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Avifauna of Omo Forest Reserve, SW Nigeria

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Summary

We recorded 210 bird species of 52 families in Omo Forest Reserve, SW Nigeria. Amongst these, 20 are Palaearctic migrants and at least 26 others are either intra-African migrants or exhibit significant local movements. Most passerines that we recorded are resident species.

Résumé

Avifaune de la Réserve Forestière de l'Omo, SO du Nigeria. Nous avons enregistré 210 espèces d'oiseaux, de 52 familles, dans la Réserve Forestière de l'Omo, dans le sud-ouest du Nigeria. Parmi celles-ci, 20 sont des migrateurs paléarctiques, et au moins 26 sont soit des migrateurs intra-africains, soit des migrateurs locaux. La plupart des passereaux sont des résidents.

Introduction

Omo Forest Reserve (FR) is one of six contiguous forest reserves covering *c.* 5000 km² in Ogun and Ondo States, *c.* 160 km east of Lagos, in SW Nigeria. First proposed in 1916, Omo FR was constituted in 1925, and took its present form in the 1950s. It lies between 6°35' and 7°5'N and between 4°12' and 4°33'E, and covers 1391 km² (Fig. 1). The reserve is divided into four administrative areas, two on each side of the Omo River: J-4 (NE), J-6 (SE), J-1 (NW), and J-3 (SW). J-4 Town is in the south-centre of the J-4 Area, 14 km north of the Lagos–Benin City (E–W) expressway. The J-6/J-4 boundary is half way between the town and the expressway. J-4 Town is the largest of several villages in the J-4 Area and site of a sawmill that has been in operation since the 1940s. Excepting in the east, most of the J-4 Area and the portion of the J-6 Area north of the expressway (*c.* 40% of the reserve) was converted to *Gmelina arborea* tree plantation during the 1970s and 80s, a World Bank project. The plantation project is an ongoing programme of Ogun State Government.

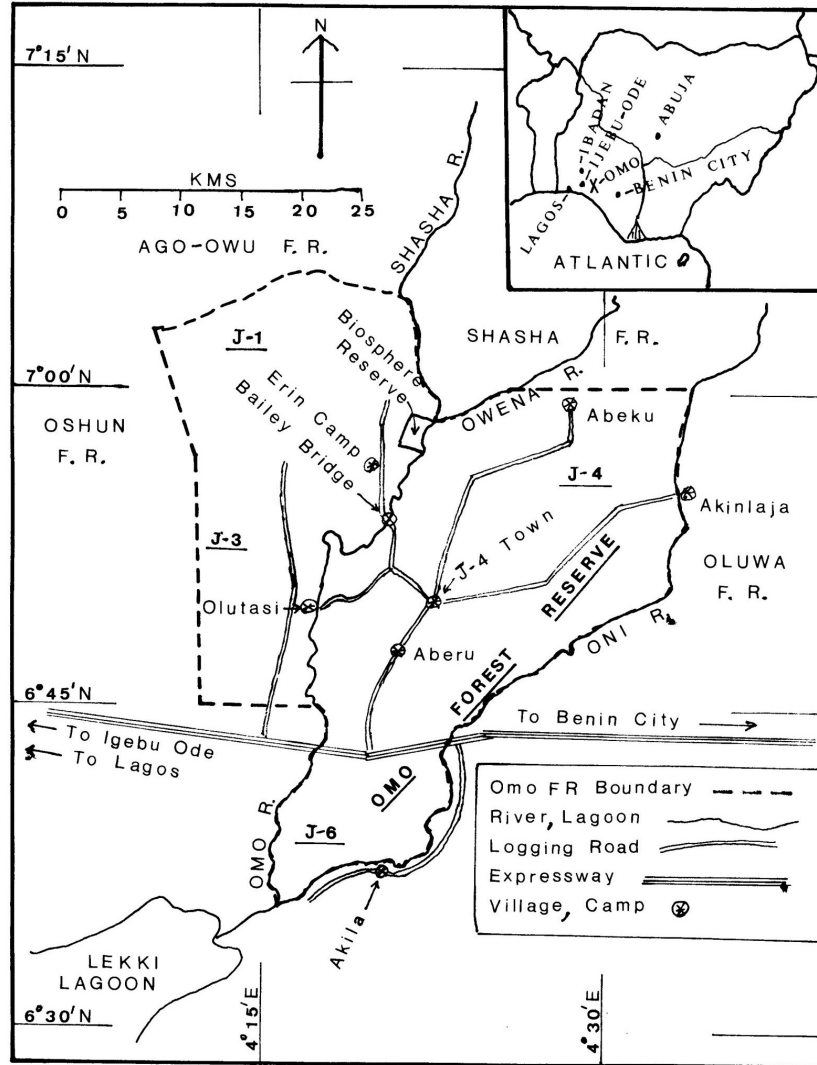


Figure 1. Sketch map of Omo Forest Reserve, Ogun State, Nigeria, showing important areas referred to in the text.

