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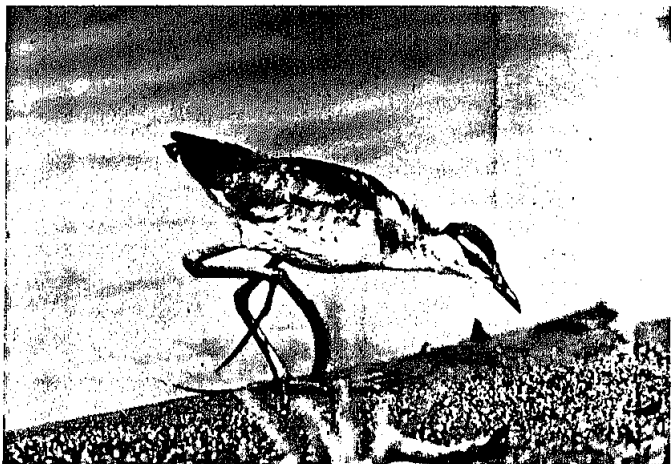
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A NEW RECORD OF THE LESSER JACANA (*MICROPARRA CAPENSIS*) IN NORTHERN CÔTE D'IVOIRE, WITH NOTES ON HABITAT

The African endemic Lesser Jacana *Microparra capensis* occurs sympatrically with the African Jacana *Actophilornis africana*, but has a much smaller range (Urban et al. 1986). The paucity of observations of *M. capensis* might be explained by rarity, shyness, and by mistaking it for juveniles of *A. africana* (see Fry 1983).

M. capensis is continuously distributed in south-east Africa whereas in west and central Africa it is known only from restricted areas (Urban et al. 1986). It is recorded in Nigeria (Sharland & Wilkinson 1981), Burkina Faso, Chad & Cameroon (Urban et al. 1986) and is quite common, but very local, in Mali (Lamarque 1980) and in the Parc W in Niger (Koster & Grettenberger 1983) - both being areas of more concentrated ornithological activity. Recent records are from Central African Republic (Carroll 1988), Nigeria (Giraudoux et al. 1988) and Côte d'Ivoire (Thiollay 1985). Most of these records are of observations of single birds.

Until now the Lesser Jacana has been recorded in Côte d'Ivoire only by Champroux & Ledant (cited in Thiollay 1985) near Abidjan (March-July) and Bouaké. Thiollay (1985) conjectures that it breeds in Côte d'Ivoire. The first evidence of the Lesser Jacana in northern Côte d'Ivoire was a single bird observed and photographed (Plate 1) by us on 24 Apr 1987 on Comoé river, 4 km upstream of Kafolo (9°38N, 4°20W). This is only 4 km



Lesser Jacana - Petit Jacana - *Microparra capensis*

(Photo: J. Späth)

from the northern boundary of the Comoé National Park, the avifauna of which is very well documented (FGU Kronberg 1980) and excludes the Lesser Jacana. In this area the African Jacana is common, frequenting rivers and ponds. According to Lamarche (1980) those habitats inhabited by this species should also be adequate for the Lesser Jacana. In southern Africa Tarboton & Fry (1986) found both species coexisting in the same habitat types and often in close proximity, but preferring different degrees of vegetation cover for nesting.

The observation date was at the end of the dry season when the Comoé had reached its lowest level, with all waterbound organisms concentrated in large stagnant pools, several hundred metres long. In no season is this section of the Comoé covered with the floating vegetation preferred by jacanids (cf. Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1970, Tarboton & Fry 1986), although this kind of vegetation is very frequent in temporary ponds which form during the rainy season in the savanna. Nearly all of these pools dry up during the dry season.

The Lesser Jacana was observed for more than one hour in the early afternoon, strolling and searching for food along the sandy shoreline but also on clay, on driftwood, and in shallow water. This is contrary to the descriptions of Urban *et al.* (1986), according to which the species generally avoids shorelines with hard substrates, but this may only apply for the breeding season. *M. capensis* evidently shows a certain plasticity, changing to vagrant behaviour and leaving its usual habitat temporarily, when the water recedes (Urban *et al.* 1986). This behaviour could represent an adaptation and survival strategy of populations living in the northern parts of the species' distribution. Our observations of African Jacana in the dry season on the river Comoé show that this species is also capable of temporarily changing its habitat.

After feeding, the Lesser Jacana basked in the sun and preened. Feeding (Plate 1) and preening behaviour was in correspondence with the observations of Tarboton & Fry (1986). *M. capensis* is said to be very shy, allowing the observer to approach only up to 100 m (Urban *et al.* 1986). In our case, however, the bird allowed a careful approach up to 4 m.

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UNE OBSERVATION D'AVRIL DU TOURNEPIERRE A COLLIER (ARENARIA INTERPRES)
 A L'INTERIEUR DU ZAIRE

Lors d'une vérification des observations du Tournepierre à collier Arenaria interpres au Zaïre je suis tombé sur une observation par Hostie (1955) le 6 avril 1950 au bord de la Sankuru près de Lusambo (4°58S, 23°25E), province du Kasai. Jusqu' à présent c'est la seule mention d'avril pour l'intérieur du Zaïre et elle n'a pas été citée par Lippens & Wille (1976) ni par Dowsett (1980). Les observations de printemps à l'intérieur de l'Afrique sont très rares: je connais une seule: 1 mai 1965 à Malamfatori, lac Tchad (A.J. Hopson in Elgood 1982).

Les autres cas au Zaïre ont été notés entre septembre et février: 6 nov 1937 Zobia, territoire Bambesa, 1 spécimen (Schouteden 1949); 16 nov 1945 île Bula-Bemba près de Banana, 1 spécimen (Schouteden 1949); 14 oct 1959 embouchure de la Rwindi, Parc National Albert, 1 ex. (Verschuren 1966); 27 sep 1960 plusieurs individus à l'embouchure de l'Ishasha, Parc National Albert (Verschuren 1966); 10 et 15 février au lac Edward un groupe de 6 ex. (Lippens & Wille 1976); entre septembre 1981 et février 1982 une vingtaine d'individus à Katanda, posés sur le dos des hippopotames (Mertens 1986).

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