, pers comm) and may have helped increase fody nesting success.

Conservation requirements

Small, localised populations such as that of the Mauritius Fody are at very high risk of extinction. A new (safeguard) population should be established away from the core area, either in predator-free areas in the wild or in captivity. To achieve this, the following two conservation management techniques should be seriously considered. The first is the translocation of several breeding pairs to areas outside the core population, including offshore islands and/or predator-controlled, fenced mainland areas. The second is to capture and establish several pairs in captivity. Research must immediately commence to learn more concerning husbandry and captive breeding of *Foudia* spp. Preliminary trials of the above techniques should initially be tested on the common *F. madagascariensis*.

Acknowledgements

We thank the Ruth Smart Foundation and United Emirates Natural History Group for financial support of our passerine work on Mauritius. Many thanks for the cooperation and support from Mr Yousouf Mungroo and the staff of the National Parks and Conservation Service. Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust also provided support. Angela Duffy and Niall McCann

spent many hours searching for fodies, and Dennis Hansen, David Roberts, Thomas Bodey and Kenneth Sutcliffe also assisted with the surveys. Roger Safford provided very helpful comments on drafts of this paper. ♀

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^aMauritian Wildlife Foundation, Black River, Mauritius, Indian Ocean.

^bDublin Zoo, Phoenix Park, Dublin, Ireland.

^cWildlife Preservation Trust Canada, 120 King Street, Guelph, Ontario N1E 4P8, Canada.

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Avifauna of the Hwimo area, Nigeria

Marie de Bont

L'auteur rapporte les résultats de ses recensements d'oiseaux, effectués sur une période de 21 mois dans les environs de Hwimo, état du Niger, Nigéria. La région est située dans le domaine soudanien et est constituée d'un mosaïque de savanne arbustive et de terres cultivées, comprenant plusieurs mares et cours d'eau saisonniers ainsi qu'un inselberg. Une méthode standardisée simple a été utilisée, constituée du comptage de la totalité des oiseaux vus et entendus pendant une durée de cinq minutes à des points fixes le long d'un transect. Au total, 21.668 oiseaux de 162 espèces ont été notés. Des données sont fournies sur la distribution géographique et saisonnière de certaines espèces et comparées à celles d'Elgood². Le Cossyphé à calotte blanche *Cossypha albicapilla*, l'Anomalospize parasite *Anomalospiza imberbis* et la Veuve nigérienne *Vidua interjectan* avaient pas précédemment été observés aussi loin au nord-ouest. Certaines espèces, telles que l'Élanion blanc *Elanus caeruleus*, le Piapiac africain *Ptilostomus afer* et certains choucadors présentent des fluctuations d'abondance saisonnière non rapportées par Elgood². Le Milan noir *Milvus migrans* était absent en juillet et août, tandis que le Faucon lanier *Falco biarmicus* et la Cisticole rousse *Cisticola rufus* étaient présents en nombres réduits pendant cette période. L'Outarde à ventre noir *Eupodotis melanogaster* est toujours présente dans la région. Des recherches supplémentaires couvrant un territoire plus vaste sont recommandées afin d'obtenir des données plus détaillées sur les migrations locales éventuelles de certaines espèces.

Introduction

In February 1998, I was posted as a Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) volunteer to a rural Primary Health Care centre in the small village of Hwimo in Mariga Local Government, Niger state, north-west Nigeria (10°41'N 05°24'E; see Fig 1). It has an estimated 600–900 inhabitants. The predominant occupation is farming.

There are few currently active ornithologists in Nigeria. Elgood² points out that little research has been undertaken around Hwimo. Therefore, I decided to monitor the region's avifauna, given that I was to be based there for two years. Regular surveys were commenced in June 1998. Here, I present a summary of the 47 surveys I performed over a 21-

month period. Nomenclature follows *Birds of Africa*, eg Fry *et al.* Names of trees are taken from Maydell⁶.

Habitat

Hwimo is situated in the northern, mainly broadleaf, Guinea Savanna region. Topsoils are largely laterite, clay and sand, and most areas around the village are very rocky. The region is a mosaic of bush (areas with trees, bushes and/or grasses) and farmland (the latter occupying ±30%). The main crops are Guinea corn, millet, maize, rice, groundnut, bambaranut and soybean (recent). Planted fruit trees are mainly mango and cashew. Some areas of farmland are not used annually and become overgrown with grasses and occasionally bushes. There is only a small remnant of gallery forest. Tree diversity in the area is quite high. Large trees are mainly shea butter *Butyrospermum parkii*, locust bean *Parkia biglobosa* and tamarind *Tamarindus indica*, with some baobab *Adansonia digitata* and palm trees. Most are fire tolerant.

Some temporary small streams have running water in the rainy season, when several ponds that attract birds such as Green Heron *Butorides striatus* also form. Within the immediate area of the village there are several inselbergs (rounded bare granite hills), which support a number of species of fruiting trees such as fig *Ficus* spp. Valleys and other areas where sediment accumulates are overgrown by grasses and bushes.

Climate

The climate is typical of the northern Guinea zone. In 1998 the first rains were in mid-March and in 1999 in April. In April–May there was only one shower per week. Both years also witnessed a dry spell in June of nearly three

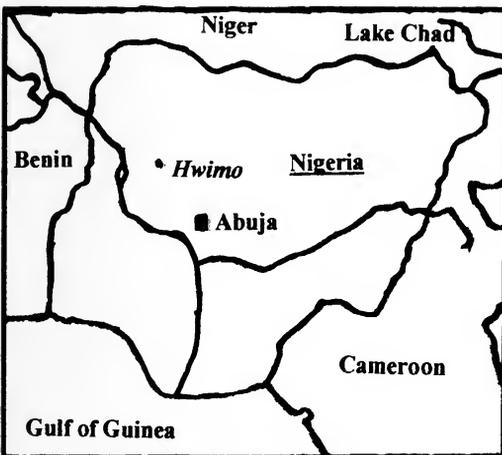


Figure 1. Map of Nigeria showing the position of Hwimo in the country.

weeks. In July the main rainy season commenced, and continued until September. Rainfall declined dramatically in October and the last rain fell in November. According to local people, both years were unusually wet. Temperatures were very high (above 40°C) in March–June, but then fell, with the lowest temperatures in late July–August (c25–30°C). Late in the rainy season (September) temperatures rose to 35°C, until the start of the Harmattan. Temperatures then declined again (c20–30°C) until around March.

Threats to wildlife in the area

Due to the increasing human population, new areas of land are being claimed for building and farming. Many large trees are felled to make way for agriculture and timber for building. Smaller trees are regularly cut for firewood and bushes cleared to make way for farming. Fires are regularly started in the area. Hunting is still widespread in the region. Many farmers carry homemade guns and children catapults. Some mammals persist, but I observed very few. Hunters were encountered returning with porcupine and duiker, but reported that mammals have become obviously scarcer in recent years. One hunter related that c40 years previously there were still hyena directly around Hwimo.

Methods

Soon after arriving in Hwimo I started familiarising myself with the local avifauna, using a tape-recorder to help learn and identify vocalisations. Some were familiar to me from previous visits to West Africa. Literature used for identification and other purposes consisted of Barlow *et al.*¹, Elgood², Mackworth-Praed & Grant⁵, van Perlo⁷ and Serle *et al.*⁸. I also used Gibbon³ to compare my own recordings of songs/calls.

I developed a simple survey based on a method used in The Netherlands by SOVON. A transect through the surrounding region was chosen along which I selected 15 points, rather than the 20 points used by SOVON. The number of survey points was reduced because of the rapid decline in bird activity during the morning. All birds seen and heard during a five-minute at each point were recorded. Precisely the same route was performed once every three weeks. The largest gap between surveys, in July 1999, was caused by illness. Table 1 lists all survey dates and times.

The method is standardised and permits comparison of the results across different counts. By conducting surveys every three weeks a temporal distribution pattern through the year could be ascertained. However, this method does not take account of the differences in the detectability of various species. Apparent absences, eg three of the four *Cisticola* spp, which are much less easily and reliably detected when not vocalising, and several *Ploceus*, *Euplectes* and *Vidua*, which are difficult to identify in their non-breeding plumages, can be explained by such factors that influence detectability. I attempted to commence and complete each survey at a similar time. Species that could not be immediately identified, I attempted to resolve directly following the relevant point count. Earlier in the survey period, I also used the period between point counts to make sound recordings, which explains the late completion of some surveys.

In June 1998 I developed an initial transect, which commenced at the house and traversed the nearest inselberg before returning around this hill to the house. This usually took 3 hrs 15 mins. Points 1–4 were mainly farmland, points 5–9 were on the inselberg and points 10–15 were in bush near the inselberg. Temporary ponds were located near points 2–3 and there was a small seasonal stream near point 12. The transect was surveyed on 27 occasions.

Following the rainy season I designed a second transect, which took me further from the inselberg. This was surveyed from December 1998 onwards and usually took 3 hrs 32 mins to complete. Points 1, 8–10, 13 and 15 were mainly farmland, points 2–5, 7 and 11 were mainly in bush, point 6 was in a small gallery forest and points 12 and 14 were in an area of mature broadleaf trees. No seasonal ponds were located on this transect, but near points 4, 6 and 15 there was a seasonal stream. The transect was surveyed on 20 occasions.

Table 1. Dates and times of surveys

Route 1			Route 2		
Survey	Date	Time	Survey	Date	Time
1	7 Jun 98	07.25–10.55	1	28 Dec 98	07.48–11.42
2	27 Jun 98	06.00–10.18	2	16 Jan 99	07.45–11.03
3	12 Jul 98	07.35–12.14	3	14 Feb 99	07.14–10.45
4	10 Aug 98	09.00–12.02	4	6 Mar 99	07.13–10.50
5	30 Aug 98	08.43–11.35	5	27 Mar 99	06.50–10.22
6	19 Sep 98	07.25–11.55	6	10 Apr 99	06.50–10.32
7	10 Oct 98	07.10–10.26	7	2 May 99	06.47–09.50
8	25 Oct 98	07.01–10.50	8	23 May 99	06.46–10.07
9	14 Nov 98	07.16–10.15	9	5 Jun 99	06.50–10.18
10	05 Dec 98	07.22–10.21	10	27 Jun 99	07.27–11.05
11	25 Dec 98	06.55–10.10	11	7 Aug 99	07.10–11.02
12	10 Jan 99	07.34–10.45	12	28 Aug 99	07.01–10.23
13	7 Feb 99	08.33–10.35	13	18 Sep 99	06.58–11.12
14	7 Mar 99	06.55–10.20	14	10 Oct 99	06.52–11.15
15	28 Mar 99	06.45–09.37	15	23 Oct 99	06.42–10.23
16	17 Apr 99	06.53–09.44	16	13 Nov 99	06.32–09.53
17	15 May 99	06.40–09.28	17	11 Dec 99	07.08–10.06
18	13 Jun 99	07.01–09.32	18	25 Dec 99	06.47–10.16
19	24 Jul 99	07.39–11.15	19	15 Jan 00	07.11–10.08
20	14 Aug 99	06.58–10.19	20	6 Feb 00	06.58–10.12
21	11 Sep 99	07.05–10.43			
22	9 Oct 99	06.43–10.13			
23	24 Oct 99	06.40–09.58			
24	14 Nov 99	06.32–09.45			
25	12 Dec 99	07.00–09.48			
26	2 Jan 00	07.05–09.50			
27	30 Jan 00	07.13–09.47			

Table 2. Number of counts and number of birds per species per month

English and scientific names	Month (number of counts)												Total (47)
	Jan (5)	Feb (3)	Mar (4)	Apr (2)	May (3)	Jun (5)	Jul (2)	Aug (5)	Sep (3)	Oct (6)	Nov (3)	Dec (6)	
Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	179	24	30	30	34	59	23	62	85	142	114	164	946
Green Heron <i>Butorides striatus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	1	7	0	0	13
Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Black-headed Heron <i>A. melanocephala</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Osprey <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
African Cuckoo Falcon <i>Aviceda cuculoides</i>	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	0	2	9
Honey Buzzard <i>Pernis apivorus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Black-shouldered Kite <i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	10
Black Kite <i>Milvus migrans</i>	6	1	3	4	1	4	0	0	1	43	5	6	74
Hooded Vulture <i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i>	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	11
African Harrier Hawk <i>Polyboroides typus</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	5
Pallid Harrier <i>Circus macrourus</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Montagu's Harrier <i>C. pygargus</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Marsh Harrier <i>C. aeruginosus</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	5
harrier sp <i>C. macrourus/pygargus</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Gabar Goshawk <i>Micronisus gabar</i>	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	3	10
Dark Chanting Goshawk <i>Melierax metabates</i>	0	2	2	1	0	2	0	2	1	0	2	0	12
Shikra <i>Accipiter badius</i>	14	5	16	3	7	7	2	4	2	6	2	9	77
Grasshopper Buzzard <i>Butastur rufipennis</i>	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	4
Lizard Buzzard <i>Kaupifalco monogrammicus</i>	1	3	7	2	0	2	1	2	1	1	0	3	23
Red-necked Buzzard <i>Buteo auguralis</i>	2	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	3	13
Tawny Eagle <i>Aquila rapax</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Common Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	10
Fox Kestrel <i>F. alopec</i>	6	1	5	2	5	8	3	5	1	10	2	10	58
Grey Kestrel <i>F. ardosiaceus</i>	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	5
Lanner Falcon <i>F. biarmicus</i>	5	3	4	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	6	3	24
Helmeted Guineafowl <i>Numida meleagris</i>	0	5	4	4	0	10	2	2	0	1	0	0	28
Stone Partridge <i>Ptilopachus petrosus</i>	72	16	72	34	32	66	29	71	35	104	45	66	642
White-throated Francolin <i>Francolinus albogularis</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	5	0	0	1	9
Double-spurred Francolin <i>F. bicaratus</i>	2	0	17	0	1	3	2	6	2	8	5	0	46
African Crane <i>Crex egregia</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	5
Black-bellied Bustard <i>Eupodotis melanogaster</i>	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	7
Bruce's Green Pigeon <i>Treron waalia</i>	0	4	2	1	1	2	3	16	4	3	0	0	36
Black-billed Wood Dove <i>Turtur abyssinicus</i>	68	22	60	34	54	89	20	107	72	100	47	95	768
Namaqua Dove <i>Oena capensis</i>	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6
Speckled Pigeon <i>Columba guinea</i>	5	13	12	4	1	1	8	8	8	2	8	7	71
Red-eyed Dove <i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>	4	0	0	0	0	7	5	4	7	6	3	3	39
Vinaceous Dove <i>S. vinacea</i>	346	274	294	179	144	247	95	257	219	390	181	389	3,015
Laughing Dove <i>S. senegalensis</i>	90	69	94	38	29	81	29	66	50	91	41	100	778
Senegal Parrot <i>Poicephalus senegalus</i>	11	12	15	7	17	23	10	23	12	31	4	19	184
Rose-ringed Parakeet <i>Psittacula krameri</i>	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	6
Violet Turaco <i>Musophaga violacea</i>	3	0	0	0	4	0	0	2	3	6	0	0	18
Western Grey Plantain-eater <i>Crinifer piscator</i>	34	11	23	8	13	17	3	18	13	13	10	15	178
African Striped Cuckoo <i>Oxylophus levillantii</i>	0	0	0	0	5	16	3	13	2	4	3	0	46
African Cuckoo <i>Cuculus gularis</i>	0	0	11	4	9	14	1	0	0	0	0	0	39
Klaas's Cuckoo <i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	4	2	1	0	0	14
Didric Cuckoo <i>C. caprius</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Senegal Coucal <i>Centropus senegalensis</i>	12	15	10	13	19	39	18	34	16	39	13	27	255
Spotted Eagle-Owl <i>Bubo africanus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	3
Pearl-spotted Owllet <i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>	7	4	9	2	3	2	0	0	0	5	1	3	36
Mottled Spinetail <i>Telacanthura ussheri</i>	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
African Palm Swift <i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>	5	0	8	2	4	1	2	0	5	11	0	2	40
Pallid Swift <i>Apus pallidus</i>	0	0	0	0	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	13
Common Swift <i>A. apus</i>	0	0	0	0	85	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	90
White-rumped Swift <i>A. caffer</i>	0	0	1	2	3	22	5	9	6	6	3	4	61
Little Swift <i>A. affinis</i>	0	0	14	15	19	22	9	16	7	51	0	160	313
African Pygmy Kingfisher <i>Ceyx picta</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
White-throated Bee-eater <i>Merops albicollis</i>	1	0	0	0	0	33	0	0	0	21	46	0	101
Carmine Bee-eater <i>M. nubicus</i>	8	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14
Rufous-crowned Roller <i>Coracias naevia</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Abyssinian Roller <i>C. abyssinica</i>	5	9	8	11	10	4	1	0	1	5	2	11	67
Broad-billed Roller <i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Green Wood-Hoopoe <i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>	26	25	14	31	32	9	7	8	22	28	15	43	260
Hoopoe <i>Upupa epops</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Red-billed Hornbill <i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>	38	16	35	28	39	52	16	43	32	40	16	32	387

African Grey Hornbill <i>T. nasutus</i>	44	34	38	24	15	29	0	6	11	33	22	64	320
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird <i>Pogonius chrysoconus</i>	77	43	67	32	49	71	24	45	26	47	31	98	610
Veillot's Barbet <i>Lybius vieilloti</i>	4	9	8	8	0	2	0	0	4	6	0	6	47
Bearded Barbet <i>L. dubius</i>	10	2	14	7	4	7	4	13	11	11	5	7	95
Greater Honeyguide <i>Indicator indicator</i>	2	2	5	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	2	17
Lesser Honeyguide <i>I. minor</i>	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	5
Fine-spotted Woodpecker <i>Campethera punctuligera</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Grey Woodpecker <i>Dendropicus goertae</i>	5	9	8	4	6	11	1	4	2	11	2	3	66
Brown-backed Woodpecker <i>Picoides obsoletus</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Flappet Lark <i>Mirafra rufocinnamomea</i>	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Sun Lark <i>Galerida modesta</i>	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	4	0	0	1	2	12
Mosque Swallow <i>Hirundo senegalensis</i>	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Lesser Striped Swallow <i>H. abyssinica</i>	0	0	10	2	6	7	2	5	0	9	0	0	41
Preuss's Cliff Swallow <i>H. preussi</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Rock Martin <i>H. fulgula</i>	9	5	8	6	0	11	4	7	6	12	5	6	79
Pied-winged Swallow <i>H. leucosoma</i>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Ethiopian Swallow <i>H. aethiopica</i>	66	0	4	3	1	2	8	30	100	30	36	281	
Barn Swallow <i>H. rustica</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Common House Martin <i>Delichon urbica</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	15	74	111
Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	4
Red-shouldered Cuckoo-Shrike <i>Campophaga phoenicea</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	1	0	6
Common Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	125	80	184	84	77	143	44	95	50	122	61	150	1,215
Nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat <i>Cossypha niveicapilla</i>	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	2	0	3	0	0	9
White-crowned Robin-Chat <i>C. albicapilla</i>	0	0	2	0	1	2	0	2	2	1	1	0	11
Common Redstart <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Familiar Chat <i>Cercomela familiaris</i>	8	2	7	4	1	5	1	1	1	2	2	0	34
Mocking Cliff-Chat <i>Myrmecocichla cinnamomeiventris</i>	44	13	43	33	21	46	25	39	27	33	17	31	372
African Thrush <i>Turdus pelios</i>	0	0	3	10	15	32	10	14	4	1	0	0	89
Melodious Warbler <i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
Olivaceous Warbler <i>H. pallida</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Singing Cisticola <i>Cisticola cantans</i>	1	0	0	0	3	2	0	3	2	17	0	1	29
Rock-loving Cisticola <i>C. aberrans</i>	14	4	17	12	10	35	17	26	15	29	12	11	202
Rufous Cisticola <i>C. rufus</i>	0	1	0	0	0	4	6	16	14	15	0	1	57
Fan-tailed Cisticola <i>C. juncidis</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	1	0	6
Tawny-flanked Prinia <i>Prinia subflava</i>	20	15	24	13	32	64	23	53	20	41	7	37	349
Bleating Warbler <i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>	18	12	15	12	12	42	24	44	30	40	9	14	272
Senegal Eremomela <i>Eremomela pusilla</i>	31	32	25	24	14	25	2	20	0	19	20	30	242
Northern Crombec <i>Sylvietta brachyura</i>	4	1	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	3	3	2	20
Willow Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	7
Northern Black Flycatcher <i>Melaenornis edolioides</i>	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	3	0	2	2	2	15
Pale Flycatcher <i>M. pallidus</i>	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Pied Flycatcher <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	5	17
African Paradise-Flycatcher <i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	0	0	0	0	7	4	0	6	2	6	1	0	26
Senegal Batis <i>Batis senegalensis</i>	5	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	14
Brown Babbler <i>Turdoides plebejus</i>	71	61	50	29	51	31	21	24	34	36	0	85	493
Blackcap Babbler <i>T. reinwardtii</i>	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	10
Yellow Penduline Tit <i>Anthoscopus parvulus</i>	0	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	8
Pygmy Sunbird <i>Hedydipna platyra</i>	26	19	10	8	2	0	0	0	0	4	13	34	116
Scarlet-chested Sunbird <i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>	25	22	61	43	54	80	28	98	49	51	11	72	594
Yellow White-eye <i>Zosterops senegalensis</i>	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Yellow-billed Shrike <i>Corvinella corvina</i>	74	64	77	34	82	91	25	77	21	51	30	60	686
Grey-headed Bush-Shrike <i>Malaconotus blanchoti</i>	4	4	2	5	2	2	0	0	0	11	1	0	31
Black-crowned Tchagra <i>Tchagra senegala</i>	2	0	5	6	8	4	2	5	1	14	0	1	48
Northern Puffback <i>Dryocopus gambensis</i>	9	4	6	6	9	3	4	0	1	7	0	8	57
Yellow-crowned Gonolek <i>Laniarius barbarus</i>	14	6	11	14	11	18	4	12	3	23	8	16	140
Brubru <i>Nilaus afer</i>	7	5	6	3	6	7	0	1	0	3	1	2	41
White Helmet-Shrike <i>Prionops plumatus</i>	19	24	15	14	16	16	9	3	8	14	0	15	153
African Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus auratus</i>	11	23	40	19	33	21	14	16	10	24	8	23	242
Fork-tailed Drongo <i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	22	17	18	16	16	13	2	20	5	11	10	40	190
Pied Crow <i>Corvus albus</i>	17	5	4	1	0	2	0	1	0	8	2	5	45
Piapiac <i>Ptilostomus afer</i>	39	19	14	23	9	16	15	3	0	0	32	16	186
Red-winged Starling <i>Onychognathus morio</i>	7	2	10	31	0	20	5	22	0	8	1	9	115
Purple Glossy Starling <i>Lamprolaima purpureus</i>	16	16	12	3	40	189	108	73	49	186	58	54	804
Bronze-tailed Glossy Starling <i>L. chalcurus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	2	6	1	0	0	17
Greater Blue-eared Starling <i>L. chalybaeus</i>	0	0	1	0	0	26	2	15	2	0	0	0	46
Lesser Blue-eared Starling <i>L. chloropterus</i>	0	0	0	0	0	163	128	103	38	253	47	0	732
Long-tailed Glossy Starling <i>L. caudatus</i>	16	7	10	5	23	45	10	31	9	32	5	28	221
Violet-backed Starling <i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>	0	0	17	15	22	29	2	3	0	0	0	0	88
Grey-headed Sparrow <i>Passer griseus</i>	9	1	7	1	3	7	4	20	3	18	13	12	98
Bush Petronia <i>Petronia dentata</i>	228	116	72	26	17	19	0	17	51	137	65	177	925
White-billed Buffalo-Weaver <i>Bubalornis albirostris</i>	77	0	0	22	0	29	25	10	25	10	0	2	200
Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver <i>Plocepasser superciliosus</i>	6	7	12	1	8	8	5	2	4	8	0	10	71

Little Weaver <i>Ploceus luteolus</i>	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
African Masked Weaver <i>P. velatus</i>	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	9	6	4	0	0	25
Heuglin's Masked Weaver <i>P. heuglini</i>	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	1	0	1	1	0	11
Village Weaver <i>P. cucullatus</i>	0	0	0	0	6	6	10	14	0	0	0	0	36
Red-headed Weaver <i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>	3	2	6	5	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	8	31
Black-winged Bishop <i>Euplectes hordeaceus</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	9	17	28	23	0	0	78
Red Bishop <i>Euplectes orix</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	20	14	31	0	20	89
Parasitic Weaver <i>Anomalospiza imberbis</i>	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Red-winged Pytilia <i>Pytilia phoenicoptera</i>	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Red-billed Firefinch <i>Lagonosticta senegalae</i>	7	7	0	0	0	0	1	12	0	1	2	10	40
Black-faced Firefinch <i>L. larvata</i>	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Lavender Waxbill <i>Estrilda caerulescens</i>	25	9	27	3	22	11	3	2	1	11	4	0	118
Orange-cheeked Waxbill <i>E. melpoda</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Black-rumped Waxbill <i>E. troglodytes</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	13	1	2	0	4	27
Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu <i>Uraeginthus bengalus</i>	38	30	18	21	32	36	6	39	22	53	9	20	324
African Quailfinch <i>Ortygospiza atricollis</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Bronze Mannikin <i>Lonchura cucullata</i>	1	10	2	3	0	23	13	33	6	29	0	3	123
Village Indigobird <i>Vidua chalybeata</i>	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	10	14
Pin-tailed Whydah <i>V. macroura</i>	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	6
Long-tailed Paradise-Whydah <i>V. interjecta</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	3
Yellow-fronted Canary <i>Serinus mozambicus</i>	23	17	22	29	42	64	13	43	17	42	11	18	341
Cinnamon-breasted Bunting <i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>	62	22	18	11	2	8	1	3	23	129	46	69	394
Brown-rumped Bunting <i>E. affinis</i>	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	7
Cabanis's Bunting <i>E. cabanisi</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total number of individuals													21,668

Both transects can be viewed as an extension of the other. For example, point 15 on route 1 is located on the same track as points 1–2 of route 2. It would have been possible to develop a transect comprising half of each route. It was only after commencing surveys on the first transect that I discovered the existence of the stream with its small gallery forest along with an interesting mix of bush and fields that formed the basis of the second transect.

Results

In the absence of other literature, I used Elgood² as a reference in which to set my observations into context, although very little previous ornithological work has focused on this part of Nigeria. For instance, Kontagora, the nearest reasonable-sized town to Hwimo, is only rarely mentioned by Elgood².

Given the existence of some different habitats on the two transects it was comparatively unsurprising that several species were only recorded on one and not the other route. The presence of the inselberg on the first transect and gallery forest and greater numbers of tall trees on the second transect presumably account for most of the differences in species recorded on the two routes.

The total species list from the surveys, including the sum of individuals recorded per month is presented in Table 2. The number of species recorded during the survey was 162, which is 85% of the total I found in the area (191 species). In total I counted 21,668 individuals (nearly 31 per point). Ten species (of which three are doves, Vinaceous Dove *Streptopelia vinacea*, Laughing Dove *S. senegalensis* and Black-billed Wood Dove *Turtur abyssinicus*) account for 48.5% of all birds (10,511 individuals). The most abundant

was *Streptopelia vinacea* (3,015, or 4.3 individuals per point). All are very vocal or very obvious species.

Many species exhibit a clear temporal distribution pattern. Some are wet-season visitors (eg African Crake *Crex egregia* and several species of cuckoo) and others are dry-season visitors (eg Bush Petronia *Petronia dentata* and Pygmy Sunbird *Hedydipna platura*), while some are only passage migrants (eg Common Swift *Apus apus* and White-throated Bee-eater *Merops albicollis*). Ten Western Palearctic breeders were recorded (Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*, Common Swift, Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*, Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*, Common House Martin *Delichon urbica*, Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*, Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*, Melo-



Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* by Mark Andrews

dious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta*, Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* and Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*).

Several species have not previously been mentioned from as far north-west within Nigeria as Hwimo²: White-crowned Robin-Chat *Cossypha albicapilla* was found in seven months, Parasitic Weaver *Anomalospiza imberbis* in January and June, and Long-tailed Paradise-Whydah *Vidua interjecta* in August and October.

Three species exhibit an unexplained seasonal pattern: Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*, Piapiac *Ptilostomus afer* and Long-tailed Glossy Starling *Lamprotornis caudatus*. Due to the relatively small size of the study area it is impossible to know if these species perform migrations, but it is plausible that all three move only within a broader area around Hwimo while foraging. Glossy starlings (*Lamprotornis* spp) were very numerous during some periods at fig trees and other fruiting trees. Elgood² considered that there was no evidence for seasonal movements for any of these three species. A survey of the broader area around Hwimo might produce some novel ideas concerning this subject.

Two species might have been expected to occur throughout the year according to Elgood², but I failed to record Black Kite *Milvus migrans* in July–August, and during the wet season (April–August) I recorded just one Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*. Black-winged Bishop *Euplectes bordeaceus* and Red Bishop *E. orix* were, as expected, principally recorded in the wet season, but both were also noted in the dry season, when they are more localised within a smaller area, and were not seen in all months. Rufous Cisticola *Cisticola rufus* was recorded in several months year-round, but during the dry season it was easily overlooked due to the cessation of vocal activity. It appears to be reasonably common around Hwimo. Identification was

confirmed by Claude Chappuis, who reported (*in litt* 2001) that my recordings closely resemble those he has made in Nigeria around Kaduna.

Black-bellied Bustard *Eupodotis melanogaster* still occurs in the area. Elgood² mentions that most large birds are declining in Nigeria because of habitat loss and hunting. Many people carry local-made guns around Hwimo, which is growing in size as bush is cleared to make way for agriculture, but the species can still be observed in small numbers.

Conclusions

One hundred and sixty-two species were recorded during the survey. While the nature of the project does not provide a fully representative view of the avifauna around Hwimo, it does offer a reasonably comprehensive overview of those species occurring in the area. Further research of a broader area might provide more in-depth information concerning the possible (local) migrations of several species.

Acknowledgements

I thank Herma Klandermans for her patience and for reading the drafts, Henk Sierdsema and Dirk Zoetebier for their help in processing the results of the survey, and Cor de Vaan, Mark Hopkins and Yvonne Galan for also reading drafts of the manuscript. ☺

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White-crowned Robin Chat *Cossypha albicapilla*
by Mark Andrews

further south, from where few winter observations are available. In 1988, Dutch observers in the Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania, recorded several small swifts thought to be this species, including four on 25 April, a maximum of 50 on 28 June and four on 21 October¹⁵. Recently a Plain Swift was recorded in the Cape Verdes, in December 2001 (T Clarke pers comm).

Since the late 1980s, there have been records of small dark swifts on the south-west Moroccan coast into April, with indications of possible breeding, as birds have been observed entering holes or crevices in sea cliffs, between Agadir and Tamri. However, proof is required of breeding. If proven, the species will not need to be removed from the list of Macaronesian endemics, as the Morocco coastline from Cap Rhir south is considered part of this region (J Lopez Rondon pers comm)²². The map depicts all sightings of these swifts in Morocco and a summary of the records is presented in the Appendix. Most of these records also appear in Thévenot *et al*²⁴.

Observers visiting Morocco are encouraged to look for these swifts and to send details of any seen to Prof. Jacques Franchimont, Secretary, Morocco Rare Birds Committee, Quartier Abbas Lemsadi, rue n°6, n°22, V.N. 50.000 Meknes, Morocco, e-mail: jfranchimont@extra.net.ma.

Acknowledgements

I thank Valéry Schollaert for initial discussion on Plain Swifts, which prompted me to write this paper, Alec Zino for information on Plain Swifts on Madeira, Eduardo García del Rey and Tony Clarke for comments on the species' status in the Canaries and information relating to Macaronesia. Jacques Franchimont, J. Lopez Rondon and Michel Thévenot also provided information and references concerning the species' status in Macaronesia. Special thanks to all of the observers who have submitted records over the years. I am also grateful to Michel Thévenot for commenting on an earlier draft of this paper. ❧

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Appendix. Records of suspected Plain Swifts *Apus unicolor* in Morocco

* Possible breeding localities

** Record subsequently withdrawn, as wings and tail considered too short for Plain Swift

Sidi Akhfennir (Tarfaya)

One, 5 January 1988** (A van den Berg)³²⁶.

Oued Laaguig estuary (Lower Draa)

5–6, 6–7 April 1997 (F Cuzin).

Tan-Tan Plage (Lower Draa)

One, 3 February 1992 (C Murphy); 1–2, 21–22 January 1997 (J Troop)¹⁰.

25 km south of Oued Massa estuary

Two carrying nesting material and entering cliff, 25 April 1996* (C Bowden).

Oued Massa estuary

'Some', 28 December 1977 (B Anderson); 5, January 1978 (U B Casselen); 2–3, 7 April 1978 (S Davies *et al*); 20, 4–10 February, 1979 (P J Ewins)²²; one, 24 August 1979 (P W J Findlay); one, 24 December 1979 (J Franchimont)²³; one, 7 January 1987 (A Gregory)³; one, 31 December 1988 (T Gullick)⁴; two, 27 December 1989 (O Amani)¹⁴; eight, 12 February 1990 (M Ajne *et al*); five, 7 January and 9 January 1992 (M Forsberg, M Golley & J Nilssen); unknown number, 23 January 1992 (D Moreen, P Hiney & A Rhods)¹⁷; one, 11–12 April 1992 (A Eadson)¹⁷; 11, 21 January 1997 (M Leivo & H Kontkanen); and 14–15, 10 April 2001 (V Schollaert).