The “Etemi Inviolable Plot” of 4.6 km² was demarcated in the J-3 Area in 1946. This became a Strict Nature Reserve in 1954 and a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in

1977. In the interest of elephant protection, the Nigerian Forest Elephant Group (NFE) was established in the early 1990s. NFE and the Ogun State Department of Forestry created a Biosphere Extension Area (BEA), a buffer zone around the Biosphere Reserve, to offer more protection to forest elephants and their habitat. NFE was given stewardship of the BEA in 1993 and established a study camp (Erin Camp) on a hilltop 15 km north of J-4 Town in the J-3 Area. Most bird observations made since the late 1980s were made near Erin Camp, near the Bailey bridge over the Omo River, and around J-4 Town.

No previous papers have been published on the birds of Omo FR. Farmer (1979) produced a checklist of birds from around Ile-Ife (7°29'N, 4°33'E), an area of secondary forest and farmlands north of Omo FR. His area, having three small lakes, attracted ducks and other water birds not found at Omo FR. Akinpelu (1994a, b) did a moulting study of two *Lonchura* species and a breeding study of three estrildid species at Ile-Ife. Sodeinde (1993) studied the breeding of Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis* at Ijebu-Ode (6°49'N, 3°56'E).

Study Area

Omo FR is near the W limit of the rainforest zone in Nigeria, approaching the Dahomey Gap. Based on rainfall records at Akilla at the southern end of the J-6 Area (annual average 2004 mm over 43 years) and Ijebu-Ode, 40 km west of J-4 Town (1626 mm over 25 years), average annual rainfall is probably 1800–2000 mm over most of the reserve, with higher amounts in the south near the sea. Although there is considerable year-to-year variability in the start and end of the rainy season, Nov–Mar can generally be considered as the dry season (<100 mm rainfall per month). The hottest time is during Mar–Apr (highs of 36–38°C at J-4 Town) until the start of the rains. Temperatures usually remain in the 20s during Jul–Aug, when it is overcast and rainy much of the time. Night-time temperatures have fallen to 16°C at J-4 Town during Dec–Jan.

The Omo River flows from north to south through the centre of the reserve, while the Oni River marks the eastern boundary. These rivers join at the southern tip of the reserve, 5 km from Lekki Lagoon and 25 km from the Atlantic Ocean. Much of the reserve consists of rolling hills 50–100 m above sea level, with some low outcroppings in the north reaching 200 m elevation. Soils are derived from underlying Precambrian granite, gneiss and schist. In the J-6 Area south of the Expressway, on flat land with sandy soil, barely above sea level, there are extensive freshwater swamps.

“J-4 Pond” is a large, manmade pond near the J-4 Plantation Project guesthouse on the outskirts of J-4 Town, and there are two fishponds nearby. Other locations are shown in Fig. 1.

Trees of the swamp forest include *Lophira alata*, *Symphonia globulifera*, *Nauclea pobeguinii*, and the palm *Raphia hookeri*. No-one has yet investigated the avifauna of this part of Omo FR. The central reserve area (where our bird records were made) is

covered with either moist rainforest, characterized by trees of the Leguminosae and Meliaceae, or *Gmelina arborea* plantation interspersed with some small villages, farms and small cacao plantations. The northern J-1 Area has a drier rainforest cover characterized by trees of the Sterculiaceae, Moraceae, and Ulmaceae. Lowe *et al.* (1992) is a good source for additional information about the vegetation of Omo FR.

The large mammalian fauna is very uncommon, due to intensive bushmeat hunting. The Leopard is believed to be extinct; Forest Elephant, Forest Buffalo, and Western Chimpanzee populations are low but are of particular interest, being the last remaining ones this far west in SW Nigeria.

Methods

AG observed birds while going about his other project duties. Other authors made bird-watching forays. Sequence and nomenclature follow Borrow & Demey (2001). Abundance: R = rare (1 or 2 records), U = uncommon (a few records per year); F = frequent (seen often, but not every day); C = common (1–10 seen or heard daily); A = abundant (more than 10 seen or heard daily). Status is usually self-evident, but local movements are mentioned, as indicated by periods of presence/absence in the area. Many old records, although well established, lack detailed location, date and abundance information. Observers' initials are given where deemed important.

Results

Below we present a list of 210 bird species in 52 families known from Omo FR, of which 30 % were added to the list during the year 2000.

Podicipedidae

Tachybaptus rufficollis Little Grebe. R. One on a pond near Oloji Village (15 km east of J-4 Town), 23 Nov 2000 (AG).

Ardeidae

Ixobrychus sturmii African Dwarf Bittern. R. One in aquatic habitat edge, 8 Mar 1998 (PH).

