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SOME CHANGES IN THE BIRD FAUNA OF LAGOS, NIGERIA

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The objective of this paper is to highlight recent changes in the bird fauna of the Lagos area, Nigeria, based on observations for the years 1977-84. It is a follow-up of the study by Gee & Heigham (1977), which covered the years 1966-75.

The selected systematic list which follows is divided into four sections: (a) additions to the Lagos list (9 species); (b) revivals (recent observations of species previously recorded in the area only before 1966) (9 species); (c) species which have increased in abundance compared with the status quoted by Gee & Heigham (8 species); (d) species, regarded as common by Gee & Heigham, which have recently decreased in abundance (53 species). (For a further 121 common species, no significant changes have been detected.)

Observations were concentrated in Ikoyi Park (palm bush, thickets, mangroves); Ikoyi gardens; Ikoyi sandfill area; Tarkwa (Lighthouse Beach, gardens, derived savanna, mangroves); University of Lagos ("Unilag", Akoka) (thickets, farms, mangroves); Agbara and Isheri (forest). Occasional visits were made to other parts of Lagos State, such as westwards to Badagri (derived savanna off the Badagri road near Ojo and Ibereko), north-west to Ipaja (forest patches) and Kande ("Captain Davies' camp" - freshwater swamp), and along the north side of Lagos Lagoon: Ijede (forest patches), Ikosi (sand pits) and Epe. Mist nets were used occasionally in forest areas.

Qualitative changes in abundance of common species (sections (c), (d)) have been assessed by comparing numbers of reported sightings for the two study periods. The apparent increase of Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* is in contrast to the decline in northwest Europe reported by Wammes et al. (1983).

The large number of previously common species which have recently decreased in abundance is highlighted. In the case of Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*, and possibly of other terns, the observed decrease may be part of an overall decline in the Western Palaearctic population. For the remaining species, the major cause of the decrease is the destruction of habitat by the continuing rapid growth of Lagos metropolis. A simple analysis of this list in terms of habitat shows that 24 out of the 53 species are aquatic or marsh birds, 12 are forest species, and 13 are savanna/mangrove species. The reduction in aquatic species is related to the draining and urbanisation of Victoria Island and the marshes round Apapa. The Dolphin sandfill scheme on the northwest side of Ikoyi provided an ephemerally attractive feeding and roosting site for several species of wader 1978/9 and 1979/80, but this area too is now largely dried out, grown over with vegetation and partly covered by low-cost housing, schools,

etc. A further decline in the fauna can be predicted as a result of clearing of almost all remaining forest on the south bank of the Ogun River at Isheri (1981/2).

A complete list of sightings (in preparation) will be deposited with the Secretary of W.A.O.S.

ABBREVIATIONS

For observers' initials see authors' names under title; also JHB J.H. Boelens, EP E. Pilcher, RES R.E. Sharland and AKY A.K. Yeats.

Data presentation follows the format of Gee & Heigham (1977), exception that + + + + + = many observations, + + + + = few observations, and CC = call heard only.

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	MONTHS RECORDED												REMARKS	
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D		
<u>(a) Additions to Lagos List</u>														
<i>Ciconia abdimii</i>													+	Vagrant: one, Ikoyi sandfill 26/11/78 (Harmattan weather) (PDA-M, AKY).
<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>													+	Vagrant: one, Ojo 1/11/81 (PDA-M, MJA) (Bannerman mentioned record from Warri).
<i>Melierax metabates</i>													+	2, Tarkwa 28/10/80 (RF).
<i>Vanellus spinosus</i>													+	One, Ikoyi sandfill 11/6/80 (PDA-M).
<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>													+	4 records Ikoyi sandfill Dec 1978-Jan 1979, with maximum 3 birds on 1/12/78 (PDA-M, WHH).
<i>Poicephalus senegalus</i>		+	+	+	+								+	Up to 8 (12/6/81), Ikoyi Park and other parts of Ikoyi; also Tarkwa from 1980; feral?
<i>Hirundo abyssinica</i>													+	6, Ologe Creek (16/8/80) (PDA-M).
<i>Oriolus brachyrhynchus</i>													+	One near Ibereko, (26/3/78) (PDA-M, WHH).
<i>Amadina fasciata</i>													+	5 at Tarkwa (24/1/84), probably feral (RF).
<u>(b) Revivals (species not recorded 1966-75)</u>														
<i>Accipiter erythropus</i>		+	+										+	5 records of single birds at Isheri (1979-81) (PDA-M, TRM)
<i>Turtur brehmeri</i>													c c	Not seen in Lagos area but call, taped at Isheri (24/5/81) identified from Chappuis (1974) (Call accelerates continuously to end, unlike that of <i>T. tympanistria</i> , which accelerates to a maximum speed) (PDA-M).
<i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>			+										c c + c c	Photographed at Tarkwa 7/4/81 and 25/10/82; call heard Aug-Feb, mainly November, sometimes 3 at a time (RF).
<i>Alcedo leucogaster</i>													+	One netted, Isheri 25/4/81 (PDA-M, MJA, RES, EP); first record since 1944.
<i>Anthus cervinus</i>													+	One in flock of <i>Motacilla flava</i> , Ikoyi sandfill 19/3/80 (PDA-M); first record since 1920.
<i>Poeyptera lugubris</i>													+	6 (including imm?) 17/9/78; 8, 24/11/79; Agbara (PDA-M, TRM, RES).

