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THE BIRDS OF CONAKRY AND KAKULIMA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF GUINEE

by D. K. Richards

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As far as I know, the birds of Conakry and Kakulima have not been documented, although I have not been able to search the pre-independence literature fully.

I lived in Conakry from mid December 1979 to mid May 1980 and again from November 1980 to February 1981. Security in Guinée is very strict, although this is now being relaxed to some extent; most of my early records were made without the use of binoculars (their use was forbidden). In cases where I consider the identification less than certain, I have marked the species '+'; other species whose identification is not positive are placed in square brackets. A total of 178 species are listed below.

CLIMATE

During the months of my stay in Guinée the weather was humid and mostly overcast, with visibility severely limited at times. The temperature was always in excess of 30°C and the only rain experienced was on the evening of 25th April 1980.

I did not reside in the area during the rain season; and in the early part of my stay, travel around Conakry was greatly hampered due to security restrictions. Thus I am sure many species will have been missed; hopefully, with the more relaxed security conditions coming into effect, a more thorough coverage of the area will soon be possible.

CONAKRY

The city of Conakry is situated on the end of a rocky peninsular which extends 14 km out to sea. The city itself is heavily populated and dense suburbs stretch as far as the airport on the southern coast, and for 10 km along the northern coast. The centre of the peninsular is formed by higher ground consisting of rocky ironstone country with scant vegetation and a low human population.

The following places are marked on the map (Fig. 2) and are where most of the birds recorded were seen.

Botanical Gardens (A) - These gardens, situated in the suburb of Camayenne, are not maintained and many trees have been felled. The Forestry Department has an office there and part of the Gardens is used for rearing seedlings. Next to the Gardens there is the Colonial Cemetery, almost completely over-

grown, but a rewarding birdwatching area.

Dabondi (B) - A heavily populated suburb on the southern coast with a small muddy bay fed by a small tree-lined creek.

Airport (C) - A typical airport. There are areas of long grass which, when dry, are harvested by the local population for bedding. The airport is bordered on the north by irrigated cultivation and on the south by a mangrove creek.

Airport Creek (D) - A tidal mangrove creek with a small area of mud exposed at low tide. Between the mangroves and the airport the area is scrub with a few tall trees.

Bare Hillside (E) - This ironstone area in the centre of the peninsular has already been noted.

Kipe (F) - A village and suburbs on the northern coast where I lived in February 1981.

Sangareya Bay (G) - Here restricted to the area of mudflats near the village of Lembagui; a very important feeding area for herons and Palaearctic waders.

Marshy Area (H) - An unnamed fresh-marsh alongside the airport road.

Fresh-water Marsh and Pools (I) - Also unnamed, near the village of Fosside.

Sparse Woodland (J) - Near Fosside.

Kakoulima (not shown on map) - A prominent hill rising to 1000 m a.s.l., 50 km NE of Conakry. There is a track normally only suitable for 4-wheel drive vehicles almost to the top. The upper third of the hill is heavily forested while the lower third has been cleared; the intermediate third is in the process of being cleared. The area would make an ideal first national park for Guinée and, in any case, should be preserved. Not only is tree-felling rampant but many local people roam the area carrying modern automatic rifles. Apart from birds there are also Chimpanzees *Pan troglodytes* and various species of monkey in the forest. Unfortunately I was only able to visit the area twice during my stay in the country.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Scientific and English names and sequence follow Serle & Morel (1977).

Pelecanus rufescens Usually present off shore.

Phalacrocorax africanus Usually seen on small fresh water pools outside the city, e.g. at H and I, but occasionally at Sangareya Bay (G).

Phalacrocorax carbo lucidus Quite common at Sangareya Bay (G) but some always present at other sites scattered along the coast.



Figure 1 White-crested Bitter (Tiger Bittern) *Tigriornis leucolopha*.
See text. Photo D.K. Richards