Bubulcus ibis Cattle Egret. U. Small flocks along the E–W Expressway (J-6 Area) Nov–May, but absent Jun–Oct during the period of heaviest rainfall.

Butorides striatus Green-backed Heron. F. Omo River; also J-4 Pond during Dec–Jan.

Egretta garzetta Little Egret. R. One seen 14 Feb 1988 (PH).

E. alba Great Egret. R. One soaring over Abeku Village 11 Dec 2000 (AG).

Ardea purpurea Purple Heron. R. Pair at J-4 Pond, 26–28 Mar 2000 (AG).

A. cinerea Grey Heron. U. One at J-4 Pond mid-Feb to early Apr 2000; one soaring over Erin Camp 28 Nov 2000; one over J-4 Town 5 Dec 2000 (AG).

Threskiornithidae

Bostrychia hagedash Hadada Ibis. C. Omo and Oni rivers and also smaller streams.

Anatidae

Pteronetta hartlaubii Hartlaub's Duck. U. A pair on a pool by the Osoko Road north of J-4 Town, mid-Jun 2000; a pair at J-4 Pond 6 Dec 2000; old records.

Accipitridae

Pernis apivorus European Honey Buzzard. R. Old records.

Macheirhamphus alcinus Bat Hawk. R. Old records.

Elanus caeruleus Black-shouldered Kite. R. One at J-4 Town from 21 Dec 2000 to mid-Jan 2001, often resting and hunting from the J-4 sawmill radio tower (AG).

Milvus migrans Black Kite. A. Dry season visitor, absent mid-Jun to late Sep, becoming abundant by mid-Oct.

Gypohierax angolensis Palm-nut Vulture. C. More common in the *Gmelina* plantation and along the Omo River than in true primary or secondary forest.

Necrosyrtes monachus Hooded Vulture. U. Aberu village and in large villages along the E-W Expressway in the dry season; wet season status unknown (AG).

Polyboroides typus African Harrier Hawk. C. Widespread in all habitats.

Accipiter tachiro African Goshawk. C. Secondary forest and *Gmelina* plantation.

Urotriorchis macrourus Long-tailed Hawk. R. One seen 8 Mar 1998 (PH).

Kaupifalco monogrammicus Lizard Buzzard. C. More common in *Gmelina* plantation than elsewhere.

Buteo auguralis Red-necked Buzzard. C. Dry season visitor (Nov–Mar) to *Gmelina* plantation.

Aquila rapax Tawny Eagle. U. Pair near J-4 Town 5 Dec 2000 (AG); old records. Probably a dry season visitor from the north.

Hieraetus ayresii Ayres's Hawk Eagle. R. One seen 22 Feb 1998 (PH); another resting on a dead tree next to the Omo River, 16 Mar 2000 (photographed, AL). Also found north of the reserve near Ife (Elgood *et al.* 1994).

Stephanoaetus coronatus Crowned Eagle. F. Primary and secondary forest; heard calling more often May–Sep than during the dry season. Rare in Nigeria (Elgood *et al.* 1994).

Falconidae

Falco tinnunculus Common Kestrel. R. One at Aberu village, 6 Jul 2000 (AG).

F. biarmicus Lanner Falcon. U. One, J-4 Town, 21–22 Dec 2000 (AG); old dry season records.

Phasianidae

Francolinus lathamii Latham's Forest Francolin. F. Primary and secondary forest.

F. bicalcaratus Double-spurred Francolin. C. Farmlands near villages in J-4 Area.

Numididae

Guttera pucherani Crested Guineafowl. C. Forest and *Gmelina* plantation.

Rallidae

Himantornis haematopus Nkulengu Rail. C. Found along swampy streams in the forest; heard calling at Erin Camp nearly every night or early morning (PH). One running down a logging road at mid-day, 15 May 2000 (AG). Rare in Nigeria (Elgood *et al.* 1994).

Sarothrura pulchra White-spotted Flufftail. F. Forest, often heard calling mornings and evenings near Erin Camp, where there are many swampy streams.

Crex egregia African Crane. C. Tall grassy areas around J-4 Town May–Oct but absent in dry season (AG). Reportedly present all year in the Lagos area, but other southerly records are mostly from the dry season (Elgood *et al.* 1994). However, farther east along the Niger River near Agenebode (7°N, 6°30'E) it is also a wet season visitor (PH).

Amaurornis flavirostris Black Crane. F. Found at J-4 Pond, but difficult to observe in wet season due to the tall vegetation at pond edges (AG).

Gallinula chloropus, Common Moorhen. R. One seen 14 Feb 1988 (PH).

Heliornithidae

Podica senegalensis African Finfoot. U. One on the Omo River 14 Feb 1988 (PH); old records.

Jacanidae

Actophilornis africana African Jacana. C. Several at J-4 Pond throughout the year.