Agadir (Souss estuary)

Sixty, 27 January 1979 (P J Ewins)²²; four, over unfinished buildings, 27 January 1982 (M J Palmer); eight, 14 March 1983 (N Dymond & D Coutts)¹; and 2–3, 6–7 December 1985 (C Hjort)².

Agadir–Cap Rhir

Ten, 30 March 1993* (C Thomas *et al*)⁶; c6, 3 km north of Taghazout, 29 April 1998* (J D R Vernon)⁷.

Tamri

Recorded, 30 December 1984 (P Geniez); four pairs, 5 April 1988* (E & C Marsh)⁴; 50 pairs, 2 April 1990* (R Jabekk)¹⁴; one, 2 February 1992 (C Murphy); 40, south of Tamri, 23 April 1992* (P Lansdown & B Bland)⁶; c4 pairs, 19 April 1993* (T Gullick & J Coldewey)⁶; 180, 1 km south of Tamri, 14 February 1994 (H Karhu *et al*)¹⁸; six, 19 January 1999 (P Lansdown); and three, 10 km north of Tamri, April 1999 (C Bowden).

Safi

Two, 13 December 1986 (M Grussu); two, 1 January 1989 (T Gullick)⁴.

Sidi Bou Rhaba

Eighty, 30 January 1997 (M Leivo & H Kontkanen)

Moulay Boussehham

Three, 2 December 1990 (N J Redman)⁵.



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Afrotropical *Sylvia* Warblers

Hadoram Shirihai, Gabriel Gargallo, Andreas J. Helbig, Alan Harris and David Cottridge

The following text is reprinted (with minor edits for Bulletin style) from *Sylvia Warblers* by Hadoram Shirihai, Gabriel Gargallo and Andreas Helbig, illustrated by Alan Harris, and photographic editing by David Cottridge, with permission of the publishers, Christopher Helm, London. In the book, the product of over 15 years extensive museum and field research, the authors advocate the recognition of several new 'species' of *Sylvia*, based on a comprehensive review of morphology, vocalisations and DNA research of the genus. One of the most remarkable of their findings, though already suggested by previous genetic work, was that *Parisoma*, a genus near endemic to the African continent be subsumed within *Sylvia*. The extract that appears here includes the introduction to the Afrotropical *Sylvia*, the plates and photographs depicting the entire subgroup and the text dealing with Brown Sylvia *Sylvia lugens* (Brown Parisoma *Parisoma lugens* in *Birds of Africa*). A review of the work will appear in the next Bulletin.

Afrotropical (Arabian) *Sylvia* (former '*Parisoma*')

The systematic affinities and validity of the genus '*Parisoma*' (Swainson, 1832) have been highly controversial for decades (see discussions in Vaurie 1957, Erard *et al* 1997 and the introduction to this book). Our analysis of their morphology, behaviour, vocalizations and mitochondrial DNA sequences convincingly demonstrates that all five species should be subsumed within *Sylvia*. This matches the findings of Blondel *et al* (1996), based on DNA-DNA hybridization (two species), and the conclusions of Sibley & Ahlquist (1990), Sibley & Monroe (1990), Dowsett & Forbes-Watson (1993), Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire (1993) and Erard *et al* (1997).

The genus *Sylvia* is unusually divergent compared to other passerine genera and may, in the future, warrant division into several genera. However, if we wish to retain in this genus all species presently allocated to it, then the five '*Parisoma*' also demand inclusion, as otherwise *Sylvia* would not constitute a monophyletic group (i.e. it would not contain all descendants of its most recent common ancestor). The fact that we treat the former '*Parisoma*' species in a different format, and place them at the end of the book, does not indicate that they are closely interrelated, but simply reflects the very limited information available for these taxa.

The five '*Parisoma*' do not even constitute each other's closest relatives, but derive from two independent ancestors: Brown Sylvia and Yemen Warbler *Sylvia buryi* belong to the Orphean *S. hortensis*/Arabian Warbler *S. leucomelaena* group, while the other three species (*boehmi*, *layardi* and *subcaeruleum*) represent a separate clade without close relatives in the genus (although there is some indication that Barred Warbler *S. nisoria* may be their closest relative).

Afrotropical *Sylvia* possess several characters not observed elsewhere within the genus. Worthy of specific mention are, the black breast-band and bold white wing

pattern of *boehmi*, the unusual vocalizations of *buryi* and *boehmi*, the throat/upper-breast streaking of *subcaeruleum* and *layardi*, the buff/rufous vent of several species, and some behavioural peculiarities (e.g. bark-foraging in burying). Such attributes may create the impression that '*Parisoma*' are not *Sylvia*, but this is merely a result of our Eurocentric view of the genus. Species such as Blackcap *S. atricapilla* (black/rufous crown patch), Barred Warbler (subterminal feather markings and yellow iris) and the Dartford *S. undata*/Mammora's *S. sarda* group (long graduated tail) are equally 'unusual', when compared with the more closely related and species-rich Mediterranean group normally regarded as 'typical' *Sylvia*. Genetically, Blackcap and Garden Warbler *S. borin* are clearly more divergent from other *Sylvia* (and from each other) than are the five '*Parisoma*'.

In the light of this, the inclusion of '*Parisoma*' within *Sylvia* is unsurprising. This treatment will, of course, modify our view of the genus, and presents a challenge to ornithologists to study the '*Parisoma*' with a rigour equal that applied to many of the Eurasian taxa.

Brown Sylvia *Sylvia lugens*

Sylvia lugens Rüppell, 1840, *Neue Wirbelthiere Fauna Abyssinien*, Vögel, p.113; Simien—Abyssinia.

1 Introduction

General. Of the five Afrotropical *Sylvia*, formerly considered *Parisoma*, Brown Sylvia is most similar, in morphology and habits, to its Palearctic relatives. *S. lugens* is widespread, but patchily distributed, in E Africa, from Ethiopia south to Malawi, but is restricted to highland biomes, from c1,400 m to 3,700 m. Habitat preferences vary geographically and altitudinally, from open *Acacia* woodland to wooded moors and Afroalpine bushy areas. Apparently largely resident.

Systematics. Five subtly differentiated subspecies are recognised. They principally differ in upperparts ground colour, extent of underparts markings, and extent and intensity of buffish vent coloration. To a lesser extent, variation exists in the extent of white in the tail and throat feather tips.

S. l. lugens Rüppell, 1840—Ethiopian plateaux (except Bale Mts), probably to only 2,500 m.

S. l. griseiventris (Erard, 1978)—Bale Mts above 3,300 m.

S. l. jacksoni (Sharpe, 1899)—Sudan and Uganda (Didinga and Imatong Mts), Kenya, N Tanzania, Zaïre (Marungu Highlands) and Malawi.

S. l. clara (Meise, 1934)—restricted to Matengo Highlands (northeast of Lake Malawi); often synonymised with *jacksoni*.

S. l. prigoginei (Schouteden, 1952)—Zaïre, northwest of Lake Tanganyika and Itombwe Highlands.

2 Field Identification

Overall length: c13.5 cm; tail/wing ratio: c96; primary projection: approximately one-third of tertial length.

2.1 Characters

A small *Sylvia*, comparable in size to Sardinian Warbler *S. melanocephala*, with very uniform brownish and grey-brown plumage. Appears like a diminutive Yemen Warbler, but iris dark brown, not whitish. Proportionately short, rounded wings and long, deeply graduated, tail. Notably rounded head appears large. Mid-length, broad-based bill is pointed and slightly decurved. Thus, in proportions, it is most similar to *S. buryi*, although distinctly smaller. Predominantly brown plumage also recalls Yemen Warbler (but see below). Inconspicuous while foraging, well concealed in

Identification summary: Brown Sylvia *S. lugens*

Small, rather featureless, principally brown warbler. Similar to small Palearctic *Sylvia* in jizz. Frequents *Acacia* canopy in many areas. Sexes almost alike; age-related plumage variation very limited.

- Very dark warm brown above, with slightly darker crown and contrastingly black tail.
- Underparts paler, fulvous brownish-grey; chin/throat often mottled whitish.
- At close range, may have buff-rufous rear underparts, whitish mid-belly patch and, occasionally, impression of faint greyish breast streaking.
- Has variable, although usually prominent, whitish edges and tips to tail.
- Dark iris.
- Bill black and tarsus dark grey.
- Proportionately short winged and long tailed; moves restlessly, often waving raised tail.
- Contact call, nasal, pressed *zrrr*; alarm call, a harsh rattle *zrr-zrr-zrr...*

canopy of flat-topped *Acacia* (gleaning insects), movements and behaviour much like other *Sylvia*. Main contact/alarm call is a harsh, nasal *zrrr*; given in a rapid series when excited. Unobtrusive; usually singly or in pairs, except when caring for fledged young.

2.2 Plumage variation

Limited seasonal and age-related variation; sexes virtually alike; slight geographical variation (see below). Following description refers to nominate.

Adult fresh (following post-nuptial moult)

Moulted remiges and rectrices very fresh; iris distinctively reddish sepia-brown (no olive). Entire upperparts almost uniformly dark earth/slate-brown, often tinged slightly paler/greyer, but crown, especially around eye and forehead, can be moderately darker (depending on light and angle of view) and merges gradually with rest of upperparts. Tail contrastingly blackish. Dark crown colour extends to ear-coverts (though these paler); lores as crown, or with some pale flecking. Wing usually as upperparts, but feathers have darker centres and paler narrow fringes. Tertials and alula almost uniform brown with thin, diffuse pale edges. Underparts clearly paler, largely cream buff-grey, but duskier brownish-grey on flanks and breast (which often appear faintly streaked). Chin and throat subtly mottled light and dark due to whitish-grey tips, thin dark brown subterminal bar and dark grey bases to feathers. Narrow belly patch whitish; rear flanks, vent and thighs tinged buffish-ochraceous. Undertail-coverts dark buffish-brown with diffusely demarcated, paler cream fringes. Tail has Lesser Whitethroat *S. curruca*-like pattern, with relatively large whitish-cream edges (cf other races). Outermost rectrix (r6) has almost entirely white outer vane and wedge-like tip (10–14 mm deep); r5 usually has white tip on both webs, but notably shallower in extent (as deep as 5–10 mm) and with no, or very thin, edge to outer web; r4–r3 similar, but progressively narrower tips, with no, or only c1 mm, whitish tip on r2; and r1 (innermost) is almost uniformly dark with paler diffuse edges. Underwing-coverts extensively tinged pinkish-buff. Eye-ring brown; orbital ring black. Bill almost entirely black. Tarsus dark slate-grey.

1st-winter (following post-juvenile moult)

Similar to adult, but iris olive-brown; partially yellow gape-flanges may still be visible. Retained juvenile remiges, rectrices and primary-coverts slightly more worn and fringed rufous. Retained juvenile rectrices have much reduced pale tips and edges, which are less white and more buffy. Overall, paler and more fulvous below, reminiscent of juvenile (which see).

Pre-breeding ('spring birds')

1st-summer probably retain a variable number of distinctive juvenile feathers that become progressively more worn and bleached, and have rustier fringes. Overall, plumage less bright.

Juvenile

Distinctive: typical loose, soft feathering, with upperparts, head and wing-feather fringes characteristically paler brown, washed rufous. Underparts paler and almost unpatterned, with buffish-cream suffusion, most intense on breast, flanks and vent. Lores often flecked whitish. Tail and bare parts as 1st-winter (see Fig 1).

2.3 Confusion species

No other *Sylvia* is easily confused with this species, as its combination of small size and overall brown coloration is virtually unique. Structure and plumage almost identical to Yemen Warbler. The latter, however, is well-separated geographically, distinctly larger and has a whitish iris.

3 Voice

Song. *S. l. griseiventris*. A full, short warble, slightly scratchy, surprisingly loud and full for the bird's size (Figs 2–3). Typical *Sylvia* quality, recalling Garden Warbler, but much shorter and deeper pitched. Most resembles Arabian Warbler. In Kenya, *S. l. jacksoni* song described as short (0.7 seconds), consisting of seven notes, beginning and ending abruptly: *p-r-s-z-choo-too-took*, ie very different from *griseiventris* in Ethiopia. Geographical variation in song remains unstudied, but may be substantial.

Calls. Common contact call is a nasal, pressed *zrrrr*, often given in short series. Alarm is a loud Sardinian Warbler-like harsh rattle *zrr-zrr-zrr-zrr-zrr-zrr-zrr-zrr* (Fig 4), consisting of a rapid series of elements (6.4–8.5 per second) similar to contact call. Rattle may also have a territorial function (like similar vocalisations in Barred and Sardinian Warblers), as often used in response to vocalisations of territory neighbours (ortape playback).

Practical use, seasonality. Song and rattling call important in locating birds, the species is otherwise hard

to find in dense tree canopy. Vocalisations carry quite far in open habitat. Song usually delivered from inside cover. Seasonality poorly documented, but in September/October (after breeding season), on Bale Mts, there was very little spontaneous song (subsong) and little response to playback. Rattling call given year-round.

4 Subspecies Taxonomy

4.1 Subspecies recognition

Five races, although perhaps not all warrant recognition. The following account is based on Erard (1978), material (all subspecies) in BMNH and MNHN (Paris), and personal field experience with nominate *lugens* and *griseiventris* from both sides of the Ethiopian Rift Valley. Subspecific separation is best evaluated by studying underparts coloration, especially the amount of buff/rufous on the vent, the amount of white in tail and, to a lesser extent, size. However, subspecific identification is often complicated by individual variation, inconsistency of characters and frequent intermediates. Further study is warranted.

***S. l. lugens*.** This Ethiopian form is characteristically dark, richly coloured and patterned, and small.

[Nomenclature and type-locality: *Sylvia (curruca) lugens* Rüppell, 1804, *Neue Wirbelthiere Fauna Abyssinien. Vögel*, p. 133, pl. 42, fig 2, labelled *Curruca (Sylvia) lugens*—Simien Province, Abyssinia. Designation relies on dark upperparts, even darker crown, rufous lower abdomen, well-marked white flecking on chin/throat, and whiter tail tips and edges; apparently the smallest race, although few morphometric data are available.]

♂♂/♀♀ Upperparts typically dark and deep sepia-brown, almost always with darker crown. Rear flanks and vent extensively warm ochraceous and buff; throat and chin feathers tipped whitish-grey, thus presenting marked mottled appearance; breast usually more markedly streaked (but still faint and variable). Whitish area on outer tail feathers appears more extensive than in other races (see description above and Fig 1).

***S. l. griseiventris*.** Endemic to Bale Mts, Ethiopia. Compared with nominate, has characteristically more uniform upperparts, paler, featureless underparts and less white in tail; also larger than nominate.

[Nomenclature and type-locality: *Parisoma lugens griseiventris* Erard, 1978, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, 98, p. 46—Dinsho (= Gurie), Bale, Ethiopia. Designation relies on uniformly very dark upperparts, featureless underparts, with strongly reduced rufous on lower abdomen and even less white in outer tail feathers; also larger than nominate, with wing length of three males 64–66, mean 65.3, and tail 61–64.5, mean 62.5 (Erard 1978).]

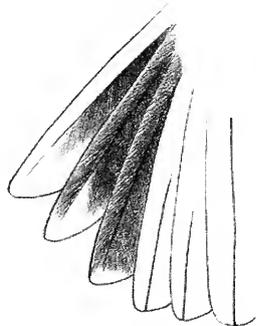


Figure 1 Tail pattern of adult Brown *Sylvia*.



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1 Brown Sylvia *S. lugens lugens*, probably imm. male autumn, Western Highlands, west Ethiopia, September 1997 (H. Shirihi). Rather long tail, dark warm brown upperparts with darker crown, ear-coverts and blackish tail. Reddish sepia-brown iris and moult pattern suggest a 2nd-year. Very worn juv. unmoulted primaries, secondaries and primary-coverts, as well as three outermost greater coverts. Only the seven innermost greater coverts and two smaller tertials were replaced during previous post-juv. moult (the fresh, largest, tertial was replaced later in the non-breeding season). **2-3 Yemen Warbler** *S. buryi*, probably 1st-winter, autumn, Saudi Arabia, November 1994 (S. Aspinall). Pale iris, dark brown upperparts, dusky underparts and pale unstreaked throat are distinctive characters of this species. Rather worn tail suggests a 1st-winter with retained juv. rectrices. **4-5 Chestnut-vented Warbler** *S. subcaeruleum*, ad. summer, Nylsvley, South Africa, August 1996 (W. Tarboton/VIREO). Greyish overall impression and diagnostic chestnut rear vent and undertail-coverts characteristic of this species. Very fresh overall plumage condition and cream-white iris distinctive of ad.

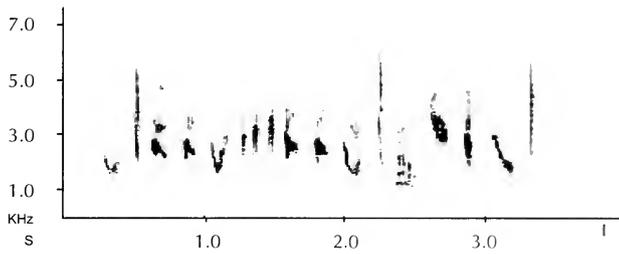


Figure 2 Song. *S. l. griseiventris*. A. J. Helbig, Goba, Bale Mts, 3,400 m, Ethiopia. October 1999. Sonogram: Annett Kocum.

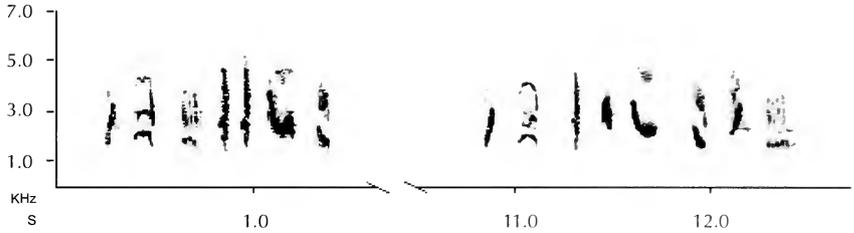


Figure 3 Short song (two strophes). *S. l. griseiventris*. A. J. Helbig, Goba, Bale Mts, 3,400 m, Ethiopia. October, 1999. Sonogram: Annett Kocum.

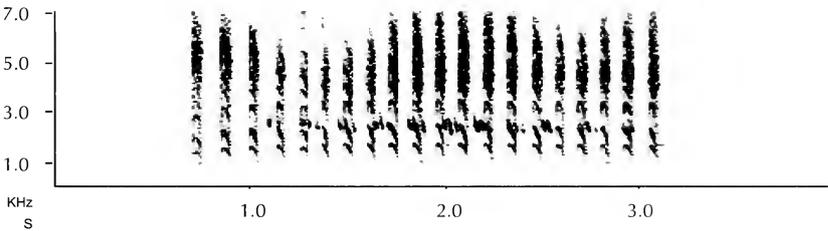
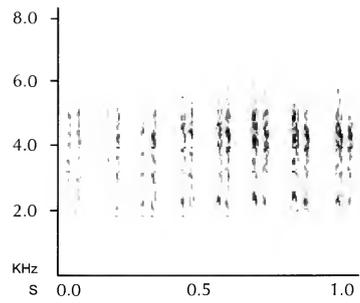
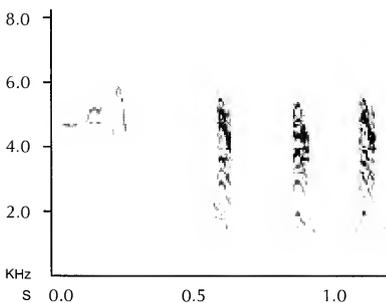


Figure 4 Alarm call (rattle). *S. l. griseiventris*. A. J. Helbig, Goba, Bale Mts, 3,400 m, Ethiopia. October 1999. Sonogram: Annett Kocum.



Figures 5 and 6 Calls. *I. Sinclair*, Ethiopia, December 1995.

♂♂/♀♀ Mantle darker and concolorous with crown, in some blackish sepia-brown. Chin and throat only slightly tipped flecked whitish; thus entire throat appears darker than in nominate. Rest of underparts paler and tinged greyer, with reduced streaking, and darker body-sides and breast. Virtually lacks rufous coloration on vent, imparting more uniform and unpatterned impression to underparts. Tail feathers usually have considerably reduced pale edges and tips, which are also greyer and more diffusely delimited.

S. l. jacksoni. The most widespread form (Sudan and Kenya south to Malawi and Zaïre) combines characters of both preceding races, but is paler throughout.

[Nomenclature and type-locality: *Parisoma jacksoni* Sharpe, 1899, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, 10, p.28—Mt Elgon. Designation relies on paler, more uniform and greyer upperparts than nominate, and paler abdomen, lacking warm ochraceous wash to vent of nominate; also larger, five males from Mt Elgon had wing 64–67 and tail 58–65 (Erard *et al* 1997).]

♂♂/♀♀ Upperparts usually slightly paler brown and suffused more greyish than nominate, from which also differs in lacking darker, contrasting crown, and paler and indistinctly patterned underparts (described for *griseiventris*, which see). Throat as heavily tipped whitish as nominate. Tail as nominate, with relatively more extensive whitish edges and tips. Differs from *griseiventris* in being noticeably paler above and more strongly patterned, with white throat flecking and larger pale edges to rectrices.

S. l. clara. This Tanzanian form is virtually indistinguishable from *jacksoni*, but is usually browner overall.

[Nomenclature and type-locality: *Parisoma lugens clara* Meise, 1934, *Orn. Monatsber.*, 42, p.16—Mahuka, northwest of Lipumba, Matengo Highlands, Tanganyika; above 1,500 m. Designation relies on being darker throated than similar *jacksoni*; in size the type-specimen had wing 64, culmen 10, tail 61 and total length 144 (Meise 1934).]

♂♂/♀♀ In side-by-side comparison of skins, the only consistent character to separate this form from *jacksoni* is the almost uniform brown throat feathers, lacking white tips/flecking, and thus presenting a dark-throated impression. Dark brown coloration is often extensive on breast and flanks. Also differs from *jacksoni*, but approaches nominate, in darker mantle and even darker crown. Tail pattern as nominate and *jacksoni*.

S. l. prigoginei. This Zaïrean form shares characters of other races, but has a distinctive olive wash to the upperparts. Also deeper and more extensively rufous below, and apparently the largest race.

[Nomenclature and type-locality: *Parisoma lugens prigoginei* Schouteden, 1952, *Rev. Zool. Bot. Afr.*, 46, p.171—

Lake Lungwe, north-west of Lake Tanganyika, Kivu, Belgian Congo. Recognition based on olive-tinged (and darker) upperparts, warmest buff/rufous vent and apparently the largest race; two males had wings 68, 69.5 and tail 60, 63 (Erard 1978).]

♂♂/♀♀ Dark above, with blacker crown as nominate, but mantle/scapulars often extensively tinged olive-brown. Characteristically strongly patterned underparts: chin solidly dark, throat extensively flecked whitish, breast markedly darker, belly patch whitish, and lower flanks and vent extensively tinged warm ochraceous. Tail has reduced pale area.

4.2 Discussion of geographical variation

Geographical variation is probably the result of allopatric isolation of discrete highland populations, both within and outside the Rift Valley system. Nominate *lugens* (Ethiopia) and *jacksoni* (SE Sudan to Kenya and Malawi) are principally distributed within the Rift Valley and surrounding areas, but neither usually ascends above 2,500 m. The nominate, which is the darker, more warmly coloured subspecies of the two, inhabits humid, lightly wooded savannas, while *jacksoni*, the paler and greyer form, frequents drier habitats. Larger and darker races, adapted to higher altitudes, have evolved in isolated ranges such as the Bale Mts (*griseiventris*), Matengo Highlands (*clara*) and Itombwe Highlands (*prigoginei*). Erard (1978) provides an excellent example of isolation through altitudinal adaptation in *griseiventris*, which breeds above 3,300 m and is separated altitudinally from the nominate. A dense forest belt separates the two taxa. Nominate in the W Ethiopian Highlands is quite divergent from *jacksoni* (Tanzania) in mitochondrial DNA (2.5%, cytochrome *b* gene; Helbig *et al* submitted) and apparently vocally (see above).

5 Moulting, age and sex

5.1 Moulting

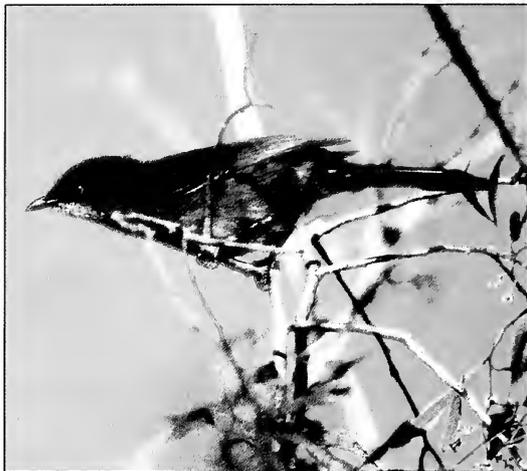
Moulting strategy/general timing

Post-juvenile moulting partial, involving entire body plumage, median and lesser wing-coverts, all or part of the greater coverts, tertials and rectrices, and often including some innermost secondaries. Timing largely unknown (recorded in November).

Post-nuptial moulting apparently always complete; timing unknown.

Detailed description of moulting

No published information available. The following is based on a very small sample studied in BMNH. Two in active post-juvenile moulting were examined, both from 9 November (Ethiopia). One had replaced most body feathers



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1 Layard's Warbler *S. layardi*, Karooport, Cape Province, South Africa (A. Greensmith). Readily separated from all other *Sylvia* by its overall greyish impression and pale iris colour. **2-3 Banded Sylvia** *S. boehmei*, ad. male autumn, 22 km south of Filtu, south-east Ethiopia, September 1997 (H. Shirihai). Unmistakable. Distinctive greyish head, blackish breast-band and rufescent orange undertail-coverts. Whitish iris distinctive of ads. **4-5 Banded Sylvia** *S. boehmei*, 1st-summer, south Ethiopia, October 1999 (H. Shirihai). Note distinctive moult limit between innermost ad.-like greater coverts and unmoulted juv. outermost coverts, which are distinctly paler brown and lack bold white fringes and tips. Whitish iris unreliable for ageing in spring/summer.

and all median and lesser wing-coverts: the three innermost greater coverts were fully grown, while the two adjacent, outer, feathers were almost grown and the innermost tertial was half-grown; all others were unmoulted. The other had replaced all body feathers, median and lesser wing-coverts, the five innermost greater coverts were fully grown and the other three coverts growing; rest of plumage unmoulted. Two that had completed post-juvenile moult had replaced all body feathers, median and lesser wing-coverts, one also having replaced all greater coverts and tertials, as well as the two innermost secondaries, the entire alula and the carpal-covert (tail also apparently completely renewed); the other had renewed only the five innermost greater coverts and central tertial.

Adults undertake a complete post-nuptial moult but none in active moult was checked. Timing unknown.

5.2 Ageing

Juvenile

Distinct. Entire plumage fresh with distinctly soft, fluffy body feathers. Underparts paler than adult and extensively washed buffish-cream, mostly on body-sides and rear

vent. Iris mostly olive-brown. Rectrices have more diffuse and less pure white edges and tips than adult.

Spring (following post-nuptial and post-juvenile moults)

Ad. All flight feathers of same generation, very fresh just after moult, becoming moderately worn with time. Remiges and primary-coverts centred blackish and fringed grey. Rectrices have pure white edges and tips. Iris reddish sepia-brown.

1st-winter/summer. Juvenile primary-coverts not so firmly textured as adult feathers, less blackish and have rufous-brown fringes when fresh. Some have a distinct moult limit among outer greater coverts: innermost adult-like feathers centred blackish-grey, while unmoulted juvenile outermost ones are clearly softer in texture and rather paler and browner. Those that replaced all greater coverts show a distinct moult limit on the inner remiges: innermost moulted feathers (usually tertials) are clearly darker with greyish fringes, while outer juvenile ones are browner with rufous-brown fringes. Unmoulted juvenile rectrices (if any) have less pure white and diffuse edges and tips. Iris colour mostly olive-brown; however, as period taken to attain adult coloration is unknown, iris



Figure 7 Range of Brown *Sylvia* with subspecies *lugens* (1), *griseiventris* (2), *jacksoni* (3), *prigoginei* (4) and *clara* (5).

colour is best used as a supporting criterion and with caution, especially following post-juvenile moult.

5.3 Sexing

♂ ♀ Sexes alike.

6 General biology and ecology

6.1 Distribution

Breeding. Endemic resident to E Africa, occurs disjunctly in Rift Valley highlands, from Ethiopia to Malaŵi; also SW Kenya. Even within range, its distribution is fragmented with no obvious ecological correlates, as similar *Acacia* habitat and rainfall regimes occur elsewhere in E Africa. *S. l. lugens* is the most widespread and, apparently, commonest subspecies, occurring in several provinces of EC Ethiopia (north-west of Rift Valley), at 1,600–2,100 m, and southeast of Rift Valley at lower altitudes around Bale Mts. *S. l. griseiventris* represents an isolated high-altitude population in the Bale Mts, S Ethiopia, at 3,300–3,700 m. *S. l. jacksoni* occurs within 500 mm rainfall zone of S Sudan, N and SE Uganda, SW Kenya (1,400–2,500 m) and, locally, in adjacent N Tanzania (Crater Highlands). Other isolated populations occur in E Zaïre, at Itombwe (*prigoginei*; rare at 2,620–3,220 m), and in the Marunga (uncommon at 1,840–2,020 m) and Matengo Highlands, S Tanzania (*clara*), the western slopes of the Nyika Plateau, N Malawi/NE Zambia (very local at 1,400–1,850 m) and S Malawi (Chongoni to Tambo).

Winter. As breeding range.

6.2 Migration and other movements

Resident. Juvenile dispersal; some altitudinal movements are to be expected in montane populations.

6.3 Habitat and ecology

Highland *Acacia* woodland and bushy habitats. In Ethiopia, it frequents olive–juniper–*Podocarpus* forest and lightly wooded savanna with *Acacia* and other bushes; also gallery forest with *Acacia* and *Ficus*. In Bale Mts subalpine zone (3,400–3,500 m; above Goba), occurs near tree-line in very open, heavily grazed *Hypericum revolutum* woodland (up to 8 m tall) with dense *Euphorbia* scrub. Wanders—only in post-breeding season (?)—to alpine scrub (*Alchemilla*, *Helichrysum cusbions* etc) with tree-like Ericaceae (HS pers obs, September 1997). In Kenya, it is common, in and near the Rift Valley, where rich stands of *Acacia abyssinica* and *A. xanthophloea* occur.

Ecological relationships with other species. Limited information from *Hypericum* woodland in Bale Mts. Ecologically most similar species are Montane White-eye *Zosterops poliogaster* and, to lesser extent,

Brown Woodland Warbler *Phylloscopus umbrovirens*. Both forage in same vegetation strata as *S. lugens*, but are smaller and preferentially use more peripheral parts of tree canopy (white-eyes often visit flowers), have smaller bills and do not rip off flakes of bark or dead leaves. No aggressive interactions noted.

6.4 Diet

Small arthropods, mostly insects including beetles, aphids and caterpillars of Lepidoptera, and many spiders. Most prey items are minute, but opportunistically takes caterpillars up to five times its bill length, which are battered against perch and squeezed with bill to remove gut contents. Also takes an unknown proportion of berries.

6.5 Behaviour and breeding biology

General habits, foraging behaviour. Unobtrusive. Occupies distinctive foraging niche in canopy of *Acacia*, *Hypericum* and tree-heaths, spending long periods in same tree. In stunted growth at high elevations it forages to ground level, but at lower altitudes strictly remains in canopy. Systematically searches vegetation by short, regular hops, scouring for food after each hop, and gleaning prey from surface or from beneath live or dead leaves, dried flowers (*Hypericum*) or, quite frequently, from lichens and bark on thick branches and trunks. Will remove pieces of bark to expose concealed prey (as does *S. buryi*), but never hammers with bill as tits do. The only tit-like action is its frequent clinging to trunk and large branches in various positions. Prefers particularly dense clumps of branches, slipping efficiently through near-impenetrable tangles. Also on and around tree trunk, rarely outside canopy.

Social organisation. Usually in pairs year-round, or in family groups for short period after breeding. Probably monogamous. Home ranges of several pairs may overlap outside breeding season, permitting relatively high densities (e.g. 4–5 pairs in 5 ha of *Hypericum* woodland, Bale Mts, October 1999). Pair members often forage in same tree.

Breeding biology. Nest is a shallow cup constructed of moss, rootlets and other plant material, lined with grass and bark-fibre, usually placed in a tree. Two distinct breeding seasons apparent in some parts of range (Kenya: April–May, December; Malawi: May, October–November; Erard *et al* 1997). *S. l. griseiventris* in Bale Mts (Ethiopia) seen with fledged young in September (HS). Clutch size two eggs. No further information.

Mortality, longevity. No information.

7 Population size and trends

Locally common in Ethiopia, uncommon in Kenya and N Tanzania, and uncommon to rare elsewhere. No information on overall sizes of the disjunct populations.

