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THE BIRDS OF IKOYI, LAGOS

M.F. Forrester

In this article I have attempted to list all the birds seen in Ikoyi over the last 2½ years by observers known to myself. The table below shows those species seen by me between June 1968 - December 1969, and those other birds seen by G. Pettitt, J.P. Gee and J. Heigham over a slightly longer period.

Ikoyi is the residential area of Lagos. An island 3 miles by 1½ miles, its western end is densely populated, with little vegetation. This is separated from the low-density housing area by the golf course, on which there are surprisingly few birds. The low-density area, approximately 1½ miles square, is well wooded and gives birds good protection. At the north west of the island is a drained marshy area, the bund, the only part of the island not covered by houses, on which N.E.T. have a radio station. It is crossed by many drainage ditches. It extends at its eastern end to Ikoyi Park, a small palm covered area. It is bordered on its seaward side by poor mangrove trees, and on its landward side is a dense thicket which borders the inhabited area of Turnbull Road. The rest of the bund is covered with sedge, and there is one small fishing village on the waterside. It is this bund area and associated thickets which contain the larger portion of the bird life on the island.

The 140 species of birds seen on the island, some of which are individually shy and retiring, must be prepared to live within a short distance of man, and the list produces no real surprises. What is surprising, however, is that Victoria Island, no more than 400 yards away, has a very different bird population. Heigham (1969) states that Victoria Island is very much a stopping-off place for passing birds, whereas a large number of the Ikoyi species are resident or dry season visitors who stay several months. About 50 birds from the lists of the two islands do not appear in the other.

Several birds new to the Lagos area as defined by Sander, (1956-57) appear; the Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo Cercococcyx olivinus, the Long-tailed Parakeet Psittacula krameri, Reichenbach's Sunbird Nectarinia reichenbachii, and the Crowned Crane Balearica pavonina, although the last is probably an escapee rather than an accidental. The Reichenbach's Sunbird is common in the area given below, and is far more numerous than Bannerman (1953) suggests it would be. Probably the most satisfying sighting, however, was that of a Bat Hawk Machaerhamphus alcinus, at 6.00 a.m. one morning as the author was setting off on a bird-watching expedition to another area. This is apparently the first sighting of a Bat Hawk in the area since Sir Bernard Bourdillon's, record in Bannerman (op. cit.) of 1943.

Grey Pelican Pelecanus rufescens: Flock of 50-70 seen once over residential area N.E. Ikoyi. December.

Red-necked Little Bittern Ixobrychus minutus: Seen only twice, June in each year in bund area next to creek.

Cattle Egret Ardeola ibis: One bird seen feeding in sedge on bund, January. Apparently accidental.

African Great White Egret Egretta alba: Seen in flight over bund area, January.

Little Egret Egretta garzetta: Same as for Grey Heron, though they are usually more common, particularly in the bund area.

Grey Heron Ardea cinerea: Seen throughout the year, but far more common in dry season (October-March), wading in Lagoon N. of Ikoyi.

Purple Heron Ardea purpurea: Seen only occasionally dry season, bund and Turnbull Road.

Palm-nut Vulture Gypohierax angolensis: Seen once, over bund, August flying approx. 200 ft.

Pallid Harrier Circus macrourus: One bird seen quartering bund late February.

West African Harrier Hawk Polyborides radiatus: A pair seen quartering bund area and thickets, early March.

West African Goshawk Accipiter toussenellii: Seen once only, an obviously errant bird in S.W. Ikoyi dense residential area - August.

Eritrean Shikra Accipiter badius: Occasionally in E. Ikoyi residential area. Seen all months.

Lizard Buzzard Kaupifalco monogrammicus: Sparse. Seen very occasionally in E. Ikoyi residential area in dry season.

Black Kite Milvus migrans: Common in dry season, particularly over bund and Queen's Drive, S.W. Ikoyi residential area near water. Not seen in rains. First appearance beginning October.

Bat Hawk Machaerhamphus alcinus: One bird seen at dawn in July, flying over residential area calling. From wing shape, colour and call, identification certain.

Osprey Pandion haliaetus: Seen occasionally dry season over bund area.

Grey Kestrel Falco ardosiaceus: Seen January, flying from Turnbull Road to residential area. This could well be the bird that is known to live on Victoria Island.

European Kestrel Falco tinnunculus: Seen two or three times January and February, bund and Turnbull Road.

African Crake Crex egregia: Seen occasionally January and February, bund area. 2 have been seen at once.