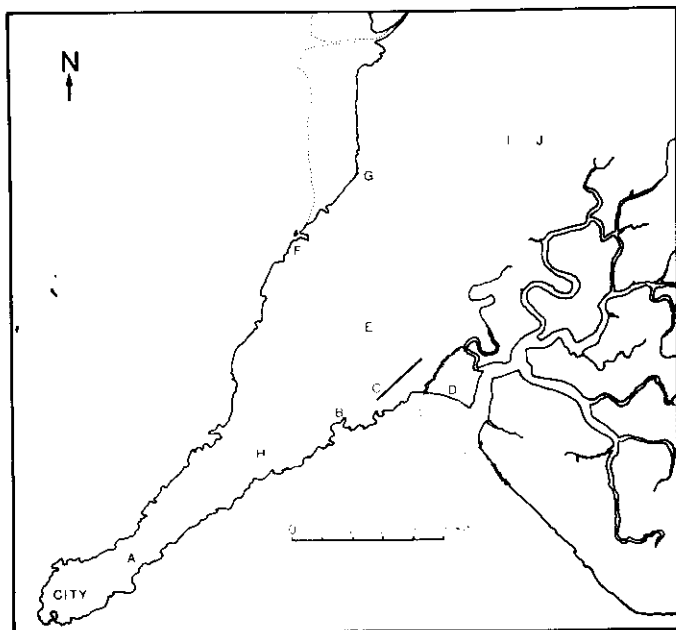


Figure 2 Environs of Conakry. A-J, see text.

- Ixobrychus sturmi* Only seen once at the small marsh H along the airport road, on 25 Feb 1980.
- Tigriornis leucolophus* (Fig. 1) One captured by fishermen in Jan 1980 at Dixinn; three kept as pets by a Guinée family near the airport in Mar and Apr 1980; one seen at the airport creek D in Nov 1980.
- Nycticorax nycticorax* Odd birds seen occasionally in Sangareya Bay but on 15 Feb 1981 several hundreds were disturbed from a roost there.
- Ardeola ralloides* Occasionally seen at H.
- Ardeola ibis* Common, even in the city feeding on rubbish heaps.
- Butorides striatus* Always present in Sangareya Bay.
- Egretta ardesiaca* A few always present in Sangareya Bay and odd birds seen at other suitable localities.
- Egretta alba* Very common in Sangareya Bay with as many as 220 seen feeding together in Apr 1980.
- Egretta intermedia* Two on 17 Feb 1981 at G is the only record for this species.
- Egretta garzetta* Not very common: mainly seen at H but a few also seen feeding in Sangareya Bay with the next species.
- Egretta gularis* Common, found all along the coast but more particularly at G.
- Ardea cinerea* A few always present at G and odd birds seen at other sites from time to time.
- Ardea goliath* Occasionally single birds at G and on the Airport Creek (D).
- Ardea purpurea* One immature at D on 25 Mar 1980 and an adult at G on 5 Feb 1981 are my only records.
- Scopus umbretta* Occasionally seen in the Airport area.
- Ibis ibis* Uncommon, only observed at Sangaria Bay (G), maximum 7; all sightings in Feb 1981.
- Threskiornis aethiopica* Occasionally at G but never more than 3 or 4 at one time.
- Platalea alba* Occasionally seen at G.
- [*Platalea leucorodia* A possible seen at G on 5 Feb 1981 feeding far out on the mud flats; an immature seen there on 18 Feb 1981 was almost certainly this species.]
- Phoenicopter ruber* Occasionally seen at G but common elsewhere along the Guinée coast.
- Neophron monachus* Very common in Conakry city.
- Gypohierax angolensis* Occasionally seen in the area although quite common along the Guinée coast (once five counted during a 160 km flight).

- Circus aeruginosus* Occasionally seen at G.
- Accipiter toussenelii* One seen at A on 13 Apr 1980.
- Accipiter badius* Seen several times in the city; a pair resident at A and a pair with a juvenile in Apr at Dabondi (B).
- Kaupifalco monogrammicus* One seen inland from Sangaria Bay on 7 Feb 1981.
- Stephanoaetus coronatus* A pair at Kakulima, 9 Feb 1981.
- Hieraaetus dubius* One at Kakulima, 17 Nov 1980 and another there on 9 Feb 1981.
- Haliaetus vocifer* Seen occasionally. Two immatures at G in Mar 1980.
- Milvus migrans* A few pairs resident in the city and at the airport.
- Elanus caeruleus* A pair resident at the airport.
- Pandion haliaetus* Occasionally observed, during the months I was resident in Conakry.
- Falco cuvieri* Twice at Sangaria Bay, 15 and 17 Feb 1981.
- Falco chicquera* Two records, both in palms: at Sangaria Bay 17 Feb 1981 and at the airport 7 Feb 1980.
- Falco ardosiaceus* Two records from the airport, 13 Feb and 5 Nov 1980.
- Francolinus bicalcaratus* Present in scrub at the Airport Creek.
- Ptilopachus petrosus* Probably resident in the area of E (Hendrick Jacobs, pers. comm.).
- Numida meleagris* A flock of guinea-fowl disturbed in secondary growth on Kakulima were assumed to be of this species; domesticated birds often kept in villages near Conakry.
- [*Crex crex* A large brown crane, with long dangling legs, disturbed in long wet grass at Airport, 16 Nov 1980, was possibly this species.]
- Actophilornis africana* One on a fresh water pool at I on 19 Nov 1980.
- Burhinus oediconemus* One on 18 Feb 1981 at G was seen with other Palaearctic waders. Good views obtained of the wing-pattern.
- Burhinus senegalensis* Small group at the Airport in Feb 1980.
- Vanellus lugubris* Present at the Airport where their behaviour suggested breeding. A chick, possibly of this species, was found there in Apr 1980.
- Vanellus senegallus* Found occasionally at low tide in area D.
- Pluvialis squatarola* Seen almost everywhere along the coast, even in the city; most numerous at G where, in Apr 1980, many were in breeding plumage.

