

Range extension of the Ibadan Malimbe *Malimbus ibadanensis*

The Ibadan Malimbe *Malimbus ibadanensis*, is one of Nigeria's four endemic bird species and is classed as Endangered in the IUCN red list. With a global population of about 2500 birds (Manu *et al.* 2005), it was known only from a small area circumscribed by Ibadan, Ife, Iperu and Ilaro in SW Nigeria (Borrow & Demey 2001, Ezealor 2002). However, surveys between 2006 and 2008 have confirmed the presence of Ibadan Malimbe in the Ifon Forest Reserve (6°55'35"N, 5°47'18"E), 139 km from Ife, the closest previously known site (Fig. 1). The reserve covers *c.* 282 km². During the surveys, eight individuals of Ibadan Malimbe were sighted, on six separate occasions (Fig. 1). Of these eight, five individuals were foraging around *Kola gigantea* trees.

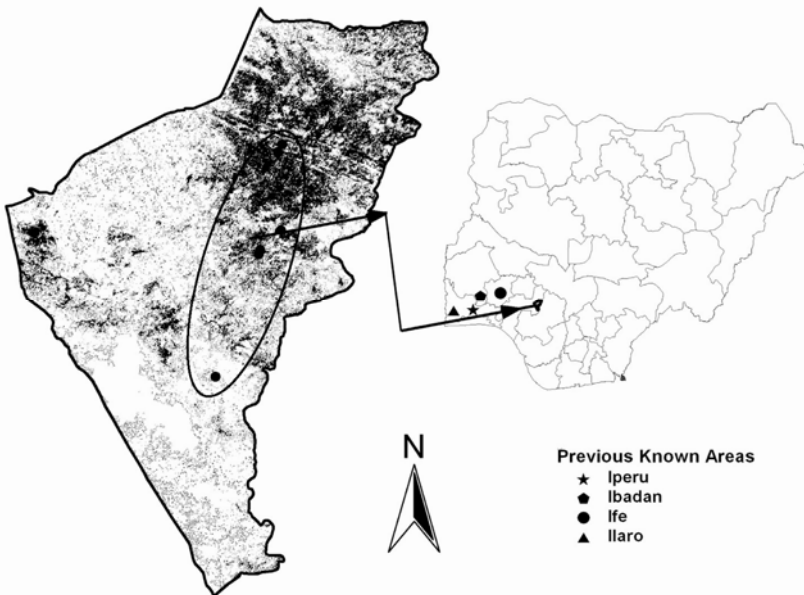


Figure 1. Locations of Ibadan Malimbe sightings in Ifon Forest Reserve, Nigeria.

In 2006, six individuals were recorded during a ten-day survey. Foraging pairs were seen on two occasions and lone males observed twice. The second foraging pair was observed on a tree canopy near a nest similar in shape to the nest of Dark-backed Weaver *Ploceus bicolor*, away from any *Kola* tree. During the eight-day survey period in 2008, lone males were observed on two occasions foraging in mixed flocks

with Red-headed Malimbe *M. rubricollis*; the second of these birds was seen away from a Kola tree. The frequent sightings around Kola trees may suggest an interaction between these two species. However, further studies of this association are required to determine what aspect of the bird's natural history might be driving it.

The sighting of the Ibadan Malimbe in Ifon Forest Reserve has triggered activities to designate the reserve as a new Important Bird Area, as the site now meets IBA criteria (Fishpool & Evan 2001, Ezealor 2002).

The surveys were carried out in partnership with the Department of Forestry and Wildlife Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forest Resources of the Ondo State Government.

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