- Black Crane *Limnocorax flavirostra*: Apparently common on bund, but elusive. Maximum of 5 seen at once.
- Crowned Crane *Balearica pavonina*: Seen regularly on the golf course dry season. It could fly but was probably an escapee.
- Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*: One bird seen in company with Greenshanks, March. Others late November.
- Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*: Several seen in marshy area in bund, November.
- Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*: Several seen in marshy area in bund, November.
- Kittlitz's Sand-Plover *Charadrius pecuarius*: One bird seen by village on bund, March. Ought to be far more numerous in the area.
- Curlew *Numenius arquata*: One seen on bund, November.
- Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*: Common in bund and park areas, feeding in waterlogged areas. Seen all months, but numbers greater in dry season.
- Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*: One seen on bund, November.
- Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*: Seen occasionally, bund, in dry season. Scarce - c.f. Victoria Island where abundant.
- Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*: Several on marsh behind bund, November.
- Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*: Several on marsh behind bund, November.
- Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos*: Common in bund and neighbouring areas. Seen all months but more in dry season.
- Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*: One seen just behind village on bund, November.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*: Seen occasionally, flocks of 20-50 flying over towards East in evening. One seen perched on poles near village November.
- Royal Tern *Sterna maxima*: One bird seen several times near village on bund, end of rainy season. These are reasonably plentiful on the harbour three miles away.
- Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*: Not common - seen v. occasionally on Lagoon at rear of Ikoyi.
- Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*: Seen often near village on bund in June-October and on Five Cowrie Creek.
- Black Tern *Sterna nigra*: As for Common Tern above. By far the most abundant tern.

Red-eyed Turtle-Dove Streptopelia semitorquata: Common all over Ikoyi, particularly in wooded areas. Seen all year.

Laughing Dove Streptopelia senegalensis: Very common all over Ikoyi, seen all year.

Tambourine Dove Turtur tympanistria: Seen twice only, in wooded area adjoining bund, October.

Red-billed Wood-Dove Turtur afer: Common in bund area and other wooded parts. Seen all year.

Sierra Leone Green Fruit Pigeon Treron australis: Common in dry season, feeding in wooded area by Turnbull Road. Flocks of up to 20 at once.

Long-tailed Parakeet Psittacula krameri: One and occasionally two seen in bund area in dry season 1968/69. Not seen this year yet.

Red-headed Love-bird Agapornis pullaria: Often seen in all seasons but more common in dry, flying in small flocks. Feeds in thickets near bund. Up to 9 seen at a time.

Levaillant's Cuckoo Clamator levaillantii: One bird seen occasionally in dry season in woods off Turnbull Road. Scarce.

Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo Cercococcyx olivinus: One bird seen January and February in Turnbull Road. It was sitting in a tree and swooping on caterpillars on low growing melon-type plants nearby. Later a young bird of this species was seen being fed by a Village Weaver. A visit to the British Museum for comparison convinced me that the identification was certain.

Didric Cuckoo Chrysococcyx caprius: Resident, but more common in dry season. Flocks of 5 or 6 often seen all over island.

Senegal Coucal Centropus senegalensis: Common all over Ikoyi; seen all year in both normal and dark versions.

Plain Nightjar Caprimulgus inornatus: One seen near palm trees S. end of Turnbull Road, November.

Long-tailed Nightjar Caprimulgus climacurus: Two birds seen resting on Turnbull Road late evening, December.

Little African Swift Apus affinis: Very common all over island all the year.

West African Palm Swift Cypsiurus parvus: Common all the year, particularly at vicinity of coco-nut palms at edge of Five Cowrie creek and lagoon.

Pied Kingfisher Ceryle rudis: Common. Seen all year in park, bund and along all creeks.

Pigmy Kingfisher Ceyx picta: One bird often seen feeding in my garden dry season.

Senegal Kingfisher Halcyon senegalensis: Common, particularly in residential area N.E. Ikoyi and bund area.

Nigerian Blue-breasted Kingfisher Halcyon malimbica: Fairly common at bund and park areas. Seen all year.

Rosy Bee-eater Merops malimbicus: Common in dry season but also present in rains. Seen all over island, once in a flock of over 100 birds. October.

White-throated Bee-eater Merops albicollis: Very common dry season all over island. Up to 8 seen at one time.

West African Broad-billed Roller Eurystomus glaucurus: One or two birds seen on 3 occasions on dead tree in Turnbull Road, November and December.

Allied Hornbill Tockus fasciatus: Two birds seen in thicket near bund, November. Ought to be more common.

Speckled Tinker Bird Pogoniulus scolopaceus: This bird is heard all year in Ikoyi in the residential area but I have only managed to see it once.

Grey Woodpecker Mesopicos goertae: Seen often in bund area. Up to 4 birds often present in Turnbull Road.

European Swallow Hirundo rustica: Very common in dry season. Seen from beginning of October all over island.

Ethiopian Swallow Hirundo aethiopica: Seen very occasionally dry season in bund area.

Rufous-chested Swallow Hirundo semirufa: As for Ethiopian swallow.

Grey-headed Wagtail Motacilla flava: Fairly common in the dry season, residential area.