- Charadrius hiaticula* Seen almost everywhere along the coast, even in the city. Most common in Apr.
- Charadrius forbesi* Often found at the Airport and most often seen at dawn.
- Numenius phaeopus* Present at all suitable areas, even in the city; most common at G.
- Limosa limosa* At times very common in flocks at G; one flock in Feb 1981 contained over 300 birds.
- Limosa lapponica* Small numbers seen occasionally at D and G.
- Tringa nebularia* Always present in numbers, and occasionally in flocks of 100 at D and G, during Feb and Mar.
- Tringa stagnatilis* A few usually present at G and occasionally at D.
- Tringa glareola* Sometimes present in irrigation ditches at the Airport; one record from G.
- Tringa ochropus* Often present in irrigation ditches at the Airport and in the marshy area next to the nearby Hotel Gbessia.
- Tringa hypoleucos* Most often found at G roosting in the mangroves at high tide but some birds always present at all other coastal sites.
- Tringa totanus* Usually found in flocks, often with *T. nebularia*, at D and G.
- Tringa erythropus* Several recorded at G in Apr 1980 among a mixed flock of waders.
- Arenaria interpres* A few (5-10) occasionally at G but odd birds seen at other places along the coast.
- Calidris alpina* Usually present at G in small numbers.
- Calidris ferruginea* Uncommon, but numbers increase from mid Mar while in Apr many are in full breeding plumage.
- Calidris minuta* Seen all round the coast, most common at G.
- Philomachus pugnax* Several disturbed from a flooded rice field near G on 5 Feb 1981 is the only record.
- Himantopus himantopus* Occasionally 2-3 at G and also recorded on mud flats near the docks in the city.
- Recurvirostra avosetta* Very common, at times several thousands, in G 7 and 18 Feb 1981 and suspected of roosting at high tide on the Iles de Los.
- Glareola pratincola* Sometimes present at G and about 20 seen flying over the Airport at dawn on 27 Apr 1980. Large flocks have been seen from the air on 8 Feb 1980 just north and south of Conakry, outside the area covered here.

Larus cirrocephalus A few usually at G.

Larus sabini About 20 seen on 30 Nov 1980 off F. The distinctive wing-pattern was seen as well as the dipping flight.

Larus fiscus Single birds seen occasionally at F and G.

[*Larus argentatus* Five gulls, possibly this species, seen resting on the sea at G on 18 Feb 1980.]

Rynchops flavirostris One at G in Feb 1980.

Sterna nilotica The commonest tern in the area: always present at G and at most other coastal sites.

Sterna caspia A few always present at G and also seen at most other coastal sites.

Sterna hirundo Occasionally seen at G during Feb 1981.

Sterna maxima Occasionally seen at any coastal site but most often at G.

[*Sterna sandvicensis* Two terns, possibly this species, seen at sea off G in Mar 1980.]

Sterna leucoptera A small flock in Apr 1980 at G.

Sterna hybrida Small flocks at G in Mar and Apr.

Sterna albifrons Occasional at G.

Streptopelia semitorquata Seen at A and in mangroves at G.

Streptopelia senegalensis Common throughout the area.

Turtur tympanistria Heard calling in the forest on Kakolima Hill.

Turtur afer Seen occasionally in scrub at G, A and on Kakolima.

