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BIRD RECORDS FROM THE REPUBLIC OF TOGO

by Robert A. Cheke and J. Frank Walsh

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The avifauna of the territory of the Republic of Togo is poorly known. The area received little mention in the classic texts of Bannerman (1930-51) despite the contributions of Reichenow (1891a, b, 1892, 1893, 1894a, b, 1897). The last papers, together with those of Millet-Horsin (1923), Dekeyser (1951) and Douaud (1956a, b, 1957), refer to what was until 1956 a larger area (incorporating parts of Ghana) than the present independent state of Togo. Robinson (1972) gave details of her observations in Togo, and the papers of De Roo et al. (1969, 1970, 1971, 1972) and Louette (1975), based solely on skin collections, are the only attempts to list the birds of Togo comprehensively but contain no ecological notes.

Recently we have recorded many species omitted by De Roo et al. and Louette (*op. cit.*) and we report these here in an attempt to develop a satisfactory species list for Togo. We include also ecological and breeding season data for some of the species listed by De Roo and his colleagues.

By West African standards Togo is a very broken country. In the extreme north there is some Sudan savanna and elsewhere there are extensive areas of Guinea savanna woodland. Much of this zone is very densely populated and intensively cultivated, to a far greater extent than in neighbouring Benin (formerly Dahomey). Some forest remains, protected in certain cases, north to Bafilo (Fig. 1) with occasional patches even further north. At Naboulgou there is a well wooded park, the Keran reserve, which would repay further study. There are also some hills with grassy summits rising up to 850 m a.s.l.; they have well vegetated, deep ravines likely to harbour some skulking species typical of lowland forest, but they are difficult to reach and were not explored by us.

The records upon which this paper is based were obtained in 1979 by R.A.C. who spent three months (May to July) based in Lama-Kara and by J.F.W. who made various short visits to Togo between 1972 and 1979. Observations by both of us was concentrated in the vicinity of Lama-Kara. Thus the majority of the records refer to birds of the northern Guinea savanna and were made during the wet season. There is also a bias towards birds associated with riverine habitats, since our work with the W.H.O. onchocerciasis control programme required a close association with rivers.

Zoogeographically Togo is of considerable interest as it is situated in the "Dahomey Gap". Thus some species typical of more northern climes in other countries are found much nearer the coast in Togo, and it is also the meeting place of representatives of the eastern and western forms of the West African fauna. Moreau (1969) pointed out that, of the Upper Guinea forest bird species which straddle the Gap, 18% of the passerines and 6.5% of the non-passerines occur as different sub-species on either side.

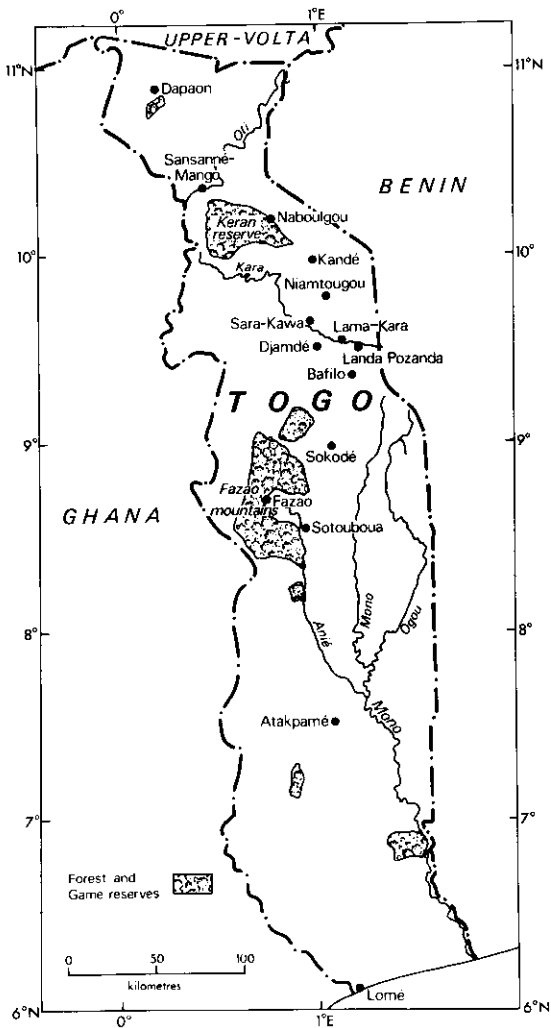


Figure 1. Map of the Republic of Togo.