African Pied Wagtail Motacilla alba: Common in the dry months, residential area.

Plain-backed Pipit Anthus leucophrys: Uncommon, but seen occasionally in bund area.

Gambian Puff-back Shrike Dryoscopus gambensis: Pairs seen quite often in residential area and bund.

Barbary Shrike Laniarius barbarus: The commonest shrike in Ikoyi. Seen all year in residential and bund areas. Common in mangroves near water's edge. Often heard.

West African Fiscal Shrike Lanius collaris: Seen occasionally in residential areas. Does not appear to be as common in Ikoyi as Victoria Island.

Corsican Woodchat Lanius senator badius: One bird seen all dry season in bund area.

Black-winged Oriole Oriolus nigriceps: Seen twice, a pair of birds by Turnbull Road in thick bushes, October.

- Chestnut-winged Starling Onychognathus fulgidus: Occasionally seen in dry season by bund area. Sometimes on palm trees, Turnbull Road.
- Velvet-headed Glossy Starling Lamprotornis purpureiceps: Seen once October. A pair, believed this species, by bund area, in tall tree.
- Splendid Glossy Starling Lamprotornis splendidus: Seen all year round. Roosts in mangroves by Ikoyi park. Many hundreds present.
- Amethyst Starling Cinnyricinclus leucogaster: A group seen Turnbull Road, January.
- Common Bulbul Pycnonotus barbatus: Widespread and abundant all over Ikoyi, all seasons.
- Little Green Bulbul Andropadus virens: One bird seen in wooded area Turnbull Road, December, and several times subsequently. It is heard quite often.
- Simple Leaf-love Chlorocichla simplex: Fairly common, skulking in many parts of residential area.
- Swamp Palm Bulbul Thescolocichla leucopleurus: Several seen in thickets backing onto bund area, October-December.
- Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat Cosbypha niveicapilla: An immature bird caught October thicket near bund. Seen once fleetingly October and once June.
- Kurrichance Thrush Turdus polio: Common all year, particularly in residential area.
- Melodious Warbler Hippolais polyglotta: Several seen in small flock on bund late November.
- Willow Warbler Phylloscopus trochilus: Quite common dry season migrant all over island.
- Chattering Grass-Warbler Cisticola anonyma: Seen occasionally in grassy area Turnbull Road.
- Rufous Grass-Warbler Cisticola galactotes: Very common in all grassy areas. Nest seen October.
- Gold Coast Common Fantail Warbler Cisticola junoidis: One bird, believed this species, often present in grassy area, end of Turnbull Road, end of rainy season.
- West African Prinia Prinia subflava: Seen very occasionally on grassy area near bund.
- Grey-capped Bush-warbler Apalis flavida: One bird seen in flowering trees off Turnbull Road, November.
- Oriole Babbler Hypergerus atriceps: Seen frequently in Turnbull Road, all year.
- Grey-backed Camaroptera Camaroptera brachyura: This is a common bird of residential area and bund thickets. More often heard than seen.

- White-bellied Crombec Sylvietta virens: Seen occasionally in bund and nearby thickets, particularly early dry season.
- Spotted Flycatcher Muscicapa striata: Common all over island in dry season. First appears October. Numbers decrease around December -- the bird probably passes south.
- Pied Flycatcher Ficedula hypoleuca: Seen only once, December in flowering trees by Turnbull Road.
- West African Black Flycatcher Melaenornis edoliodes: Pair seen at top of tree, residential area, N.E. Ikoyi, September.
- Scarlet-spectacled Flycatcher Platysteira cyanea: Quite common in bund and nearby areas. More often heard than seen.
- Blue Fairy Flycatcher Trochocercus longicauda: Several seen all year in thickets near bund. Maximum of 5 at one time.
- Mouse-Brown Sunbird Anthreptes gabonicus: Common in mangroves all round fringe of island on lagoon. All year.
- Collared Sunbird Anthreptes collaris: Not as common as other familiar sunbirds. In compounds in residential areas. More frequent during rainy season.
- Olive Sunbird Nectarinia olivacea: Occasionally seen Turnbull Road area dry season but very inconspicuous.
- Reichenbach's Sunbird Nectarinia reichenbachii: In spite of Bannerman, who asserts it is very rare west of the Cameroons, this species is fairly common in thicket areas near bund. At least 5 pairs are thought to be present. Checked at British Museum and identification absolutely certain. The birds often visit the gardens in Turnbull Road.
- Olive-backed Sunbird Nectarinia verticalis: Fairly common in compounds but, as with Olive-bellied, found more in bund area gardens. All year. Often consorts with Reichenbach sunbird.
- Carmelite Sunbird Nectarinia fuliginosa: Commonly seen in gardens in residential area: rainy season.
- Yellow-bellied Sunbird Nectarinia venusta: Common all year in compounds, favouring canna lilies and hibiscus. Often chased off plants by Copper Sunbird.
- Olive-bellied Sunbird Nectarinia chloropygia: Very common in residential area near bund area, all year.
- Copper Sunbird Nectarinia cuprea: Common all year in compound in residential area, although less frequent in dry season.
- Splendid Sunbird Nectarinia coccinigaster: Seen once only, in large flock of mixed sunbirds on eucalyptus tree, November, bund area.
- Yellow White-eye Zosterops senegalensis: Common all year in residential area. Sometimes in flocks up to 6 or so.



