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C.H. Fry

II. Palaearctic Migrants. Sixty-five migrant bird species of undoubted Palaearctic origin have been recorded at Zaria by the author, P. Ward et al. (see Introduction, Bull. N.O.S. 5 p.9) over the last six years. A majority of these occur more-or-less regularly during the winter months and several species are very common and form one of the more conspicuous features of the Zaria avifauna for about half of the year. This Section of the paper deals with these 65 species, but omits several species recorded from the area which could be of Palaearctic origin but also have African breeding populations and are more likely to be of more local origin (various herons Ardea spp., Egretta spp. etc.; the Pratincole Glareola pratincola; etc., for which see Sections III & IV). Also excluded are four Palaearctic birds (the White Stork Ciconia ciconia, the Shoveler Spatula (Anas) clypeata, the Teal Anas crecca, and the Lesser Kestrel Falco naumanni) mentioned by Hartert (1915 : List of a small collection of birds from Hausaland, Northern Nigeria. Zool Zool. 22 : 244-266) since it is not always clear in this paper whether the records were from Zaria town or Zaria Province (however as Zaria is situated near the northern boundary of the Province it may be inferred, out of theoretical interest, that these birds almost certainly have entered the area under discussion here).

During the three years (September 1962 to June 1965) of my own observation in the Zaria area, a small number of Palaearctic passerines have been caught incidentally during netting operations for local birds. This has given opportunity for confirmation in the hand of the identity of some confusable species (Hippolais, Phyll scopus), and such birds have been ringed, but for the most part identification is on field observation only. Fortunately, however, most species are unmistakable (given a reasonable view) and in the Spring months many males assume fine breeding plumage. Undoubtedly though a huge volume of birds pass through unobserved and perhaps, of some species, unsuspected. No Nightingale Luscinia megarhynchos has yet been recorded at Zaria (although it is doubtless only a matter of time until it is), and there are rather few records of many dense-cover-loving passerines which must certainly be regarded as commoner than records suggest - leaf and Sylvia warblers and so on. A number of Palaearctic passerine species which are more-or-less common in thorn savannah to the North during the winter months (Bonelli's Warbler Phylloscopus bonelli, Chiffchaff Ph. collybita, Lesser Whitethroat Sylvia curruca, Subalpine Warbler S. cantillans, Spanish Wheatear Oenanthe hispanica and Isabelline Red-tailed Shrike Lanius (collurio = cristatus) isabellinus) do not extend as far South as Zaria, or else are vagrant only.

The geographical origin of the various migrants - so far as it can be determined from identified races with a circumscribed breeding range - is very wide, although mainly European (i.e. western Palaearctic) as would be expected. The great majority of Yellow Wagtails Budytes flavus at Zaria belong to the nominate race flavus which breeds over most of continental Europe; two breeding-plumaged male B.f.feldegg which breeds in the Balkan Peninsular and Asia Minor have been seen, and occasional B.f. thunbergi/cinereocapilla, respectively from the Baltic countries and the Mediterranean. A Bluethroat Cyanosylvia svecica netted belonged to the White-spotted race cyaneocula from central and southern Europe; a Subalpine Warbler is thought (CHF) to belong to the nominate race, breeding in the northern and western Mediterranean; the Red-throated Pipit anthus cervinus which is common on fadamas over much of Nigeria in winter breeds North of the Arctic circle only; and a Red-tailed Shrike which was shot was of the race speculigerus* of East Central Asia.

Morel & Bourlière (1962 : Relations ecologiques des avifaunes sédentaire et migratrice dans une savane sahélienne du bas Sénégal, La Terre et la Vie 4 : 371-393) have arrived at very interesting figures for the relative biomasses of sedentary and migratory birds in Senegal Sahel savannah. In October Palaearctic migrants constitute over 10% of the biomass; unfortunately comparable figures are not available for Zaria particularly or Guinea Savannah generally, but Fry (in press, ibid.) has shown that the commonest species at Zaria are, in descending order of abundance (passage migrants being excluded) :

Passerines : Yellow Wagtail, Redstart Phoenicurus phoenicurus, Red-throated Pipit, Whinchat Saxicola rubetra, Wheatear Oenanthe oenanthe with Whitethroat Sylvia communis, Woodchat Lanius senator.