	MONTHS RECORDED												REMARKS
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
<i>Acrocephalus arundinaceus</i>	+	+	+									+	6 records (1979); song heard at Unilag (20/1/79) (TFM, WHH, PDA-M); subsong at Ikoyi sand-fill (PDA-M).
<i>Macrosphenus concolor</i>				c	c							c	Not seen in Lagos area, but calls heard (taped twice) 1981 at Ipaja and Isheri, and subsequently identified from Chappuis (1979) (PDA-M).
<i>Myioparus plumbeus</i>												+	One at Agbara, 4/9/78 (PDA-M, WHH).
<u>(c) Increased in abundance</u>													
<i>Ardeola ibis</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	Continuing to increase; common, especially near National Theatre, Iqanmu; flocks up to 80 birds; now present throughout the year, although fewer in July.
<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	Common at Ikoyi Park (max 15), with roosting movements to west Ikoyi; also recorded at Unilag (13/1/79), Tarkwa (6 records) and Victoria Island (30/9/79).
<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+	+	+	Seen regularly in Ikoyi Park and gardens; one entering tree hole (5/1/83, MJA); parties of 5 incl 3 imm (23/9/78) and 4 incl 2 imm (28/2/81); 2 records from forest edge/clearing Isheri late 1981 (PDA-M) and one from Tarkwa (3/3/80) (RF).
<i>Onychognathus fulgidus</i>	+	+	+	+					+	+	+	+	Widespread and fairly common Ikoyi, Victoria, Tarkwa, Agbara, Isheri, max flock 7 (4/9/78); one pair with nest material (7/1/79) Ikoyi Park.
<i>Criniger barbatus</i>									+	+	+	+	Fairly common at Isheri and Agbara in mixed feeding flocks; voice differs from Chappuis (1975) recording.
<i>Apalis flavida</i>	+	+	+						+	+	+	+	Locally common in Ikoyi mangroves, also at Unilag; immature 8/10/78.
<i>Muscicapa striata</i>									+	+	+	+	Fairly common on passage.
<i>Nectarinia cyanolaema</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	Fairly common Agbara and Isheri forests; female at nest (15/11/81) (PDA-M).

	MONTHS RECORDED												REMARKS	
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D		
<u>(d) Decreased in abundance</u>														
<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>	+										+	+	Uncommon; several sightings Sept 1978 of imm over Ikoyi; 4 over Unilag (13/1/79) and one near Lighthouse Beach (21/1/80).	
<i>Ixobrychus minutus</i>											+	+	Only recent records July-Sept, flying over grass swamp (Ikoyi and Tarkwa).	
<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	+	+	+			+						+	Continuing to decline; few records Ikoyi (max 9 (21/1/83) (MJA); mainly immatures; one behind Lighthouse Beach.	
<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+					+	+	Mainly dry season, mostly single birds (Ikoyi sandfill); max 6 behind Lighthouse Beach (12/1/81).	
<i>Egretta alba</i>	+		+	+	+	+						+	Few records of 1-2 birds, mainly June-Sept.	
<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	+			+		+							Only 4 records: 1, Unilag (16/6/79); 2, Ikoyi sandfill (18/4/80); 1, Tarkwa (23/1/80, 13/1/81).	
<i>Anastomus lamelligerus</i>			+				+					+	5 records, mainly single birds flying over Ikorodu road and Badagri road.	
<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>							+		+			+	2 records from Ogun River Delta (Ikorodu road) and one from Ikoyi sandfill.	
<i>Aviceda cuculoides</i>	+												+	One, Tarkwa (15/12/80, 10/1/83) (PF).
<i>Crex egregia</i>				+		+							+	3 records from Ikoyi sandfill and Unilag.
<i>Burhinus senegalensis</i>			+				+	+						4 records, Tarkwa and Ikoyi sandfill (1979).
<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	+												+	Records only from Ikoyi sandfill, winter 1979/80, max 4 (28/11/79).
<i>C. pecuarius</i>														NO RECENT RECORDS.
<i>C. forbesi</i>														NO RECENT RECORDS.
<i>Numenius arquata</i>												+	+	4 records of single birds Ikoyi sandfill and Tarkwa (1979).
<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	+	+	+										+	1-2 birds only, Ikoyi sandfill 1978/9.
<i>T. ochropus</i>												+	+	Few records mainly from Ikoyi sandfill; max 4 (1/12/79).