8 Appendix

Table 1. Summary of published data for Brown Sylvia *Sylvia lugens*. The following data are presented: the taxon (as given or inferred from the original source, and thus not necessarily limited to valid races; see 'Subspecies taxonomy'), geographic origin, age (Juv. = immature; Ad. = adult), sex, mean \pm standard deviation, range, sample size, bird state (Li = live birds, Sk = skin) and reference source. Where sex/age is not indicated, the dataset contains information relating to all/several age/sex categories, or this information is not presented in the relevant source.

WING							
<i>lugens</i>		♂♂	62.0	61.0–63.5	n=3	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>lugens</i>		♀♀	62.0	60.5–64.0	n=8	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>griseiventris</i>		♂♂	65.3	64.0–66.0	n=3	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>griseiventris</i>		♀♀	63.5		n=1	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>prigoginei</i>				66.0–72.0	n=8	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>jacksoni</i>	Mt Elgon	♂♂		64.0–67.0	n=5	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>jacksoni</i>	Mt Elgon	♀♀	64.0		n=1	Sk	Erard et al 1997
TAIL							
<i>lugens</i>		♂♂	57.2	56.5–58.0	n=3	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>lugens</i>		♀♀	58.4	57.0–61.0	n=8	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>griseiventris</i>		♂♂	62.5	61.0–64.5	n=3	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>griseiventris</i>			62.0		n=1	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>prigoginei</i>				62.0–67.0	n=8	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>jacksoni</i>	Mt Elgon	♂♂		58.0–65.0	n=5	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>jacksoni</i>	Mt Elgon	♀♀	58.0		n=1	Sk	Erard et al 1997
TARSUS							
<i>jacksoni</i>	Mt Elgon	♂♂		20.0–21.5	n=5	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>jacksoni</i>	Mt Elgon	♀♀	22.5		n=1	Sk	Erard et al 1997
BILL							
<i>lugens</i>		♂♂	11.7	11.5–12.0	n=3	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>lugens</i>		♀♀	11.9	11.5–12.5	n=8	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>griseiventris</i>		♂♂	12.3	12.0–12.5	n=3	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>griseiventris</i>		♀♀	12.0		n=1	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>jacksoni</i>	Mt Elgon	♂♂		10.0–11.5	n=5	Sk	Erard et al 1997
<i>jacksoni</i>	Mt Elgon	♀♀	11.0		n=1	Sk	Erard et al 1997

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Chestnut-vented Warbler *S. subcaeruleum*

A medium-sized *Sylvia* with a rather long tail and short, rounded wings. Prominent black and white alula, and a faint whitish outer wing-panel. Largely brownish dark slate-grey above, dusky-grey or whitish below, with prominent and well-defined blackish streaking on throat; diagnostic chestnut rear vent and undertail-coverts. Tail has large white edges and tips. Juv. tinged buffish below, with only a slightly streaked throat and duller, buffy rear vent. Legs dark grey. Iris whitish in ad. and dark-olive in 1st-winters. Orbital ring blackish and eye-ring greyish.

1 Ad. Nominate race (from Cape area and SW Orange Free State). Darkish overall with distinctive blackish speckled throat, and chestnut rear vent and undertail-coverts.

2 Ad. Race *ansorgei* (Angola). As nominate but whiter below.

Banded Sylvia *S. boehmi*

Small *Sylvia* with large head and long tail. Very distinctive, with greyish head, blackish breast-band and rufescent orange rear flanks and undertail-coverts. Largely greyish above with prominent well-defined whitish tertial fringes and whitish double wing-covert bar. Tail has large white edges and tips. Juv. browner above, with virtually no blackish breast-band; below buffier with paler rufous-orange rear flanks and undertail-coverts. Legs dark grey. Iris whitish in ad. and dark grey-brown in 1st-winters. Orbital ring blackish and eye-ring whitish.

3 Ad. Distinctive blackish breast-band, whitish wing-panel and double wingbar, and rufescent orange rear flanks and undertail-coverts.

Layard's Warbler *S. layardi*

Medium-sized *Sylvia* with rather short wings and long tail. Largely dark slate-grey above, with characteristic black and white alula patch, and faint whitish outer wing-panel. Below, dusky with dark streaking on throat and upper breast. Has typical *Sylvia*-like tail pattern. Juv. almost or entirely lacks the characteristic throat streaking. Iris mainly

greyish-yellow. Rectrices have more diffuse and less pure white edges and tips, compared with ad.-like feathers. Legs dark grey. Iris whitish in ad., darker and greyer in 1st-winters. Orbital ring blackish and eye-ring dark grey.

4 Ad. Overall darkish, with conspicuous alula pattern and dark-streaked throat and upper breast.

Yemen Warbler *S. buryi*

Rather large, with short wings, long tail and long, slightly curved bill. Dark brown above, with dusky grey-brown mantle, and darker and rustier crown. Below warm, with rufous-brown rear vent and undertail-coverts. Tail indistinctly patterned with diffuse pale edges and tips. Juv. browner above and has reduced dark crown contrast; below profusely washed pale buff-grey. Rectrices have reduced and more greyish-buff edges and tips compared with ad. Legs dark grey. Iris whitish in ad. and dark brown in 1st-winters. Orbital ring blackish and eye-ring brownish.

5 Ad. Overall darkish brown, with paler throat, pale eye and warm underparts.

Brown Sylvia *S. lugens*

Smallish, with moderately long tail and short wing, rather similar to some Palearctic *Sylvia* in structure. Dark warm brown above, with slightly darker crown and contrasting black tail. Below, paler brownish-grey, paler chin and throat often flecked darkish. Rear underparts buff-rufous. Obvious whitish edges and tips to tail. Juv. profusely washed buffish-cream below. Iris mainly olive-brown. Rectrices have more diffuse and less pure white edges and tips compared with ad.-like feathers. Legs dark grey. Iris reddish sepia-brown in ad., olive-brown in 1st-winters. Orbital ring blackish, eye-ring brownish.

6 Ad. Nominate race (Ethiopian plateaux except Bale highlands). Overall darkish brown, with paler throat streaked darker grey.

7 Ad. Race *jacksoni* (Sudan south to N Tanzania, Zaïre and Malawi). Compared with nominate lacks darker, contrasting crown and has slightly paler and greyer upperparts. Greyish-buff instead of pinkish-buff on rear underparts. 🦋

Rare birds in Morocco: report of the Moroccan Rare Birds Committee (1998–2000)

Patrick Bergier^a, Jacques Franchimont^b, Michel Thévenot and the Moroccan Rare Birds Committee

Durant la période 1998–2000, la Commission d'Homologation Marocaine a analysé 129 demandes d'homologation d'espèces rares ou mal connues, dont la liste est présentée en annexe. Quarante-vingt-douze ont été acceptées, incluant une espèce notée pour la première fois au Maroc et en Afrique: le Bécasseau échasses *Micropalama himantopus*, et trois espèces notées pour la première fois au Maroc, le Bécasseau de Bonaparte *Calidris fuscicollis*, le Bécasseau semipalmé *C. pusilla* et le Bécasseau rousset *Tryngites subruficollis*. La race sibérienne du Pouillot véloce *Phylloscopus collybita tristis* également été renseignée pour la première fois au Maroc.

Introduction

The first triennial report of the Moroccan Rare Birds Committee (MRBC) appeared in *Bull. ABC* in 2000⁵. This second report includes the 129 records analysed during 1998 to 2000



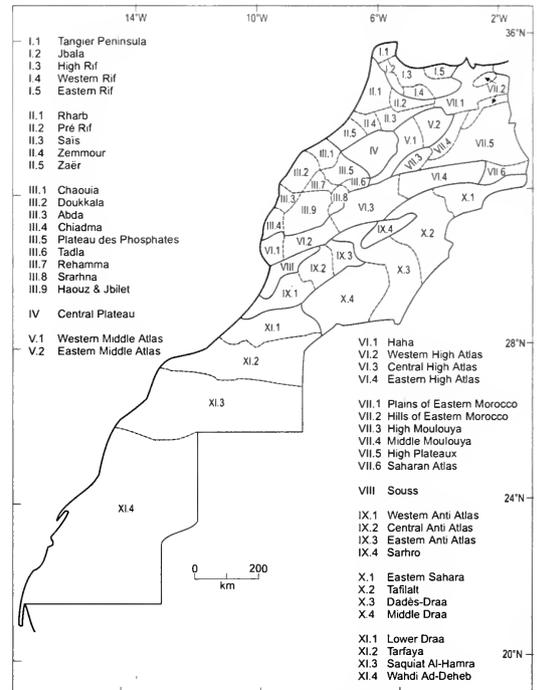
(see Table 1). Ninety-two have been accepted, including a species new for Africa (Stilt Sandpiper *Micropalama himantopus*), as well as four species/subspecies new for Morocco (White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*, Semipalmated Sandpiper *C. pusilla*, Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis* and Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*). Annual reports for the period have been published in *Porphyrion*⁶⁻⁸.

The updated list of species considered by MRBC appears as Appendix 1 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 Lemsaaadi, rue n°6, n°22, 50.000 Meknes V.N., Morocco. MRBC work in progress is accessible at <http://www.ifrance.com/Go-South/>.

Three detailed records of a dark heron (Western Reef Heron *Egretta garzetta* or dark-morph Little Egret *E. garzetta*) at Merzouga have been the subject of much discussion within the MRBC. They are presented below.

The dark egret/heron at Merzouga

On 22 April 1997, a group (G1) of ten ornithologists led by A van den Berg found a dark heron/egret at Merzouga. The bird was within a group of seven typical Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta* and several excellent pictures were taken.



Map showing the regions of Morocco used in this report.

Table 1. Number of records analysed by the MRBC from 1998 to 2000

	Records from											Total	Accepted	Rejected
	1982	1986	1989	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000				
Fourth report (1998)		1					12	37				50	34	16
Fifth report (1999)	1		1	1	2	1	1		39			46	36	10
Sixth report (2000)				1				7	7	18		33	22	11

Two days later, it was rediscovered by two other groups, (G2) with five birders led by T Gullick (who approached the bird to some 80 m), and (G3) led by N.J Redman. The dark heron egret was then with two Little Egrets.

Table 2 summarises the detailed descriptions that have been submitted by the three groups. *Texts in italics* are extracted verbatim from their reports.

The differences in the descriptions between groups G1/G3 and G2 are striking, especially concerning the jizz and bill (the hypothesis that two different birds were present in April was discussed but ultimately rejected as G2 and G3 saw the bird on the same day).

The deliberations of the MRBC, and comments of Yves Kayser and Philippe J Dubois, have also shown inconsistencies. Finally, MRBC decided that the identity of the dark heron egret at Merzouga could not be specifically determined and it should be referred to as an

Egretta sp. Van den Berg described his record in *Dutch Birding*³³.

Presentation of data

The presentation of data follows the same pattern as used in the MRBC report for 1995–1997³: 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, and recorder(s) name(s).
- Comments

Table 2

	Group G1—22 April 1997	Group G2—24 April 1997	Group G3—24 April 1997
General colour	<i>• upperparts and underparts dark grey, including elongated narrow dark grey feathers on back and breast. Belly slightly paler grey than breast.</i>	<i>• dark slaty black.</i>	<i>• smoky-grey/black dark phase (much as Western Reef Heron).</i>
Jizz	<i>• same size and structure as accompanying Little Egrets. • no difference in walking or flight with Little Egrets.</i>	<i>• different and more 'slouched stance' (in relation to the two typical Little Egrets).</i>	<i>• same size and structure (as the two typical Little Egrets).</i>
Bill	<i>• black. • at first sight, the bill seemed marginally longer (than two typical Little Egrets); however, this was not confirmed by taking measurements from photos and might be attributed to an illusory effect caused by the facial pattern.</i>	<i>• appearing heavier (in relation to the two typical Little Egrets) and more thick billed with even a droopy effect to the dirty yellowish bill (not black).</i>	<i>• fairly slender as white birds, grey-black (no pale base). Culmen slightly curved but same as white birds. Bill not deep at base, nor blunt-tipped.</i>
Legs	<i>• tarsus black with some yellowish admixed towards ankle. Toes yellow. Claws black.</i>	<i>• the black legs and yellow feet were common to all three birds (ie the dark egret/heron and the two typical Little Egrets).</i>	<i>• legs dark brownish-black (grey upper tibia) with yellowish feet (up to 'ankle'), same as white birds. Legs not noticeably thicker or shorter than white birds.</i>
Head, throat, neck	<i>• forehead white, mottled grey towards crown. Hindcrown, nape and neck dark grey. Dark lores. White feathers surrounding eye as broken eye-ring. Ear-coverts white, slightly mottled grey. • iris pale. • bare skin of face greyish.</i>	<i>• there were whitish feathers from the chin to halfway down the throat. • thicker neck was obvious (in relation to the two typical Little Egrets).</i>	<i>• throat and chin white.</i>
Wings	<i>• primaries dark grey with much white at base. Secondaries dark grey with some white mottling at base of outers. Tertiaries dark grey with little white at base. Greater primary-coverts largely white with some dark grey edges. Outer and two central greater coverts dark grey with little white at base. Median, lesser and underwing-coverts dark grey. Faint brownish hue on upperwing-coverts.</i>	<i>• in flight, the dark egret showed whitish wing patches in area of primary wing-coverts.</i>	<i>• in flight several primaries showed white webs giving curious pied effect.</i>
Tail	<i>• dark grey.</i>		
Plumes	<i>• similar ornamental plumes (to typical Little Egrets) • strap-like nape feathers longer than bill. • due to direct comparison, both in the field and on photo, it was possible to ascertain that the bird's bill shape, leg length and colour of bare parts were identical to Little Egret.</i>		<i>• dark head plumes (two) as white birds. • In summary, bird appeared exactly as white birds in size, proportions, bare-parts coloration, differing only in colour of plumage.</i>
Determined as	<i>Egretta</i> sp, dark morph	<i>Egretta gularis</i>	<i>Egretta garzetta</i> , dark morph

For accidental species, six 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 formation of the MRBC. The second pair indicate the number of records (and number of birds) accepted by the MRBC and described in the first triennial report (1995–1997)⁵. The last pair indicate the number of records accepted by the MRBC from 1998 to 2000, and the number of birds involved. The systematic list follows the sequence of species for which details are required by the MRBC (Appendix 1).

List of accepted records

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer* AV (3/3, 0/0, 1/1)

1986 (86/1) **Souss**, Souss estuary, first-winter, 14–20 December, photo (H Klemola & J Komi). This bird stayed over one month at the Souss estuary (it being present since at least 20 November—N J Redman).

Accidental visitor to the Strait of Gibraltar^{17,20} but only one documented record on the Moroccan side of the Strait (7 September 1993, F Cuzin). Two other records from the Atlantic coast (Agadir harbour, 30 December 1989, O Armini *et al.*, and Merja Zerga from late December 1990 to early January 1991²³).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus (p.) puffinus*

PM, OW (–/–, 0/0, 1/70+)

1999 (99/28) **Tarfaya**, Akhfennir and Tarfaya, 5–6 September (A Joris *et al.*)

More than 70 individuals were reported between Akhfennir and Tarfaya on 5–6 September. These dates are consistent with the known autumn migration pattern, which is from late August to late November. Of the three forms of small shearwaters, Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus (p.) mauretanicus* is the commonest off the Atlantic coast during migration; Manx Shearwater is rarer, while the occurrence of Yelkouan Shearwater *P. (p.) yelkouan* remains unestablished.

White-faced Storm-petrel *Pelagodroma marina*

AV (4/33+, 0/0, 1/1)

1997 (97/17) **Souss**, 24 nautical miles off Agadir, 31 March, photo (K Carlsson *et al.*)

Accidental visitor to Morocco. Only four previous records, all south of 30°N; an increase in pelagic trips south of Agadir would surely lead to an increase in the number of sightings. A photo of this bird was published in *Birding World* 10: 134.

Great White Egret *Egretta alba* OW, PM (1/1, 6/6)

1989 (89/1) **Tafilalt**, Merzouga, 27 December, photo (H Dufourmy)

1998 (98/34) **Rharb**, Merja Bargha, 26 November (P Wiprachtiger & A El Ghazi)

1999 (99/17) **Plains of Eastern Morocco**, Barrage Mohamed V, adult, 17 January (D Jerez Abad & R Ramirez Espinar)

1999 (99/42) **Plains of Eastern Morocco**, Barrage Arabet (Bou-Areg), Nador, 17 December (D Jerez Abad & R Ramirez Espinar)

2000 (00/06) **Plains of Eastern Morocco**, Barrage Mohamed V, immature, 27 February (D Jerez Abad & R Ramirez Espinar)

2000 (00/15) **Souss**, Souss estuary, 18–19 April, photo (J Malecha, H Dufourmy *et al.*)

Approximately 50 records to date. The Plains of Eastern Morocco, along the Mediterranean coast, are among the best areas to observe this species, whose range and numbers have recently increased in Europe. The 1989 record relates to the European subspecies *alba* and not to the African race *melanorhynchos* which can be expected in Tafilat.

Green-winged Teal *Anas (crecca) carolinensis*

AV (2/2, 0/0, 1/1)

1998 (98/1) **Souss**, Massa estuary, male, 28 February (C Bowden & G Manners)

Third record for Morocco. One previous record from the Massa estuary (23–27 April 1984, T Axelsen, G Balança, A W Clarke *et al.*), the other was at Barrage d'Imfout on the Oued Oum-Er-Rbia on 13 April 1959¹⁸.

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors* AV (14/22+, 1/1, 2/2)

1998 (98/2) **Souss**, Massa estuary, male, 28 February (C Bowden & G Manners)

2000 (00/01) **Rharb**, Sidi Bou-Rhaba, male, 20 February (P Lansdown)

Sixteenth and 17th records in Morocco, and the fifth at Sidi Bou-Rhaba and sixth at the Massa estuary. Twelve have been in January–March, with singles in April, May and December, and two in October. The only inland record was at Barrage Lalla Takerkoust, near Marrakech².

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

1998 (98/36) **Western High Atlas**, Barrage Hassan Addakhil, male, 25 January (P Lansdown)

This individual was recorded on a dam well inland of the Atlantic coast, but a pair was at the same locality in December 1980–January 1981¹².

White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*

WV, OB, PM? (0/0, 8/17)

1997 (97/18) **Rharb**, Merja Bargha, male, 30 May and 28 June, photo (J C Castro Roman *et al.*)

1998 (98/6) **Saïs**, Douyiet, male, 10 April (J Franchimont, A El Ghazi *et al.*)

1998 (98/15) **Saïs**, Douyiet, male, 25 July (J Franchimont *et al.*)

1998 (98/33) **Saïs**, Douyiet, male, 23 December (J Franchimont *et al.*)

1999 (99/21) **Saïs**, Douyiet, male, 29 April (A El Ghazi *et al.*)

1999 (99/22) **Saïs**, Douyiet, six males and one female, 13 July (J Franchimont *et al.*)

1999 (99/32) **Saïs**, Douyiet, three males and one female, 20 and 29 September (A El Ghazi *et al.*)

1999 (99/36) **Saïs**, Douyiet, male, 24 December (A El Ghazi *et al.*) Bred in the marshes of the Rharb until the late 1930s; thereafter numbers dramatically decreased. Only four records in the 1950s–1970s and since then only one, in 1983. White-headed Duck is now regular at Douyiet with the first breeding record in 2000, and further observations from there do not need to be submitted to MRBC. On 13 July 1999, the six males were displaying and the female was with a female Ruddy Duck *O. jamaicensis* and a hybrid Ruddy x White-headed female. On 20 and 29 September, at least two hybrid Ruddy x White-headed females were with the group.

Ruddy x White-headed Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* x *O. leucocephala* AV (0/0, 3/4, 2/5)

- 1998 (98/16) **Saïs**, Douyiet, three males, 25 April (J Franchimont & A El Ghazi)
1998 (98/32) **Saïs**, Douyiet, two females, 23 December (J Franchimont *et al*)

The presence of hybrids continues to threaten the re-establishment of White-headed Duck at Douyiet.

Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates*

RB (–/–, 0/0, 1/1)

- 1999 (99/37) **Souss**, 10 km east of Oulad Berehil, immature, 2 April (A Hogg *et al*)

Recorded in the argan parkland forest, an original environment which is rapidly disappearing due to encroaching agriculture.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* RB (–/–, 0/0, 3/3)

- 1998 (98/9) **Souss**, Tafingoult, 2 May (J. Franchimont & A El Ghazi)

- 1999 (99/24) **Souss**, near Arazane, subadult?, 12 September (H Dufourny & B Gauquie)

- 1999 (99/38) **Souss**, Igoudar, immature, 2 April (A Hogg *et al*)

Once widespread throughout Morocco, including the montane north. Like several other raptors, it is now rare and appears to be confined to the Souss and adjacent areas. The most recent breeding records were in 1980⁷, 1990 (H Duperex & L Maumary) and 1992⁵. H Dufourny (*in litt*) has also sent information concerning seven previous records of this eagle, all in the Souss plain, between Taroudant and Aoulouz, in 1993 (three), 1994 (one), 1995 (one) and 1997 (two).

Barbary Falcon *Falco (peregrinus) peregrinoides*

RB poorly known (–/–, 14/15, 13/17)

- 1998 (98/11) **Tarfaya**, 5 km south of El Ouaïr estuary, immature, 11 August (J Franchimont & F. Touati Malih)

- 1998 (98/12) **Tarfaya**, 16 km south of Tantan Plage, immature, 11 August (J Franchimont & F Touati Malih)

- 1998 (98/13) **Tarfaya**, 11 km south of Sidi Ifni, immature, 12 August (J Franchimont & F. Touati Malih)

- 1999 (99/6) **Doukkala**, Sidi Moussa–Oualidia, 8 April (V Schollaert & L Langhendries)

- 1999 (99/7) **Haha**, Tamri, 5 April (V Schollaert *et al*)

- 1999 (99/14) **Western High Atlas**, Tizi-n Tichka, pair, 27 March (V Schollaert *et al*)

- 1999 (99/19) **Souss**, Souss estuary, 28 April (F Herbecq *et al*)

- 1999 (99/25) **Souss**, Souss estuary, two juveniles, 15 September, one juvenile, 17 September (H Dufourny & B Gauquie)

- 1999 (99/29) **Souss**, Souss estuary, juvenile, 3 September (V Schollaert *et al*)

- 1999 (99/30) **Western Middle Atlas**, Dayet Aoua, two juveniles, 16 September (V Schollaert *et al*)

- 1999 (99/31) **Doukkala**, Khémis Zemamra, juvenile, 1 September (A Joris *et al*)

- 1999 (99/45) **Plains of Eastern Morocco**, El Aïoun, Oujda, two adults, 23 September (V Schollaert *et al*)

- 2000 (00/16) **Western Anti-Atlas**, Tissint, 14 May (A El Ghazi & J Franchimont)

Most records are from southern Morocco and the Atlantic coast between Doukkala and Tarfaya, but it may be a more widespread breeder as many areas in northern Morocco are less frequently visited by birdwatchers, eg there also two records from the Western High Atlas and Western Middle Atlas. Its distribution overlaps with *Falco peregrinus minor* in Tafilalt, and of *F. p. atlantis* along the Haha coast and in the Souss.

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana* PM, OW (–/–, 0/0, 2/8+)

- 1998 (98/4) **Souss**, Massa estuary, ♀, 28 February (C Bowden & G Manners)

- 1999 (99/9) **Doukkala**, Sidi Moussa–Oualidia, 8 April (V Schollaert & L Langhendries)

These were probably early migrants. Spring passage occurs in late February–early May. Spotted Crake migrates on a broad front, eg there are several records from the Tafilalt in south-east Morocco¹².

Little Crake *Porzana parva* PM (–/–, 0/0, 2/15+)

- 1998 (98/10) **Souss**, Massa estuary, at least five males and seven females, 16 April (H Dufourny *et al*)

- 1998 (98/24) **Souss**, Massa estuary, at least one male, 26 March, two females, 27 March (E de Thiersant *et al*)

Scarce spring migrant with most records in March–April. Many records are from the Massa estuary but the species migrates on a broad front, from the Atlantic coast to eastern Morocco.

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*

PM, BM, OW (–/–, 0/0, 1/1)

- 1997 (97/20) **Plains of Eastern Morocco**, Barrage Mechra Homadi, adult male, 23 March (D Jerez Abad & R Ramirez Espinar)

This was probably a spring migrant but the species has bred in the Plains of Eastern Morocco, at the Moulouya estuary in the 1950s and in 1989^{9,10}.

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius* AV (2/5, 0/0, 1/1)

- 1999 (99/3) **Dadès-Draa**, Zaouiati Sidi Salah, 50 km south of Zagora, 1 March (P Yésou & M South)

Third record. The two previous ones were at Merzouga in 1990 (up to four on 19 January–7 February, then three on 20 February and one on 31 March) and in 1991 (one on 14 January).

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis (d.) dominica*

AV (0/0, 1/1, 1/1)

- 1999 (99/20) **Souss**, Souss estuary, winter plumage, 16–17 May (C Bowden & R Dawson)

Second record in Morocco. The first was also at the Souss estuary, on 25 April 1997⁵.

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*

AV (0/0, 0/0, 2/2)

- 1995 (95/24) **Souss**, Souss estuary, adult, 5 May (M Andrews)

- 1999 (99/5) **Doukkala**, Sidi Moussa, Oualidia, 8 April (V Schollaert & L Langhendries)

The first records in Morocco (that in May 1995 was described in *Bull. ABC*). The only other African record was at Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania⁵.

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*

AV (0/0, 0/0, 1/1)

- 1999 (99/26) **Prérief**, Barrage Idriss 1^{er}, 21 September (V Schollaert *et al*)

First Moroccan record. Breeds in the Canadian arctic and winters in South America; it is annual in some European countries and has also been recorded in the Azores, Madeira and Canaries.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* AV (5/5, 0/0, 2/3)

- 1998 (98/39) **Souss**, Souss estuary, two juveniles, 25 September, one until 2 October (R Dawson & A Edmond)

- 1999 (99/27) **Rharb**, Lower Loukos marshes, juvenile, 17 September (G Willem & V Schollaert *et al*)

Sixth and seventh records since the first mention by Smith²⁵. All are from the Atlantic coast, in September–October.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima* AV (8/12, 0/0, 2/3)

1998 (98/14) **Zaër**, Skhirat, 6 April (M Grosselet & J Fonderflick)

1999 (99/40) **Chiadma**, Essaouira, two, 17 January–19 March (R Dawson *et al*)

All but one previous record were also along the Atlantic coast in October–February; the April record is the latest ever and that at Essaouira is the southernmost in Morocco, but the species has been recorded once much further south, at the Banc d'Arguin National Park, northern Mauritania²¹.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*

AV (8/12, 2/5, 1/1)

1999 (99/41) **Tarfaya**, Khnifiss, 27 July (G Léotard & O Chaline) The southernmost record in Morocco. Probably an early autumn migrant.

Stilt Sandpiper *Micropalama himantopus*

AV (0/0, 0/0, 1/1)

1996 (96/43) **Souss**, Souss estuary, 28 March (I Rowlands *et al*) Breeds in tundras of North America and winters mainly in central South America. The first Moroccan and African record. This individual stayed until at least 3 April.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis*

AV (0/0, 0/0, 1/1)

1998 (98/40) **Souss**, Souss estuary, 26 September, photo (R Dawson)

First record of this arctic species, which winters from Bolivia to northern Argentina. Several Nearctic waders reached Europe and Macaronesia in September 1998, eg this species was also recorded in the Canaries and the Azores.

Great Snipe *Gallinago media* PM, OW (–/–, 0/0, 1/1)

1999 (99/13) **Tafilalt**, Oued Ziz, north of Erfoud, 30 March (V Schollaert & L Langhendries)

The most recent record was in 1985. Great Snipe is an accidental winter visitor and rare passage migrant, which has been noted in late September–early April, mainly in northern Morocco.

Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris*

WV (0/0, 1/1)

1998 (98/5) **Rharb**, Merja Zerga, at least one, 11 February (M & A Parent)

First record since winter 1994–95. The species' Moroccan status has been extensively described in recent years^{19,26,31,32}.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia* AV (1/1, 0/0, 2/2)

1995 (95/25) **Souss**, Souss estuary, adult summer plumage, 5 May (M Andrews)

1999 (99/8) **Souss**, Souss estuary, 5 April (V Schollaert & L Langhendries)

Second and third records of this North American wader. The first was at Khnifiss lagoon, on 10 April 1990 (F Cuzin). A description of the 1995 bird was published in *Bull. ABC*.

Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini* PM, OW (–/–, 1/1, 2/7)

1998 (98/17) **Souss**, Souss estuary, immature, 17 April (H Dufourmy *et al*)

1998 (98/25) **Haha**, Oued Tinkert estuary, six, 29 April, photo (P Morris *et al*)

Spring passage off the Atlantic coast largely occurs well offshore, from late March to late May.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* AV (22/22, 6/7, 5/8)

1998 (98/8) **Souss**, Souss estuary, second-summer, 17 April (H Dufourmy *et al*)

1998 (98/38) **Souss**, Souss estuary, first-winter, 17 January (R Dawson & M Lawrence)

1999 (99/10) **Souss**, Souss estuary, first-winter first-summer, 5–7 April (V Schollaert *et al*)

1999 (99/18) **Chiadma**, Ksob estuary, first-summer, 29 April, photo (H Dufourmy *et al*)

2000 (00/18) **Tangier Peninsula**, Tahadart estuary, four adults, 18 October (J Franchimont *et al*)

In 1999, others were noted at Essaouira (Ksob estuary) in March and May (*Birding World* 12: 101 and 192), but details of these have not been submitted to MRBC. Together with Larache salt pans and Ksob estuary, the Souss estuary is one of the best places for this species in Morocco. The record at Tahadart estuary is the largest-ever group in Morocco.

Common Gull *Larus canus* WV (–/–, 5/5, 5/9+)

1997 (97/24) **Souss**, Souss estuary, 22 and 31 January (M Leivo & H Kontkanen)

1998 (98/29) **Souss**, Souss estuary, two adults, 29 April, one, 30 April (J D R Vernon)

1998 (98/31a) **Souss**, Souss estuary, adult, second-summer and first-summer, 15 April, adult and first-summer, 16–18 April (H Dufourmy *et al*)

1998 (98/31b) **Souss**, Souss estuary, first-winter, 23 and 25 November, adult, 30 November (H Dufourmy *et al*)

1998 (98/31c) **Haha**, between Agadir and Cap Rhir, first-winter, 23 November (H Dufourmy *et al*)

Now known to be a regular winter visitor in small numbers along the Atlantic coast south to Agadir, but rare in the Strait of Gibraltar and along the Mediterranean coast. From 1999 onwards, only records from the Strait and the Mediterranean need to be submitted to MRBC.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

WV (–/–, 0/0, 3/4)

1997 (97/25) **Souss**, Souss estuary, immature, 31 January (M Leivo & H Kontkanen)

1998 (98/43) **Tarfaya**, Khnifiss, two subadults/adults, 15 October (P Defos du Rau & M Thibault)

2000 (00/02) **Souss**, Souss estuary, first-winter, 23 February (P Lansdown)

Until the 1960s there were very few records, but since 1964 there have been nearly 70 records from the Atlantic coast, mainly north of the Souss region. There have only been a few further south, including one at Khnifiss lagoon, in December 1985–March 1986³, with others in Mauritania^{21,22} and the Canaries¹¹.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii* PM (1/1, 1/3)

1999 (99/15) **Souss**, Souss estuary, three adults, 27 April (H Dufourmy *et al*)

Roseate Tern generally passes far offshore and is thus rarely seen from the Atlantic coast. Spring passage is mainly from mid-April to mid-June.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* PM, OW (–/–, 0/0, 1/1)

1999 (99/11) **Souss**, Souss estuary, adult, 4 April (V Schollaert & L Langhendries)

Thirteenth spring record. Probably a common passage migrant offshore but rarely recorded from the coast. Spring passage noted from mid-March to late May.

Ring-necked Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

AV/RB? (–/–, 0/0, 1/1)

2000 (00/07) **Plains of Eastern Morocco.** Beni Enzar, Nador, adult male, 28 January (DJerez Abad & R Ramirez Espinar)First record on the Mediterranean coast. Along the Atlantic coast, a small feral population became established in 1990 in the Anfa district of Casablanca (O Digoit). Two other records of unknown origin, at Larache (4 May 1985, G Jacquemin) and Asilah (3 January 1996¹⁶).**Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* WV, PM (–/–, 0/0, 1/1)****1998** (98/37) **Souss.** Souss estuary, 24 November (H Dufourmy *et al*)

Uncommon winter visitor (c20 records) but rare on both passages, with only eight records in spring and 11 previous records in autumn. The majority of autumn records are in November (ten) with just two in September and none in October.

Plain Swift *Apus unicolor* AV, OB?, WV? (–/–, 0/0, 1/6)**1998** (98/30) **Haha.** 3 km north of Taghazout, c.6, 29 April (J D R Vernon)

Status in Morocco unclear. The occurrence of 'small dark swifts' was first reported from the Atlantic coast of Morocco in 1962 by KD Smith. Since then, there have been numerous sightings which have all been identified as Plain Swift, but specimens are required to confirm this. Breeding suspected along the Haha coast since 1988, but has not been proven.

Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix nigriceps*

RB (0/0, 1/16)

1999 (99/44) **Oued Ad-Deheb.** Oued Jenaa, 230 km south-east of Dakhla, 8 September, photo (V Schollaert, H Dufourmy, G Willem *et al*)First record following those of Valverde in 1955³¹ in the Négyr region and near Shayera, at c25°N. Tourism has quite recently been permitted in Western Sahara and the number of records should increase in the future.**African Rock Martin *Hirundo fuligula* RB, BM (–/–, 0/0, 4/71+)****1999** (99/2) **Dadès-Draa.** Oued Tifekhist, south-west of Zagora, two, 23 February (P Yésou & M South)**1999** (99/2a) **Dadès-Draa.** Palmerie of Oulad Driss, Mhamid, 3–4, 28 February (P Yésou & M South)**2000** (00/12) **Sarhro.** Tazzarine, 16, 25–26 December (J Franchimont & F Touati Malih)**2000** (00/13) **Dadès-Draa.** Oued Draa, 23 km east of Agdz, c50, 26 December (J Franchimont & F Touati Malih)In light of his recent observations, P Yésou has withdrawn a previous observation from the High Atlas, at Igherm in 1996, which was accepted by MRBC¹⁵. In Morocco, Crag Martin *H. rupestris* (nominate race or *theresae*) is difficult to separate from African Rock Martin (race *presaharica*) in the field and great care should be taken in identifying these two.**Dunnock *Prunella modularis* WV (–/–, 0/0, 1/1)****1982** (82/1) **Jbala.** Barrage of Ouezzane, 14 February, photo (J Franchimont)

There are only 35 records involving 49 birds since 1971, from mid-September to late April. Most were in northern Morocco with the southernmost in the Souss.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*

PM (18/19+, 1/1, 2/2)

1997 (97/28) **Dadès-Draa.** Ouarzazate, 25 January (M Leivo & H Kontkanen)**2000** (00/04) **Tafilalt.** Merzouga, 27 February (P Lansdown) Twentieth and 21st records for Morocco. All are from southern Morocco, from Tafilalt (ten), Dadès-Draa (six), Lower Draa (four) and Oued Ad-Deheb (one); most in spring (February–April) and only two in January. Now considered a scarce spring passage migrant²¹.**Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* AV (15/20+, 1/2, 2/2)****1999** (99/46) **Souss.** Ait Melloul (IFCDW), 27 November–19 December, photo (R Dawson)**2000** (00/10) **Western High Atlas.** Oukaïmeden, 23 March (G Steinbrück & E Weber)

The 1999 record is the second south of the High Atlas; this bird stayed at least three weeks at the International Foundation for Conservation and Development of Wildlife (Ait Melloul). The 2000 record is the latest for Morocco; previous records were only to late February.

Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*

PM (–/–, 0/0, 1/1)

1998 (98/28) **Haha.** Tamri, first-winter, 29 October (D Walsh & C Edginton)Previously more common on spring and autumn passages, but now much rarer and only four recent autumn records (including this one). The 28 recent records are from February (four), March (eight) and April (12), then from September (one) and October (three, including this one) but Walter³⁴ mentioned Aquatic Warblers captured by Eleonora's Falcons *Falco eleonorae* at Essauira from 23 August.**Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris* AV (–/–, 0/0, 1/1)****1999** (99/12) **Dadès-Draa.** Ouarzazate, 1–2 April (V Schollaert *et al*)There are 14 previous possible records, including the recovery of a German-ringed bird, but Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett¹⁴ assumed the latter was a misidentified Reed Warbler *A. scirpaceus*. None of the subsequent records, including four mist-netted birds, was convincingly substantiated and therefore the species' occurrence is only considered possible in the forthcoming *Cbeck-List of the Birds of Morocco*. This record is the first accepted for Morocco; it is also the first record for North Africa west of Egypt²⁹.**Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* PM, OW (–/–, 0/0, 1/1)****1998** (98/7) **Western Anti Atlas.** Oued Noun, 5 May (J Franchimont & A El Ghazi)

Thirty-four acceptable records in Morocco, most (30) during spring migration, with only four in autumn. One of the latest spring records, as most occur in April (21 records, including one trapped) with the latest on 8 May.

Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*

AV (0/0, 0/0, 1/1)

1998 (98/44) **Souss.** Massa estuary, mist-netted, 16 March, photo (P Bulens & A Le Dru)First record in Morocco. This race breeds east of the Pechora River and Urals and over most of Siberia. Racial determination difficult in the field (eg see Dubois, Yésou & CHN¹³ for differences between *tristis* and other Chiffchaffs) but this one was trapped and photographed.

Records not accepted

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica* 1997 (97/29) Plains of Eastern Morocco, Melilla, 28 December 1997–11 January 1998. 1998 (98/3) Souss, Massa estuary, subadult, 28 February. **Great Northern Diver** *Gavia immer* 1998 (98/35) Souss, Massa estuary, juvenile, 21 January. **Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus* 1997 (97/21) Haha, Cap Rhir, two, 1 February. 1997 (97/22) Haha, Cap Rhir, three, 2 February. **Leach's Storm-petrel** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* 1997 (97/23) Haha, Cap Rhir, 21 January. **Long-tailed Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax africanus* 2000 (00/17) Zaërs, Skhirat, 5 September. **Western Reef Heron** *Egretta gularis* 1997 (97/19) Tafilalt, Merzouga, dark morph, 22–25 April, photos, see above. **Intermediate Egret** *Egretta intermedia* 2000 (00/14) Souss, Oued Massa, 2 April. **Great White Egret** *Egretta alba* 1999 (99/23) Chaouïa, Dar Bouazza, 7 April. **Barbary Falcon** *Falco (peregrinus) pelegrinoides* 1994 (94/12) Zaërs, Sidi Bettache, no date. 1998 (98/19) Middle Moulouya, Missouri, 19 August. 1998 (98/20) Souss, Aoulouz, pair and a male, 25 March. 1998 (98/21) Middle Draa, Iriki, pair, 31 March. 1998 (98/22) Dadès-Draa, Tizi Beni-Selmane, 1–2 April. 1998 (98/27) Sarhro, Tagdilt, 26 April. 1999 (99/33) Eastern Sahara, Boudenib, 23 April. 1999 (99/34) High Plateaux, 50 km south of Ain Beni Mathar, 28 April. 1999 (99/35) Plains of Eastern Morocco, 69 km north of Outat el Haj, 29 April. 1999 (99/39) Various regions: Souss, Tarfaya, Dadès-Draa and Sarhro, adults, 28 March–4 April. 1999 (99/43) Souss, Oulad Berehil, 13 September. 2000 (00/09) Souss, Oued Massa, 10 April. 2000 (00/11) Souss, Massa estuary, 27 March. **Dark Chanting Goshawk** *Melierax metabates* 2000 (00/05) High Rif, Jbel Bou Hachem, Chaouen, adult, 29 March. **Spotted Crane** *Porzana porzana* 1998 (98/23) Souss, Massa estuary, 26–27 March. **Slender-billed Curlew** *Numenius tenuirostris* 1999 (99/4) Souss, Agadir, 20+30+23 birds, 31 January. **Sabine's Gull** *Larus sabini* 1998 (98/26) Haha, Cap Rhir, two, 1 May. **Guillemot** *Uria aalge* 2000 (00/03) Haha, Tamri, 12, 23 February. **Eurasian Eagle Owl** *Bubo bubo* 1998 (98/18) Middle Moulouya, Missouri, 13 and 22 August (the observation refers to *Bubo b. ascalaphus*, whose records do not have to be submitted to the MRBC). **Plain Swift** *Apus unicolor* 1997 (97/26) Souss, Massa estuary, 11 birds, 21 January. 1997 (97/27) Rharb, Sidi Bou-Rhaba, 80, 30 January. **African Rock Martin** *Hirundo fuligula* 1999 (99/16) Middle Draa, Ait Herbil, two, 15 February; Kasba-ej-Jouâ, one, 16 April. 2000 (00/08) Western Anti-Atlas, Taghjicht, pair, 8 April. **Richard's Pipit** *Anthus novaezeelandiae* 1998 (98/41) Lower Draa, Oued Draa, 23 October. **Louisiana Waterthrush** *Seiurus motacilla* 1999 (99/1) Chiadma, Essaouira, 18 January. **Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla* 1994 (94/11) Souss, Agadir, 21 October. 1998 (98/42) Lower Draa, Draa estuary, 22 October. ☞

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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 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.

<i>Struthio camelus</i>	Ostrich, Autruche d'Afrique	FB, AV?
<i>Gavia stellata</i>	Red-throated Diver, Plongeon catmarin	AV
<i>Gavia arctica</i>	Black-throated Diver, Plongeon arctique	AV
<i>Gavia immer</i>	Great Northern Diver, Plongeon imbrin	AV
<i>Podiceps auritus</i>	Slavonian Grebe, Grèbe esclavon	AV
<i>Diomedea melanophris</i>	Black-browed Albatross,	
Albatros à sourcils noirs		AV
<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	Northern Fulmar, Fulmar boreal	AV
<i>Pterodroma mollis</i>	Soft-plumaged Petrel, Pétrel soyeux	AV
<i>Bulweria bulwerii</i>	Bulwer's Petrel, Pétrel de Bulwer	AV
<i>Puffinus gravis</i>	Great Shearwater, Puffin majeur	PM
<i>Puffinus (p.) puffinus</i>	Manx Shearwater, Puffin des Anglais	PM, OW
<i>Puffinus assimilis</i>	Little Shearwater, Petit Puffin	AV
<i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>	Wilson's Storm-petrel, Océanite de Wilson	PM, OW
<i>Pelagodroma marina</i>	White-faced Storm-petrel, Océanite frégate	AV
<i>Oceanodroma leucorhoa</i>	Leach's Storm-petrel,	
Océanite culblanc		PM, WV
<i>Oceanodroma castro</i>	Madeiran Storm-petrel,	
Océanite de Castro		AV/PM?
<i>Sula leucogaster</i>	Brown Booby, Fou brun	AV
<i>Morus capensis</i>	Cape Gannet, Fou du Cap	AV
<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>	Long-tailed Cormorant, Cormoran africain	AV
<i>Anhinga rufa</i>	Darter, Anhinga d'Afrique	AV
<i>Pelecanus onocrotalus</i>	White Pelican, Pélican blanc	AV
<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	Great Bittern, Butor étoilé	PM, WV, FB, BM?
<i>Egretta gularis</i>	Western Reef Heron, Aigrette des récifs	AV
<i>Egretta alba</i>	Great White Egret, Grande Aigrette	OW, PM
<i>Mycteria ibis</i>	Yellow-billed Stork, Tantale Ibis	AV
<i>Phoeniconaias minor</i>	Lesser Flamingo, Flamant nain	AV
<i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>	Fulvous Whistling Duck, Dendrocygne fauve	AV
<i>Cygnus olor</i>	Mute Swan, Cygne tuberculé	AV
<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	Whooper Swan, Cygne chanteur	AV
<i>Anser fabalis</i>	Bean Goose, Oie des moissons	AV
<i>Anser albifrons</i>	White-fronted Goose, Oie rieuse	AV
<i>Anser caerulescens</i>	Snow Goose, Oie des neiges	AV
<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	Barnacle Goose, Bernache nonnette	AV
<i>Branta bernicla</i>	Brent Goose, Bernache cravant	AV
<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>	Spur-winged Goose, Plectroptère de Gambie	AV
<i>Aix galericulata</i>	Mandarin Duck, Canard mandarin	AV
<i>Anas americana</i>	American Wigeon, Canard d'Amérique	AV
<i>Anas (crecca) carolinensis</i>	Green-winged Teal, Sarcelle à ailes vertes	AV
<i>Anas discors</i>	Blue-winged Teal, Sarcelle socourouou	AV
<i>Aythya collaris</i>	Ring-necked Duck, Fuligule à collier	AV
<i>Aythya marila</i>	Scaup, Fuligule milouinan	AV
<i>Melanitta fusca</i>	Velvet Scoter, Macreuse brune	AV
<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	Goldeneye, Garrot à oeil d'or	AV
<i>Mergus serrator</i>	Red-breasted Merganser, Harle huppé	WV
<i>Mergus merganser</i>	Goosander, Harle bievre	AV
<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i> ¹	Ruddy Duck, Erismature rousse	AV, OB?
<i>Oxyura leucocephala</i> ²	White-headed Duck,	
Erismature à tête blanche,		WV, OB, PM?
<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	White-tailed Eagle, Pygargue à queue blanche	AV
<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	Lammergeier, Gypaète barbu	RB
<i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i>	Hooded Vulture, Vautour charognard	AV
<i>Gyps rueppellii</i>	Rüppell's Griffon, Vautour de Rüppell	AV
<i>Aegypius tracheliotos</i>	Lappet-faced Vulture, Vautour oricou	AV, FB
<i>Aegypius monachus</i>	Eurasian Black Vulture, Vautour moine	AV, FB
<i>Circus macrourus</i>	Pallid Harrier, Busard pâle	AV
<i>Melierax metabates</i>	Dark Chanting Goshawk, Autour sombre	RB
<i>Aquila pomarina</i>	Lesser Spotted Eagle, Aigle pomarin	AV
<i>Aquila clanga</i>	Greater Spotted Eagle, Aigle criard	AV
<i>Aquila rapax</i>	Tawny Eagle, Aigle ravisseur	RB
<i>Aquila (helica) adalberti</i>	Spanish Imperial Eagle,	
Aigle ibérique		AV, FB, OB
<i>Falco vespertinus</i>	Red-footed Falcon, Faucon kobez	AV
<i>Falco cherrug</i>	Saker, Faucon sacre	AV
<i>Falco (peregrinus) peregrinoides</i>	Barbary Falcon, Faucon de Barbarie	RB
<i>Numida meleagris</i>	Helmeted Guineafowl, Pintade de Numidie	FB



Figure 1. Great White Egret *Egretta alba*, Merzouga, 27 December 1989 (H. Dufourny)



Figure 2. Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* is now considered a scarce but regular spring passage migrant through Morocco (G. Willem)



Figure 3. Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark *Eremophila alpestris* occurs in the Western Sahara, a region which has been only recently opened to tourism (G. Willem)



Figure 4. First Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita tristis* in Morocco, Massa estuary, 16 March 1998 (P. Bulens & A. Le Dru)



Figure 5. The dark egret/heron at Merzouga, April 1997 (A. van den Berg)



Figure 6. The argan forest of the Souss region is a relict habitat which has produced most of the recent Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates* and Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* records (E. Rousseau)



Figure 7. The Ziz Valley, Tafilalet, is followed by many migrants. A Great Snipe *Gallinago media* was recorded here on 30 March 1999 (E. Fomairon)



Figures 8-9. The lagoons of Sidi Moussa, Oualidia (left) and the marshes and estuary of the Massa (right) are two of the most famous birding sites in Morocco (R. Vernon and E. Rousseau)



Figure 10. The sea cliffs of the Souss-Massa National Park are habitat for one of the most endangered birds in the world, Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita*.

<i>Turnix sylvatica</i> Little Button Quail, Turnix d'Afrique	RB
<i>Porzana porzana</i> Spotted Crane, Marouette ponctuée	PM, OW
<i>Porzana carolina</i> Sora, Marouette de Caroline	AV
<i>Porzana parva</i> Little Crane, Marouette poussin	PM
<i>Porzana pusilla</i> Baillon's Crane, Marouette de Baillon	PM, BM, OW
<i>Crex crex</i> Corncrake, Râle des genêts	PM, OW
<i>Porphyryla alleni</i> Allen's Gallinule, Talève d'Allen	AV
<i>Anthropoides virgo</i> Demoiselle Crane, Grue demoiselle	FB
<i>Ardeotis arabs</i> Arabian Bustard, Outarde arabe	FB, AV/WV?
<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i> Greater Painted Snipe, Rhynchée peinte	AV
<i>Glareola nordmanni</i> Black-winged Pratincole, Glaréole à ailes noires ...	AV
<i>Charadrius pecuarius</i> Kittlitz's Plover, Pluvier pâtre	AV
<i>Pluvialis (d.) dominica</i> American Golden Plover, Pluvier bronzé	AV
<i>Chettusia gregaria</i> Sociable Plover, Vanneau sociable	AV
<i>Vanellus leucurus</i> White-tailed Plover, Vanneau à queue blanche	AV
<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i> Great Knot, Grand bécasseau mambèche	AV
<i>Calidris pusilla</i> Semipalmated Sandpiper, Bécasseau semipalmé	AV
<i>Calidris fuscicollis</i> White-rumped Sandpiper, Bécasseau de Bonaparte ..	AV
<i>Calidris melanotos</i> Pectoral Sandpiper, Bécasseau tacheté	AV
<i>Calidris maritima</i> Purple Sandpiper, Bécasseau violet	AV
<i>Limicola falcinellus</i> Broad-billed Sandpiper, Bécasseau falcinelle	AV
<i>Micropalama himantopus</i> Stilt Sandpiper, Bécasseau échasses	AV
<i>Tryngites subruficollis</i> Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Bécasseau rousset	AV
<i>Gallinago media</i> Great Snipe, Bécassine double	PM, OW
<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i> Long-billed Dowitcher, Bécassin à long bec	AV
<i>Numenius tenuirostris</i> Slender-billed Curlew, Courlis à bec grêle	WV
<i>Tringa flavipes</i> Lesser Yellowlegs, Petit Chevalier à pattes jaunes	AV
<i>Xenus cinereus</i> Terek Sandpiper, Barette de Terek	AV
<i>Actitis macularia</i> Spotted Sandpiper, Chevalier grivelé	AV
<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i> Wilson's Phalarope, Phalarope de Wilson	AV
<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i> Red-necked Phalarope, Phalarope à bec étroit	AV
<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i> Long-tailed Skua, Labbe à longue queue	AV
<i>Larus atricilla</i> Laughing Gull, Goéland atricille	AV
<i>Larus pipixcan</i> Franklin's Gull, Mouette de Franklin	AV
<i>Larus sabini</i> Sabine's Gull, Mouette de Sabine	PM, OW
<i>Larus philadelphia</i> Bonaparte's Gull, Mouette de Bonaparte	AV
<i>Larus cirrocephalus</i> Grey-headed Gull, Mouette à tête grise	AV
<i>Larus delawarensis</i> Ring-billed Gull, Goéland à bec cerclé	AV
<i>Larus canus</i> ² Common Gull, Goéland cendré	WV
<i>Larus argentatus</i> Herring Gull, Goéland argenté	WV
<i>Larus glaucooides</i> Iceland Gull, Goéland à ailes blanches	AV
<i>Larus glaucescens</i> Glaucous-winged Gull, Goéland à ailes grises	AV
<i>Larus hyperboreus</i> Glaucous Gull, Goéland bourgmestre	AV
<i>Larus marinus</i> Great Black-backed Gull, Goéland marin	WV
<i>Sterna dougallii</i> Roseate Tern, Sterne de Dougall	PM
<i>Sterna paradisaea</i> Arctic Tern, Sterne arctique	PM, OW
<i>Sterna anaethetus</i> Bridled Tern, Sterne bridée	BM
<i>Sterna fuscata</i> Sooty Tern, Sterne fuligineuse	AV
<i>Rynchops flavirostris</i> African Skimmer, Bec-en-ciseaux d'Afrique	AV
<i>Uria aalge</i> Guillemot, Guillemot de Troïl	AV
<i>Oena capensis</i> Namaqua Dove, Tourterelle à masque de fer	AV
<i>Psittacula krameri</i> Ring-necked Parakeet, Perruche à collier	AV/RB?
<i>Coccyzus americanus</i> Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Coucou à bec jaune	AV
<i>Bubo bubo hispanus</i> Eagle Owl, Grand-duc d'Europe	RB?
<i>Asio flammeus</i> Short-eared Owl, Hibou des marais	WV, PM
<i>Apus unicolor</i> Plain Swift, Martinet unicolore	AV, OB?, WV?
<i>Apus caffer</i> White-rumped Swift, Martinet café	BM, PM
<i>Eremopterix nigriceps</i> Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark, Alouette-moineau à front blanc	RB
<i>Hirundo fulgula</i> African Rock Martin, Hirondelle isabelline	RB, BM
<i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i> Richard's Pipit, Pipit de Richard	WV
<i>Anthus petrosus</i> European Rock Pipit, Pipit maritime	WV
<i>Motacilla citreola</i> Citrine Wagtail, Bergeronnette citrine	AV
<i>Prunella modularis</i> Dunnock, Accenteur mouchet	WV
<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i> Isabelline Wheatear, Traquet isabelle	PM
<i>Turdus pilaris</i> Fieldfare, Grive litrone	AV
<i>Locustella fluviatilis</i> Eurasian River Warbler, Locustelle fluviale	AV
<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i> Marsh Warbler, Rousserolle verderolle	AV
<i>Acrocephalus paludicola</i> Aquatic Warbler, Phragmite aquatique	PM
<i>Hippolais icterina</i> Icterine Warbler, Hypolaïs icterine	AV
<i>Sylvia sarda</i> Marmora's Warbler, Fauvette sarde	AV
<i>Sylvia curruca</i> Lesser White-throated, Fauvette babillarde	PM, OW
<i>Phylloscopus collybita tristis</i> (Siberian) Chiffchaff, Pouillot sibérien	AV
<i>Phylloscopus (collybita) ibericus</i> (Iberian) Chiffchaff, Pouillot ibérique	RB, PM, WV
<i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i> Pallas's Warbler, Pouillot de Pallas	AV
<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i> Yellow-browed Warbler, Pouillot à grands sourcils	AV
<i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i> Dusky Warbler, Pouillot brun	AV
<i>Regulus regulus</i> Goldcrest, Roitelet huppé	AV
<i>Ficedula parva</i> Red-breasted Flycatcher, Gobemouche nain	AV
<i>Ficedula albicollis</i> Collared Flycatcher, Gobemouche à collier	AV
<i>Panurus biarmicus</i> Bearded Tit, Panure à moustaches	AV
<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i> Long-tailed Tit, Mésange à longue queue	AV
<i>Parus cristatus</i> Crested Tit, Mésange huppée	AV
<i>Tichodroma muraria</i> Wallcreeper, Tichodrome échelette	AV
<i>Remiz pendulinus</i> Penduline Tit, Rémiz penduline	AV
<i>Lanius collurio</i> Red-backed Shrike, Pie-grièche écorcheur	AV
<i>Corvus corone</i> Carrion Crow, Corneille noire	OW
<i>Lagonosticta senegalensis</i> Red-billed Firefinch, Amarante du Sénégal ...	AV
<i>Vireo olivaceus</i> Red-eyed Vireo, Viréo aux yeux rouges	AV
<i>Serinus citrinella</i> Citril Finch, Venturon montagnard	AV
<i>Carduelis flammea</i> Common Redpoll, Sizerin flammé	AV
<i>Capodacus erythrinus</i> Common Rosefinch, Roselin cramoisi	AV
<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i> Bullfinch, Bouvreuil pivoine	AV
<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i> Snow Bunting, Bruant des neiges	AV
<i>Emberiza citrinella</i> Yellowhammer, Bruant jaune	AV
<i>Emberiza pusilla</i> Little Bunting, Bruant nain	AV
<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i> 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?).

<i>Gavia adamsii</i> White-billed Diver, Plongeon à bec blanc	AV?
<i>Podiceps grisegena</i> Red-necked Grebe, Grèbe jougris	AV?
<i>Phaethon aethereus</i> Red-billed Tropicbird, Grand Phaéton	AV?
<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i> Least Bittern, Petit Blongios	AV?
<i>Aloochen aegyptiacus</i> Egyptian Goose, Oie d'Egypte	AV?
<i>Mergus albellus</i> Smew, Harle piette	F(AV)?
<i>Cathartes aura</i> Turkey Vulture, Urubu à tête rouge	AV?
<i>Porzana marginalis</i> Striped Crane, Marouette rayée	AV?
<i>Burhinus senegalensis</i> Senegal Thick-knee, Oedicnème du Sénégal ..	AV?
<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i> Greater Sand Plover, Pluvier de Leschenault	AV?
<i>Limnodromus griseus</i> Short-billed Dowitcher, Bécassin à bec court ...	AV?
<i>Alle alle</i> Little Auk, Mergule nain	AV?
<i>Streptopelia roseogrisea</i> African Collared Dove, Tourterelle rieuse ...	AV?
<i>Strix woodfordii</i> African Wood Owl, Chouette africaine	AV?
<i>Caprimulgus nubicus</i> Nubian Nightjar, Engoulevent de Nubie	AV?
<i>Caprimulgus eximius</i> Golden Nightjar, Engoulevent doré	AV?
<i>Ceryle rudis</i> Pied Kingfisher, Alcyon pie	AV?
<i>Coracias abyssinica</i> Abyssinian Roller, Rollier d'Abyssinie	AV?
<i>Luscinia luscinia</i> Thrush Nightingale, Rossignol progré	AV?
<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i> Pied Wheatear, Traquet pie	AV?
<i>Locustella certhiola</i> Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler, Locustelle de Pallas	AV?
<i>Ficedula semitorquata</i> Semi-collared Flycatcher, Gobemouche à demi-collier	AV?
<i>Passer luteus</i> Golden Sparrow, Moineau doré	AV?
<i>Montifringilla nivalis</i> Snow Finch, Niverolle alpine	AV?
<i>Seiurus motacilla</i> Louisiana Waterthrush, Paruline hochequeue	AV?
<i>Emberiza leucocephalos</i> Pine Bunting, Bruant à calotte blanche	AV?

¹ Except at Douiyét, Merja Barga and Merja Halloua.

² Except at Douiyét.

³ Only in the Strait of Gibraltar and on the Mediterranean coast.



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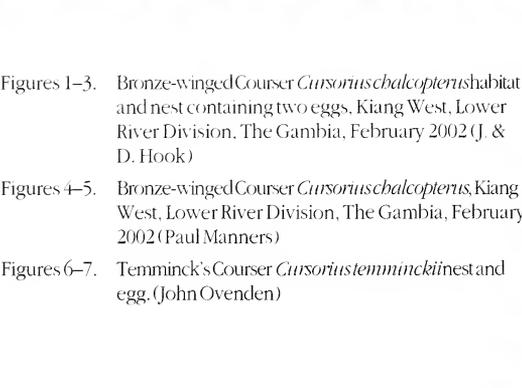
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Figures 1–3. Bronze-winged Courser *Cursoriuschalcopterus* habitat and nest containing two eggs, Kiang West, Lower River Division, The Gambia, February 2002 (J. & D. Hook)

Figures 4–5. Bronze-winged Courser *Cursoriuschalcopterus*, Kiang West, Lower River Division, The Gambia, February 2002 (Paul Manners)

Figures 6–7. Temminck's Courser *Cursoriustemminckii* nest and egg. (John Ovenden)



First nest record for Bronze-winged Courser *Cursorius chalcopterus* in Senegambia

Clive R. Barlow

Un nid actif d'un Courvite à ailes bronzées *Cursorius chalcopterus* a été découvert dans la région de Kiang West en Gambie le 14 février 2002. Il s'agit du premier nid de cette espèce trouvé en Sénégal. Il était situé dans un terrain ravagé par un feu de brousse un mois auparavant. Les œufs se trouvaient dans une légère dépression, peut-être parce que le sol était friable et comprenait des débris végétaux incinérés. *Birds of Africa* mentionne qu'aucune cuvette n'est grattée dans le sol. L'auteur a mesuré le nid et les œufs, et a collecté des sacs fécaux sur le site. En outre, il détient des spécimens tués accidentellement sur les routes et à Banjul. Cette espèce passe facilement inaperçue et les observateurs visitant la Sénégalie sont invités à soumettre leurs données à l'auteur.

Introduction

There are sight records of Bronze-winged Courser *Cursorius chalcopterus* in The Gambia in all seasons, and in all five administrative divisions including coastal areas. It is widespread in northern and southern Senegal but is not found in coastal regions. Breeding has long been suspected as likely in The Gambia but a nest has never been discovered^{1,6,7}. A highly developed nocturnal lifestyle and a strategy of remaining motionless, typically within the shade, under an emergent sapling during the day, results in it going under-recorded. Most observations in The Gambia are the result of night-drives when birds are occasionally sighted beside roads and tracks. Even more rarely, individuals are flushed from cover by chance in daylight, normally resulting in a low, short flight and immediate disappearance into scrub on landing^{1,8}. At night it is often in the loose company of Black-headed Plover *Vanellus tectus* and Spotted Thick-knee *Burhinus capensis* both of which also have nocturnal habits and come to roads at night in The Gambia, particularly during and after the rains¹. Bronze-winged Courser is typically but not exclusively associated with the Guinea-Sudan Savannah biome, eg there are a few records on dry sand-pans near water and coastal mangrove at Tanji Bird Reserve (pers obs).

Recent records

In The Gambia a known population stronghold was in Lower River Division (LRD), within and adjacent to Kiang West National Park. In December 1975, ten were observed at dawn on a stretch of c50 km of main road adjacent to the park⁶. However, regular searches for nightjar *Caprimulgus* spp casualties² at dawn by the author over the same road in recent years have produced very few courser sightings. Two fresh, car-killed specimens were collected (most recently on 27 January 2002), both near Kwinella, in LRD (13°24'N 15°48'W) were very badly damaged and only the

wings were salvaged. An immaculate specimen of a Bronze-winged Courser was found dead against a glass door on a third-floor balcony at the hotel where I live on 13 April 2002. The balcony faces directly over the River Gambia estuary a few metres away. The specimen has been retained (in DMSO), a female with an active ovary containing a pea-sized yolky egg (wing chord 185 mm, wingspan 580 mm, bill 24 mm, tarsus 75 mm, weight 140 g, gizzard 4 g, no fat and no moult).

While on a one-week (8–15 February 2002) round-country photographic safari with Paul Manners we came across a calling Bronze-winged Courser at 19.35 hrs on 13 February, in Kiang West, LRD (13°21'N 15°50'W). These calls were tape-recorded using a Telinga microphone within a folding parabola and a Sony TC-D5M recorder, and later checked against the track for Bronze-winged Courser in Chappuis 2000¹. The following morning between c07.30 and 10.00 hrs we sound recorded and photographed Temminck's Courser *C. temminckii* on burnt and denuded agricultural land near the village of Jiroff, LRD (13°25'N 15°35'W), c15 km east of the Bronze-winged Courser site. Fourteen Temminck's Coursers were present and a comprehensive set of photographs was taken of general behavioural activities. Sound recordings of the high, arching aerial displays of birds sallying far out and returning to the group were also made. No nest was found and the birds generally exhibited pre-nuptial behaviour. Sound recordings of both courser species will be included in a forthcoming three-CD set to *Bird Song of The Gambia and Senegal*³. (Weaker recordings of Bronze-winged Courser were made at dusk near Georgetown (13°32'N 14°46'W) in Central River Division, on 30 January, in the immediate vicinity of the River Gambia.)

At midday on 14 February we returned to the area of Kiang West where we had recorded Bronze-winged Courser the previous night. Within a few minutes we found two standing somnolent at roost under a burnt, leafless *Combretum* sapling and many photographs were taken over

a 20-minute period. The birds permitted very close approach. The roost site was inspected for faecal debris and one fresh pellet was collected, sun-dried, and on inspection under a binocular microscope was found to contain the wing cases and mandibles of small beetles. The sample has been retained. The same evening more sound recordings were made. At least three individuals were answering each other over a transect of 600 m.

At midday on 22 February I revisited the 14 February roost site, and one individual was observed on a nest in direct sunlight, with the off-duty mate stationed c3 m away. The nest depression had two eggs. The area had been extensively burnt in mid-January (pers obs) and the soil substrate was crumbly and granular, mixed with fragments of *Andropogon* grass and other incinerated vegetation. This could explain why a minor, albeit distinct nest depression was evident, perhaps as a result of the incubating birds shuffling the eggs on the soil. *BoA* states that no scrape is made⁸. All of the many breeding records I have for Temminck's Courser in The Gambia have involved eggs laid on hard, sun-baked earth, and always next to animal dung in treeless, open harvested fields, with several also having small stones in the immediate vicinity.

The nest scrape measured 100 mm x 90 mm and both eggs measured 35 mm x 25 mm. The depression was c12 mm deep in its centre. Placing a digital thermometer on the ground close to the nest, in direct sun at 13.30 hrs, a temperature of 38.5°C was recorded. Ground temperature at dawn was 23°C. The incubating bird ran to the nest and settled on the eggs immediately I left the area. I made further observations from c25 m away. This first Senegambian nest observation accords well with Nigerian data, where eggs and young have been recorded in February–March⁵ with laying in January–February⁸. Burkina-Faso laying dates are May–June⁸. No other information for Upper Guinea is known to me. Further nocturnal work covering more areas of The Gambia and Senegal (in Upper River Division and along the coast respectively) is required to establish the true status and distribution of this courser. Visiting birdwatchers could assist by forwarding any relevant records to the address below. To establish the species' presence, field workers are advised to familiarise themselves with the eerie and evocative twilight call of this elusive bird, which appears able to adapt sufficiently well to the changing fire-tolerant vegetation in the area discussed. Work on sedentary bird communities of vegetation zones in fire-adapted equilibrium, in Senegambia, would be a potentially interesting area of research.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Paul Manners who provided photographs of the adults and J. & D. Hook who supplied

those of the nest, eggs and habitat. Their supportive company in the field is appreciated. Gordon Kirk assisted with computer work in UK and John Ovenden supplied other photographs. ☺

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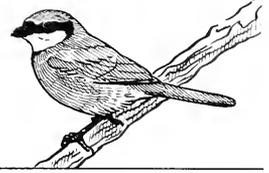


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Figures 1-3. Temminck's Horned Lark *Fremophila bilopha*. Fajara golf course, The Gambia, 23 February 2002 (Brian Small videograbs)



Figure 1. Forbes's Plover *Charadrius forbesi*, Tujering, Western Division, The Gambia, 6 February 2002 (Paul Manners)



Temminck's Horned Lark *Eremophila bilopha*— a new species for The Gambia

Mike D. Creve and Brian J. Small

Les auteurs rapportent la découverte d'une Alouette bilophe *Eremophila bilopha* sur le terrain de golfe de Fajara, Division Occidentale, Gambie, le 23 février 2002. L'oiseau a été filmé en vidéo, photographié et décrit en détail. Ceci constitue la première mention pour la Gambie et l'Afrique subsaharienne. Bien que l'espèce soit généralement considérée comme sédentaire et seulement encline à un erratisme local, des égarés ont été notés à Malte, au Liban et au Yémen.