The following list is in two parts. Part 1, species of greater interest, is annotated. Species marked with an asterisk were not mentioned by De Roo *et al.*; we have also included some records kindly provided by Dr A. Rougement (A.R.), S. Sowah (S.S.) and Dr P. Reiter (P.R.). Most of the localities referred to and shown in Fig. 1, and the coordinates of the remainder are given in the text. Part 2 is complementary and records the commoner species which we have seen in Togo. Sequence and nomenclature follow Hall & Moreau (1970) and Snow (1978).

Part 1

- Phalacrocorax africanus* An immature bird at Naboulgou on 25 July 1979.
- Bubulcus ibis* A dry season visitor.
- **Scopus umbretta* Recorded from many localities. One carrying mud or food, presumably nesting, at Naboulgou on 24 October 1979.
- **Ciconia abdimii* A flock of about 20 birds present in the Oti valley (10°33'N, 00°33'E) on 19 April 1978 and six at Landa-Pozanda on 7 May 1979.
- **C. episcopus* Six seen near Naboulgou on 12 December 1978 and two there on 24 July 1979.
- **Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis* Two near Naboulgou on 19 April 1978.
- Anastomus lamelligerus* 30 in the Oti valley (10°29'N, 00°31'E) on 19 April 1978 and one 10 km NW of Sara-Kawa on 17 July 1979.
- **Threskiornis aethiopica* Recorded from the Keran reserve in April 1979 (A.R.).
- **Bostrychia hagedash* A single at Bagan (09°00'N, 00°40'E) on 18 April 1978 and another at Naboulgou 24 October 1979.
- **Nettapus auritus* Two pairs seen in marshes south of the Oti river near Sansanné-Mango on 25 July 1979.
- **Gypohierax angolensis* Widespread in well wooded areas. Recorded as far north as Landa-Pozanda.
- **Polyboroides typus* One at Mo (09°05'N, 01°03'E) on 12 December 1979. Singles 25 km east of Sokodé 19 July 1979, at Lama-Kara 23 July 1979 and at 09°28'N, 01°18'E on 18 July 1979.
- **Circaetus cinerascens* One in the Oti valley (09°30'N, 00°22'E) on 18 April 1978.
- **Micronisus gabar* On 13 June 1979 one was seen carrying sticks, presumably for nest-building, 5 km south of Lama-Kara. One at the same locality on 16 June 1979.
- **Buteo auguralis* One near Lama-Kara on 27 May 1979 and another at 08°25'N, 00°58'E on 13 July 1979.
- Butastur rufipennis* A dry season visitor recorded as far south as Naboulgou.
- **Lophaelurus occipitalis* One near Sansanné-Mango in June 1978 (A.R.).
- **Polemaetus bellicosus* One in the Keran reserve 12 December 1978 and another seen by A.R. near Sansanné-Mango in December 1978.
- **Aquila rapax* One at 10°45'N, 00°42'E on 19 April 1978 and a pair near Djamé on 24 June 1979.
- **Macheirhamphus alcinus* A pair seen at 1800 hrs on 15 July 1979 at Landa-Pozanda. The birds flew side by side, with slow wing-beats, just above the canopy of riverine forest and followed the course of the Kara. The one on the left suddenly veered up above its partner and to its right and completed a counter-clockwise spiral flight. When it was directly above it, it dived at it with its legs dangling. After this brief display the

birds resumed their flight in the fashion described in the first sentence and disappeared. The only previous record of this species in Togo is that of Douaud (1956b).

Elaeans caeruleus Common and noted in all seasons.

