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NOTES ON BIRDS AT IBADAN AND ELSEWHERE

H. G. M. Bass

I have not been able to do any sustained observations during the two years I have been in Nigeria, chiefly in Ibadan; the following notes, however, may be of some interest. I have included a number of dated records in response to Elgood's article - African Migrants in Nigeria (Bull. Nig. Orn. Soc. 3 (11) : 62-70).

Poliocephalus ruficollis African Little Grebe. Seen twice only, at Eleiyele Reservoir, Ibadan, on 17 May 1965, and a pair at Ede/Oshogbo Reservoir on 15 January 1967.

Bubulcus ibis Cattle Egret. Latest date 20 June, 1966, a single bird, probably sick, as it had been around the Secretariat, Ibadan, for some time and was on that day carried off by a townsman.

Scopus umbretta Hammerkop. Common at Basita, 29 May, 1966. At Ihuiya Camp, Upper Ogun Forest Reserve, 27/28 December, 1966.

Anastomus lamelligerus African Openbill. Oye Reservoir 2 or 3 birds, 30 May, 1965; 6 birds on 2 January 1967. One bird at Ede/Oshogbo Reservoir, 1 January 1967.

Hagedashia hagedash West African Hadada.

Several birds at Basita, 28 May 1966.

Nettapus auritus Pygmy Goose. A pair Ogbomoso Reservoir, 28 August 1966. The waterworks superintendent tells me he saw 7 or 8 ducklings there later in the year but could not confirm the identity of the species.

Neorosyrtes monachus Hooded Vulture. Elgood implies the nearest he has seen this bird to Ibadan is at Fiditi, 20 miles to the north. I have noted it also in the next village, five miles nearer Ibadan. The botanists tell me that it is at Fiditi that the first real change occurs from forest to savannah tree-forms.

Buteo auguralis Red-necked Buzzard A sight record on 9 June, 1966. on the new Benin road near Ore, is perhaps of interest in view of what Bannerman says of its whereabouts during the rains.

Accipiter badius Eritrean Shikra Present all the year round in my garden in Ibadan.

Crecoptis egregia African Crane One bird at Oyo Reserv. on 2 January, 1967.

Lissotis melanogaster Black-bellied Bustard A single female near Ago-Are, 21 August 1965.

Afrocyne forbesi Forbes Banded Plover Bannerman implies it resorts to open spaces during the dry season, but I have come across it at pools on the ford over the River Ogun at Ibuiya Camp in the Upper Ogun Forest Reserve on 27/28 December, 1966.

Crocethia alba Sanderling. Several birds at Lighthouse Beach, Tarkwa, 31 July, 1965. A rather early date?

Clamator glandarius Great Spotted Cuckoo As Elgood only gives January to June as the months of occurrence in Ibadan, a sight record of a bird in my garden there on 14 August, 1966, may be of interest. The throat was quite buff, so presumably a bird of the year.

Clamator levaillantii Levaillant's Cuckoo Certainly present during the rains in Ibadan.

Bubo leucostictus Akun Eagle Owl Gambari, 5 September 1965. Asleep in mid-morning on an exposed horizontal branch about 20 feet up. Underparts pale, blotched, not striped or streaked. Bill, eyes, feet all yellow. Of medium size.

Micropus caffer White-rumped swift. A few birds near Iscyn on 27 June 1965.

Megaceryle maxima Giant Kingfisher. Whenever I have seen this bird it has always been at reservoir spillways.

Melittophagus gularis Black Bee-eater. Near Okitipupa in early June, 1964.

Melittophagus pusillus Least Bee-eater. A single bird in wooded country between Mokwa and Kainji on 29 August 1965.

Phoeniculus erythrorhynchos Guinea Wood-Hoopoe. My wife tells me she has seen this typically arboreal bird feeding on our garden lawn.

Pogoniulus erythronotos Red-rumped Tinker bird. Akure 20 November, 1966. I included this as I have not met anyone in Ibadan who has seen it.

Campephaga phoenicea Red-shouldered Cuckoo-Shrike. Seen at Ibadan 24 November, 1965 and 20 January, 1967, and at Bacita 28 May, 1966.