Recurvirostridae

Himantopus himantopus Black-winged Stilt. R. One at J-4 Pond, Feb–Mar 2000 (AG).

Charadriidae

Charadrius forbesi Forbes's Plover. C. A half-dozen seen daily, J-4 Pond, Jan–Apr 2000 (AG).

Vanellus albiceps White-headed Lapwing. U. Dry season visitor to Omo River.

Scolopacidae

Gallinago gallinago Common Snipe. R. One at J-4 Pond 29 Mar 2000 (AG).

Tringa erythropus Spotted Redshank. R. One at J-4 Pond, Feb–Mar 2000 (AG).

T. nebularia Common Greenshank. U. One at J-4 Pond, late Mar to early Apr 2000; a pair circling J-4 Pond, 12 Nov 2000 (AG).

T. ochropus Green Sandpiper. R. One at J-4 Pond 15 Mar 2000 (AG).

T. glareola Wood Sandpiper. R. One at J-4 Pond during Mar 2000 (AG).

Actitis hypoleucos Common Sandpiper. C. Omo and Oni rivers and J-4 Pond Sep–Apr; returning birds first noted at the J-4 Town fishponds on 20 Aug 2000 (AG).

Columbidae

Treron calva African Green Pigeon. C. Widespread in all habitats.

Turtur brehmeri Blue-headed Wood Dove. C. Forest understorey (photo by AL).

T. tympanistris Tambourine Dove. A. Widespread, heard calling all day.

T. afer Blue-spotted Wood Dove. C. Farmland and *Gmelina* plantation.

Streptopelia semitorquata Red-eyed Dove. C. Omo and Oni Rivers, at villages and along watercourses in farmland, and in the *Gmelina* plantation.

Psittacidae

Psittacus erithacus Grey Parrot. U. In the mid-1990s, flocks of over 100 still occurred; now uncommon although still widespread (PH).

Musophagidae

Corythaeola cristata Great Blue Turaco. U. Widespread in the forest but now uncommon due to hunting pressure and habitat changes caused by intensive logging.

Tauraco macrorhynchus Yellow-billed Turaco. A. Forest and *Gmelina* plantation. Not hunted; the most common turaco in coastal forests from the Niger Delta to Lagos (PH).

Cuculidae

Oxylophus levaillantii Levaillant's Cuckoo. U. Dry season visitor or passage migrant; one seen 14 Feb 1988 (PH); one near J-4 Pond 27 Mar 2000 (AG).

Clamator glandarius Great Spotted Cuckoo. U. Old dry season records.

Cuculus solitarius Red-chested Cuckoo. C. Widespread in forest, heard calling Apr–Oct, but dry season presence requires confirmation.

C. clamorosus Black Cuckoo. F. Widespread in forest in the wet season; possibly resident (PH).

C. gularis African Cuckoo. U. Dry season visitor; old records.

Cercococcyx olivinus Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo. RS, r. One, along the Erin Camp Nature Trail, 6 May 2000 (PH, AL).

Chrysococcyx cupreus African Emerald Cuckoo. A. Forest and *Gmelina* plantation, heard calling all the time.

C. klaas Klaas's Cuckoo. R. One, 14 Feb 1988 (PH); one near J-4 Pond, 15 Mar 2000 (AG).

C. caprius Didric Cuckoo. C. Secondary forest and *Gmelina* plantation.

Ceuthmochares aereus Yellowbill. C. Widespread in forest.

Centropus leucogaster Black-throated Coucal. F. Secondary forest undergrowth.

C. senegalensis Senegal Coucal. A. Farmland and *Gmelina* plantation. The dark morph is common (AG).

Strigidae

Bubo poensis Fraser's Eagle Owl. C. Often heard calling at Erin Camp and in the eastern J-4 Area dense forest, and once at J-4 Town on 9 Dec 2000 (AG).

Scotopelia bouvieri Vermiculated Fishing Owl. R. First seen by R. Oladepo of Akinlaja village on the Oni River, early Oct 2000; one flushed from a tree branch by the Oni River at Keno hunting camp, crossing the river into Ondo State 24 Nov 2000 (AG). May not be uncommon along rivers in the area. Three records near Lagos (Elgood *et al.* 1994); recorded from the banks of the Ogwe River, a tributary of the Niger near Agenbode (6°57'N, 6°35'E), a considerable distance east of Omo FR (Turk 2000); also found in the Niger delta (PH).

Strix woodfordii African Wood-Owl. C. Widespread, often heard calling at night.

Caprimulgidae

Caprimulgus climacurus Long-tailed Nightjar. C. Dry season visitor, seen on roads and open areas near villages in the J-4 Area. A large passage noted through J-4 Town and vicinity, 4–8 Dec 2000. Tail feathers grow to full length during Dec–Feb (AG).

Apodidae

Rhaphidura sabini Sabine's Spinetail. U. Twenty over Erin Camp, 22 Feb 1998 (PH).