- **Pandion haliaetus* One at the outfall of the river Ouale (10°33'N, 00°49'E) on 4 June 1976.
- **Falco peregrinus* One between Sansanné-Mango and Barkoissi (10°33'N, 00°18'E) on 13 December 1978.
- **F. subbuteo* Three in the Bafilo area on 12 December 1978.
- **F. chicquera* One near Lama-Kara 27 May 1979.
- **F. ardosiaceus* Common in the Lama-Kara area, at least during the wet season.
- Numida meleagris* Abundant in the Naboulgou area. One there with small flightless young on 25 July 1979.
- **Crex egregia* One disturbed from rank vegetation beside the Kara river near Lama-Kara on 25 May 1979. The (?same) bird was again present on 2 June 1979.
- **Porphyrio alleni* One in the Keran reserve in April 1979 (A.R.).
- **Podica senegalensis* One flushed into the Mono at 09°03'N, 01°23'E on 12 July 1979. Also seen in the Mono and Anie rivers during May and June 1979.
- **Balearica pavonina* One near Naboulgou 19 April 1978. One seen by A.R. 5 km north of Sansanné-Mango in June 1979. Dekeyser (1951) recorded this species from Lama-Kara.
- Eupodotis melanogaster* Common in the Lama-Kara area in July 1979.
- Burhinus* spp. Frequent in the Lama-Kara area but not specifically identified. De Roo (1970) recorded *B. senegalensis* at Atakpamé.
- Vanellus albiceps* Common near Lama-Kara and Naboulgou. Two pairs displaying as if defending nests near Lama-Kara on 2 June 1979.
- **V. senegallus* Common in the Lama-Kara district. An adult with two recently fledged juveniles at Naboulgou 24 July 1979.
- **V. spinosus* A pair behaving as if nesting, beside the Oti river at 10°40'N, 00°48'E on 19 April 1978.
- **Charadrius forbesi* One at 10°40'N, 00°48'E on 19 April 1978. Singles at Landa-Pozanda on 26 May 1979 and at Sansanné-Mango on 16 June 1979.
- Pluvianus aegyptius* One beside the Oti river, south of Sansanné-Mango on 25 July 1979 and on 24 October 1979. On the latter date another was seen at Na boulgou.
- **Cursorius temminckii* One near Sansanné-Mango on 5 May 1979.
- **Glareola nuchalis liberiae* A small breeding colony on the Kara river near Landa-Pozanda has been described by Cheke (1980).
- **Pterocles exustus* Many were seen in the Keran reserve on 12 December 1978.
- **Oena capensis* Several seen between Sansanné-Mango and Lama-Kara on 10 November 1972 and two near Sansanné-Mango on 24 October 1979.
- Treron calva* Singles at Landa-Pozanda on 11 July 1979 and at Naboulgou on 24 July 1979.
- **Psittacus erithacus* One at Mo (09°05'N, 01°03'E) on 11 May 1979. Recorded in Togo by both Millet-Horsin (1923) and by Bannerman.
- **Agapornis pullaria* On 20 June 1979 one was seen in forest fringing the Akama River, a tributary of the Anie, and another in similar habitat beside the Ware River at 08°34'N, 00°53'E.
- **Corythaecola cristata* One at 07°52'N, 01°00'E on 21 June 1979, and P.R. saw one in the Fazao mountains on 21 July 1979. Douaud (1956b) recorded this species from Togo.

