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6. Oti, left bank, 10°15'N, 00°21'30"E (Togo). Colony estimated at 500 holes. About 40 birds present at 10.15 hours on 16 April 1987. There was a small M. bullocki colony with a few birds present at the downstream end of the M. nubicus colony.
7. Kara, right bank, 10°01'30"N, 00°25'30"E (Togo). Colony estimated at 350-400 holes. More than 50 birds present at 11.00 hours on 16 April 1987. The colony was at the top of a not very sheer bank, and could easily be approached from below. An old fishing net had been erected to trap the bee-eaters. In this there were three dead and two live birds. A Black Kite was disturbed from eating one of the birds. The living birds were cut from the net and released; the net was confiscated. Footprints showed that children were responsible for erecting the net. Four fresh eggs were found below the colony.
8. Kara, right bank, 09°58'30"N, 00°25'45"E (Togo). Colony estimated from aerial photograph taken on 16 April 1987 at 350 holes.
9. Kara, left bank, 09°57'N, 00°29'45"E (Togo). Colony estimated from aerial photograph taken on 16 April 1987 at 490 holes.

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Dr J.F. Walsh, Mr S.A. Sowah & Dr Y. Yamagata,
OMS/ONCHO, B.P. 36, Kara, Togo, West Africa

WHAT ARE THE AFFINITIES OF THE BLACK-CAPPED APALIS APALIS NIGRICEPS ? THE NEED FOR FIELD STUDIES -

When working on the material of the genus Apalis in the British Museum (Natural History), at Tring, for the projected volume of The birds of Africa to include the family Sylviidae, and being published by Academic Press, I was struck by the distinctiveness from other members of the genus, of the Black-capped Apalis A. nigriceps. It had quite a different look about it, although its generic status has never been questioned. It is the smallest member of this compact Afrotropical group and found in lowland forest from West Africa to Uganda where it occurs mostly in the canopy in pairs or small parties. Hall & Moreau (1970, An atlas of speciation in African Passerine Birds. British Museum, London) allied it to their A. flavida species-group and A. jacksoni superspecies. However, and more importantly, it differs from others of the genus in possessing an essentially different looking bill. This is short and rather robust for so small a species, measuring from the base of the skull 10-12 (11.1) mm and not attenuated as is usual in Apalis spp. If the ranges and means of bill length in all other Apalis are combined they run from 11.5-17.5 mm (usually 12 and above) and average 12.7 mm. The culmen is always straighter and proportionately finer whether or not the bill tends to be pointed and warbler-like or broad and flycatcher-like in form. In common with other sylviid genera, bill profiles are often quite diagnostic though such differences may be very subtle, and appear generically conservative. They are also a useful indicator of affinities, however such characters may vary inter-specifically.

The impression gained then, is that nigriceps may not be an apalis at all and its affinities are open to question.

On the other hand the bill profile of nigriceps bears a strong resemblance to certain species of the genus Eremomela (which may itself be a generic composite) and in particular to the Rufous-crowned Eremomela E. badiceps. This similarity extends to the plumage pattern above and below where they are remarkably alike. However, in badiceps the tail is not graduated and is unpatterned whereas in nigriceps it is sharply graduated and with conspicuous white tips. Badiceps is also proportionately longer-winged like most others of the genus and there is no marked sexual dimorphism which is strongly developed in nigriceps. Nigriceps therefore, does not fit very comfortably in one genus or the other.

Critical field studies that might help determine the affinities of nigriceps are lacking. However, Field (Ostrich, 1974, 45: 258-260) noted that while there seemed to be no clear behavioural distinction between Sharpe's Apalis A. sharpii and nigriceps and the very similar badiceps, the call notes of badiceps and nigriceps were barely distinguishable. The significance of voice similarities is not clear but may indicate an affinity. Both are also wide-ranging in lowland forest, occur sympatrically and may be found in the same mixed bird parties. The nest of nigriceps is unknown and may provide a clue to relationships when discovered. Nests of Apalis spp. where known and authenticated are enclosed, domed structures with a side-top entrance and oval or bag-shaped. The open nest of small twigs attributed to A. rufogularis by Gray (Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 9, 1972: 25) is unlike that of any apalis and the identification is thought very doubtful. Those of the genus Eremomela are open, and cup-shaped.

I lack field experience of these species and would like to appeal to those who may have an opportunity to look at them in life, to do so critically in the light of this discussion and help elucidate their affinities.

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M.P.S. Irwin, 3 White Cairns Avenue, Hillside, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

LE PLUVIER DE LESCHENAULT (CHARADRIUS LESCHENAUTII), ESPECE NOUVELLE POUR LE SENEGAL -

En novembre 1986, au retour d'une sortie entomologique à la "niaye" (Niaye (terme wolof): depression interdunaire où la nappe phréatique est affleurante ou subaffleurante et où la végétation, relictuelle guinéenne, est caractérisée par la présence du Palmier à huile (Elaeis guineensis)) du lac Tanma, en compagnie de Jacques Mestre du Cirad de Montpellier, je fus intrigué par la présence, sur une prairie en bordure de cultures maraîchères, de quelques individus d'un pluvier, haut sur pattes, que je n'avais jamais vu. J'ai pu rapidement faire quelques photos au téléobjectif de 500mm. En comparant ces diapositives avec le livre de Geroudet (1982, Limicoles, Gangas et Pigeons d'Europe, Neuchâtel, Paris) j'aboutissais au Pluvier de Leschenault (Charadrius leschenaultii Lesson) en plumage intermédiaire. Toutefois, la répartition donnée par Geroudet me fit douter de ma détermination. En effet, Charadrius