Neafrapus cassini Cassin's Spinetail. F. Seen soaring over the forest canopy (PH).

Cypsiurus parvus African Palm Swift. U. Probably resident, but only noted during Jun–Aug 2000 at streams near villages in the *Gmelina* plantation (AG).

Apus apus Common Swift. U. Old dry season records, soaring over the forest canopy.

A. affinis Little Swift. A. Found at all large villages in the J-4 Area.

Alcedinidae

Halcyon badia Chocolate-backed Kingfisher. R. Found near streams in primary forest; one heard calling 8 Mar 1998 (PH).

H. leucocephala Grey-headed Kingfisher. C. Dry season visitor, Dec–Mar, at roadside streams in the *Gmelina* plantation (AG).

H. malimbica Blue-breasted Kingfisher. C. Forest and *Gmelina* plantation.

H. senegalensis Woodland Kingfisher. U. Seen at J-4 Pond, Dec 2000; old records.

Ceyx lecontei African Dwarf Kingfisher. U. Forest; one mist-netted 18 Apr 1997 (PH); old records.

C. pictus African Pygmy Kingfisher. C. Farmland and *Gmelina* plantation.

Alcedo leucogaster White-bellied Kingfisher. R. Forest streams; one mist-netted 18 Apr 1998 (PH). May be more common than this would suggest. Mist-netting in Korup NP, Cameroon showed it to be quite common there, although rarely observed (Rodewald *et al.* 1994).

A. cristata Malachite Kingfisher. F. A pair seen regularly at the J-4 Pond (AG).

A. quadribrachys Shining-blue Kingfisher. U. Omo River and large streams.

Megaceryle maxima Giant Kingfisher. U. Omo River and large streams.

Ceryle rudis Pied Kingfisher. U. A pair at J-4 Town fish-farm ponds and also at J-4 Pond during Dec–May, but absent Jun–Nov (AG).

Meropidae

Merops gularis Black Bee-eater. F. Forest and *Gmelina* plantation, often seen at Omo River Bailey Bridge and in high trees on outskirts of J-4 Town.

M. pusillus Little Bee-eater. C. J-4 Town outskirts and J-4 Area farmlands.

M. albicollis White-throated Bee-eater. U. Passage migrant or dry season visitor. A flock at J-4 Town, 8–12 Dec 2000 (AG); old records.

Coraciidae

Eurystomus gularis Blue-throated Roller. U. Forest edge and clearings; four, 14 Feb 1988 (PH); a pair along the upper Omo River near the Biosphere Reserve, mid-Jul 2000 (AG).

E. glaucurus Broad-billed Roller. C. Dry season visitor during Nov–Jun along the Omo River, in *Gmelina* plantation and in farmland (AG).

Phoeniculidae

Phoeniculus castaneiceps Forest Wood-hoopoe. U. Forest; old records.

Bucerotidae

Tropicranus albocristatus White-crested Hornbill. F. Found in dense foliage in forest.

Tockus camurus Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill. C. Forest; the laughing call of small groups heard daily.

T. fasciatus African Pied Hornbill. F. Widespread in Omo FR.

Bycanistes fistulator Piping Hornbill. F. Forest edge and secondary forest.

B. subcylindricus, Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill. U. Forest canopy; forest edge.

B. albotibialis White-thighed Hornbill. C. Forest canopy.

Ceratogymna atrata Black-casqued Hornbill. U. Forest canopy, the least common hornbill in Omo FR. Elgood *et al.* (1994) indicated that it was not to be found west of Benin City, but it is very common in Okomu NP (6°25'N, 5°20'E), 100 km southeast of Omo FR, with upwards of 10 recorded daily (PH).

Capitonidae

Gymnobucco calvus Naked-faced Barbet. C. Noisy groups in secondary forest.
Pogoniulus scolopaceus Speckled Tinkerbird. C. Widespread, foraging in lower stratum of dense forest.

P. atroflavus Red-rumped Tinkerbird. F. Usually found foraging high in forest trees, heard calling daily.

P. subsulphureus Yellow-throated Tinkerbird. C. Widespread, more common in dense forest than in cacao plantations and farmlands.

P. bilineatus Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird. C. Widespread, more common in overgrown farmlands and cacao plantations than in dense forest.

Buccanodon duchaillui Yellow-spotted Barbet. C. Forest canopy.

Tricholaema hirsuta Hairy-breasted Barbet. C. Forest canopy; its distinctive call heard daily in the vicinity of Erin Camp (AG).

Indicatoridae

Indicator maculatus Spotted Honeyguide. R. One, Erin Camp, 16 Mar 2000 (photographed, AL, PH, AG), the first record for Omo FR. Elgood *et al.* (1994) considered it a rare resident in Nigeria (one collected east of Omo FR in Ondo State, another netted to the west near Lagos at Badagri).