+*Turtur abyssinicus* A small black-billed dove, possibly this species, seen in the Airport Creek area in Apr 1980.

Poicephalus senegalus Seen occasionally at Kipe.

Tauraco persa Seen on Kakolima Hill (Hendrick Jacobs, pers. comm.).

Crinifer piscator Seen once at A on 30 Mar 1980 and once at Kipe on 2 Feb 1981.

Clamator jacobinus Occasionally recorded in bush on the outskirts of the city and also in private gardens in the city.

Chrysococcyx caprius Calling in the Airport area throughout Nov 1980.

Centropus senegalensis Several pairs in A and the adjacent cemetery but also occurs in city suburbs such as B and at Kakolima Hill.

- Tyto alba* Three roosted in a hanger at the Airport during Mar 1980.
- Caprimulgus climacurus* Present in scrub in the Airport Creek area during Feb to May.
- Macrodipteryx longipennis* As previous species but also seen throughout the whole area.
- [*Apus aequatorialis* A very large brown swift seen over Kakolima in Nov was thought to have been this species.]
- Apus apus* Seen over Kakolima in Nov 1980 and Feb 1981.
- Apus affinis* Several small colonies in the city and one near the Airport.
- Cypsiurus parvus* Present in the city where there are palms.
- Ceryle maxima* Two records in Mangrove Creek near the Airport, on 16 Nov 1980 and 8 Apr 1980.
- Ceryle rudis* The commonest kingfisher, found on the coast and in creeks.
- Alcedo cristata* Always present at Sangaria Bay (G), and once feeding in spring at the Hotel Gbessia near the Airport.
- Ceyx picta* Once at the Botanical Gardens (A), on 22 Feb 1980.
- Halcyon senegalensis* Occasionally near Airport (C).
- Halcyon malimbica* Usually present in mangroves at Sangaria Bay (G); also a pair resident by a small creek in the city suburb of Daboni (B).
- Halcyon leucocephala* Pair resident at the Hotel Gbessia, near the Airport.
- Merops superciliosus* Occurs at Airport Creek and Sangaria Bay (G), feeding from mangroves, Feb-Apr 1980 and Feb 1981.
- Merops albicollis* Occurs in the same areas as the previous species but feeds from trees. Many juveniles/immatures in Feb 1981. Adults only Mar 1980.
- Merops pusillus* Very scarce, only two sightings: Sangaria Bay 30 Mar 1980 and Airport Creek 27 Apr 1980.
- [*Coracias abyssinica* A roller flying over the Airport in Nov 1980 was thought to have been this species.]
- Eurystomus glaucurus* Pair seen in tall trees near Yalaya Dam (I), 27 Apr 1980.
- Eurystomus gularis* One in the Botanical Gardens, 9 Mar 1980.
- Tockus fasciatus* Common on lower slopes of Kakoulima.
- Pogoniulus chrysoconus* Seen twice in scrub near the Airport (C), 28 Mar and 8 Apr 1980.

- Campethera nivos* One seen at Kakoulima in Feb 1981 in secondary forest.
- Mesopicos goertae* In scrub near the Airport (C) 8 Apr 1980, also three immatures in mangroves at Sangaria Bay (G), Feb 1981.
- Mirafr* *africana* Resident at the Airport.
- Galerida modesta* Resident at the Airport but found in drier, sandier places than the previous species.
- Hirundo rustica* Surprisingly, only small numbers seen.
- Hirundo smithii* Occasional, especially inland from Sangaria Bay.
- Hirundo abyssinica* Occasional anywhere in the area.
- Delichon urbica* Small flock flying high over the city in Jan 1980, also at Kakoulima on 9 Feb 1981.
- Psolidoprocne obscura* Several pairs at Kipé.
- Psolidoprocne nitens* Occurs on Kakoulima.
- Motacilla flava* Seen from Feb onwards, mostly females and immatures; in mid Apr 1980 hundreds flew over the Hotel Gbessia at dusk.
- Motacilla aguimp* Occasionally seen in the Airport area.
- Motacilla alba* Two seen at C, Jan 1982.
- Macronyx croceus* Resident at the Airport
- Dryoscopus gambensis* Once in mangroves at Sangaria Bay (G), 17 Feb 1981.
- Lanius collaris* Surprisingly observed only once, near Kipé.
- Oriolus* sp. An oriole called regularly in mangroves at Sangaria Bay during Feb 1981.
- Lamprotornis chalybaeus* One near Airport 16 Nov 1980.
- Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* A pair once seen feeding in scrub near the Airport, 16 Mar 1980.
- Corvus albus* A few resident throughout the area.
- [*Picathartes gymnocephalus* A bird possibly of this species disturbed among rocks on Kakoulima Hill.]
- Campephaga phoenicea* A female in the Botanical Gardens, 15 Feb 1980. A completely black male on Kakoulima in Feb 1981 may have been this species or *C. quisqualina*.
- Pycnonotus barbatus* Common everywhere.
- Anopadus gracilirostris* One seen in primary forest on Kakoulima, Nov 1980.