Oriolus brachyrhynchus West African Black-headed Oriole. Elgood records this species from Gambari; I have seen it once in Ibadan at the Forestry School on 12 September, 1965; common at Ikogosi, Ekiti District on 21 August, 1966, so probably found all across the forested area of Western Nigeria.

Hippolais polyglotta Melodious Warbler. Earliest date for Ibadan 3 January, 1967.

Sylvia borin Garden Warbler. Fond of the berries of Trema guineensis, as are also other small passerines, e.g. white-eyes and grosbeak weavers.

? Parisoma grisaeigularis Grey-throated Flycatcher. I have always found the "grey" flycatchers difficult. A pair of birds I saw on 7 June 1966, pirouetting above a dead branch overhanging the water in a forested stretch of the creek below Okitipupa may have been of this species. They were a clear pale grey above,, the throat and

breast also grey; the remainder of the underparts white. Primaries were brown, but I did not see if any of the tail feathers were other than grey; the tail appeared rather long in proportion to the size of the bird. They were not 'sad little' birds; in fact they reminded me more of a Rhipidura (which I know in Australia and India) than of Alseonax cassinii in behaviour and they were certainly more sprightly than a Parisoma (if P. subaeruleum which I have seen in Rhodesia and South Africa, is typical of the genus). The description of P. or A. griseigularis in Bannerman and Praed & Grant respectively do not precisely tally, even for different subspecies, and I have gained no clear picture of what the bird is really like from either work, particularly as the behaviour of the two genera is so different.

Melanornis edolioides Black Flycatcher. Two birds were in my garden at Ibadan when we arrived in January, 1965. They left about the same time as the palaeartic migrants, i.e. Whinchat, Woodchat, Melodious Warbler. Is it a migratory species?

Pedilornychus comitatus Dusky-blue Flycatcher. I have come across this bird twice in Ibadan and been surprised at the extent and depth of the grey on the underparts; there was only a little white on the belly and the throat. It thus has the characters of the subspecies camerunensis, whereas I would have expected aximensis from the distribution given in Bannerman.

Tohitrea smithii Fagan's Paradise Flycatcher. One of the few birds to be regularly found in teak plantations.

Budytes flavus Blue-headed Wagtail. Frequently perches in trees and hawks from the topmost (bare) branches of a large fig in my garden; I have also seen it pecking at fallen palm kernels. By mid-April 1965, at least one had assumed the characters of thunbergi, though the vast majority are the typical subspecies.

Tohagra senegala Black-crowned Tohagra. My wife maintains that the call in Ibadan is half a tone lower than in Rhodesia.

Malaconotus oruentus Fiery-breasted Bush-shrike. In early February, 1967, two birds were feeding on the ground in my vegetable patch.

Cyanomitra cyanothaema Blue-throated Brown Sunbird. The one bird I have seen, in bushes in the Botanical Garden, University of Ibadan in August, 1966, drew attention of itself by its continuous chittering, as described in Praed & Grant.

Emberiza flaviventris Yellow-bellied Bunting. A small party on 27 August, 1965, in light woodland between Mokwa and Kainji, the type of country in which I have met with the species in Rhodesia. Definitely not cabanisi and I would have said too large for forbesi.

Melanoploceus tricolor Yellow-mantle Weaver. Occurs also in Akure.

Malimbus rubricollis Red-headed Weaver. In January 1965, noted as stripping off eucalyptus leaves and letting them fall to the ground.

Amblyospiza albifrons White-fronted Grosbeak. July 1965, in my garden off and on for about 10 days feeding on Trema berries. The underparts were very dark, so possibly saturata.

Euplectes afra Yellow-crowned Bishop. Occurs on the saltmarsh at Aiyetoro City on the sea south of Okitipupa.

Pironestes ostrinus Black-bellied Seed-cracker. Occurs in the villago area at Tarkwa across the harbour from Lagos.

Pytilia hypogrammica Yellow-winged Melba-Finch. It may be worth mentioning I have come across this bird at Ihugu.

Estrilda melpoda Orange-checked Waxbill. Elgood describes this species as abundant at Ibadan; I have only seen it once, at Eleiyelo Reservoir.