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Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest
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PALAEARCTIC RUFOUS SCRUB-ROBIN: NEW TO NIGERIA - The Rufous Scrub-Robin *Cercotrichas galactotes* has one race *minor* in the semi-arid belt to the south of the Sahara and three races north of the Sahara, around the Mediterranean *galactotes*, in the Near East *syriacus* and in Transcaucasia *familiaris*. Elgood, Sharland & Ward (1966) stated that the large resident population of *C. g. minor* in northern Nigeria is evidently not augmented by Palaearctic migrants in the dry season. *C. g. galactotes* vacates its breeding region in winter, and although it has been recorded previously in West Africa from Niger, Mali and Senegal, Moreau (1972) considered those records too few to account for the entire population of this migratory race.

On the morning of 2 November 1978 a Rufous Scrub-Robin which I believe to belong to the Palaearctic race *C. g. galactotes* was netted near a spreading hedge of *Acacia ataxacantha* on abandoned farmland at Bayero University, Kano. The bird was noticeably larger than any individual of the African race *C. g. minor* which I had previously handled, having a wing length of 92 mm and a weight of 24.5 g, which are both outside the ranges of seven *C. g. minor* netted at the same location (wing 77 to 83 mm, weight 16.0 to 21.0 g). It may be of interest to note that this bird was in moult, with primaries 1-3 new, 4 and 5 growing, and the first secondary in pin in both wings. The outer tail feathers were also growing.

The bird was assigned to the race *C. g. galactotes* on the basis of its wing length (equal to the maximum quoted by Mackworth-Praed & Grant, 1970-73, for *galactotes* but beyond the maximum of 90 mm for *syriacus* and the known wintering areas of the three northern races. *C. g. familiaris* which winters in Iraq, Arabia and northeastern Africa is extremely unlikely to occur in Nigeria. *C. g. galactotes*, as previously noted, seems to winter in the western *sahel* zone, whereas the main wintering area of *syriacus* is northeastern and eastern Africa with a single record from the eastern Congo (Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1970-73, Moreau 1972). Although Mackworth-Praed & Grant note that *syriacus* is 'above darker and browner than the nominate race and greyer below', these criteria could not be used without either reference skins or previous knowledge of these races.

Reference

MOREAU, R.E. (1972) *The Palaearctic-African Bird Migration Systems*. Academic Press, London and New York

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UNUSUAL CONCENTRATION OF EUPLECTES ORIX NESTS IN MILLET - When a pipeline right-of-way was cut through a field at the Ahmadu Bello University Farm, Zaria, Nigeria, in October 1977, its *miawa* millet crop was found to have an unusually dense concentration of nests of Red Bishops *Euplectes orix*. The closely ("forage") planted millet had produced numerous stalks 10-17 cm apart, ideal for nest supports,