Picidae

Campethera nivosus Buff-spotted Woodpecker. F. Forest understorey, noted especially in cacao plantations along the Omo River and at Erin Camp (AG).

Dendropicus fuscescens Cardinal Woodpecker. R. One observed for several minutes at close range in overgrown farmland near J-4 Town 9 Sep 2000 (AG).

D. pyrrhogaster Fire-bellied Woodpecker. C. Widespread, the most common woodpecker in the reserve.

Eurylaimidae

Smithornis rufolateralis Rufous-sided Broadbill. R. Forest; one heard, 8 Mar 1998 (PH).

Pittidae

Pitta angolensis African Pitta. R. Forest floor; old records. Considered a rare rainforest resident by Elgood *et al.* (1994).

Hirundinidae

Hirundo semirufa Rufous-chested Swallow. A. Rainy season visitor, May–Oct, villages and farmlands of J-4 Area. A pair nested under the eaves of AG's house, J-4 Town, late May 2000.

H. senegalensis Mosque Swallow. C. Dry season visitor, Dec–May, J-4 Town and Abeku.

H. smithii Wire-tailed Swallow. R. One at J-4 Town for a few days in mid-May and then a pair there on 26 May 2000 (AG).

H. aethiopica Ethiopian Swallow. A. Found in J-4 Town and other large villages in the J-4 Area, nesting in houses, schools and other buildings (AG).

H. rustica Barn Swallow. C. Dry season visitor, Oct–Apr, villages and farmlands of J-4 Area.

Motacillidae

Motacilla flava Yellow Wagtail. A. Dry season visitor, Nov–Mar, to villages and farmlands of the J-4 Area, coming into breeding plumage in early Mar.

M. aguimp African Pied Wagtail. C. Rainy season visitor, May–Oct 2000, J-4 Town (AG).

Anthus leucophrys Plain-backed Pipit. F. Dry season visitor, Dec–May, to school grounds and football fields at J-4 Town and to the east at Oloji Village (AG).

A. trivialis Tree Pipit. F. Passage migrant; one at J-4 Town 28 Mar 2000 and many there 13–18 Nov 2000 (AG).

Macronyx croceus Yellow-throated Long-claw. C. Found in tall grass at J-4 Town near the football field, the sawmill office, and around J-4 Pond (AG).

Pycnonotidae

Andropadus virens Little Greenbul. A. Widespread in a variety of habitats.

A. curvirostris Cameroon Sombre Greenbul. C. Lower stratum of forest.

A. gracilirostris Slender-billed Greenbul. C. Forest canopy (common at Erin Camp) and tall trees in farmland.

A. latirostris Yellow-whiskered Greenbul. C. Secondary forest, forest edge, and abandoned farmland with underbrush.

Ixonotus guttatus Spotted Greenbul. C. Widespread, in large noisy groups.

Thescelocichla leucopleura Swamp Palm Bulbul. F. A group was resident in a patch of forest near the J-4 Pond during 2000–1 (AG).

Phyllastrephus icterinus Icterine Greenbul. U. Lower stratum of forest; three mist-netted at Erin Camp 18 Apr 1997, and netted there again 8 Mar 1998 (PH).

Bleda syndactyla Red-tailed Bristlebill. U. Forest undergrowth.

B. canicapilla Grey-headed Bristlebill. F. Forest undergrowth and forest edge.

Criniger barbatus Western Bearded Greenbul. C. Lower stratum of forest, heard calling throughout the day.

C. calurus Red-tailed Greenbul. C. Widespread in low and middle strata of the forest.

Pycnonotus barbatus Common Bulbul. A. Widespread in all habitats.

Nicator chloris Western Nicator. C. Brushy tangles in forest.

Turdidae

Stiphornis erythrorhox Forest Robin. F. Forest floor and undergrowth.

Alethe diademata Fire-crested Alethe. F. Forest floor.

A. poliocephala Brown-chested Alethe. F. Forest floor.

Neocossyphus poensis White-tailed Ant Thrush. F. Forest floor and undergrowth.

Saxicola rubetra Whinchat. C. Passage migrant in J-4 farmland; first noted on 5 Mar, then found to be common (several per day) during 14–18 Mar 2000 (AG).

Myrmecocichla albifrons White-fronted Black Chat. R. One seen in cultivation 14 Feb 1988 (PH); also known from the Lekke Peninsula between Omo FR and Lagos (PH).

Zoothera princei Grey Ground Thrush. R. Forest floor; first sighting near Erin Camp 9 Mar 1997 and subsequently mist-netted there 17 Apr 1997 (PH). Elgood *et al.*

(1994) mention only one sight record (early 1950s) for Nigeria. Thomas (1991) netted one just over the Cameroon border in Korup NP.

Turdus pelios African Thrush. U. Farmlands of the J-4 Area.