- Orange Weaver Ploceus aurantius: Scarce. Seen in eucalyptus near bund, November.
- Village Weaver Ploceus cucullatus: The commonest weaver. Seen everywhere.
- Chestnut-and-black Weaver Ploceus nigerrimus: Seen in palm and scrub thickets near bund area. Not common.
- Swainson's Spectacled Weaver Ploceus nigricollis: Quite common in thickets near bund all year.
- Grey-headed Sparrow Passer griseus: Very common, all year, everywhere.
- Indigo Finch Hypochera ?Sp.: Very occasionally associated with mannikins and other estrildine birds. Dry season.
- Black-bellied Seed-cracker Pirontes ostrinus: Seen occasionally in residential area compounds but fairly regularly seen in thickets near bund.
- Grey-crowned Negro-finch Nigrita canicapilla: Very rarely seen, very often heard, residential area.
- Chestnut-breasted Negro-finch Nigrita bicolor: One bird seen January, Turnbull Road. Up to 3 seen subsequently February-March. Bird seen with nesting material, March.
- Orange-cheeked Waxbill Estrilda melpoda: Dry season in compounds in residential area. Not common.
- Bar-breasted Fire-finch Lagonosticta rufopicta: Common in dry season in compounds and grassland near bund.
- Blue-billed Mannikin Lonchura bicolor: Not so common. Seen very occasionally in residential area, but more in grass near bund.
- Bronze Mannikin Lonchura cucullata: Very common, everywhere, all year.
- The following birds have been heard by me, but not seen, and therefore not positively identified.
- Senegal Thick-Knee Burhinus senegalensis: Occasionally heard late at night over residential area.
- Barn Owl Tyto alba: Residential area all year.
- White-faced Owl Otus leucotis: Residential area all year.

Messrs. J.P. Gee and J. Heigham have been active bird-watching in Ikoyi and neighbouring areas, and Garth Pettitt compiled a list published in the B.N.O.S. 5 (17) 24-26. The following birds have been seen by them, but not by the author.

Reef Heron	<u>Arrotta garzetta</u>	J.H.
Goshawk	<u>Melierax gabar</u>	G.P.
Senegal Plover	<u>Vanellus lugubris</u>	G.P.
Forbes' Banded Plover	<u>Charadrius forbesi</u>	G.P.

Wood Sandpiper	<u>Tringa glareola</u>	J.P.G.
Redshank	<u>Tringa totanus</u>	J.H.
Niger Morning Dove	<u>Streptopelia decipiens</u>	J.P.G.
Grey Plantain-eater	<u>Crinifer piscator</u>	G.P.
Least Bee-eater	<u>Merops pusillus</u>	G.P.
Grey Hornbill	<u>Tockus nasutus</u>	J.P.G.
Yellow-throated Long-Claw	<u>Macronyx croceus</u>	G.P.
Black-crowned Tchagra	<u>Tchagra senegala</u>	G.P.
Red-shouldered Cuckoo-Shrike	<u>Campephaga phoenicea</u>	G.P.
Garden Warbler	<u>Sylvia borin</u>	J.H.
Wood Warbler	<u>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</u>	J.H.
Yellow-browed Camaroptera	<u>Camaroptera superolliaris</u>	J.P.G.
Buff-throated Sunbird	<u>Nectarinia adelberti</u>	J.P.G.

### References

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- Holgham, J.P. (1969) Birds observed on Victoria Island, B.N.O.S. 6 (24): 109-119.
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### SOKOTO PROVINCE

#### (I) Sokoto Town & Environs

BY

P.J. Mundy & A.W. Cook

Sokoto, in the N.W. corner of Nigeria, is at the confluence of 2 rivers; these with the new large artificial lake at Wurno, 2 or 3 other lakes to the north, and a small one 60 miles to the south (Lake Natu) provide a well-watered area in an otherwise generally arid province. Quite probably, this part of Nigeria is an important "gateway" for Palearctic migrants, being one of three such in the north. To date (July) we have seen 46 species of migrants during the northern winter, which almost exactly coincides with the dry season - beginning of October to end of May. This number is one-fifth of the total number of species that we have seen around Sokoto (i.e. within 25 miles of the town), in 18 months.