On the morning of 23 February 2002 we, together with a tour group and local bird guide Barry Mamadou, were birdwatching at the west end of Fajara golf course, Fajara, Western Division, The Gambia. Passing through a narrow area of *Neocarya macrophylla* bushes onto an open, sandy fairway with a sparse cover of grasses (Poaceae) and depauperate herbs (including *Hyptis suaveolens*, *Sida* spp., *Ipomoea* spp. and *Nelsonia canescens*), BJS, who was just ahead of the group, exclaimed that he had found a Temminck's Horned Lark *Eremophila bilopha*. The ease with which this species can be identified at first overruled any thoughts of whether such a species should be at this location. Common sense and caution caused a recap as MDC and the rest of the group located the bird, which was feeding no more than 3 m in front of BJS. It was indeed a Temminck's Horned Lark!

Over the next 30 minutes (and again more briefly subsequently) we studied the bird closely. BJS obtained several minutes of digital video of the bird, while Derek Lamer took several digital photographs. During this period the following notes were made by MDC and BJS. Others searching for the bird later the same day were unable to relocate it.

Description

Medium-sized lark, clearly belonging to the genus *Eremophila*, with a rather plain body and strikingly marked black-and-white head pattern. Entire upperparts pale sandy-buff with slight pinkish tone, becoming more orange-buff on tertials. Underparts paler, off-white, with pale sandy wash to lower breast-sides and flanks. Primaries brown; tail predominantly brown with whitish outertail feathers and sandy-buff central feathers. Upper breast marked by a broad, dark black band, with a narrow off-white band below. Entire chin and throat white; forehead, supercilium and much of ear-coverts white; black band extending narrowly over bill, broadly through the eye and across

malar region and fore ear-coverts, forming a broad, black 'bandit mask', turning down into a broad moustachial. The black area did not meet the black breast-band and was more extensive around the eye than is typical in Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*. A narrow black band, broadest at front of crown, extended back across crown-sides, terminating in a pair of narrow 'horns', one either side of head. Bill and legs grey-black, the former rather fine.

Elimination of any possible confusion species was easy given such a distinctive bird. Horned Lark is the only likely confusion species but the North African taxon *E. a. atlas* (the only remotely possible form in The Gambia) has a yellow tone to the pale areas of the face, and darker, less uniform upperparts. Adult male sparrow-larks of the genus *Eremophila* have more extensive black, covering most of the underparts, as well as much heavier, sparrow-like bills.

Nothing concerning the bird's plumage led us to draw any conclusions about its age or sex, though the generally well-defined head pattern suggested that it was not a first-winter. The plumage generally exhibited considerable wear, but this is perhaps typical of species that inhabit open, sandy areas where wind-borne sand particles can cause extreme abrasion. This was particularly noticeable on the tail where the central pair of feathers was almost reduced to a shaft.

Behaviour

Very approachable, although the bird retained a greater distance when the entire group of 14 people was observing it. At one point, MDC was able to approach to within 1.5 m as it continued to feed. Such behaviour is often typical in species from desert areas where contact with humans is either infrequent or where human behaviour has not had adverse impacts. This individual fed actively, shuffling with rapid, short steps, with the body mostly held low to the ground. It was impossible to determine individual food

items but both insect and plant food appeared to be taken. The bird was faithful to a very sandy area of sloping ground, although a pedestrian route across the golf course was close by.

Status and distribution

Temminck's Horned Lark is generally considered a resident, prone to occasional dispersal. Accidentals have been reported outside of the species' usual range, between north-west Mauritania across North Africa to north and east Arabia, Syria, and east and south-west Iraq¹⁻³, in Malta, Lebanon² and Yemen⁴. This appears to constitute not only the first record for The Gambia, but also for anywhere in Africa south of the Sahara.

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Second confirmed record of Forbes's Plover *Charadrius forbesi* for The Gambia

Gordon Kirk^a and Clive R. Bartou^b

En février 2002 un Pluvier de Forbes *Charadrius forbesi* a été observé sur la côte gambienne. Ceci ne constitue que la deuxième mention confirmée pour le pays. L'examen de spécimens au Royaume Uni semble indiquer qu'il s'agissait d'un adulte en plumage intermédiaire.

Forbes's Plover *Charadrius forbesi* occurs in savannas of western Central Africa², breeding in rocky upland areas of Nigeria in March–August³ and July–August in Ghana⁵. It is known to move short distances from its breeding grounds and to undertake longer journeys, although the routes involved are not understood². The only confirmed record from The Gambia is of one at Bansang (13°26'N 14°39'W) in Central River Division, on 23 November 1979^{1,4}. There is also an unconfirmed January record from coastal Western Division, and records in south and east Senegal in February^{1,6}.

On 6 February 2002, GK and a small group of British birders spent a day with CB in Western Division of The Gambia. During mid-afternoon some of the group spent time watching Palearctic shorebirds on a muddy pool behind the beach at Tujering (13°19'N 16°47'W) in south Gambia on the Atlantic coast. The seasonal pool was bordered by vegetation dominated by *Tamarisk pentandra* and while searching through numbers of Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*, Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*, Wood Sandpiper *T. glareola* and Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*, GK saw a small wader alight and CB immediately identified it as a Forbes's Plover. CB has recent experience of the species from Guinea-Bissau and Guinea Conakry, both in October, in stonier, lateritic grasslands at higher altitudes. We obtained prolonged, close views of the bird in good light. The main question was the bird's age. A few wing feathers appeared to have

pale fringes, which are just visible in Fig 1, suggesting that it may not have been a full adult. After c10 minutes the bird flew off, uttering a double call as it departed. On 10 February 2002 at 08.00 hrs CB and Paul Manners visited the same site and found the bird still present. It moved between two areas, the muddy pool and a drier part some 250 m away. PM took a series of photographs and CB obtained a short sound recording of the flight call.

On returning to the UK, GK visited the Natural History Museum (Tring) to examine skins of Forbes's Plover (35 specimens). About 50% had been collected in Nigeria, with most other records from other West African countries (Sierra Leone, Liberia, 'Gold Coast', 'British Cameroon' and Côte d'Ivoire), and two taken in 'north Rhodesia' and 'west Tanganyika' (country names within quotes appear as on the relevant specimen labels). The birds had been collected in most months, with the majority of the breeders taken in May. Many of the non-breeding adults, labelled as having been caught in December–February, had some pale feather fringes, especially on the secondaries and inner primaries, like those on the Gambian bird. The Gambian bird also had the following features that appear to eliminate the possibility of it being a juvenile (see Fig 1): no pale fringes to the mantle or scapular feathers, a black (not brown) breast-band and grey (not buff) face and throat. GK concluded that the observed bird was an adult in non-breeding plumage. The sexes are similar⁷.

This constitutes the second confirmed record of Forbes's Plover in the Gambia¹.

Acknowledgements

Dr Robert Prys-Jones kindly permitted GK to inspect skins at the Natural History Museum (Tring), Paul Manners supplied the photograph, and Colin McKerrow also observed the bird and made supporting notes.

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Red-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus ruficollis*, new to Burkina Faso

Bruno Potier

La nuit du 15 mars 2001 a été observé au Ranch de gibier de Nazinga (c11°10'N 01°35'W) au sud du Burkina Faso, un engoulement inhabituel pour la région. Une description de l'oiseau et du biotope sont données. Identifié comme Engoulement à collier roux *Caprimulgus ruficollis*, il s'agit de la première mention connue de ce migrateur paléarctique pour le Burkina Faso.

On the evening of 15 March 2001, I observed an unfamiliar nightjar c2 km east of the tourist campground at Nazinga Game Ranch (c11°10'N 01°35'W), in Burkina Faso, 200 km south of Ouagadougou on the Ghana border. It was resting in the centre of a dirt road, where I observed it in the beam of my car headlights, approaching it to within 10 m to examine its plumage in detail through binoculars. It flew off after c30 seconds and was not seen again.

A large, grey-brown nightjar, it was noticeably larger than Standard-winged *Macrodipteryx longipennis* and Long-tailed Nightjars *Caprimulgus climacurus*, both common at Nazinga, with a broad rufous hindneck collar, brighter than on Standard-winged Nightjar. A white malar stripe reached the ear-coverts and there was a conspicuous, large white throat patch. Buff tips to the scapulars and upper wing-coverts formed 4–5 contrasting pale bars. The tail was fairly long, square ended and barred, extending well beyond the wingtips. In flight, it had white patches near the wingtips, on the outer primaries, and broad white tips to the outertail feathers.

It readily differed from the four nightjar species previously known from the ranch. Apart from its smaller size, Standard-winged Nightjar differs in its less contrasting plumage markings and much shorter tail. Long-tailed

Nightjar was excluded by its small size and long, graduated tail. Plain Nightjar *Caprimulgus inornatus* has very different, pale and plain overall coloration, whereas Freckled Nightjar *C. tristigma* is overall much darker. The wing and tail patches excluded a possible vagrant Pennant-winged Nightjar *Macrodipteryx vexillarius*. It also differed from European Nightjar *C. europaeus* in having a larger white throat patch, more spotted wing-coverts, a diagnostic rufous nuchal collar, paler and more variegated plumage, with no dark grey/black coloration on the shoulders. I therefore identified it as a male Red-necked Nightjar *C. ruficollis*, probably of the nominate form.

Vegetation at Nazinga is dominated by shrub and tree savannas (Northern Guinea Savanna), with *Vitellaria paradoxa* and *Combretum glutinosum*, patches of wooded savanna (*Isobertinia doka*, *Azelia africana*, *Anogeissus leiocarpus*) and some riparian forest along major drainage channels. Climate is characterised by annual rainfall of c1,000 mm and a six-month dry season.

Red-necked Nightjar is a rare to uncommon Palearctic winter visitor in West Africa, known from Mauritania, north Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Liberia, north Côte d'Ivoire and north Ghana¹, and, most recently, north-east Nigeria⁵. Though Burkina Faso is included in

distribution maps in Fry *et al*¹ and Cleere & Nurney², no records can be traced³ and this appears to be the first documented record in the country. As I did not see it again, despite my continued presence at the site, regularly driving tracks at night, it may have been a passage migrant.

Acknowledgement

Ron Demey encouraged me to write this note and commented on the manuscript.

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Ansorge's Greenbul *Andropadus ansorgei*, new to Uganda

NikBorrow^a and RonDemey^b

Les auteurs rapportent la découverte du Bulbul d'Ansorge *Andropadus ansorgei* en Ouganda. Bien que la présence de l'espèce dans le Parc National de Bwindi est soupçonnée depuis 1992, lorsque les vocalisations caractéristiques de l'espèce furent entendues pour la première fois, ce n'est qu'en août 2001 que ceci a pu être confirmé par l'observation visuelle d'un oiseau répondant vigoureusement à la repasse de son chant. L'espèce, qui peut facilement être confondue avec le Bulbul gracile *A. gracilis*, est probablement commune dans le parc.

On 12 November 1992, RD, Lincoln Fishpool and John Miskell heard the typical rattling call of Ansorge's Greenbul *Andropadus ansorgei* at Kitahurira, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, west Uganda. A small greenbul was briefly seen in the upper mid-level of the forest edge but its underparts coloration could not be ascertained. On plumage characters alone, it therefore could not be separated from the very similar and locally not uncommon Little Grey Greenbul *A. gracilis*. However, as the dry rattle is, in the observers' field experience, never made by Little Grey Greenbul, RD and LF were certain of the identification, being familiar with both species' vocalisations from elsewhere in Africa, especially Yapo Forest, Côte d'Ivoire. They were aware that Ansorge's Greenbul was not on the Bwindi⁵ or even the Uganda list^{2,7} but, as good views had not been obtained, preferred to await further evidence before claiming an addition to the country's avifauna.

On 4 August 1999 NB observed several small greenbuls resembling *A. ansorgei* and making the dry rattling call in the mid-canopy along the main track at Buhoma, Bwindi. However, as he knew that only *A. gracilis* had been recorded in Uganda, he speculated that the rattle ascribed to *ansorgei* by Fishpool *et al*¹ was perhaps also made by *gracilis*. Cameroon Sombre Greenbul *A. curvirostris* was excluded by its larger size, plainer appearance, less obvious broken eye-ring and its vocalisations, which also include a rattle

that is, however, much shorter and muted. The statement in Zimmerman *et al*¹ that *gracilis* has a 'pale brown' vent further confused NB, as this did not match his West African experience of the species. Though Keith *et al*¹ also state that *A. gracilis* has 'pale-brown undertail-coverts', examination of skins at the Natural History Museum (Tring) revealed that these are better described as yellow-ochre, merging into yellow on the belly, whereas in both races of *A. ansorgei* (n nominate and *kavirondensis*) the ginger-coloured undertail-coverts and flanks surround the greyish belly, with no hint of yellow in the plumage. Skins of *A. g. gracilis* and *extrema*, the races occurring in West Africa, and of *A. g. ugandae*, known from the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo to west Kenya, were very much alike, without plumage differences that would be noticeable in the field and all having a yellowish vent and belly.

On 2 August 2001 NB again heard the dry rattle along the main track at Buhoma and briefly saw two birds with the gingery vent and flanks typical of *ansorgei*, but they rapidly departed and did not respond to playback of a recording of the rattle made by Chappuis³ in Cameroon. In addition to the dry rattle, *A. ansorgei* also produces a distinctive three-note whistle. NB later heard this whistle and the vocalising bird responded vigorously to playback of an identical recording, made by Chappuis³, coming directly to the source of the sound and affording excellent views. The lack of yellow on the underparts and the

gingery vent and flanks were obvious. The head and throat were olive-grey and there was a narrow but obvious white eye-ring. NB concluded that it was indeed *ansorgei*. Tape-recordings of the song were made by Adam Riley.

Ansorge's Greenbul is an uncommon to locally common forest resident in west Guinea to Togo and from Nigeria to south-west Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo, with a disjunct population, described as a separate race *kavirondensis*, in west Kenya^{1,6}. Status and distribution are obscured by confusion with the more common and widespread Little Grey Greenbul. We suspect that Ansorge's Greenbul is common in Bwindi.

Acknowledgements

NB's observations were made while leading Birdquest tours. Alfred Twinomujuni and Adam Riley provided assistance in the field, and Lincoln Fishpool commented on the manuscript. ♀

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Recent Reports



These are largely unconfirmed records published only for interest; **records are mostly from the second half of 2001 and early 2002, with a few from earlier dates.** We thank all birders who have sent in their records and urge them to submit full details to the relevant national or regional organisations (see *Bull. ABC9*: 58–60). 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

Records from the period October 2001–February 2002 include the following. Four **Pink-footed Geese** *Anser brachyrhynchus* were at Lagoa Funda and Rasa, Flores, on 6–8 November. An **American Wigeon** *Anas americana* was at Fajã dos Cubres, São Jorge, on 6–8 October. On Flores, up to 13 **American Black Duck** *A. rubripes*, including a number of hybrids, were seen in October–November. **Blue-winged Teals** *A. discors* were found on Flores (one on 30–31 October), Terceira (one on 28 October) and at Lagoa Azul, São Miguel (two on 1–3 November). Five **Ring-necked Duck** *Aythya collaris* were at Lagoa Branca, Flores, on 5–6 October and a **Lesser Scaup** *A. affinis* at Lagoa Verde on 3–9 December. The fourth **Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula* for the Azores was discovered at Porto Pim beach, Faial, on 18 November and stayed in the area until at least 12 January. **Rough-legged Buzzards** *Buteo lagopus* were at Porto Pim, Faial, on 11–20 October, at Cabo da Praia, Terceira, on 1 November, near Praia da Vitoria, Terceira, on 17 November and at Horta, Faial, on 30 December. An adult **American Coot** *Fulica americana* was discovered on Flores on 31 October and (probably the

same) subsequently seen at Lagoa Combes, Flores, on 6 November where it was found shot the next day. Another was claimed from Lagoa Azul, São Miguel, on 3–8 December.

Semipalmated Plovers *Charadrius semipalmatus* were present at Cabo da Praia, Terceira, on 28–30 October (two), 1–14 November and 29 December. A **Killdeer** *C. vociferus* remained at Sete Cidades, São Miguel, on 1–12 November. Vagrant *Calidris* found at Cabo da Praia, Terceira, in October included a **Semipalmated Sandpiper** *Calidris pusilla*, a **Western Sandpiper** *C. mauri*, up to 25 **White-rumped Sandpipers** *C. fuscicollis* (with the last being seen in mid-November), a **Baird's Sandpiper** *C. bairdii* and up to four **Pectoral Sandpipers** *C. melanotos*. Also there were a **Hudsonian Whimbrel** *Numenius hudsonicus* on 1 November and a **Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes* on 11–14 October. A **Spotted Redshank** *T. erythropus* was at Sete Cidades, São Miguel, on 12 November. In October–January, a total of seven **Spotted Sandpipers** *Actitis macularia* was seen on several islands, including Pico, Faial, São Miguel and Terceira.

A first-winter **Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus* was found at Ponta Delgada harbour, São Miguel, on 11–12 November and a first-winter **Bonaparte's Gull** *L. philadelphia* at Praia da Vitoria, Terceira, on 5 November. At least 550 **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** *L. fuscus graellsii* were counted in south-east Terceira on 13 November. At Horta harbour, Faial, up to three **Ring-billed Gulls** *L. delawarensis* were present on 7–23 February, up to two **Iceland Gulls** *L. glaucoides* on 31 December–22 January and a **Glaucous Gull** *L. hyperboreus* on 7–22 January. A **Ross's Gull** *Rhodostethia rosea* was with an **Iceland Gull** *L. glaucoides* at Ribera Grande, São Miguel, on 28 December. A **Common Nighthawk** *Chordeiles minor* was seen at Fajã dos Cubres, São Jorge, on 5–7 October and the second **Belted Kingfisher** *Ceryle alcyon* for the Azores, following one in October 1996, stayed at Porto Pim, Faial, from 2 October to at least 9 December.

A **Cliff Swallow** *Hirundo pyrrhonota* (presumably that observed previously on

28 September) was seen again on 19 October at Cabo da Praia, Terceira. A **Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros* was present at Mosteiros, São Miguel, on 7–8 December. The first **Yellow Warbler** *Dendroica petechia* for the Azores was photographed on São Miguel on 5 December. A female **Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis* was at Lagoa do Ginjal, Terceira, on 13 November (per *Birding World* 14: 421, 457–458 & 494, 15: 12 & 57 and *Dutch Birding* 23: 355–362, 24: 46–59 & 112).

Botswana

A **Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* was seen at Gaborone on 27 December 2001. In Chobe National Park, a **Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus* was found on 11 November and an **American Golden Plover** *Pluvialis (d.) dominica* on 16 December (ZfB). A **Grey Plover** *P. squatarola* was at Lake Ngami on 1 December. A **Pennant-winged Nightjar** *Macrodipteryx vexillaria* at Mokolodi Nature Reserve near Gaborone, in mid-October was outside its usual range (ST).

In January 2002, large numbers of waterbirds were present at Nata Sanctuary, at the northern end of Sua Pan, including 1,130 **Chestnut-banded Plovers** *Charadrius pallidus*, 71 **White-fronted Plovers** *C. marginatus* and 102 **Common Ringed Plovers** *C. biaticula* on 7th, and 3,320 **Pied Avocets** *Recurvirostra avosetta*, 1,300 **Black-winged Stilts** *Himantopus himantopus*, 490 **Grey-headed Gulls** *Larus cirrocephalus* and nine **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** *L. fuscus* on 27th, with a single **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa* also there. In February,



Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*
by Mark Andrews

1,561 **Great White Pelicans** *Pelecanus onocrotalus*, 60,000 **Greater Flamingos** *Phoenicopterus ruber*, 12,000 **Lesser Flamingos** *Phoeniconaias minor* and 41 **Caspian Terns** *Sterna caspia* were counted. A pair of **Grey Crowned Cranes** *Balearica regulorum* was observed on 7 January and 7 February. By April Sua Pan had dried up and waterbirds had departed. A **European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* was seen near Sefophe, eastern Botswana, on 17 February. **Red-chested Flufftails** *Sarothrura rufa* were heard calling at Xakanaxa, Moremi Game Reserve, in January and April. April records from Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, in the south-west, include a **Black Harrier** *Circus maurus* on 17th, **Speckled Mousebirds** *Colius striatus* at four locations along the Mabuasehube–Nossob track on 16–17th, and five **Rosy-faced Lovebirds** *Agapornis roseicollis* roosting in a Sociable Weaver *Philetairus socius* nest at Swart Pan on 19th; if accepted the latter record is likely to be the first for Botswana (*CBR*). **Indian** (Common) **Myna** *Acridotheres tristis* unfortunately continues to spread in south-east and east Botswana (*ST*).

Burkina Faso

Records from the period November 2001–April 2002 include the following. At Nazinga Game Ranch ten adult and two immature **White-backed Night Herons** *Gorsachius leuconotus* were observed on 12 April. Several species were added to the Nazinga list, including **Saddle-billed Stork** *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis* (an adult on 22 December), **European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* (one on 25 April, five on 28 April and three on 29 April, all migrating north), **Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* (a male on 23 April), **Little Stint** *Calidris minuta* (five on 20 April), **Great**



White-backed Night Heron *Gorsachius leuconotus* by Craig Robson

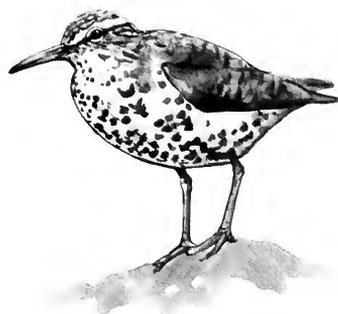
Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius* (one on 20 April), **Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus* (three on 20 November), **Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica cyaneicola* (one on 20 November) and **Great Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* (one on 9 November). A **Secretary Bird** *Sagittarius serpentarius* seen during this period may constitute the first sighting in Nazinga since 1983. A **Golden-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza flaviventris* was found at Gonsé, near Ouagadougou, on 13 April (all *BP*).

Cameroon

Records from the second half of 2001 include the following. An **Eastern Wattled Cuckoo-shrike** *Lobotos oriolinus* was observed north of Lobéké National Park on 30 November. **Dja River Warbler** *Brachypterus grandis* was found at three new sites in November, north of Ndongo village (02°12'N 14°51'E) and north of Lobéké National Park (02°31'N 15°34'E and 02°34'N 15°51'E). **Dorst's Cisticola** *Cisticola dorsti* appeared to be common in wooded savanna in Bouba Ndjida National Park in July, with many in song. Five **White-collared Starlings** *Grafafistatorquata* were seen close to Kika, far into the forest block in extreme south-east Cameroon, on 13 November. A pair of **Bob-tailed Weavers** *Brachycope anomala* feeding four fledglings was discovered at Kika, on 7 October. An adult was seen at the same place on 29 November and another two days previously along the Dja River, close to Ngongo village. An adult male **Orange-winged Pytilia** *Pytilia afra* was claimed from the Tibati area in November; this would be the first record north of the Congo Basin forest block, if confirmed. A pair of **Grant's Bluebills** *Spermophaga poliogenys* was found north of Lobéké on 30 November and a second, at another site in the area, three days later; these constitute the first records for Cameroon (per *ML*).

Canary Islands

Records from the period December 2001–March 2002 include the following. A **Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* was at Tejina Ponds, Tenerife, on 30 December (*TC*). The **Yellow-billed Stork** *Mycteria ibis* present on Fuerteventura since at least November 2000 is now known to be an escape (per *Dutch Birding* 23: 356). Two **Eurasian Spoonbills** *Platalea leucorodia* were at Playa de Sotavento Jandia, Fuerteventura, on at least 29–



Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia* by Mark Andrews

30 December (per *Dutch Birding* 24: 109). Three **Greylag Geese** *Anser anser* at Roquito del Fraile, Tenerife, on 31 December until at least 3 January, constituted the fifth record for the archipelago (*TC*). A total of six **Ruddy Shelducks** *Tadorna ferruginea* was found at three sites on Fuerteventura in December–February (per *Dutch Birding* 24: 109 and *GO*). The first **Hooded Merganser** *Mergus cucullatus* for the Canaries, a female, was on Tenerife from 11 December to at least 26 January. A **Ring-necked Duck** *Aythya collaris* at Los Silos, Tenerife, was still present on 26 January. A **Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* was seen at Los Rodeos, Tenerife, on 14–22 March (*TC*). Single **Spotted Sandpipers** *Actitis macularia* were at El Pinque, Tenerife, on 5 January and at Los Molinos, Fuerteventura, in early March (per *Dutch Birding* 24: 111). Three **Slender-billed Gulls** *Larus genei* were at Risco del Paso, Fuerteventura on 28 January and five at the same site two days later; three had Spanish rings (*GO*). **Laughing Dove** *Streptopelia senegalensis* was regularly seen on Fuerteventura, with a pair mating on 2 February; the species has only recently colonised the Canary Islands (*GO*).

A **Richard's Pipit** *Anthus novaeseelandiae*, found on Amarilla golf course, Tenerife, in early November was still present on 23 March. On 26 January a **Dunnock** *Prunella modularis* was reported from Embalse de la Cruz Santa, Tenerife; this will be the first for the Canaries if accepted. On the same date, the third **Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva* for Tenerife was discovered at Tenbel; it was still present on 23 March (*TC*). The third **Western Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula* for the archipelago was on Tenerife from 7 November (per *Dutch Birding* 24: 59).

Cape Verde Islands

Records from a trip on 1 November–5 December 2001 include the following. Eight **Cape Verde Purple Herons** *Ardea (purpurea) bournei* were counted at Banana, Santiago, on 9 November; about five of the c15 nests appeared occupied. A juvenile/female **Common Teal** *Anas crecca* was at Mindelo sewage ponds, São Vicente, on 3 November. A juvenile **Common Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus* was found near Tarrafal de Santiago on 2 December and a **Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* at Tarrafal de Santo Antão on 16 and 18 November. An **American Golden Plover** *Pluvialis (d.) dominica* and a **Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago* were at Mindelo ponds, São Vicente, on 14 November, and another Common Snipe at Tarrafal de Santiago on 2 December. A **Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus* flew alongside the ferry, c15 km north-west off Santiago on 5 November (PC).

Records from March 2002 included the following. At least 13–15 **Cape Verde Purple Herons** were at Banana, Santiago, on 2nd. A **Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* was at Rabil Lagoon, Boavista, on 20th. A dark-morph **Western Reef Heron** *Egretta gularis* was found at Praia, Santiago, on 3rd–4th, an **Intermediate Egret** *E. intermedia* at Mindelo sewage ponds, São Vicente, on 15th and an immature **Eurasian Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia* at Rabil Lagoon, Boavista, on 17th. A female **Common Teal** was seen at Mindelo sewage ponds on 11th and 15th. A female **Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* was at Curral Velho, Boavista, on 18th and two females at Sal Rei island, Boavista, the next day. Two **Cape Verde Buzzards** *Buteo (buteo) bannermanni* were video-taped at Boa Entrada, Santiago, on 1st, and several on Santo Antão. Vagrant waders included three **Red Knots** *Calidris canutus* at Rabil Lagoon, Boavista, on 17th, a **Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata* at Curral Velho, Boavista, on 18th, a **Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes* at Pedra de Lume saltpans, Sal, on 20th, and a **Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularia* at Mindelo ponds, São Vicente, on 15th (LBo & TF).

Some interesting earlier records have come to light. A **Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* was photographed at Sal Rei Bay, Boavista, where it stayed for 2–3 days in July or August 2000, while another pelican *Pelecanus* sp. was found dead around

the same time. An immature **Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandarius* was also photographed on Boavista, on an unknown date. Both records are the first for the Cape Verde Islands. Four **Cape Verde Red Kites** *Milvus (milvus) fasciicauda* were reportedly present on Boavista in July–August 2001; one was photographed. During the same period two more were reportedly present on Maio in the company of six Black Kites *M. migrans* and two possible hybrids (per LBo).

Côte d'Ivoire

Records from the period January–April 2002 include the following. Two **Olive Ibis** *Bostrychia olivacea* were at the mouth of the Dodo River, near Grand-Béréby, on 11 March (RD). A male **Harlequin Quail** *Coturnix delegorguei* was found near Yamoussoukro on 7 April. On bare ground in the same area, a flock of c100 **Collared Pratincoles** *Glareola pratincola* was observed, with many pairs displaying and one pair seen mating; the species is known to breed in Côte d'Ivoire only at Adiopodoumé and Bouaké (OL & HJO). A silent **Brown Nightjar** *Caprimulgus binotatus* was seen in Taï National Park on 5 February, at the same site as in 2001 (NB) and a **Red-necked Nightjar** *C. ruficollis* was found in Mt Sangbé National Park on 21 February (RD & LF). Additions to the Banco National Park list included a juvenile **Yellow-footed Honeyguide** *Melignomon eisentrauti* observed on 7 April (HR) and two **Yellow-bearded Greenbuls** *Crimiger olivaceus* the next day (OL & HR). Several pairs of **Baumann's Greenbul** *Phyllastrephus baumannii* were found at new sites in Mt Sangbé National Park in January–February; the presence of this species in the park was discovered in 2001 and it appears to be fairly common (RD). **White-necked** (Yellow-headed) **Picathartes** *Picathartes gymnocephalus* was seen for the first time on Mt Tonkoui on 24 February (RD & LF). The southernmost record in the country of **Neumann's** (Red-winged) **Starling** *Onychognathus neumanni* was of a flock of 20 foraging on rocky outcrops in the south of Mt Sangbé National Park on 6 February (RD). A non-breeding flock of **Heuglin's Masked Weavers** *Ploceus heuglini* was seen in Comoé National Park on 31 January; the species is treated as unconfirmed for the park by Salewski (2000, *Malimbus* 22: 55–76) (NB).

Field work in Haute Dodo, Cavally, Mt Glo and Guéoulé Forest Reserves, in the east of the country, in February–March 2002, produced the following interesting records. **White-breasted Guineafowl** *Agelastes meleagrides* was found in logged forest in Haute Dodo and Cavally and appeared to be fairly common in the latter. Three male **Western Watted Cuckoo-shrikes** *Lobotos lobatus* were seen at three different locations in Haute Dodo. In Cavally, three **Green-tailed Bristlebills** *Bleda eximia* were mist-netted. **Yellow-bearded Greenbul** was found in Haute Dodo, Cavally and Guéoulé; the species was previously known from only five sites in the country. **Nimba Flycatcher** *Melaenornis annamarulae* was seen in Haute Dodo and Guéoulé. **Yellow-footed Honeyguide**, whose presence in the country was only confirmed in 2001, was seen at Cavally (one) and Guéoulé (2–3). Single **Brown Nightjars** were singing at Haute Dodo and Cavally. A pair of **Fiery-breasted Bush-shrikes** *Malaconotus cruentus* was seen in Guéoulé, flocks of **Dusky Tits** *Parus funereus* were in Mt Glo and Guéoulé, and **Preuss's Golden-backed Weavers** *Ploceus preussi* in Haute Dodo, Mt Glo and Guéoulé. A female **Pale-fronted Negrofinch** *Nigrita luteifrons* and a male **Red-fronted Antpecker** *Parmoptila rubrifrons* were observed in Haute Dodo (RD, LF & HR).

Egypt

Records from the period November 2001–February 2002 include the following. Twenty **Egyptian Geese** *Alopochen aegyptiacus* were at Aswan on 2 February and c20 **Black-shoudered Kites** *Elanus caeruleus* between Idfu and Aswan on 1–2 February. Single **Lappet-faced Vultures** *Torgos (Aegypius) tracheliotos* were seen south-east of Aswan on 2 February and 50 km north of Shalatin the next day, while an adult **Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga* was south-east of Aswan on 2 February. Twelve **Greater Sand Plovers** were at Hamatta on 30 January and seven on 3 February (per *Birding World* 15: 57). At Gebel Elba, south-east Egypt, at least two pairs of **Nubian Nightjar** *Caprimulgus nubicus* were found in late November. Also there were c100 **Red-tailed Wheatears** *Oenanthe xanthopyrma*, including ten of the eastern form *O. x. chrysopygia*; the latter taxon had apparently not been recorded previ-

ously in Egypt. A wintering population of 30 **Cyprus Warblers** *Sylvia melanothorax* was also found in the same area (MBD & SBD).

Eritrea

In late December 2001, an exhausted **Great Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* was captured in the Massawa area by a local fisherman and released at freshwater ponds, where it survived for ten days. **Bluetheats** *Luscinia svecica* were observed and photographed at Massawa. Asmara and Akwar hot-water springs during the period November 2000–February 2001 (JT).

Ethiopia

On 28 October 2001, 19 **Wattled Cranes** *Bugeranus carunculatus* were observed on the shore of Lac Abiyata (BW per JE).

