



**West African Ornithological Society  
Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest  
Africain**



**Join the WAOS and support  
the future availability of free  
pdfs on this website.**

<http://malimbus.free.fr/member.htm>

If this link does not work, please copy it to your browser and try again.  
If you want to print this pdf, we suggest you begin on the next page (2) to conserve paper.

**Devenez membre de la  
SOOA et soutenez la  
disponibilité future des pdfs  
gratuits sur ce site.**

<http://malimbus.free.fr/adhesion.htm>

Si ce lien ne fonctionne pas, veuillez le copier pour votre navigateur et réessayer.  
Si vous souhaitez imprimer ce pdf, nous vous suggérons de commencer par la page suivante  
(2) pour économiser du papier.

Sussex and York, our attention was drawn to two small herons a few yards into the mangroves. After reversing the boat, we were able to identify two White-backed Night Herons *Nycticorax leuconotus*, one of which was photographed. The birds kept close together and quickly climbed amongst the lower mangrove roots, only a little disturbed by our presence. The mid-afternoon light provided clear views. They appeared slightly bigger than Green-backed Heron *Butorides striatus*, seen some minutes before, but gave the impression of being slender and long-legged. The crown, nape and lores were dull black; the eyes were large and liquid black surrounded by a white eye-ring. Below the whitish chin, the neck, chest and belly were dark rust, the back and wings dark grey. We did not detect any white on the back, possibly because the birds neither flew nor moved their wings. After some minutes they moved further into the mangrove.

We can trace no published records of this species in Sierra Leone but G.D. Field (pers. comm.) refers to a specimen being collected in 1952 in Songo Creek near the Peninsula and to unpublished sight records for the Little Scarcies River and from Kono. This sighting would therefore appear to be unusual.

Received 19 October 1992

Revised 23 February 1993

Dudley Iles

Waylands, East Hanney, Oxon., OX12 0JE, U.K.

### Breeding of Slender-billed Bulbul *Andropadus gracilirostris* in Sierra Leone

As Keith *et al.* (1992) state that the nest and eggs of the Slender-billed Bulbul *Andropadus gracilirostris* are undescribed, a note of my observations in Sierra Leone may be worth-while.

Although basically a forest canopy species, the Slender-billed Bulbul is much less dependent on forest than most of the genus and in the 1970s used regularly to breed in my garden at Fourah Bay College on the outskirts of Freetown. My house was near the edge of the college housing area, with plenty of rather scrubby secondary forest or "bush" within easy flying distance. The garden consisted of open grass and a number of trees and shrubs, particularly *Anisophyllea laurina* and *Dialium guineense*, left when the ground was originally cleared for housing because of their edible fruits. The *Dialium* trees (and others) were frequently infested with hairy caterpillars, attracting Didric Cuckoos *Chrysococcyx caprius* and the Slender-billed Buleuls, which were therefore regularly in the garden and I could expect to see or hear them there most days of the year.

In four separate years a pair built in one of these *Dialium* trees, in another year they chose a *Rauvolfia vomitaria* close to the house, and in another a tall, straggly hedge of the exotic *Tecoma stans*, none of which trees was higher than 6-7 m.

Nests were built almost entirely by one individual, presumably the female; another bird, presumably the male, accompanied each visit, normally without assisting in building, although very occasionally he too would bring material. The latter bird also

occasionally gave bursts of song, again suggesting that it was the male. The site was always a terminal fork, with light leaf shading above, rather thicker in the case of the *Teconia*, though here, by the time the young fledged, the tree had almost entirely shed its leaves. The outer shells of the nests were of leaves, usually dead but sometimes green, with spiders' webs and lichen but practically no moss, and with a rather perfunctory lining of petioles, the whole seeming rather small for the size of bird. The two eggs (not measured) were pinkish, heavily marked all over with purplish red-brown streaks and smears, so that at a glance they looked simply brown. Both sexes incubated and brought food to the young, in the latter case swooping up onto a twig below the nest, pausing for several seconds and then hopping up onto the nest. After delivering the food, the adult swallowed faecal pellets. It then usually brooded the young for several minutes, even when they were quite large, though I cannot be sure that both sexes did this. Only one breeding attempt was completed successfully; usually the nests were predated, probably by Vine Snakes *Thelotornis kirtlandii* which were plentiful in the area. The successful nest (in the *Teconia*) was started a few days before 9 November and the single young fledged 11 December.

The species was observed elsewhere in Sierra Leone either building or carrying food, both inside and at the edge of the forest, usually in much higher trees (some 15-20 m high) though one nest in a small tree at the forest edge was only slightly higher than my garden nests. In all, my records show breeding or attempted breeding in Jun (1, the only pre-rains record), Sep (3), Oct (5), Nov (8), Dec (2), Jan (2), the month being adjusted to the assumed date of laying. This seasonality is typical of *Andropadus* (Keith *et al.* 1992), although the species more strictly confined to forest (*A. virens*, *A. latirostris*, *A. ansorgei*) continue breeding well into the dry season (Feb-Mar) (Keith *et al.* 1992, pers. obs.).

I thank John Elgood for reading this note and making some helpful comments.

#### Reference

KEITH, S., URBAN, E.K. & FRY, C.H. (1992) *The Birds of Africa*, vol. 4. Academic Press, London.

Received 5 January 1993

G.D. Field  
37 Milton Grove, New Milton, Hants, BH25 6HB, U.K.

#### Nest sites of Brown Nightjar *Caprimulgus binotatus* and Collared Nightjar *C. enarratus*

I was interested to read the notes on Brown Nightjar *Caprimulgus binotatus* by Carroll & Fry (1987) and Fry (1988), and would like to point out a record of a nightjar species nesting other than on a firm substance which pre-dates the one discussed in the notes: the Madagascan endemic Collared Nightjar *C. enarratus* has been recorded nesting on