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BIRDS OF THE CALABAR AREA

by Paul Mackenzie

Received 8 September 1978

INTRODUCTION

Calabar (04°58'N, 08°17'E) is the capital of Cross River State, in the south east corner of Nigeria. It lies almost at sea level, and the area has high rainfall which reaches a maximum from June to September, and a minimum from November to February.

To the south and west of the city is riverside swamp forest, with tidal flow, and accessible only by boat. To the north and east the natural vegetation is the high rain forest. Patches of this forest remain, but much has been replaced by cultivation, villages, and estates of rubber and palm oil. However, it is worth noting that just to the north east of the area included in this report lie the Oban Hills, where large tracts of relatively undisturbed forest remain.

To my knowledge, little has been recorded about the distribution of bird species in this part of Nigeria*. The observations refer to an area within 40 km (25 miles) of the city of Calabar, and I include all species identified in this area from April 1976 to August 1978. About five mornings per month were spent in the field, usually in the forest patches north and east of the city, but very little time in the riverine swamp. The list is obviously far from complete, and several forest songs and owl calls heard remain unidentified.

HYPOTHETICAL LISTS

The appended check-list contains 213 species, comprising 103 non-passerines and 110 passerines. In addition the following 13

* [The author has been working in isolation from the literature, which is in fact substantial, at least for south-east Nigeria and the Cameroun montane (Serle, *Ibis* 99(1957): 371-418, 628-685) if not also for Calabar (Marchant, *Ibis* 95(1953): 38-69; Maclarens, *Niger. Field* 18(1953): 165-171). But his important observations merit publication, even in the absence of integration with those of previous authors. Ed.]

birds have each been recorded only once in the area; because of short glimpses or distance, their identification was not entirely conclusive, and they should be regarded as hypothetical pending confirmation:

Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii*
Black Guineafowl *Phasidus niger*
Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*
Black-throated Coucal *Centropus leucogaster*
Scops Owl *Otus scops*
Black Bee-eater *Merops gularis*
European Roller *Coracias garrulus*
Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*
Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*
Willcock's Honeyguide *Indicator willcocksi*
White-throated Greenbul *Phyllastrephus albicularis*
Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta*
Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava*

Five more species may occur, but their field identification is uncertain to the author:

Cameroun Sombre Bulbul *Andropadus curvirostris*
Shining Drongo *Dicrurus atripennis*
Baumann's Greenbul *Phyllastrephus baumanni*
Bates' Sunbird *Nectarinia batesi*
Tiny Sunbird *Nectarinia minullus*

The Square-tailed Rough-wing Swallow *Psalidoprocne nitens* has been seen consistently in the Oban Hills just north of the area, but not within the area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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REFERENCE

HEIGHAM, J.B. (1975) Comparative nomenclature of Nigerian birds for the amateur. Pp. 26. Published by the author.

APPENDIX ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS OBSERVED AT CALABAR

Sequence and systematic names follow Heigham (1975) (derived from White 1960-65) and English names follow Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1970-73).

Months column : c = common (more than ten records), f = frequent (4-9 records), o = occasional (2-3 records), x = single record.

Remarks column : mig = migratory (Palaearctic and African migrants) and species not so marked are presumed to be sedentary; habitat: Fi = forest inside, i.e. from paths with forest canopy overhead, Fe = forest edge, including forest roads and forest clearings, Fs = forest streams, including the Calabar and Kwa rivers north of their wide tidal portions in the riverine area, P = ponds in forest or puddles in fields, R = rubber estates, Riv = riverine areas, Calabar and Kwa rivers and adjacent swampy forest, S = open scrub and cultivated areas with cassava and scattered palms; mixed bird parties, referring only to forest, where aggregations of birds at localised food sources like ant armies, flowering and fruiting trees are excluded; the occurrence of a species in a true forest mixed foraging party is indicated by C = common (in over 80% of parties), F = frequent (20-80% of parties), O = occasional (less than 20% of parties).