- Tauraco persa* One at 09°12'N, 01°09'E on 18 July 1979.
Clamator levaillantii One near Lama-Kara, 23 July 1979.
- **Cuculus gularis* One at Sara-Kawa 3 June 1976, two there on 27 May 1979 and one at Landa-Pozanda on 11 July 1979.
Chrysococcyx klaas One singing 10 km north-east of Kandé 8 June 1979 and another at Djamdé 24 June 1979.
C. caprius One singing at Lama-Kara on 7 and 8 July 1979. Also recorded from Naboulgou and Sansanné-Mango 25 July 1979.
Bubo africanus One at Naboulgou 12 December 1978.
Glaucidium perlatum One at Lama-Kara 7 July 1979 and one at Niamtougou 24 October 1979.
- **Telacanthura ussheri* One west of Djamdé 24 June 1979 and two pairs at Naboulgou 24 October 1979.
Apus caffer One flying NE over Landa-Pozanda on 10 July 1979 and two passing north over Naboulgou on 24 July 1979.
Ceryle maxima One at Naboulgou 25 July 1979.
- **Alcedo quadribrachys* One at Landa-Pozanda on 15 July 1979. Recorded from Togo by Bannerman.
Ispidina picta One at Naboulgou 25 July 1979.
Halcyon leucocephala Singles at Landa-Pozanda on 18 April 1979 and 11 May 1979.
H. senegalensis One at Lama-Kara on 27 May 1979 and two at Naboulgou 24 July 1979.
- Merops albicollis* Nine on 8 November 1972 and 22 on the next day flying south over Sokodé. 24 in flight at Sara-Kawa on 3 June 1976 and 12 flying north over Sansanné-Mango on 16 June 1979.
- M. nubicus* Three near Sansanné-Mango on 13 December 1978. A flock of about 50 birds, 5 km south of Lama-Kara on 18 April 1979 and two near Sansanné-Mango on 5 May 1979.
- Coracias abyssinica* One between Sansanné-Mango and Naboulgou 13 December 1978 and one flying N over Lama-Kara 27 May 1979.
- C. cyanogaster* One 35 km south of Dapaon 5 May 1979. On 6 May 1979 a pair were found nesting in a hole 10 m up in a dead tree, presumably with young as one parent was seen bringing a lizard to the hole. The nesting tree was close to sparse riverine forest on the edge of a small stream passing through Northern Guinea Savanna woodland, with numerous *Borassus* palms also present, near Djamdé. The birds were absent when the site was re-visited on 24 June 1979.
- Eurystomus glaucurus* Common in the Lama-Kara area from May to July 1979. One at Landa-Pozanda on 24 October 1979.
- Tockus fasciatus* A few were seen in forested areas as far north as Sokodé during July 1979.
- T. nasutus* 60 seen flying N of Lama-Kara on 3 June 1976 and 23 passed over the same site on 31 May 1979. Small numbers present in this region from May to July 1979. A flock of 70 recorded flying south over Niamtougou on 24 October 1979.
- Lybius vieilloti* Four near Lama-Kara 27 May 1979 and one there on 8 July 1979.
- **Riparia paludicola* Two at 09°28'N, 00°59'E on 6 May 1979 and two at Landa-Pozanda 7 July 1979. Also present at the Oti river south of Sansanné-Mango 25 July 1979.
- Hirundo smithii* Commonly seen on all rivers. A pair raised four young at Mo (09°05'N, 01°03'E) in May 1979. On 3 May three were still in the nest, attached to the underside of a rock overhanging a river, and the

fourth bird was flying nearby. At this time the nest was about 0.5 m above the water level, but after the rains began in earnest the nest site was flooded.

