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Short Notes — Notes Courtes

Observations at a Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis* nest

The solitary nesting, monogamous and territorial Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis* is commonly double-brooded or sometimes treble-brooded and usually builds a new nest for each brood (Fry *et al.* 2000). The female builds the nest and may take 3–6 days (Fry *et al.* 2000). Nests are usually found in borders of woodland and open ground, often near or over water, and commonly in thickets of bushes and small trees growing on *Macrotermes* termite mounds (Fry *et al.* 2000). Many different tree species are used, with the nest suspended from a twig (Fry *et al.* 2000, Cheke & Mann 2001). The species is a common resident in Nigeria (Elgood *et al.* 1994). In Ilorin, two to three broods were raised in the same nest from March to October, while in another case at Jos, the broods were at six-month intervals (Elgood *et al.* 1994).

On 19 Mar 2004 we found a nest of this species suspended from an electric lamp holder outside the main building of the A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (9°53'N, 8°59'E), in Amurum Forest Reserve, Laminga, Plateau State, Nigeria. It was oval, made of grass, dry leaves and woolly strands, with the entrance at the side-bottom. Observations were made from the ground on most days in the periods 19 Mar to 1 May, 24 May to 4 Jun, 11–18 Aug and 31 Aug to 2 Sep, with occasional observations between these dates, totalling 82 h of observations. We climbed to check inside the nest at 1–7 day intervals during these observation periods.

When we first found the nest, on 19 Mar, the female made repeated visits, collecting materials to thicken the walls; this continued for about seven days, during which period the male visited the nest only twice, the second visit being on the last day the female brought materials, when male and female arrived together. On 29 Mar the nest was still empty. On 5 Apr, a warm egg was discovered in the nest, suspected to have been laid between 31 Mar and 4 Apr, because from 31 Mar to 13 Apr, the time intervals that the female spent in the nest ranged between 11 and 63 min., compared to 3–16 min. between 14 and 30 Apr. The egg hatched between 06h00 12 Apr and 06h00 13 Apr. Both parents fed the chick. The chick stuck out its head 28 and 30 Apr, and fledged 30 Apr or 1 May, as neither adults nor chicks were present on 1 May.

The sunbirds then disappeared for about three weeks until a female was seen leaving the nest on 24 May. Two eggs were found already being incubated. On 3 Jun, two chicks were found in the nest. Both parents fed the chicks, which were still present on 15 June. The nest was empty on 18 June.

The sunbird had already started feeding two more chicks when regular observation started for the third brood, on 11 Aug. Feeding continued until 2 Sep when the chicks fledged. Thus the chicks remained in the nest for at least 23 days, three days longer than the maximum quoted by Cheke & Mann (2001).

The same nest was used for all three broods, with an interval of three weeks between the first and second brood and six weeks between the second and third. We believe that the same parents were involved in all three.

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Rufous Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes* at Fusa Hills, Plateau State, Nigeria

On 10 Apr 2005, during a trek into the Fusa Hills range in the Jos East local government area of Plateau State, Nigeria, a Rufous Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes* was sighted and photographed at about 9h00 near Kudedu village (9°51'45''N, 9°4'25''E), c. 25 km southeast of Jos. The bird was plain sandy rufous-brown above, with plain sandy-white underparts, rufous rump, and fan-shaped rufous tail boldly tipped black and white, with a creamy-white supercilium bordered below by a narrow blackish eye-stripe (Borrow & Demey 2001). It was gathering grass stems and other nesting materials into a crevice c. 1.5 m from the ground in the straw fence of a hut. No attempt was made to approach the bird or nest.

This is the first sighting of this species on the Jos plateau (U. Ottosson & M. Hopkins pers. comm.). There are two distinct subspecies in Nigeria: the migratory nominate *galactotes* and the resident *minor* (Elgood *et al.* 1994, Keith *et al.* 1992). The observed bird is believed to be the resident *C. g. minor* (as shown by the nest