M O N T H S

S P E C I E S	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	R E M A R K S
<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>	o	o								o			mig? Riv,P
<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	o	o								o			mig,P
<i>A. ibis</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c		f	c	c			mig(mid Oct-late May), fields,S
<i>Butorides striatus</i>	o	o	o	o				o	o	o			mig,P
<i>Egretta alba</i>	o	o	o	o		o		o	o				mig? Riv
<i>E. garzetta</i>	f	f	o	o		o		o	o				mig? Riv
<i>Ardea cinerea</i>			o							o			mig? Riv
<i>A. melanocephala</i>	o	o	o					o	o				mig? Riv
<i>A. purpurea</i>	o	o	o					o	o				mig? Riv
<i>Scopus umbretta</i>						o	o	o					Riv
<i>Ciconia abdimii</i>									f				mig,S
<i>Threskiornis aethiopica</i>						o		o	o				mig? P
<i>Bostrychia hagedash</i>					o	o	o	o					Fs;empty nest,May
<i>Pteronetta hartlaubii</i>	o	o	f	o	o	f	o	o	f				P;several pairs
<i>Neophron monachus</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c			City,over 500
<i>Gypohierax angolensis</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f			Riv,Fe,nest Nov
<i>Polyboroides radiatus</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c			Fe,Riv,R
<i>Accipiter melanoleucus</i>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o			S,R
<i>A. toussenelii</i>	o	o		o		o		o	o	o			Fe
<i>Urotriorchis macrourus</i>							o						Fe
<i>Kaupifalco monogrammicus</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c			Fe,R
<i>Buteo auguralis</i>	o		f							o	o		mig,S

M O N T H S

S P E C I E S	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	R E M A R K S
<i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>		o	o	o									mig?,S
<i>Stephanoaetus coronatus</i>					x								Fe
<i>Hieraetus africanus</i>	o	o			o		o						Fe
<i>Milvus migrans</i>	c	c	c	c	c	f		f	c	c	c		mig(late Sep-early Jun)
<i>Pernis apivorus</i>	x												mig
<i>Aviceda cuculoides</i>	o	o	o	o									Fe,nests Jan,Apr,Jun
<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	x					x							mig?,S
<i>Machaeramphus alcinus</i>	o	o	o	o	o								o mig?,one pair,City
<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	x							x					mig,S
<i>Guttera edouardi</i>		x											Fe
<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	x												mig,P
<i>Podica senegalensis</i>								x					mig? Riv
<i>Actophilornis africana</i>	o	o	o	o				o					mig? P
<i>Vanellus albiceps</i>	x	x											mig? Fs
<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	o							o	o				mig,P
<i>C. forbesi</i>	f		o					o	f				mig? P,fields,airport
<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	x												mig,Riv
<i>T. glareola</i>	f	f	f	f				o	o	f			mig,P
<i>T. ochropus</i>	o							o					mig,P
<i>T. hypoleucus</i>	f	f	f					o	f	f	f		mig,Riv
<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>								o					mig,P,one pair
<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c		Riv,S,palms
<i>Turtur tympanistria</i>		o	o	o		o		o	o				Fe
<i>T. afer</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f		S,rubber-trees
<i>T. brehmeri</i>	o		o	o	o	o		o	o				Fi
<i>Treron australis</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	c	c	f	f	c		Fe,R,Riv,nest Sep
<i>Psittacus erithacus</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c		Fe,Riv
<i>Tauraco persa</i>			o	o	o	o			o	o			Riv
<i>T. machrorhynchus</i>	f	o	o	f	o	o			o	f			Fe. Red-tipped race
<i>Corythaëola cristata</i>	f	f	f	f	o	f	f	f	o	f	f		Fe, nest Dec
<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>	o								o				mig? Riv,S
<i>Cuculus clamosus</i>	o		o						o				Fi,Fe. O. Gabon race
<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f		S,Riv
<i>C. caprius</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f		S,Riv,R
<i>C. cupreus</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f		Fe
<i>Ceuthmochares aereus</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f		Fe,Fi,vines,F
<i>Centropus senegalensis</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f		S,R
<i>Ciccaba woodfordi</i>	o		o										Riv
<i>Caprimulgus climacurus</i>	f	f	f							f			mig,S
<i>Macrodiptryx longipennis</i>	o	o											mig,S
<i>Apus apus</i>	c	c	c	c	f			c	c	c			mig,S,Fe,Riv
<i>A. caffer</i>									o				mig,S,one pair
<i>A. affinis</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c		City,S,nests Nov