Non-passerines : Pallid Harrier Circus macrourus, Kestrel Falco tinnunculus⁺, Wood Sandpiper Tringa glareola, Hoopoe Upupa epops[?], Green Sandpiper Tringa ochropus with Greenshank Glottis nebularius, Montagu's Harrier Circus pygargus, Little Stint Erolia minuta with Ruff Philomachus pugnax.

The habitat of Palaearctic birds - particularly passerines, at their winter quarters in Africa is often very different from that in their breeding range : necessarily, since comparable habitats often just do not exist in the two areas. Thus, as was pointed out by Meinertzhagen (1951 : Some relationships between African, Oriental and Palaearctic genera and species...Ibis 93 : 443-460) the Rock Thrush Monticola

*According to Vaurie (1959 : Birds of the Palaearctic Fauna. I- Passeriformes) the range is S.E. Russian Altai, throughout Outer Mongolia, North to southern Transbaikalia, to West Manchuria; but the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) in identifying the specimen point out that this race intergrades with isabellinus and phoenicuroides and that too much weight ought not to be given to presumed racial identity of a single wintering bird.

saxatilis in Europe is a wild shy bird of rocky outcrops, screes, and limestone bluffs, while in Nigeria its favoured habitat is rather open savannah woodland; it is rather tame here, and will even penetrate gardens as at Ahmadu Bello University.

The temporal distribution of selected Palaearctic species at Zaria is shown in the Table opposite. This shows that about 22 birds occur regularly over the winter months, mostly arriving in October and departing in March or April. A further five or six species are well-marked passage migrants, although it is interesting that for all three hirundines there are isolated January records in addition to well-defined Autumn and Spring passages. Three species are shown at a glance to be much commoner on the northward Spring passage than on the southbound Autumn - Red-footed Falcons Falco vespertinus, European Swifts Cypselus apus and Spotted Flycatchers Muscicapa striata, but in fact several other species are apparently commoner in Spring although occurring in considerable numbers on both passages (but note that at the end of the wet season in Autumn there is much more cover than at the end of the dry in Spring; thus birds are more likely to be seen in Spring).

For purposes of tabulation months are divided into quarters as in Smith : Pal. migrants at Vom...Bull. N.O.S. 6 p.29.

Ferruginous Duck Nyroca (Aythya) nyroca Vagrant as far South as Zaria. One only, on 8th January 1964. This bird was very shy, and an interesting behaviour was that it 'swam' from one pond to another over a few feet of intervening smooth wet mud, the head remaining outstretched and the body flattened in exactly the same posture as when swimming low at a shallow surface.

Pintail Dafila (Anas) acuta Rare. Single birds on two dates in October were probably Pintails. A flight of 38 including fine males over Samaru lake on 24th January.

Osprey Pandion haliaetus (Table 1.) Individuals may remain up to a fortnight.

Red-footed Falcon Falco vespertinus (Table 1.) On 20th April 1964 a flock conservatively estimated at 500, but very probably over three times this number, passed at a great height approximately NNE over Kufena Rock, Zaria. They were thermalling, and loose flocks stretched out of sight at opposite horizons. On 24th and 25th April 1965 huge flocks were passed through on a journey from Zaria to Jos and back. 7 or 8 discrete flocks were seen, the two largest each being some 2-2½ miles in length, if not diameter. Hundreds were in sight at once, looking more like Swallows than falcons; they were fit and apparently hunting, flying and circling low over the road, farmland and woodland, and may have been feeding on grasshoppers. Assuming that the flocks were confined to the vicinity of the road, 5,000 is still a conservative estimate.

I am not aware that the winter quarters are known, but the species is well-known to pass northwards up the western edge of the Jos Plateau in Spring.

Footnote cont. from p. 36 : † may include the local F.t. rufescens as well as the European F.t. tinnunculus. ♀ may include the local U. senegalensis.