- H. lucida* Recorded from near Sokodé 25 September 1977. A pair were prospecting a nest site at Naboulgou on 19 April 1978. Six were seen near Lama-Kara on 27 May 1979 and there were singles there on 13 June and 8 July 1979. At least ten were at Naboulgou on 24 July 1979.
- **H. senegalensis* One at Sansanné-Mango on 16 July 1979.
- H. abyssinica* Two at 09°29'N, 00°29'E on 6 May 1979. Six or more pairs were nesting under a bridge at 09°05'N, 01°03'E on 11 May 1979 of which at least two pairs were still present on 2 July 1979. Two pairs were seen near Bafilo on 31 May 1979 and the species also bred under a bridge over a river 8 km NE of Kandé in June 1979. Six were present near Djamdé on 24 June 1979 and the species was also seen at Lama-Kara, Sansanné-Mango and Kandé in July 1979.
- H. fuligula* Three near Djamdé 24 June 1979.
- **H. preussi* Recorded 8 km north-east of Kandé on 17 July 1979.
- Delichon urbica* The occurrence of this species in Togo is discussed by Douaud (1956a). Several were seen between Atakpamé and Sokodé on 11 December 1978. On 6 May 1979 two groups were observed at 09°29'N, 00°59'E at a bridge over the river Kawa. In the first group six birds were present and were followed by a flock of at least 50. Both groups fed for two to three minutes swooping down low over the water and often drinking from it. Eventually the birds departed *en masse*, uttering shrill calls similar to those characteristic of pre-migratory flocks in Europe during autumn.
- Anthus leucophrys* One at Lama-Kara 7 July 1979.
- Macronyx croceus* Two at Sara-Kawa on 3 June 1975 and 26 October 1979 and singles at Lama-Kara on 8 and 20 July 1979.
- Motacilla aguimp* Recorded only south of Sokodé.
- Campophaga phoenicea* A male at 09°29'N, 00°59'E on 6 May 1979, a pair at Landa-Pozanda on 10 July 1979 and a male there on 20 July 1979.
- Coracina pectoralis* A pair seen in well grown Northern Guinea Savanna woodland near Landa-Pozanda on 7 and 20 July 1979.
- Chlorocichla flavicollis* One at Landa-Pozanda on 19 May 1979 and another 8 km NE of Kandé on 8 June 1979.
- Dryoscopus gambensis* On 20 July 1979 a pair were seen with a recently fledged juvenile at Landa-Pozanda.
- **Cossypha albicapilla* Two seen 8 km NE of Kandé on 8 June 1979.
- C. niveicapilla* One at Landa-Pozanda on 11 July 1979.
- Turdus pelios* Common in the Lama-Kara area. One was seen building a nest in a *Borassus* palm there on 16 June 1979.
- Sphenoeacus mentalis* Recorded from thickly vegetated river banks in the Lama-Kara area in May, June and July 1979.
- Cisticola eximia* One performing a song-flight and display on 7 July 1979 at Lama-Kara.
- C. natalensis* One heard at Sokodé on 8 November 1972 and others singing at Lama Kara on 7, 8 and 19 July 1979.
- C. ruficeps* One at Lama-Kara on 2 June 1979 and another there on 19 July 1979.
- C. brachyptera* One at Lama-Kara on 16 June 1979.
- C. aberrans* One seen well, singing, near Djamdé on 24 June 1979.
- C. cantans* Recorded from the Lama-Kara area and Naboulgou in June and July 1979. One seen carrying food to a presumed nest in a neglected cassava field near the Kara river on 8 July 1979.

- C. galactotes* Recorded from the Lama-Kara area in June and July 1979. On 16 June 1979 one of a pair took a small white moth to a presumed nest amongst grasses between a track and the Kara river.
- Prinia subflava* One seen carrying food near Lama-Kara on 8 July 1979. Other records from this region in May, June and July 1979 and from Naboulgou on 17 July 1979.
- Heliolais erythroptera* One singing at Landa-Pozanda on 10 July 1979 and also present there on 11 and 20 July 1979.
- **Melaenornis edolioides* A pair were seen on many occasions in riverine forest fringing the Kara at Landa-Pozanda during July 1979.
- Nectarinia chloropygia* A pair at Lama-Kara on 7 and 30 June 1979.
- N. cuprea* On 24 July 1979 a pair were building a nest at Naboulgou and the female of a second pair was noticed carrying food.
- Emberiza tahapsi* Recorded 15 km north of Sansanné-Mango on 25 September 1977 and many were seen near Kandé on 13 December 1978. At Lama-Kara 2 on 7 July 1979, one the next day and 6 on 20 July 1979.
- E. cabanisi* A female near Djamdé on 24 June 1979 and a pair at Lama-Kara on 8 July 1979.
- **Ploceus velatus* Two pairs present at Landa-Pozanda on 7 and 15 July 1979.
- P. heuglini* Two near Lama-Kara on 7 July 1979 and another there on the following day. Four beside the Oti river near Sansanné-Mango on 25 July 1979.
- P. luteolus* A fresh nest found at Naboulgou on 19 April 1979.
- **Malimbus rubriceps* Two fresh nests were found near Sansanné-Mango on 13 December 1978 and the species also breeds as far south as Landa-Pozanda where an old nest was found in July 1979.
- Quelea erythroptera* On 19 July 1979 a flock of 20-30 birds, of which one was a male of this species, was seen at Lama-Kara.
- Petronia dentata* On 13 December 1978 one was seen carrying material to a nest in a hole in a tree at Kandé.
- **Plocepasser superciliosus* Two at Lama-Kara on 27 May 1979 and two at Naboulgou on 24 July 1979.
- Lagonosticta rubricata* Two at Landa-Pozanda on 13 June 1979.
- L. rara* Two near Lama-Kara on 7 July 1979 and another there on the following day.
- L. larvata* On 8 July 1979 a male at Lama-Kara was seen carrying a piece of grass in its bill in a manner suggestive of a courtship display.
- **Amandava subflava* On both 7 and 19 July 1979 a flock of 20-30 birds were seen feeding amongst grass close to the bank of the Kara river near Lama-Kara.
- **Ortyospiza atricollis* One, possibly two, at Sara-Kawa on 2 June 1976 and another at Lama-Kara on 7 July 1979.
- Lonchura malabrica* Several were seen in tangles of *Mimosa pigra* at Kanbouanga (10°40'N, 00°46'E) on 19 April 1978.
- **Spree pulcher* On 26 July 1979 S.S. saw a single bird north of Dapaon.
- Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* A pair near Djamdé on 24 June 1979. The male was carrying a green leaf, presumably for their nest.