M O N T H S

S P E C I E S	J F M A M J J A S O N D	R E M A R K S
<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>	c c c c c c c c c c c c	City,S
<i>Chaetura sabini</i>	f f o f f f f f f c f f f	Fe
<i>C. ussheri</i>	o o o o	mig? Fe
<i>C. cassini</i>	f f o o f f f f f o	Fe
<i>Ceryle maxima</i>	o o o o o o	Riv,P
<i>C. rufid</i>	o o o o o o	mig? Riv
<i>Alcedo quadribrachys</i>	o o o o o	Fs
<i>A. cristata</i>	o o o o o o	mig? P
<i>Ceyx picta</i>	f f f f f f f f f f f f	R,S,Fe,nests Mar,Apr
<i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>	c c c c f c c c f c c c	S,Riv,City
<i>H. malimbica</i>	o o o o o o	R,Fe
<i>H. badia</i>	x	Fi,O
<i>H. leucocephala</i>	f f f f f f f f	mig,S,City
<i>Merops malimbicus</i>	f c f f f f f f f f f f	S
<i>M. albicollis</i>	c c c c c c c c c c c c	mig,S,R,Riv
<i>M. muelleri</i>	o o o o o o	Fe,feeding young Apr
<i>Eurystomus gularis</i>	o o o o o o o o	Fe
<i>Tockus camurus</i>	f f f f f f f f f f f f	Fi,Fe,upper storey,C
<i>T. hartlaubi</i>	o o o o o o o o	Fe,Fi,feeding young Aug
<i>T. fasciatus</i>	c c c c c c c c c c c c	Riv,Fe,S,nest May
<i>Tropicranus albocristatus</i>	f o o o f o o o o f o o	Riv,Fi,Fe,mid storey,O
<i>Ceratogymna elata</i>	o o o o o o o o o o	Fe
<i>C. atrata</i>	f o o f o o o f o o o f	Fe
<i>Bycanistes fistulator</i>	c c c c c c c c c c c c	Fe,Fi,Riv
<i>B. cylindricus</i>	o f o o f o o	Fe
<i>Lybius hirsutus</i>	o o o o o o o o	Fe,O,flavipunctatum
<i>Gymnobucco calvus</i>	c f f c c f f f c f f f	Fe,dead trees
<i>Buccanodon duchaillui</i>	o o o o o o o o o o o o	Fi,Fe,F,nest hole Jun
<i>Pogoniulus scolopaceus</i>	f f f f f f f f f f f f	S,Fe,Riv,F,nest hole Aug
<i>P. bilineatus</i>	f f f f f f f f f f f f	Fe,Fi,Riv,F
<i>P. subsulphureus</i>	o o o o o o o o	Fe,O
<i>P. atroflavus</i>	o o o o o o o o	Fe,O
<i>Trachyphonus purpuratus</i>	o o o o o o o o	Fi,Fe,fruiting trees,O
<i>Prodotiscus insignis</i>	o o o o o o	Fe,umbrella trees,O
<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	x	mig,S
<i>Campetherina nivosa</i>	f o o f o o f f f o o	Fi,mid storey,F
<i>Dendropicos gabonensis</i>	o o o o o o o o o o	Fe,O
<i>Mesopicos pyrrhogaster</i>	f f f f f f f f f f f f	Fe,dead trees
<i>Smithornis rufolateralis</i>	o o o o	Fi
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	c c c c f c c c c c c	mig(late Sep-late Apr),S,City
<i>H. nigrita</i>	o o o o o o o o o o o o	Riv
<i>H. semirufa</i>	f f f f c c c c c c f	S,nest Apr,flocks Nov