The Gambia

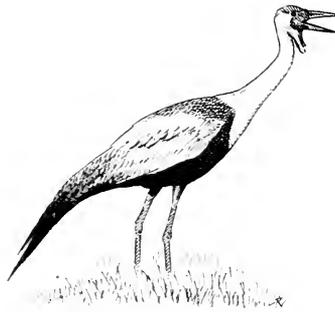
An adult **Franklin's Gull** *Larus pipixcan* was photographed at Banjul on 17 January 2002 (per *Dutch Birding* 24: 112).

Ghana

In February 2001, six **African Spoonbills** *Platalea alba* were present on Sakumo Lagoon on 4th. A **Red-thighed Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter erythropus* was observed in Kakum National Park on 7th and another in Bobiri Forest Reserve on 17th. Two **Martial Eagles** *Polemaetus bellicosus* were in Mole National Park on 13–14th. A **Red-necked Falcon** *Falco chicquera* was seen in Shai Hills Reserve on 8th. A flock of c200 **Spotted Redshanks** *Tringa erythropus* stayed at Sakumo Lagoon (with similar numbers in February 2002). A **Grey (Red) Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* was at the Densu Delta salt pans on 4th. At least one pair of **Freckled Nightjars** *Caprimulgus tristigma* was found on the escarpment at the lodge in Mole National Park. A pair of **Forest Penduline Tits** *Anthoscopus flavifrons* was nesting near Kakum National Park on 5th (RC, DD et al).

On 4–5 January 2002, the nest of a **Saddle-billed Stork** *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis* was found in Mole National Park, in a *Khaya senegalensis* tree; it contained two well-grown chicks c1.0–1.5 months old (BP). There are few definite breeding records of this species in West Africa.

In February 2002, a **Black Stork** *Ciconia nigra* stayed in Mole National Park on 13–26th at least. Two **Knob-billed**



Wattled Crane *Bugeranus carunculatus*
by Craig Robson

Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* and a **Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos* were on Sakumo Lagoon on 18th (RC, DD et al). A **Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes* was claimed from the same site on 15th (BS, JD et al per RC). An **African Dwarf Kingfisher** *Ceyx lecontei* was seen at Mole National Park on 26th. A colony of 600–800 **Preuss's Cliff Swallows** *Hirundo preussi* discovered a year previously at Brenu Achenema near Cape Coast, was found at the same site and is apparently resident. A male **Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* was in Mole National Park on 26th. A **Little Grey Flycatcher** *Muscicapa epulata* was seen in Kakum National Park on 7th and a flock of c12 **Dusky Tits** *Parus funereus* in Bobiri Forest Reserve the next day (RC, DD et al).

Guinea

During field work in south-west Mali, at the confluence of the Bafing and Balé Rivers, on the border with north-east Guinea, in mid-February 2002, **Adamawa Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia hypopyrrha*, **Dorst's Cisticola** *Cisticola dorsti* and **Swamp Flycatcher** *Muscicapa aquatica* were seen on the Guinea side, and thus added to this country's list (RJD & FDL).

Kenya

Records from the period October 2001–May 2002 include the following. A single **Greater Frigatebird** *Fregata minor* was seen at Malindi on 30 December; the species appears to be more regular along the coast than previously thought, with 5–10 records per year of frigatebirds most likely this species. A **Western Reef Heron** *Egretta gularis* was at Lake Nakuru in early March; this species is rare away

from the south coast. A **Palm-nut Vulture** *Gypobierax angolensis* was observed near Sio River, south of Nambale, Busia, on 13 April. A male **Levant Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter brevipes* in Busia, western Kenya, on 15 April would constitute the fourth country record, if accepted. A **Short-toed Eagle** *Circus gallicus* and a **Grasshopper Buzzard** *Butastur rufipennis* were reported from Tsavo East National Park on 19 January. A roost of 500 **Lesser Kestrels** *Falco neumannii* was found at Olomanyi dam, Nairobi National Park, in February. Over 1,000 **Amur (Eastern Red-footed) Falcons** *F. amurensis* with a scattering of **Eurasian Hobbies** *F. subbuteo* were observed at Mwea National Reserve on 28 November. A **Quail-plover** *Ortyxelos meiffrenii* was seen at Tsavo East on 23 December. Reports from Sabaki River mouth included 700+ **Madagascar Pratincoles** *Glareola ocularis* on 12 May, an adult **Caspian Plover** *Charadrius asiaticus* on 27 December, and a **Pacific Golden Plover** *Pluvialis (d.) fulva* on 27 January. The second **Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos* for Kenya was discovered in Nairobi National Park on 7 April. A **Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* was at Gongoni salt works, north of Malindi, on 27 January; this species is recorded only every few years. The 56 **Broad-billed Sandpipers** *Limicola falcinellus* at Sabaki River mouth on 27 December constitute the highest count since 1996. Two adult **Slender-billed Gulls** *Larus genei* were found at the mouth of Tana River in October. A small population of **Sokoke Scops Owls** *Otus irenae* was reported from the edge of unprotected *Brachystegia* forest c25 km north of Arabuko–Sokoke Forest in June 2001 and confirmed in October; this is the first record in the country outside of Arabuko–Sokoke Forest.

The record of an **African Pitta** *Pitta angolensis* in Arabuko–Sokoke Forest on 7 October is the second for 2001 and only the third in four years. A roost of **Barn Swallows** *Hirundo rustica* at Mwea National Reserve was estimated at over one million birds in November–December; this is the largest roost for the species in Kenya. A **River Prinia** *Prinia fluviatilis* claimed from Lokichogio in 2001 would constitute a considerable range extension and the first record for East Africa, if accepted. Two separate **Pied Flycatchers** *Ficedula hypoleuca* reported from

Udo's Camp, Kakamega Forest, in late February, would be the second and third records for Kenya, if accepted. A female **Semi-collared Flycatcher** *F. semitorquata* was observed at Mt Elgon in late March. A small, apparently resident population of **Green-headed Orioles** *Oriolus chlorocephalus* was found in a restricted area of Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, where the species was previously thought to be a wanderer. **Brown Twinspot** *Clytospiza monteiri* and **Black-bellied Firefinch** *Lagonosticta rara* were reported from Mungatsi Grassland in mid-April (all per *CJ*).

Madagascar

A **European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* was claimed from Kirindy Forest on 25 October 2001 (*GA*); this species does not figure in Morris & Hawkins (1998, *Birds of Madagascar*), the most recent work on the island's avifauna.

Madeira

The following records are from the period October 2001–March 2002. **Little Shearwaters** *Puffinus assimilis* were seen from Funchal harbour throughout January–March, with a peak of 100 on 20 March. On 27 October, seawatching from the Porto Santo ferry produced a **Zino's Petrel** *Pterodroma (mollis) madeira* (apparently identified quite easily in direct comparison with two Fea's Petrels), 12 **Fea's Petrels** *P. (mollis) feae* and three **Madeiran Storm-petrels** *Oceanodroma castro*. A **Cattle Egret** *Butor ibis* was at Tanque, Porto Santo, on 20 January and a **Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* at Porto do Cruz on 23 March.

Species seen in or from Funchal harbour included a **Eurasian Spoon-bill** *Platalea leucorodia* on 3 November, a **Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra* on 19 January, a first-winter **Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus* on 2 February, three

Ring-billed Gulls *L. delawarensis* in October–November, a first-winter **American Herring Gull** *L. argentatus smithsonianus* (the first for Madeira) on 16 February, single first-winter **Iceland Gulls** *L. glaucooides* on 12 January and 12 March, and a first-winter **Great Black-backed Gull** *L. marinus* on 14–15 March, with another at Santo da Serra Lagoa on 19–21 March. The second **Semipalmated Plover** *Charadrius semipalmatus* for Madeira was discovered at Tanque, Porto Santo, on 20 October, together with two **Pectoral Sandpipers** *Calidris melanotos*. A **European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur* was seen at Praiahina on 12 March.

The first **Cliff Swallow** *Hirundo pyrrhonota* for the archipelago was observed at Tanque, Porto Santo, on 27 October. Three **Red-rumped Swallows** *H. daurica* at Ponta do Pargo on 2 March constitute the first Madeiran record away from the Salvages. A **Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus* at Tanque, Porto Santo, on 1 November is probably the first record for Madeira (per *Birding World* 14: 421 & 459, 15: 12, 57 & 103).

Malawi

Field work in the lower Shire Valley in November 2001–January 2002 and March–April 2002 produced a number of interesting records. **Amur** (Eastern Red-footed) **Falcons** *Falco amurensis* were observed between 9 December and 30 March, with up to 150 in Lengwe National Park in December–January, whence 50 were seen to depart on 24 March. (Western) **Red-footed Falcon** *Falco vespertinus* is much scarcer this far east, thus a pair in Lengwe on 13 April and two males at Nchalo on 15 April were noteworthy. Heavy passage of **Jacobin Cuckoos** *Oxylophus jacobinus* between late March and at least 24 April is suggestive of a possible Palearctic origin. **Asian Lesser Cuckoos** *Cuculus poliocephalus*, including a hepatic bird, were seen on 18 and 25 December and 20 March. **Thick-billed Cuckoos** *Pachycoccyx audeberti* were very common everywhere in the area throughout this period, being especially vocal in November–January; a large fledgling fed by Retz's Helmet-shrikes *Prionops retzii* in Majete Wildlife Reserve, on 2 December, represents the first breeding record for Malawi. Disappointingly, **African Pitta** *Pitta angolensis* was noted only twice in Lengwe this year, including one displaying sporadically on 7 January. 'Chiperone' weather

(low cloud and winter rain) brought very large numbers of migrant swallows to the Nchalo area in mid-April, including hundreds of **Mascarene Martins** *Phedina borbonica*. Among Palearctic warblers wintering in the area, **River Warbler** *Locustella fluviatilis* was locally common to 14 April, with up to six per day and several in song in April. **Basra Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus griseldis* was noted in small numbers between 27 December and 11 April, including one in song on 20 March. The first Malawi breeding records of **Black-and-white** (Vanga) **Flycatcher** *Bias musicus* were obtained in Lengwe, with a female incubating in early January and another occupied nest in March. With a third pair and a single second-year male, this probably constitutes the entire local population. **Gorgeous Bush-shrike** *Telophorus viridis*, thought to be extinct in Malawi, with no records for the past 18 years, was rediscovered between December and April in a single block of thicket in Lengwe, with a population of perhaps 20–30 pairs occupying 9–10 km² of suitable habitat (*RJD & FDL*).

Mali

During field work, undertaken in February and early March 2002, mainly in the south-west and south, the following species were added to the country's list. **Adamawa Turtle Doves** *Streptopelia hypopyrrha* were singing and displaying at the confluence of the Bafing and Balé Rivers, on the border with Guinea, as well as on the Manding Plateau. Singing **Black-shouldered Nightjars** *Caprimulgus nigriscapularis* were found on the Manding Plateau and in the south. **Narina's Trogon** *Apaloderma narina* was found near the Guinea border at the Bafing–Balé confluence and **Simple Greenbul** *Chlorocichla simplex* on the Baoulé Sud River, near Madina-Diassa. A **Spectacled Warbler** *Sylvia conspicillata* was observed in the delta near Sari-Mama on 1 March. **Dorst's Cisticola** *Cisticola dorsti* was found to be common in the south and Bafing area, thus records of Red-pate Cisticola *C. ruficeps* from this area are doubtless erroneous. **Brown Sunbird** *Anthreptes gabonicus* and **Tropical Boubou** *Laniarius aethiopicus* (not *L. turatii*) were recorded from gallery forest on the Baoulé Sud. **Dybowskii's Twinspot** *Euschistospiza dybowskii* was seen on the Manding Plateau and **Black-bellied Firefinch** *Lagonosticta*



Little Shearwater *Puffinus assimilis*
by Craig Robson



Red-footed Falcon *Falco tinnunculus*
by Ian Lewington

rara at several southern localities. In addition, several species rarely recorded previously were found to be not uncommon, including **Great Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* (Yanfolila and Delta), **Blue-breasted Kingfisher** *Halcyon malimbica* and **Yellow-breasted Apalis** *Apalis flavida* (throughout gallery forest in the south) (RJD & FDL).

Mauritania

An **Aquatic Warbler** *Acrocephalus paludicola* was mist-netted on 4 September 2001 in coastal scrub near Nouakchott (VSA).

Morocco

Records from the period September 2001–February 2002 include the following. An **American Black Duck** *Anas rubripes* was claimed from Oued Massa on 15 February. Five **Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* were at Sidi Bourhaba on 6 November. An immature **Tawny Eagle** *Aquila rapax* was seen 10 km north of Moulay Bouselham, in north-west Morocco, on 28 February; this is an unusual site for this species. At Oued Loukkos, Larache, 900 **Red-knobbed Coots** *Fulica cristata* were counted on 4 November and more than 1,000 on 28 February. An adult **Common Gull** *Larus canus* was recorded at Oued Sous on 4 February, an **Iceland Gull** *L. glaucoideus* at Agadir harbour on 21 January and a **Common Guillemot** *Uria aalge* at Cap Rhir on 2 February. A **Chimney Swift** *Chaetura pelagica* was briefly seen at Tassila, Oued Massa, on 21 September. At Merja Zerga, two **Richard's Pipits** *Anthus novaeseelandiae* were observed on 5 November. **Isabelline Wheatears** *Oenanthe isabellina* were reported from the Sous Valley, south-east of Igoudar, on 21 February and near Erfoud on 24 February. During mid-

September, **Iberian Chiffchaffs** *Phylloscopus collybita ibericus* were seen at Ifrane and Michliffen (with three on 13th), Aguelmame Sidi Ali and Sidi Bettache. At least two adult **Woodchat Shrikes** *Lanius senator* of the form *badius* were identified at Aoulouz gorge on 19 September. An **Azure-winged Magpie** *Cyanopica cyanus* was claimed to have been briefly seen from an airplane that landed at Tangiers on 8 January; this would apparently constitute the first for Morocco and Africa (per *Dutch Birding* 23: 365–369, 24: 110–113 and *Birding World* 14: 459, 15: 57 & 103).

A sub-adult **Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* landed on a seasonal lake at Erg Chebbi on 29 March (RO). In April 2002, a female **Red-footed Falcon** *Falco tinnunculus* was seen near Taroudannt on 1st (RO) and another at Zeida on 9th, a **Barbary Falcon** *Falco peregrinus pelegrinoides* at Er-Rachidia on 10th, a **Marsh Sandpiper** *Tringa stagnatilis* at Oualidia on 28th, three **Common Gulls** *Larus canus* at Oued Sous on 14–15th, and two **Isabelline Wheatears** at Erfoud on 11th and one at Tazenakh on 13th. **Iberian Chiffchaffs** were claimed from Meski on 10th (one) and from Todgha on 20th (two) (VS).

Mozambique

At least four **Greater Frigatebirds** *Fregata minor* were seen near Inhambane on 30 December 2001. An out-of-range **African Hobby** *Falco cucullerius* was reported from Beira on 14 November. At rio Savanne estuary, just north of Beira, a **Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* was seen on 15 November (ZfB). A **Black-naped Tern** *Sterna sumatrana*, found at the same locality the next day, constitutes the third record for the country and the eighth for southern Africa; the previous Mozambican records are of four birds at Inhaca Island and two at Bazaruto Island, while the other five records are from the KwaZulu-Natal coast, South Africa (TH).

Namibia

Records from the period November 2001–March 2002 include the following. Southern Africa's third **Little Blue Heron** *Egretta caerulea* was found at Walvis Bay on 14 March. An **Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus* was reported from Etosha National Park on 4 November. Single **Eurasian Oystercatchers** *Haematopus ostralegus* and **Black-tailed Godwits** *Limosa limosa* were regularly

seen at Walvis Bay throughout the period. Two **Eurasian Oystercatchers** were also found at Sandwich harbour, together with a **Lesser Sand** (Mongolian) **Plover** *Charadrius mongolus*, on 22 January. Reports from the same site included two **Broad-billed Sandpipers** *Limicola falcinellus* on 14 April and a **Hudsonian Godwit** *Limosa baemastica* on 29 December, 6–9 February and 9 April. A **Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* was observed at Rendu Sewage Works, in the north, on 31 January. **Common Redshanks** *T. totanus* were seen at Walvis Bay on 29 November (one), 12 January (four), 22 February (one) and 6 March (one), and at Swakopmund on 3 December–3 January (two) and 2 March (two). Throughout the period, **Red-necked Phalaropes** *Phalaropus lobatus* were regularly found at Walvis Bay (maximum five on 12 January) and Swakopmund (with up to four in December and three in March). Four **Grey (Red) Phalaropes** *P. fulicarius* were at Walvis Bay Salt Works on 12 January and a flock of 81 was seen offshore on 11 March. A **Franklin's Gull** *Larus pipixcan* was discovered at the Swakop River mouth on 29 November and another at Walvis Bay on 7–8 February (all ZfB).

Niger

Three species new to 'W' National Park were reported: **Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica* in February 2000, and **Common Quail** *Coturnix coturnix* and **Winding Cisticola** *Cisticola galactotes* in January 2001 (CB per AH & JB).

Nigeria

The following records are largely from the period November 2001–May 2002. Of particular significance were the observations of **Anambra Waxbill** *Estrilda poliopareia* at several sites in the Tombia Ekpeta area of the Niger Delta from March 2001, the first sightings of this Nigerian endemic for 16 years (FR, DO & PH).

The Lake Chad area continues to produce interesting records. In November, several noteworthy raptors were recorded, including a second-calendar-year **Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus* on 15th and 25th, relatively large numbers of **Steppe Eagles** *Aquila (rapax) nipalensis*, with a maximum of 72 on 8th (the species was first observed in November 1998, cf *Bull ABC* 9: 52–55), single juvenile **Eastern Imperial Eagles** *Aquila heliaca* on 14th, 16th

and 24th (the first for Nigeria), several **Booted Eagles** *Hieraaetus pennatus*, with highest counts (12 individuals) on 11th and 26th, adult **Barbary Falcons** *Falco (peregrinus) peregrinoides* on 23rd, 24th and 26th (the first for Nigeria) and the fourth **Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus* for Nigeria on 22nd (WV, RG & UO). In January, a **Wahlberg's Eagle** *Aquila wahlbergi* was seen at Alagarno, well north of its expected range. Also in that area were a **Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyrtes minimus* and three **Isabelline Wheatears** *Oenanthe isabellina* (PH). In February, an adult male dark-morph **Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* was seen on 22nd. Five **Barbary Falcons**, including four adults and a juvenile, were observed. A male **Coqui Francolin** *Francolinus coqui* crossing the road 20 km southwest of Potiskum on 11th apparently constituted the first record for Nigeria since the 1980s. Single **Short-eared Owls**, seen on 15th and 20th, are the fifth and sixth records for Nigeria. A very probable **Golden Nightjar** *Caprimulgus eximius* was found at Alagarno on 17th (WV). Following the discovery of an adult male **House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* of the form *indicus* on the shore of Lake Chad on 10 January (cf *Malimbus* 24: 40–41) a group of 14 was seen at Baga and seven at Dugarou, c30 km northwest of Baga, on 16–23 April. Other birds of note in the area included a **Wattled Starling** *Creatophora cinerea* and relatively high numbers of wintering **Orphean Warblers** *Sylvia hortensis* and **Masked Shrikes** *Lanius nubicus* (JW & RMG).

Interesting records from the new Ornithological Institute in Jos included a **Bat Hawk** *Macheiramphus alcinus* and flocks of **Red-footed Falcons** *Falco vespertinus* in April, with a maximum of 105 at nearby Rockwater Fish Farm, **Bates's Swift** *Apus batesi* on three dates in March–April, two **Pallid Swifts** *A. pallidus* in April, with a



Figure 1. Anambra Waxbill *Estrilda poliopareia*, Tombia, Bayelsa state, 18 May 2002 (Guus A. Hak)



African Pitta *Pitta angolensis*
by Mark Andrews

further ten at Vom, **Long-billed Pipits** *Anthus similis* throughout March–April, a **European Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus* in April, a single singing male **Emin's Shrike** *Lanius gubernator* also in April and a **Dybowski's Twinspot** *Euschistospiza dybowskii* at Rockwater in January (PH).

The most notable records from elsewhere in the country included the following. A **Great Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* was found at IITA, Ibadan, in late November and a **Gadwall** *Anas strepera* at Dagona in February. Two **Saddle-billed Storks** *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis* and a **Lappet-faced Vulture** *Torgos (Aegyptius) tracheliotes* were seen at Yankari National Park in April, both species are now extremely rare in Nigeria. An immature **Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus* was there in early November. In late April, a group of eight **European Honey Buzzards** *Pernis ptilorhynchus* was seen flying over Kagoro, on the southern escarpment of the Jos Plateau. A **Red-thighed Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter erythropus* at IITA, Ibadan, in late November was a new record for the site. Two **Cassin's Hawk Eagles** *Spizaetus africanus* were seen over the Oban Hills portion of Cross River National Park in early February. A **Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo* was in the Nguru area in early December with others at Jos and Kagoro in March and April. At Sambisa, **Savile's E. savilei**, **White-bellied E. senegalensis** and **Black-bellied Bustards E. melanogaster** were seen in late January; a Black-bellied was also recorded at IITA, Ibadan, in late February. Three **Lesser Black-winged Lapwings** (Senegal Plover) *Vanellus lugubris* were next to the runway at Lagos Airport in late January. A **Great Snipe** *Gallinago media* was at Nguru in April. At Okomu National Park, in the south-west, a **Black Spinetail**

Telacanthura melanopygia and two **Bates's Swifts** were reported in late February. **Narina's Trogon** *Apaloderma narina* was seen at Yankari National Park in early November and at Kagoro in April. At Okomu National Park, an **African Pitta** *Pitta angolensis*, the first for over 60 years in the south-west, was seen in late February. A pair of **Rufous-sided Broadbills** *Smithornis rufolateralis* was seen displaying in the Oban Hills, Cross River National Park, in early February. Small numbers of **Isabelline Wheatears** were wintering in the Nguru area in January. At Yankari, a **Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca* in November was the southernmost record ever. Two records of **Sennar Penduline Tit** *Anthoscopus punctifrons* were reported from the Hadejia–Nguru Wetlands area in December, a considerable range extension for this species. A **Brown-necked Raven** *Corvus ruficollis* was seen near Maiduguri in early March, further south than previously recorded (PH).

Senegal

In November 2001, large numbers of *Calonectris* shearwaters were observed off Cap Vert Peninsula, Dakar. On 10 November, c2,000 were seen migrating south in five hours. Among the 1,000 observed in the afternoon c10% were identified at species level and more than 95% of these appeared to be **Cory's Shearwaters** *C. diomedea*, with less than 5% **Cape Verde Shearwaters** *C. (d.) edwardsii*. (By comparison, during three hours of seawatching on 23 October, only one **Cory's Shearwater** was seen among more than 100 **Sooty Shearwaters** *Puffinus griseus*.) The next day, similar percentages were observed in the 3,000 *Calonectris* passing within 1.5 hours. On 12 November, however, no Cape Verde Shearwaters were identified among the c800 *Calonectris* that passed in 1.5 hours. Other migrating seabirds included a **Great Shearwater** *Puffinus gravis* on 10 November, up to nine **Northern Gannets** *Sula bassana*, and many **Pomarine Skuas** *Stercorarius pomarinus*, **Arctic Skuas** *S. parasiticus* and **Sabine's Gulls** *Larus sabini* (CE).

Seven immature **European Griffon Vultures** *Gyps fulvus* were observed in gatherings of Afrotropical vultures in the Toubakouta area in mid-November 2001; usually only adults are seen. An immature, killed

for the pot on 7 December, wore Paris Museum ring no. TY-2710 and a white ring marked AXZ. Still in the same area, three immatures were found dead under a tree roost on 1 February 2002; they probably died from poisoning at least one month previously (BN).

Records from January 2002 included the following. A flock of c60 **Intermediate Egrets** *Egretta intermedia* was at Marigot One on 5th. Six **Black Storks** *Ciconia nigra* were also there and a further nine at Ndiaël Reserve on 7th. A flock of c300 **White Storks** *Ciconia ciconia* flew over Ndiaël Reserve on 7th. A **Martial Eagle** *Polemaetus bellicosus* was seen in Saloum National Park on 12th. Two female **African Finfoots** *Podica senegalensis* were on the Gambia River in Niokolo Koba National Park on 15–19th, an unusual sighting in this area. Also in Niokolo Koba, a group of at least six **Adamawa Turtle Doves** *Streptopelia hypopyrrba* were near Simenti lodge on 16–19th. Two **Alpine Swifts** *Tachymarptis melba* flew over Simenti Lodge on 18th and one was seen over Kaolack on 19th. Three **Swallow-tailed Bee-eaters** *Merops hirundineus* were in Saloum National Park on 12–13th. A **Spotted Honeyguide** *Indicator maculatus* was seen in Niokolo Koba on 15–17th. A **Greater Hoopoe Lark** *Alaemon alaudipes* was observed in Ndiaël Reserve on 7th; this species appears to have been regular here during the last three years (RC & CC).

Seychelles

Records from the period October 2001–May 2002 include the following. Three species not previously recorded from Seychelles were reported, all yet to be confirmed by Seychelles Bird Records Committee. Most remarkable was a **Sociable Lapwing** *Vanellus gregarius*, which stayed on Alphonse from 12 November to 11 March; if accepted, it will also be a first record for the Southern Hemisphere. Perhaps more predictable were an adult **Madagascar Pratincole** *Glareola ocularis* on Grand Terre, Aldabra, on 6–7 November and a first-winter **Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus* on Platte Island on 28 January–31 March.

Platte Island also turned up a number of other interesting records, including a first-winter **Amur** (Eastern Red-footed) **Falcon** *Falco amurensis* on 28 December–16 January, with two present on 30 December, an **Allen's Gallinule** *Porphyrio*

alleni on 25–27 December, a **Little Swift** *Apus affinis* on 24–28 January, a **Broad-billed Roller** *Eurystomus glaucurus* on 23 January–20 February, a **Common Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia* on 16–17 February, a **Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis* on 5–12 February, a **White Wagtail** *Motacilla alba* on 25 November–30 January, a **Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe* on 11–14 January and a male **Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* on 22–30 January.

Artificial pools recently constructed at Lemuria Golf Course, Praslin, are proving to be an interesting site for waterbirds. **Yellow Bittern** *Ixobrychus sinensis*, resident only in Seychelles within the African region but rare (fewer than 100 pairs), is regularly seen here. As for migrants, a **North-ern Pintail** *Anas acuta* (fifth record for Seychelles), a **Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata* (sixth record) and eight **Garganey** *Anas querquedula* (an uncommon annual migrant) were observed on 29 December. The following day at the same location, a female **Allen's Gallinule** was observed calling and a second heard answering from within the reeds (fourth record for Seychelles). A **Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni* on Praslin on 11–13 November was the third record for the islands. A **European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur* on Aldabra on 1–11 November constituted the fourth record for Seychelles. A remarkable invasion of **Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters** *Merops persicus* took place throughout the Amirantes and granitic islands in November. First, at least several hundred and possibly more than 2,000 arrived at Alphonse around 5 November, remaining for a few days, numbers then rapidly declining to 14 by 9 November. As they vanished from Alphonse, 75–100 appeared on Bird on 9 November. The following day, c40 were present on nearby Denis Island, increasing to at least 58 the next day. On 11 November, 150–200 appeared on North Island and 75–100 on neighbouring Silhouette. Smaller numbers were observed around the same time on Aride Island, Conception, Curieuse, Cousin, Desroches, Frégate, Mahé, Praslin, Rémire and South-east Island. By late December most had disappeared, but isolated reports continued; in early May c60 were still present on Denis and a few on Curieuse. The species has previously been recorded in Seychelles only as a rare vagrant in small parties, usually of 2–3 individuals. **Mascarene Martins**

Phedina borbonica were recorded on Aldabra on 2 October (two) and 24 October (one); these are the sixth and seventh records (all AS).

South Africa

Records from the period November 2001–early May 2002 include the following. During pelagic trips out of Cape Town single **Wandering Albatrosses** *Diomedea exulans* were seen on 18 November and 8 December, **Northern Royal Albatrosses** *D. (epomophora) sanfordi* were observed on 3 November (one), 8 December (one) and 16 February (two). An **Atlantic Petrel** *Pterodroma incensata* was noted on 24 March. **Spectacled Petrels** *Procellaria (aequinoctialis) conspicillata* were regularly seen in December–March (usually 1–3 per trip). Other noteworthy sightings included a **Flesh-footed Shearwater** *Puffinus carneipes* on 24 March, a **Leach's Storm-petrel** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* on 16 February and three on 7 April, and the second **Matsudaira's Storm-petrel** *O. matsudairae* for southern Africa (following one in Durban in 1988) on 24 March.

An immature **Rockhopper Penguin** *Eudyptes chrysocome* was found at Jeffery's Bay on 6 January and taken into care. A **Red-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon rubricauda* flew towards Langebaan on 10 December. A **Great Bittern** *Botaurus stellaris* was reported from Franklin Marsh, KwaZulu-Natal, on 12 December, and another from Olifants River, Northern Province, on 8 January. Southern Africa's second **Little Blue Heron** *Egretta caerulea*, which stayed near Hermanus, Western Cape, in February–September 2001 (cf. *Bull ABC* 9: 71) presumably moved north along the coast and stayed at the Olifants River mouth from 10 November through April. Up to two, possibly three, **Slaty Egrets** *E. vinaceigula* were at Marievale Bird Sanctuary, Gauteng, on 2 December–16 March; one was also seen at Dicken's Pan, Gauteng, on 3 and 24 February. Southern Africa's first **Western Reef Heron** *E. gularis* stayed in Cape of Good Hope Reserve, Western Cape, on 13–20 April. An even more spectacular first, also in Western Cape, was a **Snowy Egret** *E. thula*, discovered at Zandvlei on 23 April and still present at the end of the month. Some 13 **European Honey Buzzards** *Pernis apivorus* were reported throughout the country in December–April. An **Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus* was seen in Pilanesberg National Park, North-west

Province, on 27 November. **Marsh Harriers** *Circus aeruginosus* were recorded, usually singly, at 11 localities in the east throughout the period. A **Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus* was seen in Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park on 3–5 April. An **Eleonora's Falcon** *Falco eleonorae*, reported from Ndumo Wilderness Camp, KwaZulu-Natal, on 2 November was still present on 18 December; another was seen at Vaalkop Dam, North-west Province, on 10 and 12 January. An out-of-range **African Hobby** *F. cuvierii* was found in West Coast National Park, Western Cape, on 3 November.

A **Crab Plover** *Dromas ardeola* was at Richard's Bay, KwaZulu-Natal, on 6 December–23 March and another at St Francis Bay, Eastern Cape, on 18 January. A **Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus* was seen at the mouth of Gamtoos River, Eastern Cape, on 20 November–26 December and (the same?) on 10 February–13 April. **Lesser Sand** (Mongolian) **Plovers** *Charadrius mongolus* were recorded at the Olifants River mouth, Western Cape, on 10 November–13 January (one), De Mond Nature Reserve, Western Cape, on 17 November (two), at the Kromme River mouth, Eastern Cape, on 20 November (two) and 15 February–13 April (1–2), and in West Coast National Park, Western Cape, on 8 April. At the latter locality on the same date there was also a **Greater Sand Plover** *C. leschenaultii*. At least one of the long-staying **Caspian Plovers** *C. asiaticus* at Kgomo near Pienaarsrivier, North-west Province, was still present on 10 November; up to 60 were at Rooipoort Nature Reserve near Kimberley, Northern Cape, on 16 December. **American Golden Plovers** *Pluvialis (d.) dominica* were reported from St Francis Bay, Eastern Cape, on 20–28 January (four), with one still there on 17 February, Kromme River, Eastern Cape, on 9 March–7 April (one), and De Mond Nature Reserve, Western Cape, on 26 March–23 April (two). Single **Pacific Golden Plovers** *P. (dominica) fulva* were identified at Velddrif, Western Cape, on 10–17 November, West Coast National Park, Western Cape, on 17 March, St Francis Bay, Eastern Cape, on 1–2 February, and Richard's Bay, KwaZulu-Natal, on 4–8 December and 7 January–23 March. The first **Great Knot** *Calidris tenuirostris* for southern Africa stayed at West Coast National Park from 16 March until at least 28 April. A **White-rumped Sandpiper** *C. fuscicollis*, found in the same park in October,

was still present on 11 November. A **Baird's Sandpiper** *C. bairdii* stayed in Marievale Bird Sanctuary, Gauteng, on 2 December–3 February and at least four were at Richard's Bay, KwaZulu-Natal, on 7 January. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** *C. melanotos* was near Port Elisabeth, Eastern Cape, on 5 December and two at Dicken's Pan, Gauteng, on 27 January–25 March. At Richard's Bay, KwaZulu-Natal, a **Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Limicola falcinellus* was seen on 18 November, 7 December and 2 February, and up to four on 15–30 December. Two **Black-tailed Godwits** *Limosa limosa* were at Blesbokspruit, Gauteng, on 3–23 March. A **Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* was observed at West Coast National Park on 8 November and another near Ladysmith, KwaZulu-Natal, on 14 November. **Green Sandpipers** *T. ochropus* were found at Dundee Sewage Works, KwaZulu-Natal, from 26 November to at least 1 December (one) with a second later in the month, at Hluhluwe Game Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal, on 11–16 December (two) and on Olifants River, Northern Province, on 8 December (two). **Red-necked Phalaropes** *Phalaropus lobatus* were reported from Velddrif, Western Cape, on 11 November (two), 24 February (three) and 21 March (two) with one still present on 21 April, Strandfontein Sewage Works, Western Cape, on 24 December–28 January (one), and Port Elisabeth, Eastern Cape, on 5 January (two) and 14 January (five). A **Grey (Red) Phalarope** *P. fulicarius* was at Dicken's Pan, Gauteng, on 20–22 February.