Sylviidae

Hippolais polyglotta Melodious Warbler. U. Dry season visitor in farmlands.

Cisticola anonymus Chattering Cisticola. C. Tall grass around villages and farms.

Prinia subflava Tawny-flanked Prinia. C. Farmlands, brushy areas and villages.

Apalis nigriceps Black-capped Apalis. R. Forest canopy; a pair seen 8 Mar 1998 (PH).

A. rufogularis Buff-throated Apalis. F. Forest canopy and amongst lianas.

Camaroptera brachyura Grey-backed Camaroptera. C. Brushy areas in farmland and secondary forest edge.

C. superciliaris Yellow-browed Camaroptera. C. Forest, often seen near Erin Camp in secondary growth.

C. chloronota Olive-green Camaroptera. R. Two mist-netted 14 Feb 1988 (PH).

Macrosphenus concolor Grey Longbill. C. Forest, in dense tangles and brush.

Sylvietta virens Green Crombec. C. Forest edge and brushy areas.

Phylloscopus trochilus Willow Warbler. C. Dry season visitor noted at J-4 Town during Jan-Feb 2000 (AG).

P. sibilatrix Wood Warbler. U. Dry season visitor to forest edge.

Hylia prasina Green Hylia. C. Forest and forest patches on outskirts of J-4 Town.

Muscicapidae

Fraseria ocreata Fraser's Forest Flycatcher. F. Forest edge and forest clearings.

F. cinerascens White-browed Forest Flycatcher. R. First recorded 16 Mar 2000 at forest edge on the bank of the Omo River (PH, AL & AG).

Muscicapa striata Spotted Flycatcher. F. Passage migrant Mar–May and Sep–Nov, often seen at Omo River Bailey Bridge and around J-4 Town; also several birds in J-4 Town and at J-4 Pond 26 Dec 2000 (AG).

M. cassini Cassin's Flycatcher. C. Riverbanks of Omo and Oni rivers and along the lower Erija Stream (J-3 Area).

Myioparus plumbeus Lead-coloured Flycatcher. U. Overgrown farmlands of J-4 Area (AG).

Ficedula hypoleuca Pied Flycatcher. PM, u. Dry season visitor to overgrown farmlands of the J-4 Area (AG).

Monarchidae

Erythrocercus mccallii Chestnut-capped Flycatcher. C. Forest mid-stratum and edge.

Elminia nigromitrata Dusky Crested Flycatcher. U. Forest undergrowth; one mist-netted 18 Apr 1997 (PH).

Trochocercus nitens Blue-headed Crested Flycatcher. F. Forest undergrowth and amongst lianas in forest mid-stratum.

Terpsiphone viridis African Paradise-Flycatcher. U. Dry season visitor (white-tailed birds) in the *Gmelina* plantation during Dec–Apr (AG).

T. rufiventer Red-bellied Paradise-Flycatcher. A. Widespread in groups (rufous-backed race) in secondary forest and at forest edge.

Platysteiridae

Dyaphorophya castanea Chestnut Wattle-eye. C. Widespread in forest mid-stratum, often encountered near Erin Camp.

Platysteira cyanea Common Wattle-eye. C. J-4 Town, J-4 Area farmlands and in forest at Olutasi village, 15 km west of J-4 Town on the Omo River (AG).

Timaliidae

Illadopsis rufipennis Pale-breasted Illadopsis. C. Forest lower stratum and forest floor; the distinctive call heard all day.

I. fulvescens Brown Illadopsis. F. Forest undergrowth and thickets.

Remizidae

Pholidornis ruficapilla Tit-hylia. F. Forest canopy.

Nectariniidae

Deleornis fraseri Fraser's Sunbird. U. Forest lower and mid-strata.

Cyanomitra cyanaea Blue-throated Brown Sunbird. F. Forest canopy and edge.

C. obscura Western Olive Sunbird. C. Forest mid-stratum and in tall trees on the outskirts of J-4 Town.

Chalcomitra adelberti Buff-throated Sunbird. F. Forest edge and clearings (often seen at Erin Camp) and J-4 Town gardens.

Hedydipna collaris Collared Sunbird. C. Secondary forest, forest edge, farmland and J-4 Town gardens.

Cinnyris chloropygius Olive-bellied Sunbird. A. Forest, forest edge and village gardens (the most common sunbird in J-4 Town).

C. superbus Superb Sunbird. C. Forest edge, forest clearings and J-4 Town.

C. batesi Bates's Sunbird. R. Forest canopy; also a pair at forest edge near J-4 Pond 13 Nov 2000 (AG).

Zosteropidae

Zosterops senegalensis Yellow White-eye. F. Farmlands near J-4 Town.

Malaconotidae

Dryoscopus sabini Sabine's Puffback. U. Forest upper stratum.