S P E C I E S	M O N T H S												R E M A R K S
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
<i>Psalidoprocne obscura</i>	o	o	f	c	f	f	f	f	c	o	o		mig? Riv,S,City, flocks mid Oct
<i>Motacilla flava</i>	f	f	o	f					f	o	f		mig,S,P
<i>Anthus leucophrys</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f		S,airport
<i>Prionops caniceps</i>	f		f	f	f				f	f			Fe,Riv,O
<i>Dryoscopus sabini</i>									o				Fe,O
<i>Tchagra senegala</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f		S
<i>Laniarius luhderi</i>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o		S
<i>Lanius collaris</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c		S,City,imms.Apr,Jul
<i>L. senator</i>	o	o	o								o		mig,S
<i>Oriolus brachyrrhynchus</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f		Fi,Fe,C,imm.Mar
<i>Dicrurus ludwigii</i>	f	f	o	f	o	f	f	o	o				Fi,Fe,C
<i>D. adsimilis</i>	o	f	f	f	o	f	f	o	f	o	f		Fe,F
<i>Onychognathus fulgidus</i>	f	f	c	f	f	c	f	f	f	f	f		Fe,Riv
<i>Lamprotornis purpureiceps</i>	f	f	o	f	f	f	f	o	f	f	f		Fe
<i>L. splendidus</i>	o	o	o	f	o	o	o	o	o	o	f		Fe
<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>											c		mig,S
<i>Corvus albus</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c		S,City
<i>Coracina azurea</i>	f	o	o	f		o	o	o	o	o	o		Fi,Fe,F
<i>Campephaga phoenicea</i>		x											mig,S
<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c		S,Riv,R
<i>Andropadus gracilis</i>	o	o	o	f	f	o	o	o	f	o	o		Fe
<i>A. gracilirostris</i>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o		Fe,O
<i>A. virens</i>	f	f	f	c	c	c	c	c	c	f	f		S,Fe,Riv
<i>A. latirostris</i>	f	o	f	f	c	c	c	c	f	c	c		Fe,Fi
<i>Calyptocichla serina</i>										o	o		Fe,O
<i>Baeopogon indicator</i>										o	o		Fe,O
<i>Ixonotus guttatus</i>	f	f	f	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c		Riv,Fe
<i>Chlorocichla simplex</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f		S
<i>Theselocichla leucopleurus</i>	f	f	o	f	o	f	o	o	f	o	f		Riv
<i>Phyllastrephus icterinus</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c		Fi,C
<i>Bleda syndactila</i>	o		o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o		F
<i>B. canicapilla</i>	o	o	o	f	o	f	o	f	o	o	o		Fi,F
<i>Criniger barbatus</i>	o										o		Riv,Fi,O
<i>C. calurus</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c		Fi,Fe,Riv,C
<i>Nicator chloris</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f		Fe,Riv
<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	f	f	f							f	f		mig,S,R
<i>Myrmecocichla albifrons</i>	o									o	o		
<i>Alethe diademata</i>	o		f							o	o		
<i>Stiphrornis erythrothorax</i>										o	o		Fi,O
<i>Neocossyphus pennis</i>	o	o	o							o	o		Fi
<i>Stizorhina fraseri</i>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o		Fi,O
<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>										o			S
<i>Turdus pelios</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f		S,City
<i>Trichastoma rufipennis</i>	o		f	o	o					f	o		Fi,F