A **Franklin's Gull** *Larus pipixcan* was at the Umgeni River, KwaZulu-Natal, on 27 December and another at Alexander Bay, Northern Cape, on 23 January. Single **Black-headed Gulls** *L. ridibundus* were found at Paarl Bird Sanctuary, Western Cape, on 1–10 November, Bayhead, KwaZulu-Natal, on 26 November, Port Elisabeth on 1–7 December, and the Umgeni River mouth, Durban, on 31 December–3 January. The **'Baltic' Lesser Black-backed Gull** *L. f. fuscus* discovered near Durban on 28 September was still present on 29 November.

Southern Africa's third **European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur* was claimed from Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park, Northern Cape on 7 May. A small influx of **Black Coucals** *Centropus grillii* occurred in the extreme east of the country throughout the period, with sightings from at least eight

localities (mostly singles, maximum four). A **Collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicollis* was claimed from Augrabies Falls, Northern Cape, on 19 January; this would constitute the first for western South Africa (all per ZJB).

Tanzania

A **Western Banded Snake Eagle** *Circaetus cinerascens* was seen near Moshion 13 November 2001; this is a rare bird in eastern Tanzania with a smattering of records near Iringa and singles along the Pangani Valley and near Dares Salaam (N&LB). Just a few months after two colonies of **Chestnut-mantled Sparrow Weavers** *Plocepasser rufoscapulatus* were found in south-west Tanzania, the same observer discovered **Black-necked Eremomela** *Eremomela atricollis* in the Kalambo Falls Forest Reserve in the extreme south-west of the country (SN per N&LB).

Tunisia

Birds observed at Oued El Rmal Reservoir (36°21'N 10°21'E) on 13 October 2001 included 4,000 **Greater Flamingos** *Phoenicopterus ruber*, 1,613 **Marbled Duck** *Marmaronetta angustirostris*, 1,682 **Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* (with two more on Jdidi Reservoir, 36°25'N 10°27'E) and 186 **White-headed Duck** *Oxyura leucocephala*. The next day, 1,600 **Marbled Duck** were counted at Oued El Hajar Reservoir (36°52'N 11°02'E) and 1,053 at Lebna Reservoir (36°42'N 10°56'E), with 269 **Ferruginous Duck** also at the former. The total of 1,953 Ferruginous Duck is probably the highest number ever recorded in Tunisia (HA).

Uganda

During a field survey conducted specifically to elucidate status and distribution of the **Blue Swallow** *Hirundo atrocaerulea* in the country, 630 individuals of this threatened species were counted along Lake Victoria's shore between Sango Bay and Mabamba in nine days in August 2001 (per *Africa—Birds & Birding* 6 (6): 73). A flock of ten **House Sparrows** *Passer domesticus* was found at the Kibimba rice scheme, Iganga Province, south-east Uganda, on 21 November 2001; this is apparently the first record for the country, the species not being mapped for Uganda in Stevenson & Fanshawe (2002, *Field Guide to the Birds of East Africa*). Two displaying male **Northern Masked Weavers** *Ploceus taeniopterus* were

found in a small colony of Yellow-backed (Black-headed) Weavers *P. melanocephalus* at Entebbe Zoo in February 2002; the species, which is not in the Uganda list, was previously known in East Africa only from an isolated colony in Lake Baringo, Kenya (MW).

Zambia

Records from the second half of 2001 include the following. In July, three **Palm-nut Vultures** *Gypobierax angolensis* were together in the Luangwa Valley where the species used to be very scarce. A **Dwarf Bittern** *Ixobrychus sturmi* was also there and apparently stayed throughout the dry season, the first such record in Zambia. Nearby were two late migrants, a **Black Coucal** *Centropus grillii* and an **Allen's Gallinule** *Porphyrio alleni*. A **Pel's Fishing Owl** *Scotopelia peli* was seen with a freshly killed small (50–60 cm) crocodile. High waterfowl counts in Lochinvar National Park included 17,900 **White-faced Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna viduata*, 9,360 **Red-billed Teal** *Anas erythrorhynchos*, 345 **Wattled Cranes** *Bugeranus carunculatus* and 220 **African Skimmers** *Rynchops flavirostris*. A **Slaty Egret** *Egretta vinaceigula* was also recorded there, while two others were found in Kafue National Park and near Solwezi.

In August, **Angola Swallows** *Hirundo angolensis* were discovered in Luanshya early in the month, the first Copperbelly record for some time. The same species was found breeding in good numbers in Luapula Province. Near Mkushi and Mpika, **Bar-winged Weavers** *Ploceus angolensis* were found nest building and **Chestnut-headed** (Long-toed) **Flufftails** *Sarothrura lugens* calling, whereas an unidentified sunbird was seen which might be an undescribed taxon. In the far north, the poorly known Lusenga Plain National Park was explored and species present included **Wattled Crane** *Bugeranus carunculatus*, **Blue Quail** *Coturnix chinensis* and **Cassin's Flycatcher** *Muscicapa cassini*. Further north still, large numbers of **Orange-cheeked Waxbills** *Estrilda melpoda* and the occasional **Spotted Thrush Babbler** *Ptyrticus turdinus* were found along the Luao River; both species have very small ranges in Zambia. The forest which constituted the single locality from which **Joyful Bulbul** *Chlorocichla laetissima* was known in Zambia appeared to have been almost

completely cleared, and the species probably no longer occurs. **Lesser Black-winged Lapwings** (Senegal Plover) *Vanellus lugubris* were found breeding near Lake Tanganyika and a nominate **Long-toed Lapwing** *V. crassirostris* was seen at Lake Tondwa along with drumming **Ethiopian Snipe** *Gallinago nigripennis* and very large numbers of **White-backed Duck** *Thalassornis leuconotus*. **Red-knobbed Coots** *Fulica cristata* and **Lesser Jacanas** *Microparra capensis*. More **Lesser Black-winged Lapwings** were in the Luangwa Valley, along with an off-season **African Pygmy Kingfisher** *Ceyx picta*.

In September, several **Blue Quail** and breeding **Angola Swallows** were found near Solwezi, and in Mwinilunga were several **White-bellied Bustards** *Eupodotis senegalensis*, regular **Thick-billed Cuckoos** *Pachycoccyx audeberti* and **Angola Larks** *Mirafra angolensis*. A **Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus* (rather uncommon in Zambia) on the Kafue floodplains was an interesting suggestion of local breeding and an **African Hobby** *F. curieri* was on the Busanga Plains. **Sombre Bulbul** *Andropadus importunus* was found in Mazabuka for the first time. In Livingstone a **Slaty Egret** arrived for what turned into a long stay.

In October, near Livingstone, an **African Yellow Warbler** *Chloropeta natalensis* was the first confirmed record for the area, and in Lochinvar National Park, interesting sightings included **Slaty Egret**, **Denham's Bustard** *Neotis denhami*, **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*, **Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata* and **Gull-billed Tern** *Gelocbelidon nilotica*. The ornithologically long-forgotten Isangano National Park was visited and among interesting species found were **White-backed Night Heron** *Gorsachius leuconotus* and **Black Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter melanoleucus*. A **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* near Mpika was only about Zambia's fifth.

In November, an **African Pitta** *Pitta angolensis* spent a few days around a workshop in the Luangwa Valley. A new big day record of 302 species was set on the 11th with highlights including **Western Banded Snake Eagle** *Circaetus cinerascens*, **Chaplin's Barbet** *Lybius chaplini* and a roost of c250,000 **Barn Swallows** *Hirundo rustica* in Choma, and **Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*, **Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*, **Sanderling** *Calidris alba* and **Ruddy Turnstone**

Arenaria interpres in Lochinvar National Park. A **Barn Swallow** with a UK ring was trapped in a reedbed in Choma, which held a roost of several thousand **Parasitic Weaver** *Anomalospiza imberbis*. A **Baillon's Crake** *Porzana pusilla* was flushed there and the first **Thick-billed Weavers** *Amblyospiza albifrons* for Choma found. A very early **Striped Crake** *Aenigmatolimnas marginalis* was found in Livingstone where up to four **Baillon's Crakes** were also present along with the occasional **Spotted Crake** *Porzana porzana*. An **Anchieta's Barbet** *Stactolaema anchietae* was found just south of its known range near Mongu and large numbers of **Slaty Egrets** and **Black-winged Pratincoles** *Glareola nordmanni* were recorded in Liuwa Plain National Park.

In December, a **Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandarius* being chased by **Burchell's Starlings** *Lamprolornis australis* in Sioma Ngwezi National Park suggests that another Zambian host awaits discovery. Several groups of **Red-backed Mannikins** *Lonchura bicolor* appeared in Choma (where the species was hardly known) and stayed for several weeks in what appeared to be some sort of invasion. Both **Corncrake** *Crex crex* and **Spotted Crake** were there, as well as a **River Warbler** *Locustella fluviatilis*. In the Zambezi Valley **Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo** *Cercococcyx montanus*, **African Pitta** and **Mottled Spinetail** *Telacanthura ussberi* were found. A **European Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus* was near Kafue and a **Buff-spotted Flufftail** *Sarothrura elegans* near Lusaka. Relatively large numbers of **Short-tailed Pipits** *Anthus brachyurus* were displaying in Mwinilunga and other interesting species there included **Black-rumped Buttock** *Turnix hottentotta*, **Black-collared Bulbul** *Neolestes torquatus* and **Bannerman's Sunbird**



Figure 2. Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*, Makololo Plains, Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe, January 2002 (Grahame Stewart)

Cyanomitra bannermani. A pair of **Spur-winged Lapwings** *Vanellus spinosus* was found in the Bangweulu basin, illustrating the continuing spread of a species that was only discovered in Zambia in 1999. A wandering **Shoebill** *Balaeniceps rex* was at Kasanka National Park and several **White Storks** *Ciconia ciconia* were, once more, being tracked by satellite across the country. Two notable Palearctic migrants on the Nyika Plateau were a **Corncrake** and a **Common** (European) **Rock Thrush** *Monticola saxatilis* (all *PL*).

Zimbabwe

Records from the period November 2001–March 2002 include the following. A **European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis papiorvus* was near Hwange National Park on 12 December and another in the Vumba area on 30 January. A **Shoebill** *Balaeniceps rex* was claimed from Chipinda Pools on 3 November (*ZfB*). What appears to be the first **Little Ringed Plover** *Charadrius dubius* for the country and for southern Africa was photographed at Makololo Plains, Hwange National Park, on 5–8 January 2002 (*G&S*; Fig 2); the nearest records are from Zambia and Malawi. A **White-throated Bee-eater** *Merops albicollis*, apparently

only the fifth for southern Africa, was located at Mana Pools National Park on 2 November. An **Asian Lesser Cuckoo** *Cuculus poliocephalus* and a **Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla* were reported from the Vumba area on 31 January (*ZfB*). ☞

Records were collated by Ron Demey from contributions supplied by Göran Alstedt (*GA*), Hichem Azafzaf (*HA*), Neil & Liz Baker (*N&LB*), Captain Bello (*CB*), Zest for Birds (*ZfB*), Leo Boon (*LBo*), Nik Borrow/Birdquest (*NB*), Chris Brewster (*CB*), Joost Brouwer (*JB*), Paul Carter (*PC*), Tony Clarke (*TC*), Chris Cox (*CC*), Richard Cruse (*RC*), David Daramani (*DD*), Ron Demey (*RD*), John Depman (*JD*), Mindy Baha El Din (*MBD*), Sherif Baha El Din (*SBD*), Robert J. Dousett (*RJD*), Françoise Dousett-Lemaire (*FDL*), Jan Elfrink (*JE*), Chris Engelhardt (*CE*), Lincoln Fishpool (*LF*), Tommy Frandsen (*TF*), Ross McGregor (*RMG*), Rolf Gustafsson (*RG*), Phil Hall (*PH*), Trevor Hardaker/Megabirds (*TH*), Colin Jackson (*CJ*), Olivier Lachenaud (*OL*), Marc Languy (*ML*), Peter Leonard (*PL*), Babacar Ndao (*BN*), Stuart Norman (*SN*), Georges Oltoso (*GO*), Henk-Jan Oosterhuis (*HJO*), Dimie Otokotekere (*DO*), Ulf Ottosson (*UO*), Bruno Portier (*BP*), Hugo Rainey (*HR*), Fabrice Roux (*FR*), Volker Salewski (*VSA*), Valéry Schollaert (*VS*), Bill Silver (*BS*), Adrian Skerrett (*AS*),

Grabame Stewart (*GS*), Jugal Tiwari (*JT*), Stephanie Tyler (*ST*), William Velmala (*WV*), Adrian Verbagen (*AV*), Ben Wasmus (*BW*), Jared Wilson (*JW*), Malcolm Wilson (*MW*) and from Africa—Birds & Birding, Birding World and Dutch Birding.

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Corrigendum

Mindy Baha El Din (*MBD*) and Sherif Baha El Din (*SBD*), credited for several records from Egypt, were accidentally omitted from the observers' list in the previous Recent Reports (*Bull ABC* 9: 73).

Request

Observers are kindly requested to send records from Zambia to the Zambian Ornithological Society, Box 33944, Lusaka, Zambia, or e-mail zos@zamnet.zm. All species records are published in the annual *Zambia Bird Report*, available from the same address.

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Birds of a Grumeti River forest in Serengeti National Park, Tanzania

Thomas Gottschalk

Un inventaire de l'avifaune des forêts galeries denses du Parc National du Serengeti en Tanzanie a été effectué entre juin 1999 et juillet 2000. La zone d'étude de 3,8 ha était située à l'intérieur d'une vaste forêt galerie le long du fleuve Grumeti à 44 km à l'est du lac Victoria. Les données ont été collectées à l'occasion de 12 sorties sur le terrain, complétées par des captures au filet d'une durée de six jours. Au total, 79 espèces d'oiseaux forestiers ont été inventoriées: l'article en présente le statut, la localisation et l'abondance. Trois espèces sont mentionnées pour la première fois au Serengeti: le Bulbul vert-olive *Phyllastrephus cerviniventris* (très répandu dans la forêt Grumeti), le Cossyphé à calotte rouge *Cossypha natalensis* et le Sénégalalivert *Mandingoa nitidula*.

Introduction

Endless open plains, the large herds of ungulates and their spectacular migrations have drawn much attention to the Serengeti National Park (SNP). However, the avifauna of the park has received less attention. Basic information on the birds of SNP has been published⁹ and supplemented by Stronach¹¹. Most avian studies have either been conducted in open grasslands or woodlands^{3,10,12}, while other works are species specific⁷. Little attention has focused on the evergreen forests of Serengeti, which occur as narrow and often discontinuous riverine communities. This may be due to poachers who are present in some of these dense forests^{2,6}. These forests are in the north of the park at the Mara River drainage and in the Western Corridor along the Grumeti, Orangi and Mbalageti Rivers⁵. While conducting research in SNP a study site in a Grumeti River forest was visited monthly between July 1999 and June 2000.

Location

The study site was located along the Grumeti River in the Western Corridor of SNP (02°18'S 34°23'E) c44 km east of Lake Victoria, at 1,220 m (Fig 1). The river is the second largest in SNP after the Mara River. The site comprised a 360-m long section of the Grumeti River, an old branch and a forest patch, which is situated between the river and the branch with a total area of 3.8 ha (Fig 2). The forest is c250 m long and 180 m wide, and covers an area of c2.6 ha. Water levels in the Grumeti fluctuate depending on rainfall during the wet season. In the dry season the river consists of ponds. The water is heavily eutrophicated and turbid as a result of animal dung and stirring by Hippopotamuses *Hippopotamus amphibius*, Crocodiles *Crocodylus niloticus* and wildlife crossing the river⁴ (Fig 3). The two small pools within the old branch of the study site hold water only in the wet season.

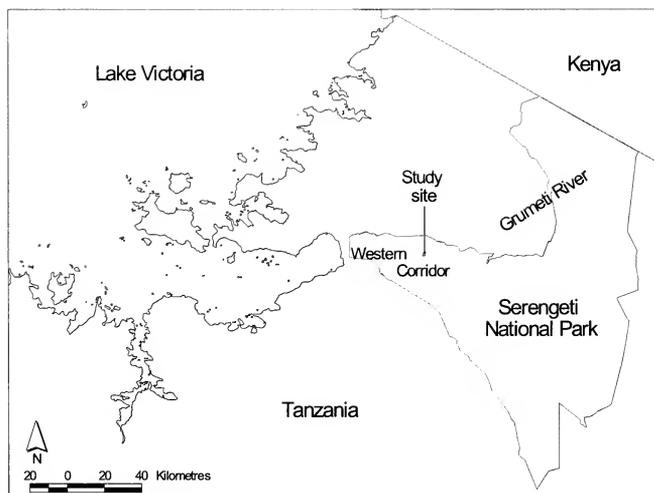


Figure 1. Location of the study site

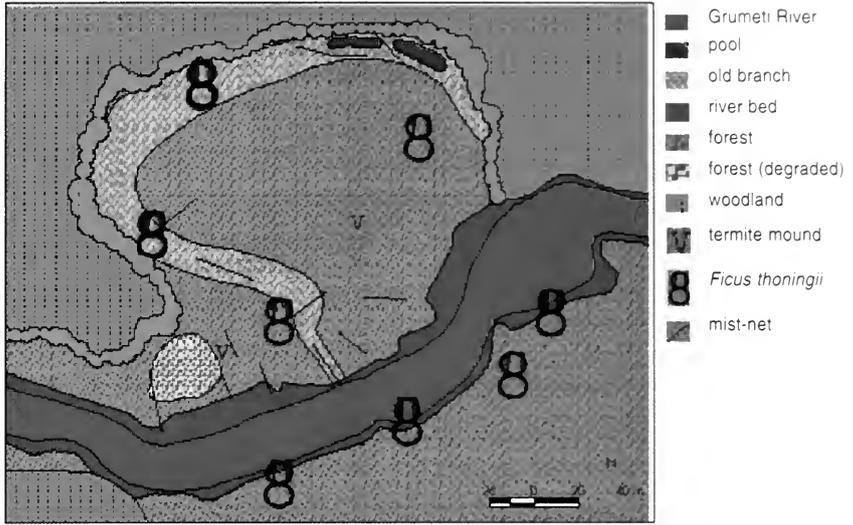


Figure 2. Main habitat types and structures of the study site.



Figure 3. View of Grumeti River from the east side of the study site (Thomas Gottschalk)



Figure 4. The interior of Grumeti River forest (Thomas Gottschalk)



Figure 5. Black-headed Gonolek *Laniarius erythrogaster* is a very frequent species in the forest (Thomas Gottschalk)



Figure 6. Pygmy Kingfisher *Ceyx picta picta* was trapped in April in the south-west of the study site (Thomas Gottschalk)



Figure 7. Little Spotted Woodpecker *Campetbera cailliantii nyansae* was trapped in April in the south-west of the study site (Thomas Gottschalk)



Figure 8. Ashy Flycatcher *Muscicapra caerulea* was trapped in May. The left bird had moulted the greater primary-coverts (Thomas Gottschalk)



Figure 9. Grey-olive Greenbul *Phyllastrephus ceriniventris* was trapped in May (Thomas Gottschalk)

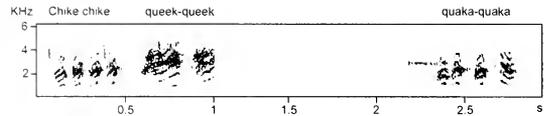


Figure 10. Sonogram of a typical call of Grey-olive Greenbul *Phyllastrephus ceriniventris* at Grumeti River. This call is often repeated and might be rendered *Chike chike queek-queek* and a soft *quaka-quaka*



Figure 11. Red-capped Robin Chat *Cossypha natalensis intensa* was trapped in May (Thomas Gottschalk)

The canopy of Grumeti riparian forests mainly comprises *Aphania senegalensis*, *Ekebergia capensis*, *Ficus* spp, *Garcinia livingstonei*, *Lecaniodiscus fraxinifolius*, *Tamarindus indica* and *Ziziphus pubescens* and in the understorey the main woody plants are *Cordia goetzei*, *Cordia ovalis*, *Crateva religiosa*, *Erythroxylum fischeri* and *Strychnos henningsii*¹³¹ (Fig 4). Within the study site a total of 18 different woody plant species was recorded. Figs *Ficus thoningii* were the largest trees and were

between 1.6 m and 2.6 m in diameter at breast height. Locations of these trees and the extent and position of all habitat types and features are shown in Fig 2.

Crocodile and Hippopotamus are present in large numbers in the Grumeti. The shoreline is often heavily compacted by Hippopotamus and the forest partially damaged by these and African Elephants *Loxodonta africana*. While elephants visited the forest irregularly and created a small clearing in the south-west part in 1999, the hippopotamus crossed the forest following their own

beaten trails every night. Larger mammals in the forest included Olive Baboon *Papio cynocephalus*, Blue Monkey *Cercopithecus mitis* and Black-and-white Colobus *Colobus abyssinicus*. Other large mammals were not recorded in the forest and may have avoided it.

Results

The study site was visited once a month during July 1999 to June 2000 except in November and December. During the wet season, in April and May, the forest was sampled twice. All bird species at the study site were recorded while walking slowly through the forest during a period of up to two hours. Additionally, mist-netting was conducted for a total of 23 hours on seven days in March and May 2000 to sample cryptic species. Up to six mist-nets with a total length of 58 m were used at different locations within the study site (see Fig 2). As many birds moved through the forest along the river, mist-nets were placed vertically to the Grumeti.

The numbers of birds in the forest differed according to rainfall and the presence of mixed-species flocks, which were moving through. Between six and 39 bird species were observed per visit and a total of 79 was recorded during the 12 daily samples and six mist-netting sessions (Appendix 1). Three species, Madagascar Bee-eater *Merops superciliosus*, African Hawk-Eagle *Hieraaetus spilogaster* and Violet-backed Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* were recorded while mist-netting but not on the foot surveys.

Following Becker¹, species that were recorded in 50–80% of the samples were considered 'frequent', those observed less often were noted as 'present' and those recorded more often as 'very frequent'. While 28 species were seen only once and another 40 on 2–5 occasions, only ten were frequent and only one, Black-headed Gonolek *Laniarius erythrogaster* (Fig 5) was very frequent.

The species recorded once were often cryptic or rare in this forest (eg African Green Pigeon *Treeron calva* and Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*), intra-African migrants (eg Madagascar Bee-eater and Black Cuckoo Shrike *Campephaga flava*), Palearctic migrants (European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* and Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*) or birds which usually occur in woodland but visit water especially in the dry season (eg African Mourning Dove *Streptopelia decipiens* and Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus*).

Birds, which were present close to or on the river were Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus*, Great Egret *Egretta alba*, Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath*, Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis* and Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash*. These preferred shallow parts of the river and were mainly recorded in the wet season, when the river was fuller. Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*, which is

uncommon in Kenya and north Tanzania¹⁵ was observed 500 m west of the study site in both wet seasons, on 24 May 1999 and 17 March 2000, on the flooded bridge of the Grumeti River at night.

Water Thick-knee *Burbinus vermiculatus* and Green-backed Heron *Butorides striatus* were common and often observed resting in dense thickets beside the river, but were easily overlooked and often not seen unless disturbed. African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer* was easier to observe as it has a distinctive call and sits atop large trees. Other raptors were White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*, which often nests at the river (one pair used an old nest on a large fig tree in the south part of the study site), Rüppell's Griffon Vulture *G. rueppellii*, Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus* and African Hawk-Eagle. The most common kingfisher was Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis*, often located by its 'laughing' trill, while Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* was only observed in the wet season. African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ceyx picta picta* was difficult to see and perhaps often overlooked. One was trapped in April (Fig 6). The skulking White-browed Coucal *Centropus superciliosus loandae* was 'frequent'; one was trapped on 16 April 2000 and identified as *C. s. loandae* due to the black crown, which is brown in *C. s. superciliosus*¹⁵.

Two types of mixed-species parties could be distinguished according to habitat use. One occupied the ground to middle strata and the other mainly between the middle and upper strata or canopy. Species in the former grouping comprised mainly Grey-olive Greenbul *Phyllastrephus cerviniventris*, Arrow-marked Babbler *Turdoides jardineii emini*, African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis ferreti*, Brown-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira cyanea nyansae*, Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brachyura* and White-browed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas leucobryis*. Apart from the scrub robin these are 'frequent' in the forest. The second flock type included species such as Black-backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla*, Black-headed Gonolek and Grey-headed Bush Shrike *Malaconotus blanchoti*, whose loud distinct calls are often heard. The puffback and gonolek were 'frequent' and 'very frequent' respectively. Grey-headed Bush Shrike, which is not mentioned for the west part of SNP¹⁵ was recorded monthly with up to three in February–May.

Others such as Red-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus pusillus* and Schalow's Turaco *Tauraco (persa) schalowi* sometimes joined mixed-species flocks but were also seen alone or in pairs. African Green Pigeon, Brown Parrot *Poicephalus meyeri*, Bare-faced Go-away Bird *Corythaixoides personata*, Eastern

Grey Plantain Eater *Crinifer zonurus*. Schalow's Turaco and four species of barbet, preferred feeding in large fig trees. Lilac-breasted Roller *Coracias caudata* and African Grey Hornbill *Tockus nasutus* appeared to nest in holes in larger fig trees in the south of the study site.

Ashy Flycatcher *Muscicapa caerulescens* was recorded in more open parts of the forest in March–April 2000, and two trapped on 30 May 2000 (Fig 6) were perhaps of the western subspecies *brevicaudata*. The measurements show that the birds at Grumeti were obviously larger than *M. c. brevicaudata*¹³, but they were more ash-grey than blue-grey above, which is a characteristic of *M. c. cinereola*¹⁵. Occurrence of Ashy Flycatcher in the west part of SNP is not mentioned in the literature^{13,15} but according to Schmid⁹ the race *cinereola* is an uncommon to frequent resident in riverine forest in SNP.

The following three species recorded in the Grumeti Forest are not mentioned for SNP⁹ or for this region¹⁵. Grey-olive Greenbul (Fig 10) was a common but cryptic species of dense undergrowth in Grumeti Forest (presence: 0.75). It was best detected by call. Mostly 2–3 birds were seen together (mean 2.6 birds), but some individuals were perhaps missed. On 1 August 2000, a family consisting of an adult and five young was observed. Grey-olive Greenbul was often very shy, and incessantly searched for food in the leaf litter or between roots and branches close to or on the forest floor. Despite several surveys of other forests within SNP, such as the riverine forests at Mbalageti, south of Grumeti, and forests at the Mara and Bolongonja, this species was not found elsewhere. The only greenbul previously recorded in SNP was Cabanis's Greenbul *Phyllastrephus cabanisi*, which was collected by Kittenberger at the Mara River⁹. Grey-olive Greenbul is also unknown from Masai Mara National Reserve in Kenya. The nearest known location is Lake Manyara National Park^{8,15}.

One Red-capped Robin Chat *Cosyphus natalensis intensa* was trapped on 30 May 2000 (Fig 11). The species is an intra-African migrant between late April and November¹⁵. It has neither been recorded for SNP⁹ nor west of the Rift Valley. Movements of inland birds are little known, particularly in northern Tanzania¹⁵.

A pair of Green-backed Twinspot *Mandingoa nitidula* was recorded following short rains, on 28 January 2000 and 21 February 2000, with a female on 17 March 2000, at the southern part of the old branch. The birds fed on the ground within dense thickets. It is not listed for SNP⁹ and does not regularly occur in northern Tanzania¹⁵, although wandering or displaced birds are occasionally recorded from inland East Africa¹⁵.

Acknowledgments

Don Turner, the National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi, and the Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin, helped

identify the Grey-olive Greenbuls. I thank the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for funding the field work, and the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH), Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) and Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI) for permission to work in Serengeti National Park. I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of F.M. Chalamila in the field and especially thank Richard Hauschild for translating the summary. ♀

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Appendix 1. Bird species recorded at Grumeti River in Serengeti National Park. Those in bold are frequent at the study site.

Species English name / Scientific name	Number of days species was recorded	Presence	Species English name / Scientific name	Number of days species was recorded	Presence
Goliath Heron <i>Ardea goliath</i>	1	0.08	White-headed Barbet <i>Lybius leucocephalus</i>	1	0.08
Green-backed Heron <i>Butorides striatus</i>	2	0.17	Red-fronted Tinkerbird <i>Pogonius pusillus</i>	3	0.25
Great Egret <i>Egretta alba</i>	2	0.17	Golden-tailed Woodpecker <i>Campethera abingoni</i>	3	0.25
Yellow-billed Stork <i>Mycteria ibis</i>	2	0.17	Little Spotted Woodpecker <i>Campethera cailliautii nyansae</i>	2	0.17
Hadada Ibis <i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>	2	0.17	Black-throated Honeyguide <i>Indicator indicator</i>	2	0.17
Egyptian Goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>	3	0.25	Lesser Honeyguide <i>Indicator minor</i>	1	0.08
White-backed Vulture <i>Gyps africanus</i>	3	0.25	African Pied Wagtail <i>Motacilla aguimp</i>	5	0.42
Rüppell's Griffon Vulture <i>Gyps rueppellii</i>	1	0.08	Lesser Striped Swallow <i>Hirundo abyssinica</i>	2	0.17
Bateleur <i>Terathopus ecaudatus</i>	1	0.08	Red-rumped Swallow <i>Hirundo daurica</i>	2	0.17
African Hawk-Eagle <i>Hieraaetus spilogaster</i>			Wire-tailed Swallow <i>Hirundo smithii</i>	1	0.08
African Fish Eagle <i>Haliaeetus vocifer</i>	2	0.17	White-headed Sawwing <i>Psalidoprocne albiceps</i>	2	0.17
Hildebrandt's Francolin <i>Francolinus hildebrandti</i>	1	0.08	Black Cuckoo Shrike <i>Campephaga flava</i>	1	0.08
Crested Guineafowl <i>Guttera pucherani</i>	2	0.17	Common Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	6	0.50
Water Thick-knee <i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>	2	0.17	Grey-olive Greenbul <i>Phyllastrephus cerviniventris</i>	9	0.75
Ring-necked Dove <i>Streptopelia capicola</i>	3	0.25	White-browed Scrub Robin <i>Cercotrichas leucophrys</i>	5	0.42
African Mourning Dove <i>Streptopelia decipiens</i>	1	0.08	Red-capped Robin Chat <i>Cossypha natalensis</i>	1	0.08
Red-eyed Dove <i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>	3	0.25	Yellow-breasted Apalis <i>Apalis flavida</i>	2	0.17
Emerald-spotted Wood Dove <i>Turtur chalcospilus</i>	1	0.08	Grey-backed Camaroptera <i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>	9	0.75
African Green Pigeon <i>Treron calva</i>	1	0.08	Ashy Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa caerulescens</i>	4	0.33
Brown Parrot <i>Poicephalus meyeri</i>	6	0.50	Brown-throated Wattle-eye <i>Platysteira cyanea nyansae</i>	6	0.50
Schalow's Turaco <i>Tauraco (persa) schalowi</i>	4	0.33	African Paradise Flycatcher <i>Terpsiphone viridis ferreti</i>	8	0.67
Bare-faced Go-away Bird <i>Corythaixoides personata</i>	4	0.33	Black-backed Puffback <i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>	8	0.67
Eastern Grey Plantain Eater <i>Crinifer zonurus</i>	5	0.42	Black-headed Gonolek <i>Laniarius erythrogaster</i>	10	0.83
Didric Cuckoo <i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	1	0.08	Slate-coloured Boubou <i>Laniarius funebris</i>	2	0.17
Klaas's Cuckoo <i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>	1	0.08	Grey-headed Bush Shrike <i>Malaconotus blanchoti</i>	4	0.33
White-browed Coucal <i>Centropus superciliosus loandae</i>	6	0.50	Grey-crested Helmet Shrike <i>Prionops poliophopus</i>	1	0.08
African Scops Owl <i>Otus (scops) senegalensis</i>	1	0.08	Violet-backed Starling <i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>		
Speckled Mousebird <i>Colius striatus</i>	4	0.33	Rüppell's Long-tailed Starling <i>Lamprotornis purpuropterus</i>	6	0.50
Narina's Trogon <i>Apaloderma narina</i>	4	0.33	Collared Sunbird <i>Hedydipna collaris</i>	1	0.08
Pied Kingfisher <i>Ceryle rudis</i>	1	0.08	Purple-banded Sunbird <i>Cinnyris bifasciata</i>	1	0.08
Woodland Kingfisher <i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>	4	0.33	Marico Sunbird <i>Cinnyris mariquensis</i>	2	0.17
African Pygmy Kingfisher <i>Ceyx picta picta</i>	2	0.17	Arrow-marked Babbler <i>Turdoides jardineii emini</i>	6	0.50
European Bee-eater <i>Merops apiaster</i>	1	0.08	Common Drongo <i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	2	0.17
Madagascar Bee-eater <i>Merops superciliosus</i>			Black-headed Oriole <i>Oriolus larvatus</i>	5	0.42
Lilac-breasted Roller <i>Coracias caudata</i>	1	0.08	Eurasian Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	1	0.08
Green Wood-Hoopoe <i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>	2	0.17	Red-headed Weaver <i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>	1	0.08
Von der Decken's Hornbill <i>Tockus deckeni</i>	1	0.08	Holub's Golden Weaver <i>Ploceus xanthops</i>	2	0.17
African Grey Hornbill <i>Tockus nasutus</i>	5	0.42	Grey-headed Sparrow <i>Passer griseus</i>	1	0.08
Double-toothed Barbet <i>Lybius bidentatus</i>	4	0.33	African Firefinch <i>Lagonosticta rubricata</i>	1	0.08
Red-fronted Barbet <i>Tricholaema diademata</i>	1	0.08	Red-billed Firefinch <i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>	2	0.17
Spot-flanked Barbet <i>Tricholaema lachrymosa</i>	1	0.08	Green-backed Twinspot <i>Mandingoa nitidula</i>	3	0.25

Appendix 2. Measurements (in mm) of 12 birds trapped in mist-nets on seven sessions during 23 hours between March and May 2000. *Bill measurements refer to the upper mandible measured to the feathers. Sample size for those data repeated from Urban *et al*³ was five males.

