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A RANGE EXTENSION AND PROBABLE BREEDING RECORD OF THE BROWN NIGHTJAR  
(CAPRIMULGUS BINOTATUS BONAPARTE) IN SOUTHWESTERN CENTRAL AFRICAN  
REPUBLIC -

In the course of ecological investigations on the lowland gorilla and forest elephants in the Sangha Economique Prefecture of southwestern Central African Republic (CAR) (Figure 1) by RWC, an adult Brown Nightjar Caprimulgus binotatus was observed on 10 March 1986 perched on an arched Raphia sp. leaf apparently incubating eggs or brooding young. This would be a world first breeding record as well as a range extension for this species, previously recorded in Liberia and Ghana (three records altogether), southern Cameroon, northern Gabon, and north-central Zaire. This bird was approached to within two meters and did not fly. As shown in the accompanying photos, the irregular fanning of the breast feathers, together with a telltale soft white down feather or two combined with defensive gaping and the scatter of bird faeces on the palm leaf, all indicate that the bird was brooding young. (It is possible that, as noted for other species of the genus (Skutch 1972 Parent Birds and their Young, p 229), young may actually have been hatched on the ground and coaxed by the parent bird to the palm frond perch for brooding).

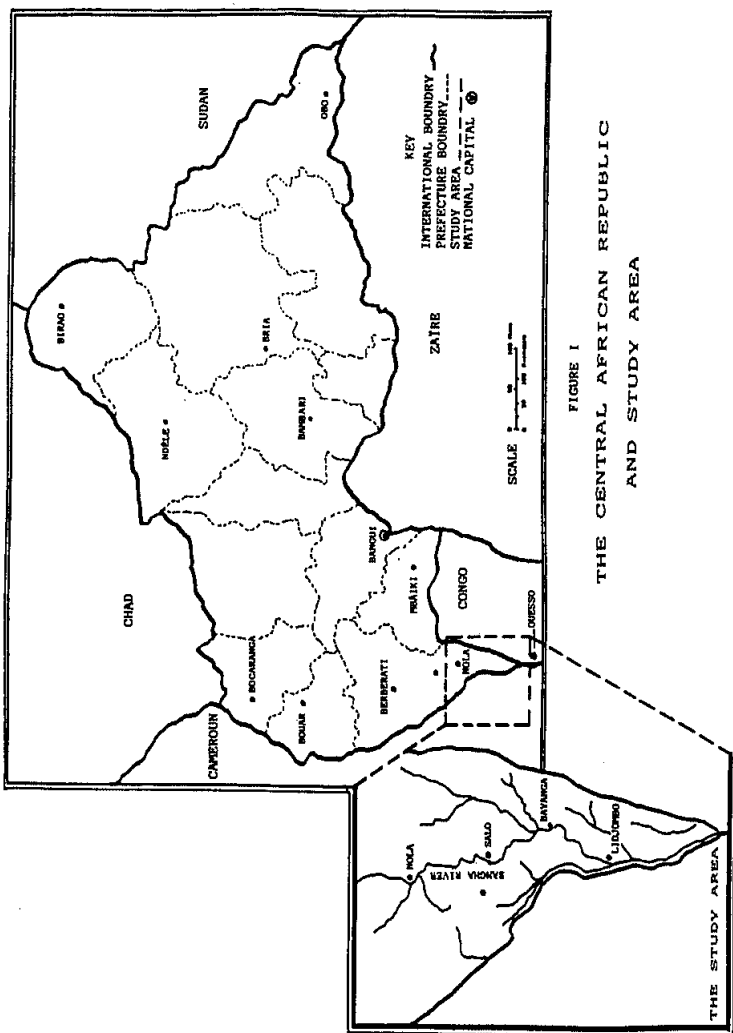
The photos show several points of interest: the tail is tented; the eyes are huge (A. Forbes-Watson, pers. comm., has noted that a Liberian bird also seemed to have large eyes for a night-jar); the ridged eyebrows make it look amazingly toad-like; the mouth is pink; besides the paired large white throat spot there is also a small white spot on the side of the neck (not noted in nine skins examined by CHF at the British Museum (Natural History)); and there is clearly a long off-white scapular line, noted by Bannerman, D.A. (1933, Birds of Tropical West Africa Vol. 3, p 168) as a "distinct diagonal buff band on the scapulars", and observed in 3 specimens from Zaire (held in Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, Tervuren, Belgium, M. Louette, pers. comm.).

The bird was observed on the edge of a flooded Raphia swamp. This flooded forest was in the midst of an area selectively logged in 1982 approximately 40 km northeast of Bayanga village on a branch of the Yobe stream at 03°10'N and 16°22'E. This dense forest area is a semi-deciduous ombrotrophile forest characterized by 1400 mm of rain annually distributed over a nine-month rainy season.

RWC was funded by the New York Zoological Society, World Wildlife Fund/US and Yale University. His studies have led to 4000 km<sup>2</sup> of forest in the southern tip of CAR being gazetted as the Dzanga-Sangha Dense Forest Wildlife Sanctuary and the Dzanga-Ndoki National Park. We thank S. Keith and M. Louette for comments on the manuscript.

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Brown Nightjar - Caprimulgus binotatus (Photo: R Carroll)

FIRST SIGHT RECORD OF THE BLACK-HEADED GULL FOR CAMEROON, WEST AFRICA -

On 19 December 1985 two Black-headed Gulls (Larus ridibundus) were observed along the Nyong River at Akonolinga, Cameroon (3°40'N, 12°15'E). A first-winter bird and an adult were observed for an hour (12.00-13.00 hours) using 9X binoculars at a distance of 75m. The birds swam on small temporary pools created by the receding river. These birds were seen again on 20 December (13.30-15.00 hours) at the same location. The first-winter bird was observed through a 15- 60X zoom spotting telescope as it foraged at distances as close as 50 m. At 15.00 hours the adult reappeared circling overhead. The first-winter bird began giving a high-pitched "begging" call and shortly thereafter flew up to join the adult. Both circled over the marsh several times before flying out of sight downstream.

The following description was made at the time of the observations:

Adult: Roughly the size and appearance of a Bonaparte's Gull (L. philadelphia), a species with which I am familiar from western North America. Bill slender, reddish and about the same length as the head. Head white with a dark ear spot. Throat, nape, underparts and tail white. Mantle and upper portions of inner wing light grey. Outer wing with extensive white leading edge bordered by black primary feather tips.

First-winter bird: Same size as adult. Bill slender, reddish-orange on basal two-thirds and dark on the tip. Head white with faint grey on crown and a dark ear spot. Underparts, throat and nape white. Tail white with a wide subterminal black band. Mantle and upper portion of inner wing light grey. Lesser and median wing coverts (carpal bar) brown. Outer wing with extensive white leading edge bordered by brown primary feather tips. Feet orange-red.