M O N T H S

S P E C I E S	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	R E M A R K S
<i>T. cleaveri</i>		o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Fi,O
<i>Sylvia borin</i>		o				o	o						mig,S
<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	f	f	o	c				f	f				mig,S
<i>Cisticola erythrops</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	S,City
<i>C. anonyma</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	S,R,City
<i>Prinia erythroptera</i>			o	o									mig? S
<i>P. leucopogon</i>	f		f	f		f	o		f	f	f		S,one locality only
<i>Apalis rufogularis</i>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Fe,O
<i>Camaroptera superciliaris</i>				o	o			o	o				S
<i>C. brachyura</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	S
<i>Sylvietta virens</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	S,feeding young Oct
<i>Macrosphenus concolor</i>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Fe,Fi,F
<i>Hylia prasina</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	Fe,Fi,Riv,C
<i>Pholidornis rushiae</i>	o	o		o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Fe,Riv
<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	o	f	f					o	f	o			mig,S
<i>M. cassini</i>	o	o	o	o									Fs,three sites
<i>M. comitata</i>			o	o	o	o							Riv
<i>Artomyias fuliginosa</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	Fe,O
<i>Fraseria ocreata</i>	o	f	o	o		f		o	f	o			Fe,O
<i>Megabyas flammulata</i>				o				o	o				Riv
<i>Bias musicus</i>		x				x		x					mig? Fe
<i>Platysteira cyanea</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	R,S,imms.Jan,Jul
<i>P. castanea</i>	c	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	f	Fi,Fe,C
<i>P. concreta</i>					x			x					Fe
<i>Erythrocercus mccallii</i>		f					f	f	f				Fe,O
<i>Trochocercus nigromitratus</i>	o		o			o			o				Fi,O
<i>Terpsiphone rufiventer</i>	f	f	f	f	f	f	c	c	f	c	c		Fi,C
<i>T. viridis</i>	o		o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	R
<i>Anthreptes fraseri</i>	c	c	c	f	c	c	c	f	c	c	c		Fi,Fe,C
<i>A. rectirostris</i>	o		o	o	o								Fe
<i>A. collaris</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	Fe,S,Riv,F,feeding young Oct
<i>Nectarinia seimundi</i>	o	f	f	o	o	o	f		o	f	f		Fe
<i>N. olivacea</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	Fi,Fe,Riv,F
<i>N. verticalis</i>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	City
<i>N. cyanolaema</i>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Fe,O
<i>N. adelberti</i>	o	o	o	f	o	o	f	o	o	f			Riv,City
<i>N. chloropygia</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	S,R,feeding young Oct
<i>N. superba</i>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	Fe
<i>Serinus mozambicus</i>		o	o	o									mig? S,R
<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	S
<i>P. nigerimus</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	S
<i>P. tricolor</i>			o	f	o	o	o	f	o	o	o	o	Fe,O
<i>P. nigricollis</i>	f	c	f	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	S
<i>Malimbus scutatus</i>	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	Riv,Fe,F,nest Jul
<i>M. racheliae</i>	f	f	c	c	f	f	c	c	f				Fi,Fe,C,nests Nov,Apr, Jun
<i>M. nitens</i>	o	o	o	o	o	f	f	o	o	f	f	f	Fi,Fe,F,nests Aug,Nov

M O N T H S

S P E C I E S	J F M A M J J A S O N D	R E M A R K S
<i>M. rubricollis</i>	f o o o f o o o o o o o	Fe,O
<i>M. erythrogaster</i>	o f	Fe,O
<i>M. malimbicus</i>	f o o f o f o o f o f f	Fi,F,nests Jan,Dec
<i>Quelea erythrops</i>	f f f f	S
<i>Euplectes macrourus</i>	o o f f	S
<i>Passer griseus</i>	c c c c c c c c c c c c	City
<i>Vidua macroura</i>	c c c c c c c c c c c c	S
<i>Pirenestes ostrinus</i>	o o o o o o o o	Riv,S,nest Aug
<i>Nigrita canicapilla</i>	c c c c c c c c c c c c	S,Riv,Fe,O,nests Apr., Dec
<i>N. bicolor</i>	o o o o o o o o o o o o	Riv,Fe,O
<i>N. fusconota</i>	o f f f o f f f f o f o	Riv,S,O
<i>Parmoptila woodhousei</i>	o o o	Fe,Fi,O,feeding young May
<i>Spermophaga haematina</i>	o o o o o	Riv
<i>Estrilda melpoda</i>	c c c c c c c c c c c c	S,imm.Jul
<i>Lonchura bicolor</i>	c c c c c c c c c c c c	S,nests May,Aug
<i>L. cucullata</i>	c f c c c f c c c f c c	S,nest May