D. gambensis Northern Puffback. R. One seen in Jan 2000 (AG with Manu Shiiwua) near Erin Camp, a short distance from extensive farmland at a hunting camp (AG).

Oriolidae

Oriolus nigripennis Black-winged Oriole. C. Forest canopy, especially in secondary forest.

O. brachyrhynchus Western Black-headed Oriole. C. Forest canopy, especially in undisturbed forest.

Dicruridae

Dicrurus atripennis Shining Drongo. U. Mid-stratum of the forest interior.

D. modestus Velvet-mantled Drongo. R. One seen 14 Feb 1988 (PH).

Corvidae

Corvus albus Pied Crow. C/U. Common resident only along the E-W Expressway. Very uncommon at J-4 Town in the dry season, becoming frequent Jul-Sep, then absent Oct-Nov, reappearing in Dec; also recorded at Abeku, Dec 2000 (AG).

Sturnidae

Lamprolornis purpureiceps Purple-headed Glossy Starling. U. Forest canopy.

L. splendidus Splendid Glossy Starling. F. Flocks in high trees in J-4 Area villages and farmlands and in forest canopy along the Omo River.

Cinnyricinclus leucogaster Violet-backed Starling. C. Dry season visitor to open areas of the reserve; especially noted in J-4 Town during Jan–Feb 2000 (AG).

Passeridae

Passer griseus Northern Grey-headed Sparrow. A. J-4 Town and large villages in the Gmelina plantation; absent from smaller villages surrounded closely by forest.

Ploceidae

Ploceus nigricollis Black-necked Weaver. C. Forest edge; a pair often seen in the forest patch near J-4 Pond (AG).

P. nigerrimus Vieillot's Black Weaver. A. Towns, villages, farmlands and along J-4 Area streams, frequently nesting in tall oil palms with Village Weavers. Black and chestnut race *castaneofuscus* readily distinguished from *P. albinuchas*, which in the study area is all black.

P. cucullatus Village Weaver. A. Villages and towns in the J-4 Area.

P. tricolor Yellow-mantled Weaver. F. Forest upper stratum and forest edge.

P. albinuchas Maxwell's Black Weaver. U. Forest canopy. A flock seen building nests in a tall *Ceiba pentandra* tree along the J-3 logging track, 30 Aug 2000 (AG). Fairly common 100 km southeast of Omo FR in Okomu NP (PH).

P. superciliosus Compact Weaver. C. Pairs at several locations around J-4 Town (AG).

Malimbus nitens Blue-billed Malimbe. A. Found along streams in the *Gmelina* plantation, especially in farmlands. A flock building new nests in *Raphia* palms at J-4 Pond, Jun–Jul 2000, remained near the old nests during the dry season (AG).

M. malimbicus Crested Malimbe. F. Primary forest in mid-stratum, forest edge, and in logged (secondary) forest.

M. scutatus Red-vented Malimbe. F. Forest canopy at forest edge.

M. rubricollis Red-headed Malimbe. C. Forest and also in wooded areas of farmland; a flock building nests in a tree outside Abeku, Dec 2000 (AG).

Estrildidae

Parmoptila woodhousei Red-headed Antpecker. R. Undergrowth near swampy forest streams; a pair mist-netted 8 Mar 1998 (PH).

Nigrita canicapillus Grey-crowned Negrofinch. C. Forest, mostly in canopy.

N. luteifrons Pale-fronted Negrofinch. F. Forest edge and secondary growth.

N. bicolor Chestnut-breasted Negrofinch. C. Forest, plantation and farmland.

Spermophaga haematina Western Bluebill. F. Forest, especially in undergrowth.

Estrilda melpoda Orange-checked Waxbill. A. Tall grass at J-4 Town and in farmlands throughout the J-4 Area.

Lonchura cucullata Bronze Mannikin. A. Villages and farmlands.

L. bicolor Black-and-white Mannikin. C. Villages and farmlands.

Viduidae

Vidua macroura Pin-tailed Whydah. A. Farmlands and villages, changing into breeding plumage during Apr–May 2000 and changing back in Nov 2000 (AG).

Discussion

Of the 20 Palaearctic migrants, ten are passerines. Twenty-six species are either intra-African migrants or exhibit local movements, and seven of these are passerines.

Excepting Green-backed Heron, other herons and egrets are uncommon in Omo FR. The occasional Palaearctic heron turned up at J-4 Pond during the dry season, and some Palaearctic shorebirds also stopped off there from mid-dry season onward (pond water levels were too high to provide a muddy shoreline earlier).

Five common resident raptors are Palm-nut Vulture, Harrier-hawk, West African Goshawk, Lizard Buzzard, and Crowned Eagle. Most other hawks and eagles on the list above are either uncommon or rare.

Prior to 2000, most birding visitors to the reserve were only interested in “forest” species, and paid little or no attention to open country birds. This could explain why more of the open country species have not yet been listed.

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