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Cooperative breeding in captive Emerald Starlings *Coccycolius iris*: an update

In my paper with the above title (Wilkinson 1996, *Malimbus* 18: 134-141), I suggested, on the basis of the relative frequency of provisioning behaviour, that the Emerald Starling "O", which fed chicks at the 1993 nest but not in 1992 or 1994 may have been a female. Post-mortem examination has since shown it to be a male. This indicates that the complement at the 1993 nest was two males and one female. This is consistent with helping in the Chestnut-bellied Starling *Spreo pulcher* in which most adult helpers are male. The immature helpers in 1994 were therefore the offspring of the female parent and of at least one of the males O and Unb, all of which were present at the 1994 breeding attempt.

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The Mali Firefinch *Lagonosticta virata* in Senegal

The Mali Firefinch *Lagonosticta virata* is found near Bamako and elsewhere in Mali (Bates 1934, Lamarche 1981, Nicolai 1982, Goodwin 1982). Like the Chad Firefinch *L. umbrinodorsalis* of Chad and northern Cameroon (Erard & Roche 1977, Brunel *et al.* 1980, Payne & Louette 1983) it occurs on rocky slopes of hillsides in shrubby vegetation, denuded laterite slabs, patches of grass and scattered trees (Nicolai 1982, Wheatley 1995). The calls of *L. virata* (Nicolai 1982) are similar to those of *L. umbrinodorsalis* (Brunel *et al.* 1980) and differ from those of Jameson's Firefinch *L. rhodopareia* of the dry bush in east and southern Africa, in lacking the "purr" churring alarm of *L. rhodopareia*; the calls of *L. virata* also differ from those of African Firefinch *L. rubricata* (Payne 1973, 1982, Payne *et al.* 1993) which occurs in more humid grassland and bush. Following Nicolai (1982), *L. virata* has been recognized as a distinct species (Sibley & Monroe 1990, Clement *et al.* 1993).

Senegal records of *L. rubricata* (Morel & Morel 1990) are based on an observation south of Ziguinchor and a specimen taken in eastern Senegal in a scrub woodland drier than the usual habitat of this species. The specimen is number 1403 in the ORSTOM collection at Mbour, Senegal (formerly housed at Richard-Toll). I examined and photographed the skin and later compared the description and photos with *L. virata* from Mali in the British Museum at Tring, *L. virata* taken at Bamako (Mali) in the Copenhagen Museum, *L. umbrinodorsalis* from Chad in the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris, and *L. rhodopareia rhodopareia* from Eritrea and Kenya in the Copenhagen Museum and the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology. The Senegal specimen, which was taken in the "region 100 km sud de