Part 2

- Butorides striatus*
 **Ardea cinerea*
 A. melanocephala
 **Egretta alba*
 **A. purpurea*
 Dendrocygna viduata
 **Plectropterus gambensis*
 Necrosyrtes monachus
 Kaupifalco monogrammicus
 Accipiter badius
 Milvus migrans
 Francolinus bicalcaratus
 Ptilopachus petrosus
 Amaurornis flavirostris
 Actophilus africana
 Tringa nebularia
 T. hypoleucos
 Streptopelia vinacea
 S. semitorquata
 **S. decipiens*
 S. senegalensis
 Turtur afer
 T. abyssinicus
 Treron waalia
 Poicephalus senegalus
 Psittacula krameri
 Crinifer piscator
 Musophaga violacea
 Centropus senegalensis
 Cypsiurus parvus
 Apus affinis
 Ceryle rudis
 Merops bulocki
 Coracias naevia
 Phoeniculus purpureus
 Lybius dubius
 Pogoniulus pusillus
 Campethera punctuligera
 Dendropicos goertae
 Mirafra rufocinnamomea
- Hirundo rustica*
H. daurica
Pycnonotus barbatus
Prionops plumata
Laniarius barbatus
Corvinella corvina
Tchagra senegala
Malaconotus blanchoti
Saxicola rubetra
Turdoides plebejus
T. reinwardii
Camaroptera brevicaudata
Eremomela pusilla
Muscicapa aquatica
Platysteira cyanea
Nectarinia coccinigaster
N. senegalensis
Serinus mozambicus
Ploceus cucullatus
E. hordaceus
E. macrourus
Euplectes franciscanus
E. afer
Vidua macroura
Hypochoera sp
Passer griseus
Lagonosticta senegala
L. rufopicta
Uraeginthus bengalus
E. melpoda
Estrilda troglodytes
E. caerulescens
Lonchura cucullata
Lamprotornis caudatus
L. purpureus
Dicrurus adsimilis
Oriolus larvatus
Ptilostomus afer
 **Corvus albus*

SUMMARY

A list of birds seen in Togo, mostly in Northern Guinea Savanna, between 1972 and 1979 is presented. 195 species were recorded of which 55 were not given in the only previous systematic list for the Republic of Togo. Evidence of breeding and other notes are included for several species.

RESUME

Liste des oiseaux vus au Togo, principalement dans la savane nord-guinéenne, entre 1972 et 1979. Le total des espèces s'élève à 195 dont 55 ne figurent pas dans la liste de De Roo, la seule existant jusqu'à ce jour pour la République du Togo. Données sur la reproduction et diverses observations pour plusieurs espèces.

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