	MONTHS RECORDED												REMARKS
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
<i>T. totanus</i>	+	+				+	+	+	+	+	+	+	Mainly Aug-Sept, Ikoyi sandfill, max 18 (5/9/79, 7/10/79); 3 Tarkwa records.
<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	+	+	+	+					+	+	+		Records mainly Ikoyi sandfill 1978/9, max 20 (17/1/79); also Iju Waterworks Road and Ojo.
<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>													NO RECENT RECORDS.
<i>Cursorius temminckii</i>													NO RECENT RECORDS.
<i>Glareola cinerea</i>						+	+	+	+	+	+		Regular at Ikoyi sandfill but numbers reduced; max 30 (27/8/80).
<i>Sterna dougalii</i>													NO RECENT RECORDS.
<i>S. hirundo</i>		+	+			+	+	+	+	+	+	+	Regular in small numbers Lighthouse Beach; max 10 (7/9/80).
<i>S. paradisea</i>								+	+	+			Recent records only autumn passage; max 2.
<i>S. albifrons</i>							+	+	+				Uncommon Lighthouse Beach; max 2 in breeding plumage (3/6, 24/6/79).
<i>Turnix sylvatica</i>		+											One, Ikoyi sandfill (1979).
<i>Tauraco persa</i>		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	Heard more often than seen but uncommon, Aqbara and Isheri, Ikoyi Park.
<i>Clamator leuallantii</i>												+	Four records from Unilag, Isheri forest only.
<i>Cuculus solitarius</i>						+	+						4 records 1981 only (Isheri, Ipaja).
<i>Caprimulgus climacurus</i>						+	+						3 records of single birds, Ikoyi sandfill and Unilag.
<i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>												+	Uncommon.
<i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	Common but in reduced numbers; max 10 (5/1/83) (MJA); also present throughout rainy season 1981.
<i>Gymnobucco peli</i>													No recent records from Lagos area.
<i>Mirafraga rufocinnamomea</i>		+	+				+	+				+	6 records Ikoyi sandfill 1979/80 only.
<i>Hirundo semirufa</i>		+	+										Tarkwa only (PF).
<i>Psalidoprocne obscura</i>			+							+	+	+	7 records from Unilag and Tarkwa; max 7 (20/1/79).

	MONTHS RECORDED												REMARKS	
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D		
<i>Lanius collaris</i>											+	+	Only 2 records (1981): one, Victoria Island near remaining open grassland; 2 on wires near Ojo.	
<i>Lamprotornis purpureiceps</i>	+	+										+	Only 4 records of single birds, Agbara and Ijede forests, and Tarkwa.	
<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>	+	+										+	7 records from Tarkwa (max 20, 9/1/83 (PF)) and Agbara.	
<i>Ixonotus guttatus</i>			+	+	+							+	Uncommon in forest areas, max 9 (15/10/78).	
<i>Phyllastrephus albigularis</i>												+	One pair netted (16/3/80) Agbara (WHH, PDA-M).	
<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>													+	Song heard on 2 days Dec 1981 in cleared area, Isheri.
<i>Macrosphenus flavicans</i>														NO RECENT RECORDS: checked recordings of Chappuis (1979) and of J.H. Elgood (Lagos 1960's) but nothing similar heard 1977-81.
<i>Platysteira castanea</i>												+	+	Uncommon, Agbara and Isheri.
<i>P. blissetti</i>														NO RECENT RECORDS.
<i>Trochocercus longicauda</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+							+	Local in mangroves; pair present Ikoyi mangroves 1978 to April 1979, thereafter only recorded from Tarkwa and Unilag.
<i>Terpsiphone rufiventer</i>	+												+	All recent records only from Unilag; max 4 (25/12/79).
<i>Nectarinia reichenbachii</i>	+												+	Local in freshwater swamp, Kande; rare at Tarkwa.
<i>N. cuprea</i>													+	One near Ojo (1/11/81).
<i>Euplectes afer</i>													+	At least 6 males in grass swamp, Tarkwa; also Yewa Lagoon (JHB).
<i>Nigrita luteifrons</i>													+	Uncommon; 5 records from Isheri (1981).
<i>Ortygospiza atricollis</i>	+	+	+										+	5 records 1980 from Ikoyi sand-fill, max 4 (23/8/80); 4 at Tarkwa (1/9/81).