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Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest
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SOME NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF THE KIG-OM HILLS ON THE WESTERN
EDGE OF THE JOS PLATEAU (OVER 3,000 ft.)

P. J. E. Woods

NOTES

The Kigom Hills form an isolated promontory of high ground 12 square miles in area connected to the main Plateau by a narrow neck of land. 90% of the hills are within the Rahama Escarpment Forest Reserve and, in fact there are only two small groups of dwellings in the whole area. The habitat varies, from the plains 1,000 ft. below up the steep cliffs and slopes and wooded gullies, to the high rocky hills and forested valleys, with occasional patches of cultivation. Thus a rich avifauna can be found within a comparatively small area. 129 species were positively identified by the writer and many others were given doubtful names when only seen briefly.

The Spring migration, particularly of warblers and flycatchers, was very evident. Mist-netting and ringing commenced on 12th April and ended on 8th May but the total 'catch' was not large, owing to the lack of concentration in any one area. However, 60 different species of local birds were netted, in addition to the migrants. One of these was a Gambage Dusky Flycatcher, Muscioapa gambagee gambagee which is a new record for the area. The most delightful local bird, seen in the hand, was a Klaas' Cuckoo Lampromorpha klaasi.

On 18th and 19th April large flocks of Red-footed Falcons Falco vespertinus vespertinus (up to 200 on the first day - were seen following thunderstorms. Their identity was unmistakable on the second occasion when the birds were seen from above, rather than below, pursuing termites along a steep escarpment. The marked differences between the sexes was most noticeable.

A large variety of birds of prey follow the escarpment round the hills, which still afford abundant small game. A Martial Eagle Polemaetus bellioosus was seen on two occasions, and Bateleurs Terathopius ecaudatus and Red-tailed Buzzards Buteo auguralis are daily sights. Fox Kestrels Falco alopex alopex nest on the more inaccessible cliffs in company with Neumann's Chestnut-winged Starlings Onychognathus morio.

Most Record:

These records in general support those of V.W. Smith (Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 3 (12): 78-90) but one or two species are additional.

Falco alopex alopex Four Kestrel

April - May on ledges on inaccessible cliffs. Young bird with adult plumage just coming through down, found fallen from nest 22nd May.

Streptopelia hypopyrius Adamawan Turtle-Dove

Nest of twigs 10ft. up near stream 15th March. 2 white eggs (30.2 x 23.5mm, 30.0 x 22.8mm). Nest robbed 28th March. The date of this nest, together with V.W. Smith's records seem to indicate that this bird nests all the year round.

Ispidina picta Pygmy Kingfisher

Seen excavating burrows in roadside beginning May.

Melittophagus bullocki Red-throated Bee-eater

Large colony in high river bank at bottom of Escarpment below Kishesha Village. Feeding of young in nests complete by first week of March.

Hirundo aethiopica Ethiopian Swallow

Mud and grass cup under grass roof of house, being built two weeks of May.

Onychognathus morio Chestnut-winged Starling

Several ragged nests of grass and sticks in crevices and ledges of high cliffs. Parents seen feeding young in nest 23rd May.

Hyphantornis brachypterus Johnson's Spectacled Weaver

Solitary nest with young, overhanging steep stream gully, seen 12th April.

Anaplectes melanotis Red-winged Anaplectes

On 26th April a male was seen completing two nests on the tips of branches overhanging a stream. By the end of the month one nest had disappeared, probably cut down by the female - a common practice amongst Weavers, where the males does the building, offering alternative accommodation, frequently to a most unappreciative female who may destroy all his efforts.

Nest Record at Dogon Dutse, JosAccipiter badius sphenurus Eritrean Shikra

A pair were seen violently attacking all crows in the vicinity of a garden in Jos at the beginning of April. The nest was found high in a Mahogany tree overhanging the house, made of sticks and twigs. The female was seen sitting soon afterwards with the male keeping watch in a nearby tree but after a violent hail and thunderstorm the nest was abandoned.