- Chlorocichla simplex* Occurs in thick undergrowth in the old Cemetery.
- Saxicola rubetra* Winter resident at the Airport, last date 18 Apr.
- Oenanthe oenanthe* One near Daboni, Nov 1980.
- Cossypha albicapilla* Pair resident in thickets in Daboni.
- Cossypha niveicapilla* Resident at old Cemetery, also in scrub adjacent to Airport Creek.
- Turdus pelios* Seen near Kipé, also on Kakoulima.
- Turdoides plebejus* Occurs in the old Cemetery and in scrub at the Airport Creek.
- Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* Common in mangroves at Airport Creek during Apr.
- Sylvia atricapilla* One seen feeding in a City garden, Jan 1982.
- Phylloscopus trochilus* Very common from early Feb to mid Apr, many in full song by the end of Mar.
- Cisticola cantans* Common in scrub at Airport near water; also present near Sangaria Bay (G).
- Cisticola galactotes* Occurs in scrub at Sangaria Bay.
- Cisticola juncidis* Common in dry scrub around the Airport.
- Prinia subflava* Quite common in areas of neglected cultivation all over the city.
- Hypergerus atriceps* One seen in coastal scrub near Sangaria Bay on 16 Mar 1980.
- Cameroptera brachyura* Common in the Botanical Gardens and the old Cemetery.
- Sylvietta brachyura* Seen occasionally in secondary growth at the Airport Creek.
- Macrosphenus concolor* One in the Botanical Gardens on 22 Feb 1980.
- Artomyias ussheri* Seen at Kakoulima on 9 Feb 1981.
- Melaenornis edolioides* Two seen in Nov near Fosside.
- Platysteira cyanea* Often seen in mangroves at Sangaria Bay (G).
- Terpsiphone rufiventer* Male seen in primary forest below the top of Kakoulima Hill.
- Terpsiphone viridis* Pair in overgrown cultivation on Kakoulima.

- Anthreptes gabonicus* Common in mangroves at Sangaria Bay and the Airport Creek, but also regularly seen feeding in palms, mangroves and other trees at Kipé.
- Nectarinia venusta* The commonest sunbird, found throughout; many birds are white-bellied.
- Nectarinia chloropygia* Quite common in the Botanical Gardens and the adjoining Cemetery.
- Nectarinia pulchella* Occasionally seen in the Airport area, in gardens and in mangroves at Sangaria Bay.
- Ploceus cucullatus* Very common in the Airport area and the outskirts of the city.
- Ploceus nigricollis* Present in numbers in the Botanical Gardens and Cemetery; nest-building in Mar.
- Euplectes ardens* Occurs in overgrown cultivation on lower slopes of Kakoulima, Nov 1980.
- Euplectes hordeaceus* Several displaying males in long grass and reeds at (I) and also at Airport Creek, Nov 1980.
- Euplectes macrourus* A few in overgrown cultivation on the lower slopes of Kakoulima, Nov 1980 and at the Airport Creek during the same period.
- Passer griseus* Fairly common near houses throughout the city.
- Vidua macroura* At least four males resident at the Airport.
- Estrilda melpoda* Group feeding in seeding grasses, Airport Creek, Nov 1980.
- Estrilda troglodytes* Large group feeding on seeding grasses, Airport Creek, Nov 1980.
- Estrilda astrild* Present in overgrown cultivation on the lower slopes of Kakoulima.
- Estrilda caerulescens* Several, possibly this species, disturbed in village of Kaporó, near (G).
- Lagonosticta senegala* Very common, found almost everywhere.
- Ortygospiza atricollis* Resident at the Airport in tall grass adjacent to irrigation ditches.
- Lonchura cucullata* Present wherever seeding grass available.

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