English name / Scientific name	Date	Sex	Bill*	Tarsus	Tail	Overall length	Wing
African Paradise Flycatcher <i>Terpsiphone viridis ferreti</i>	17.03.00		-	-	204	306	86
White-browed Coucal <i>Centropus superciliosus loandae</i>	16.04.00		30.7	44.9	215	450	167
African Pygmy Kingfisher <i>Ceyx picta picta</i>	16.04.00		23	10.7	28.4	120	52.5
Little Spotted Woodpecker <i>Campethera cailliautii nyansae</i>	16.04.00		15.8	16.2	65	183	99.5
Brown-throated Wattle-eye <i>Platysteira cyanea nyansae</i>	16.04.00	♀	14	19	-	-	64.5
Arrow-marked Babbler <i>Turdoides jardineii emini</i>	16.04.00		18	31.8	109	230	101
Red-billed Firefinch <i>Lagonosticta senegala ruberrima</i>	16.04.00	♂	9	12.2	37.2	101	47
Grey-olive Greenbul <i>Phyllastrephus cerviniventris</i>	06.05.00		15.6	22.4	86.3	204	87
Rüppell's Long-tailed Starling <i>Lamprotornis purpuropterus</i>	07.05.00		19.4	40.7	131	315	152.5
Red-capped Robin Chat <i>Cossypha natalensis intensa</i>	30.05.00		15	28.6	78	190	95
Ashy Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa caerulescens cinereola</i>	30.05.00		9.65	17.25	58.1	145	76
Ashy Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa caerulescens cinereola</i>	30.05.00		10.65	17	61.8	151	81
Ashy Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa caerulescens brevicauda</i>	Urban <i>et al</i> ³	♂	14.9	16.2	49.6		70.4

Reviews



Field Guide to the Birds of East Africa

Terry Stevenson and John Fanshawe. 2001. xxvii + 604 pp. 287 colour plates. London, UK: T. & A.D. Poyser. UK£29.95.

Anyone who has birded in East Africa outside Kenya and northern Tanzania will have been keenly awaiting this book, as the only 'modern' guide to the birds of this area has been van Perlo¹, which is helpful but badly flawed. They will not be disappointed, as every species occurring in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi is illustrated and described, all 1,388 of them. The 287 plates are painted by three experienced artists and depict most of the plumages and major races. The book is a trifle heavy and could have been condensed by having more than 4–5 species per plate, as was done by Robson², but I think the uncluttered appearance of the plates is good and justifies the relatively high number of pages.

There is a clear, simple map of the region on the inside cover and another useful map of the same area on the end cover, illustrating Important Bird Areas and Protected Areas. The 14-page introduction briefly covers landscapes, seasonality, terminology, and explains the species accounts and using the guide; it also includes interesting colour maps of habitats and topography. Next there is a plate and accounts of seven recently added species, which would have more logically been placed at the end, followed by a page on conservation and suggestions for additional reading.

Nearly the entire book is occupied by the species accounts and plates, a sensible decision in my view. For all illustrated species, the text and map appears on the page facing the plate, which is undoubtedly the best way of organising a field guide. The accounts are inevitably condensed, given the need to cover a large number of species: important diagnostic features are italicised, while habits, habitat, status and voice are treated in brief, possibly too briefly on occasion in the case of habitat. The texts appear well written, accurate and largely adequate, complementing the excellent plates, although use of English colloquialisms such as 'stonking' should have been avoided. If I had had this book with me in Uganda last summer, I would have known how Red-faced Barbet *Lybius*

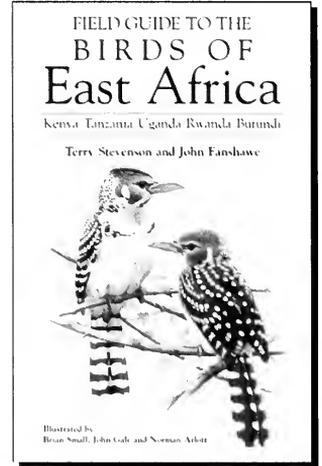
nubifacies called and had more chance to locate it, along with several other previously inadequately described species.

The maps are very clear but basic, indicative rather than accurate, especially for Tanzania, with no attempt made to differentiate the area of occurrence according to seasonality or breeding range, always a tricky and time-consuming exercise. It will still be necessary to consult Britton³, and the Ugandan and Tanzanian atlases (for information concerning the latter see Baker⁴) when published, for more accurate information on distribution.

The plates by all three artists are generally excellent, with rare exceptions such as the wryneck plate in which the quality falls well short of that in *Birds of Africa*⁵. Although Norman Arlott's style is slightly different from Brian Small and John Gale's, I think the three blend well and most birds are depicted to the highest standard of current field guides, which is praise indeed. Given a good view, it should be possible to identify most species using this book, even the cisticolas (for possibly the first time). A few which might cause problems are Lesser Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilivestris*—bill length is variable but never as long as illustrated; Yellow Warbler *Chloropeta natalensis* which is a delicate bird that has only a hint of raised feathers when agitated, not as depicted with a large square head giving the impression of a large bird; and Stripe-checked Greenbul *Arundinax milanensis*, a green bird with bright yellow-green underparts, red eye and prominent white-streaked black ear-coverts. The muddy green colour pervading some of the plates, for example the crombec and longbill plate, is a little disconcerting and may confuse less-experienced birders who take such plates as gospel.

The taxonomy of some sub-Saharan birds appears to be in a state of flux at present, and this work takes a middle course, for example recognising Taita Thrush *Turdus (olivaceus) helleri* but not Taita Apalis *Apalis iboracica fuscigularis* and Taita White-eye *Zosterops (poliogaster) silvanus* as species. It does detail and illustrate the two 'new' species of *Cisticola* on the Kilombero floodplain—'White-tailed' and 'Kilombero'—which have yet to be scientifically described.

Significant inaccuracies in distributions



include Blue-headed *Centropus monachus* and Senegal Coucals *C. senegalensis*, not depicted as present in Tanzania where they do occur, and Cape Teal *Anas capensis*, which is shown for the entire Ulipa Plateau in southern Tanzania where it does not occur. For many species the distribution reflects habitat availability. This is especially so on the dry central plateau in Tanzania, yet this appears to have been mapped differently for many species that share the same habitat restrictions, and a similar situation occurs for many miombo species. Also note that Speckle-throated Woodpecker *Campythera scriptoricauda* is not a miombo bird—*C. bennettii* is the miombo species with *scriptoricauda* occurring in coastal woodland and more open areas such as on the floodplain in Mikumi National Park, Tanzania. One editorial error is that the plate for Grey-capped Social-Weaver *Pseudonigrita amsudii* has the subspecies transposed, the text being correct.

Kenya and northern Tanzania are already covered by the superb Zimmerman *et al.*, which is a larger book, too heavy really for field use. Nonetheless, it is still indispensable and the illustrations, though a little jumbled and featuring some strange poses, are largely accurate, the artists possibly having more field experience than those that worked on the volume under review. For birding in Kenya it would be useful to have both books; it would be a hard to decide which if you only wanted to take one. However, I have no hesitation in recommending anyone with an interest in

African birds to buy the excellent book under review here.

I am indebted to Neil Baker for comments relating to Tanzania.

Jon Hombuckle

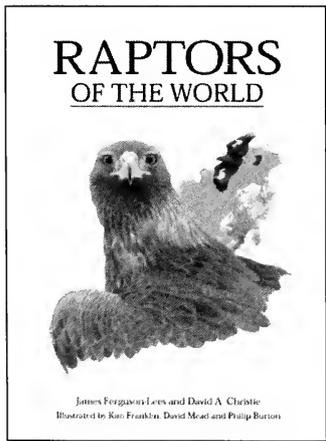
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3. Fry, C. H., Keith, S. and Urban, E. K. (eds) 1988. *The Birds of Africa*. Vol 3. London, UK: Academic Press.
4. van Perlo, B. 1995. *Collins Illustrated Checklist of the Birds of Eastern Africa*. London, UK: HarperCollins.
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Raptors of the World

James Ferguson-Lees and David A. Christie, illustrated by Kim Franklin, David Mead and Philip Burton, 2001. 992 pp, 112 colour plates, 312 colour distribution maps (equal number in black and white) and 60 line drawings. London, UK: A. & C. Black. UK£49

This must be the most long-awaited book in the bird families series. The first author freely admits that it has taken 18 years to write, and it must have possessed more rumoured 'due dates' than most works. It is a big book in every sense of the word, it has 992 pages and 112 colour plates and is definitely not one to take into the field with you. The sheer size must go some way to explaining why it took so long to produce.



Despite the time it has taken to appear, or perhaps because of it, *Raptors* has commendably managed to keep up with current thinking on a number of issues—particularly taxonomy (not always the case with books that have taken a long time to reach fruition). Although the taxonomic decisions taken by the authors will doubtless leave some people cold, there is evidence that they have not just maintained the status quo with regards to species limits. Indeed, recognition that some taxa treated here as subspecies might actually be species is made very clear in the 'List of Species' section. The authors consider there to be 313 species of raptor and include within that definition the New World Vultures, now considered to be more closely allied to storks.

As well as the species accounts and other expected sections, there are chapters on moult and ageing, vision, hearing and smell, plumages and external structure by Carl Edelman. Other sections cover topography, migration, sex and age differences, size and shape in raptors, and how to approach identifying a raptor in the field.

Three generic plates show typical examples from each genus. Helpfully they are divided geographically into Old World, New World and those found in both. They are also divided roughly by size, and each plate has two scale silhouettes to permit size comparison between each of these plates.

The 109 remaining plates are used to illustrate all of the species in detail. On average there are three species per plate with a minimum of one (several of the falcons, with Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* requiring two plates), and a maximum of nine (Indo-Malayan serpent-eagles *Spilornis* spp, for which there are no flight illustrations for most of the species). Some of the plates are too crowded and have images that overlap—which I personally find irritating—though it doesn't prevent them being useful. That three different artists are responsible is immediately obvious. In my opinion the plates by Kim Franklin are the best and more realistic, given the slightly dishevelled appearance of the birds so typical of the larger raptors that you see in real life. They appear more true to life than the immaculate birds painted by David Mead and to a lesser extent those by Philip Burton. Unfortunately the shapes of some of birds, which can be so important to the identification process with raptors, do not help at all. Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* and Common Kestrel *F. tinnunculus* in flight are disappointing and both have the

wrong wing formula on some of their flight illustrations. This comment also applies to some other figures. None of the plates is useless but some definitely fall short on some of the fine detail.

Previous books in the series have seen the maps placed opposite the plates or within the main text. Here we have both, a small colour map opposite the plate and a larger greyscale map with the main text. This is a good idea and makes the book more user-friendly than some of the previous books in the series have been.

The species accounts typically concentrate on aspects useful for identification. They also cover distribution, habitat, movements, breeding, population and socio-sexual behaviour. The well laid-out text is easy to read and follow, permitting swift reference to the relevant section. The field characters section, which covers the plumages in detail, starts with a general identification synopsis and then detailed information covering identification when perched and identification in flight. Each of the detailed sub-sections is then further broken down into distinct plumages by age and sex. This treatment makes perfect sense for raptors and could probably be usefully employed for other bird groups. Most species have an extensive list of references, which are fully documented in a huge 55-page bibliography—presumably testament to the huge amount of research needed for this book. Obviously a work like this cannot hope to present the same level of detail per species as a more specialist book, such as Dick Forsman's *The Raptors of Europe and The Middle East*, and indeed it doesn't. However, the authors have included more than sufficient detail to adequately identify most raptors. Some species remain too challenging to be reliably identified, except under exceptional conditions, and thankfully the authors have acknowledged this fact and not been tempted to offer speculative solutions to possibly insurmountable problems. Serious raptorophiles and the more scientifically minded may find this work does not meet all their needs but its extensive bibliography will be an invaluable springboard to more specialist works.

Doubtless it is possible to find the occasional mistake in the text but this would only slightly diminish a truly monumental work. Though some of the illustrations are disappointing and not as useful as they could be, this book is still a must have for anyone interested in raptors and in establishing which species they are looking at, wherever they are in the world.

Roy Hargreaves

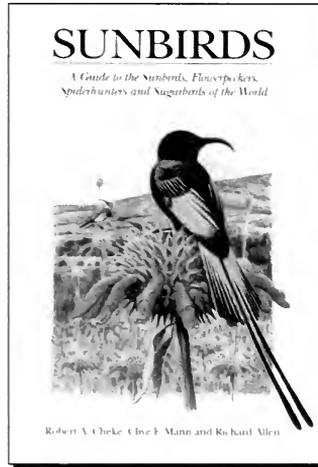
Sunbirds. A Guide to the Sunbirds, Flowerpeckers, Spiderhunters and Sugarbirds of the World

Robert A. Cheke and Clive F. Mann, illustrated by Richard Allen, 2001. 384 pp, 48 colour plates and 176 distribution maps. London, UK: A. & C. Black. ISBN 1-873403-80-1. UK£37.00.

Sunbirds is an excellent addition to the burgeoning stable of Helm family monographs. It covers the 176 species of sunbirds, flowerpeckers, spiderhunters and sugarbirds which comprise the Nectariniidae, of which almost exactly half (the two sugarbirds, the remainder sunbirds) occur in the African region. The format of the book is the by now familiar one. Thus, there are some 30 pages of introduction, here divided into 12 sections, the longest of which discuss morphology, behaviour, breeding and physiology, with some enlivened by helpful black-and-white line drawings. These are followed by 48 colour plates, the species accounts with distribution maps and 15 pages of references.

Richard Allen's plates, which illustrate as a minimum the adult male and female of each species but also immature males, where relevant, and often more than one form of polytypic species, are of an extremely high standard. They are both pleasing to the eye and generally accurate, to me, in both jizz and coloration, the latter no mean feat given the brash subtleties of many male sunbirds. One satisfying touch is that many are depicted in a variety of typical feeding poses on carefully illustrated flowers and flowering stems, the identities of which are given on the legend to the plate on the facing page. The temptation to show pectoral tufts on perched birds has, I am pleased to say, been resisted, except in cases where the bird is shown eg alighting, wings raised, on a branch.

Sensibly, unrelated but superficially similar sympatric species are illustrated together. Full marks, therefore, for placing Little Green Sunbird *Antbreptes seimundi*, Bates's Sunbird *Cinnyris batesi* and Western Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra obscura* on the same plate. Some marks have to be deducted, however, for not doing this consistently; it would have been preferable to have had Purple-banded *Cinnyris bifasciata* and Pemba Sunbirds *C. pembae* on the same plate as those species they most resemble and whose ranges they overlap or approach, Tsavo Purple-banded *C. tsavoensis* and Kenya Violet-breasted Sunbirds *C. chacomelas*, rather than on Plates 32 and 39 respectively.



The taxonomic treatment adopted is similar to that used for the group in Vol 6 of *The Birds of Africa* (*BoA*), except that Cheke & Mann recognise one more genus (*Drepanorhynchus* for (*Nectarinia*) *reichenowi*, Golden-winged Sunbird) and two more species: Prigogine's Double-collared Sunbird, *Cinnyris prigoginei*, treated as a subspecies of *C. stuhlmanni* in *BoA* and Grey-headed Sunbird *Deleornis acavillaris*, considered specific from Scarlet-tufted Sunbird *D. fraseri*.

The species accounts, ranging in length from one to three pages, follow a sequence of subject heading similar to that employed in previous volumes in the series. Although in a few places the style and the layout are such that one has to read the text closely to be certain of the meaning this is, in fact, an indication of the enormous amount of information and detail the authors have managed to pack into a small space. An example of this comes in the accounts of the Eastern *Cyanomitra olivacea* and Western Olive Sunbirds *C. obscura*, treated here, as in *BoA*, as separate species. The geographical variation sections of these accounts discuss evidence for the intriguing, not to say bizarre, possibility of the occurrence of both on the island of Zanzibar!

The distribution maps, I appreciate it is extremely difficult to make such maps accurate in those parts of species' ranges for which no atlas has been published—which means most countries—and, further, that in cases where one has personal experience of countries or parts thereof that lack published atlases, one's own knowledge of distributions is likely to be more detailed or up to date than the information that appears in the literature, the major source of these maps. For these reasons, and others,

allowances must be made, but especially for widely distributed species, one has to treat the maps as indicative only. So, for example, Copper *Cinnyris cuprea* and Superb Sunbirds *C. superbus* are shown as not occurring in south-east Côte d'Ivoire where both do, whereas Variable Sunbird *C. venusta* is shown as being widespread throughout the forest zone in the country where it is not. Other instances could be given. Or maybe it is indicative of the overall level of scholarship that this book (and indeed others in the series) have achieved that one has such high and, perhaps, unrealistic expectations?

If you have bought the recently published *Birds of Africa* Vol 6¹, which includes sugarbirds and sunbirds, will you also want to own this book? If you like fine bird books and/or have an interest in this group of birds, oh yes definitely!

Lincoln Fishpool

Reference

1. Fry, C.H., Keith, S. and Urban, E.K. (eds) 2000. *The Birds of Africa*. Vol 6. London, UK: Academic Press.

A Guide to the Nests and Eggs of Southern African Birds

Warwick Tarboton, 2001. 432 pp, 146 full-colour plates. Cape Town: Struik Publishers (Pty) Ltd. UK£20.

Those interested in breeding biology will have been disappointed that the six volumes to date of *The Birds of Africa* did not include colour plates of eggs. This excellent book fills this gap for southern Africa, namely the region south of the Zambezi and Kunene Rivers, and the colour plates include photographs at actual size of the eggs of 686 species, with variations shown for many. There are also photographs of the nests of 390 species, mostly containing eggs, with some showing nestlings and adults. The quality of the photographs and colour production is generally excellent throughout.

Introductory chapters deal with types of nests, shape and colour of eggs, the effects of egg-collecting, finding nests, useful equipment, and methods of recording nests.

The species accounts are in standard format: habitat, breeding system (solitary, colonial, widely spaced etc), nest site, nest, nest-building, laying months and number of broods, clutch size, eggs, incubation periods and role of the sexes; nestlings are not described, but each account includes the fledging period and the role of the sexes in

tending/food provisioning. A small breeding distribution map is included with the text for each species.

The accounts are concise, well written, and thorough, where the information is known. Understandably there are many gaps, particularly for lesser known species, but for the vast majority full, detailed summaries of basic breeding biology are included.

This book provides for southern Africa a detailed guide to the complexity and intricacy of nests and to the beauty and infinite variety of eggs. It contains a wealth of information and represents excellent value for money. Thoroughly recommended to anyone with even the slightest interest in nests.

PeterCastell

Important Bird Areas in Uganda

A. Byaruhanga, K. Pantaleon, and D. Pomeroy, 2001. 166 pp, numerous maps, charts and line drawings. Kampala: Nature Uganda, The East Africa Natural History Society. UK£16.00.

BirdLife International established the Important Bird Area (IBA) programme to 'identify and protect sites critically important for the long-term viability of bird populations (for those species where a site based approach is appropriate)'. Work on the African IBA programme commenced in 1993 and the Uganda IBA directory was utilised in the recent publication of the continental (African) directory. The IBA process is detailed within an introductory section of the book.

Useful general information on Uganda (physiography, population, climate, vegetation, politics and ornithological importance) is provided, and is followed by a section on conservation in the country. Categories of designated 'Wildlife Conservation Areas' are described here, along with details of land-use activities permitted within each. Ugandan government policy is outlined and relevant international protocols are discussed. Global categories and criteria used in IBA identification are fully described. A brief overview of the sites included in the Uganda IBA directory is then presented.

Site accounts for 30 localities are given, sub-divided by region. These range from Queen Elizabeth National Park (c223,000 ha) to the Doho Rice Scheme (3,200 ha). Boxes at the head of each account list the area, location, altitude and status of the site along with the categories under which it qualifies as an IBA. The text is organised under sub-headings. The site description includes physical features

and rudimentary details of vegetation zones (where available). Birds are then discussed, with statistics such as the total number of species and number of globally threatened species recorded frequently cited. Rare or unusual species in Uganda (often those restricted to a particular biome) are often included. The text is cross-referenced to charts listing globally threatened species occurring on-site, with comments on their status. Large congregations of birds (another selection criteria) are also listed here with details of maximum numbers. A section on other wildlife is often particularly useful for an overview of the mammals present. A final section outlines conservation issues and often references specific problems for birds (eg the shooting of Shoebill *Balaeniceps rex*, which being large and docile presents an easy target). These sections make rather depressing reading but do not shrink from dealing with Uganda's political history, and its impact on the nation's wildlife. Further reading is suggested at the end of each site description and full references are presented in a bibliography that follows the accounts.

Appendices list globally threatened species, biome-restricted species and congregations (with site details). A complete Ugandan bird list and a list of Ugandan species appearing on the East African Regional Red List of birds are also presented.

This book provides a wealth of information in a very well-designed and easy-to-use format. While it is principally a tool for decision-makers and conservationists it contains a wealth of information useful to any birder visiting Uganda and I would urge them to support this valuable work by purchasing a copy.

Tim Marlow

Checklist of the Birds of the Canary Islands/Lista de las Aves de las Islas Canarias

Eduardo García del Rey/Sociedad Ornitológica Canaria, 2001. 30 pp. Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Publicaciones Turquesa S.L. Paperback. No price available.

This is an up-to-date checklist of all bird species recorded and their present status on each of the seven Canary Islands, and the main islets of Graciosa, Alegranza, Montaña Clara and Lobos. It provides for the first time a comprehensive official list compiled by Sociedad Ornitológica Canaria (SOC). Only those species and subspecies accepted by CR-SEO (Spanish Rarities Committee), plus a few additional species awaiting acceptance, are included. There is a brief introduction, both in

Spanish and English, outlining sources for the nomenclature adopted and references from which the checklist was compiled. Following each reference explanatory notes present the rationale for omission of some species from the current list. The tabulated checklist is clearly laid out and is useful as a quick reference to species/subspecies present on each island. However, two species, Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* and Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris*, are confusingly annotated, ie while indicated as summer visitors (defined as 'migratory species present mostly during the breeding period in spring and summer') this status is given in parenthesis () indicating 'a breeding species absent from the archipelago in the summer'. Other than this, a few minor typographical errors in the text and one main reference not cited in the bibliography, it is a neat professionally presented publication with an excellent colour photo of a Laurel Pigeon *Columba junoniae* on the cover. Worth acquiring, if visiting the islands, to maintain one's list, and proceeds from sales go to SOC to promote biodiversity conservation on the Canaries archipelago.

Dave A. Showler

Birds of Roma Valley, Lesotho Atlas of Birds of Bloemfontein

Grzegorz Kopij, 2001. Roma: National University of Lesotho. UK£3 & UK£4 respectively from Dr G Kopij, Raczká 13, 49-137 Korfantow, Poland.

These booklets of 40 pages and 48 pages cover quite small study areas. The first is a historical review of birds within the Roma Valley, giving considerable statistical data on the abundance of each species based on recent studies. The second is a breeding atlas with maps and text for the commonest 51 species and notes on a further 32 irregular or scarce breeders. A summary of rare visitors and vagrants is also presented.

Keith Betton

Guide sonore des oiseaux nicheurs des Comores

M. Herremans, 2001. CD featuring 82 taxa, with companion booklet of 8 pp. Tervuren: Africa Museum, B-3080 Tervuren, Belgium; e-mail: hmans@africamuseum.be. 15 Euros plus postage & packing.

This CD contains an impressive selection of recordings of landbirds from all four islands of the Comoro archipelago. Particularly interesting are the scops owls *Otus*, thrushes *Turdus*, bulbuls *Hypsipetes*,

brush warblers *Nesillas*, sunbirds *Nectarinia/Cinnyris* and white-eyes *Zosterops*, genera each represented by several species and subspecies, with differing views on species limits. Only a few taxa are missing, and sound quality is largely excellent, thanks in part to extensive 'cleaning'. A selection of non-bird noises is usefully included. This CD is essential for all birding visitors to the islands, and also for anyone interested in inter-island variation in bird vocalisations.

Roger Safford

Pink Africa

Carlo Mari and Nigel Collar, 2000. 210 pp, many colour photographs. London, UK: The Harvill Press. ISBN 1-86046 804-7. UK£30.

There are many photographic books to the wildlife of Africa but almost all focus on mammals such as lions, leopards, elephants and rhinos. Some include

occasional shots of birds, but this is the first to concentrate on just two species—the Greater *Phoenicopterus ruber* and Lesser Flamingos *Phoeniconaias minor*.

Carlo Mari's photographs are excellent and almost every page of this large-format book contains an image that takes you right into the heart of these flamingos' lives. Anyone who has visited the East African Rift Valley lakes to photograph flamingos will have realised that the opportunity to demonstrate your creative flair is rather limited! Just how many photographic styles can you use to show flamingos in action? Well, Mari has filled this book with every conceivable image. Some shots are detailed with pin-sharp focus while the blurred movement of the birds in others makes them appear to move across the page. Wide-angled panoramas of the birds' habitat are mixed with close-ups of their anatomical features, and everything from birth to death is included in graphic detail.

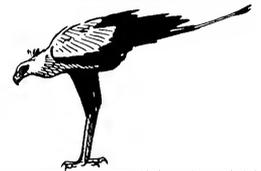
The early pages include a light and

easily readable text in the form of a long essay on the ecology of flamingos by Nigel Collar. The writing style is artistic and while it follows a logical order through plumage, structure, feeding, breeding, behaviour and conservation, the text is not designed to be used as a reference. Indeed, there is no index. In addition, each photograph is accompanied by an extended caption which amply describes the activity being displayed—very often a failing in so-called 'coffee-table books'.

If you have visited the Rift Valley lakes then you will want to buy this book. If you have not yet made that journey, then it will take you there in an instant. This is not a book for hardened birders, but if you have ever attempted wildlife photography you will enjoy it. To create a book on such a narrow subject was a brave project but it has succeeded admirably. 🐦

Keith Betton

Letter



Have birds really shifted their range limits southwards in Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa?

Salewski *et al* summarise locality information for a number of species in Côte d'Ivoire, obtained since the publication of Thiollay's 1985 national checklist⁹ which, they suggest, may provide evidence of recent shifts of range limits in the country and speculate whether these are attributable to climatic change and/or anthropogenic habitat modification. While we do not seek to challenge the proposition that these phenomena can indeed provoke changes in bird distributions, we question whether at least some of the data that Salewski *et al* present actually support their thesis. As a significant number of the records they use to argue their case are ours, we feel entitled to offer our perspective on them.

Our reservations on the interpretations placed upon the data are of two types, one general, the other more detailed. The former is to question whether the baseline information on Côte d'Ivoire's avifauna is sufficiently robust to enable meaningful statements on 'change' of range limits of any species over the timeframe concerned. We would go further and state that there

are no more than a dozen or so sites/areas (national parks etc) in the country for which anything approaching comprehensive species lists have yet been published or are available. The fact that our paper², upon which Salewski *et al* draw, also mentions 28 species, not all of them vagrants, new to the country since the publication of the Thiollay⁹ checklist (and there have been almost as many added since 1991¹) is another indication that Côte d'Ivoire's avifauna remains very imperfectly known.

Our other concerns stem from the specific examples of the putative changes in range limits quoted by Salewski *et al*. One of the tables they present lists 19 species which have apparently undergone recent southward range limit shifts of more than 1°, of which eight are taken from Demey & Fishpool² and a further two from Balchin¹. We confine our comments to these in the belief they will make our case.

Remarks, similar to those given above, on the probable westward expansion of *H. aethiopica* and of the coastal population of *O. atricollis* apparently being unknown to Thiollay⁹, appear in Demey & Fishpool² but are not addressed by Salewski *et al*.³ 🐦

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Species	Reference	SR*	Observations
<i>Mycteria ibis</i>	Demey & Fishpool	1°54'	Based on a single immature seen twice, April and May 1990. An example of post-breeding dispersal? A small breeding colony exists in Comoé National Park, Côte d'Ivoire. The species is considered a dry-season breeding visitor to Ghana ⁴ and a rare dry-season breeding visitor to Liberia ⁵ .
<i>Ciconia abdimii</i>	Demey & Fishpool	2°33'	Based on a single individual seen once in February. The species is a trans-equatorial migrant; this individual had presumably wandered somewhat west of its usual flight path.
<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>	Demey & Fishpool	3°11'	Based on two observations of probably the same female at two localities c70 km apart in December 1986. Dry-season wanderer?
<i>Agapornis pullarius</i>	Balchin	3°49'	Based on a mistake in the original paper, which should have read <i>Agapornis swinderniana</i> . English vernacular correctly given as Black-collared Lovebird.
<i>Oxylophus jacobinus</i>	Demey & Fishpool	2°19'	Based on a single immature in January. An intra-African migrant.
<i>Phoeniculus aterrimus</i>	Demey & Fishpool	1°32'	Based on one observation of two together in February 1988 at Lamto. Two more seen here in January 2002 by RD. These may indicate a genuine change in distribution but data appear too few to rule these out as mere dry-season wanderers.
<i>Riparia cincta</i>	Demey & Fishpool	3°19'	Based on three individuals seen together once in a large mixed hirundine flock in November 1988 and a single in November 1989, also in a mixed flock. An intra-African migrant; thought to be mainly a sparse non-breeding visitor to West Africa from its breeding range south of the equator ⁶ .
<i>Hirundo aethiopica</i>	Demey & Fishpool	2°56'	Based on numerous records from the east of the country. These probably form part of the current continuing westward range expansion mentioned for Ghana by Grimes ⁴ .
<i>Apalis flavida</i>	Balchin	1°14'	Based upon 'one seen in a small flock of <i>Apalis sharpii</i> on the upper slopes of Mont Tonkoui', in the forest zone. Only known observation from forest of this, in West Africa, otherwise exclusively savanna species; possibly a misidentification of <i>A. nigriceps</i> or juvenile <i>A. sharpii</i> ?
<i>Ortygospiza atricollis</i>	Demey & Fishpool	2°24'	Based on a number of records from several localities in the coastal fringe, at one of which it was fairly common and thought likely to breed. Thought to represent part of a coastal population, possibly of the ssp <i>ansorgei</i> , mentioned by Mackworth-Praed & Grant ⁶ , Grimes ⁴ and Gatter ³ .

*SR = Southward range limit shift claimed by Salewski *et al*⁷

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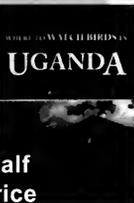
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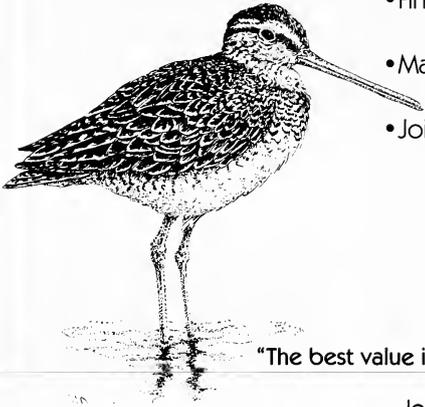
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The ABC Representatives scheme aims to support existing members by providing a local point of contact in their region, for example, to answer queries to the Club, to solicit submissions for the bulletin, and possibly to arrange local meetings for members. Existing ABC members can contact their local Representative in the first instance with queries relating to the Club. ABC Representatives help to recruit new members in their region, for example, by distributing 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 the Club in your region, have any queries, or require further information relating to the ABC Representatives scheme please do not hesitate to contact Paul Lascelles, the Country Representatives Coordinator, at the club address or email: reps@africanbirdclub.org.

Supported and Affiliated Membership

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 Supporting 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.

ABC Information Service

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 the answers but will try to help. The service is free to

ABC members. Contact: Keith Betton, who is also custodian of ABC's journal library, at 8 Dukes Close, Folly Hill, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 0DR, UK. Tel: +44 1252 724068. Fax: +44 171 637 5626. E-mail: info@africanbirdclub.org.

African Birding e-mail discussion list

Launched, in October 2000, by the ABC and the Pan-African Ornithological Congress, African Birding or AB, as it is known, has become a useful forum for those interested in African birds. To join the discussion, which averages 1-2 messages a day, send a blank e-mail to African Birding-subscribe@yahoo.com. You will then receive an email instructing you how to join.

The Club also maintains a list of members e-mail addresses that are useful for informing members of upcoming events and news concerning the Club. We have addresses for approximately 33% of members. Please send additions or corrections to the secretary, at secretary@africanbirdclub.org. All addresses will be kept confidential and not used for commercial advertising etc.





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