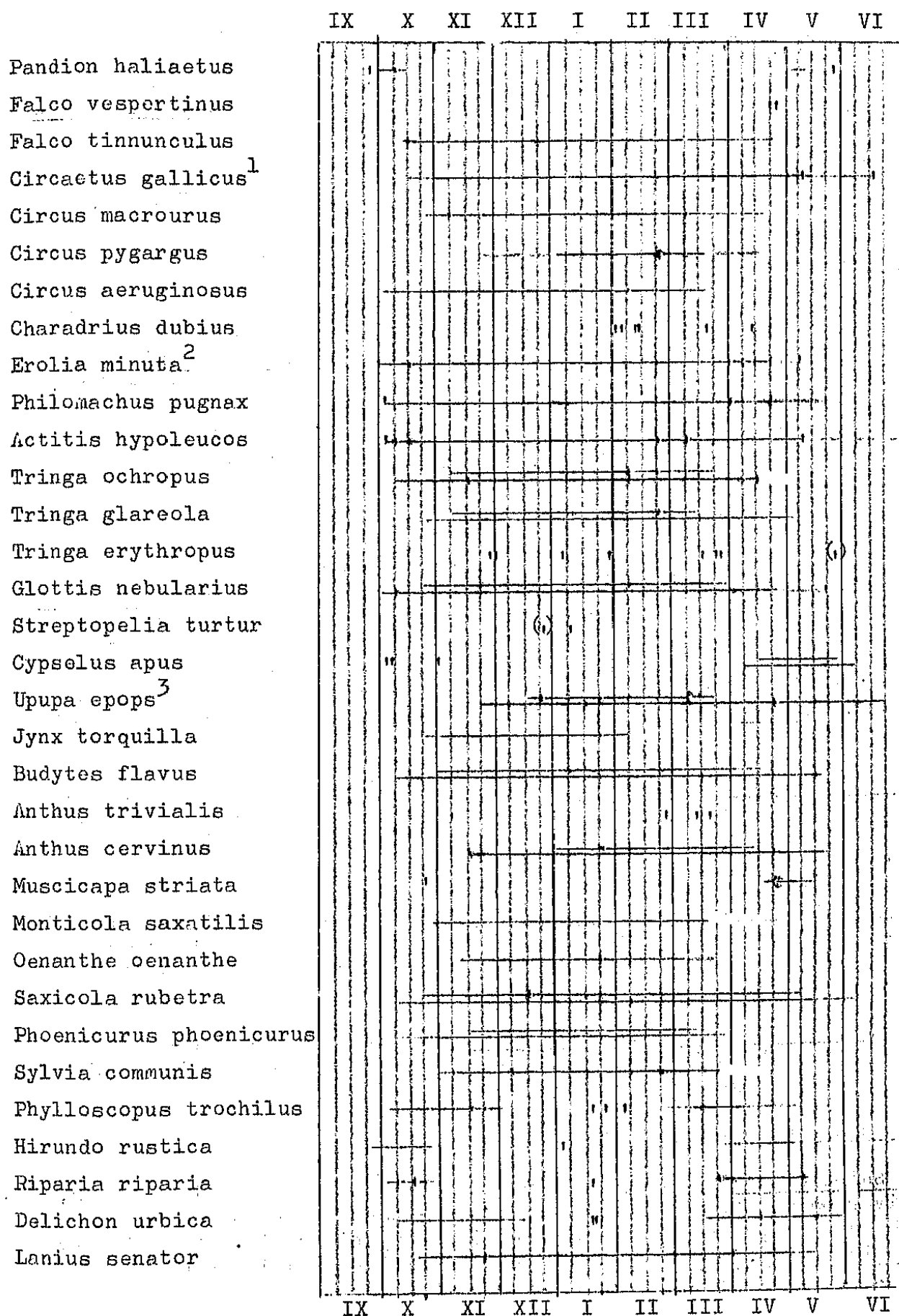


TABLE 1. THE TEMPORAL DISTRIBUTION OF SOME PALAEARCTIC MIGRANTS AT ZARIA, based on observation from September 1962 to June 1965.

Months are indicated by Roman numerals IX - XII ; I - VI, and each is divided into quarters (see p.). A solid line represents the regular occurrence of a species between its earliest and latest dates; a dotted line its probable regular occurrence. The mark , shows isolated occurrences, and () is a very probable but not fully substantiated record. Where there is a double horizontal line, the upper line represents the period of peak numbers. 1. may include *C. beaudouini*; 2. may include *E. temminckii*; 3. *U.e.epops* or *U.(e). senegalensis*. SEE ALSO TEXT.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* (Table 1.) Frequent from mid-October to the end of April. Hovering is rare, and has only been seen twice. Kestrels have been seen attending locust swarms, along with Lanners *F. biarmicus*. The race concerned is in doubt; the European *F. t. tinnunculus* is a partial migrant migrating into tropical Africa, but the Mountain Kestrel *F. t. rufescens* has been collected at Zaria and Serle (1943 : Further field observations on Northern Nigerian birds. *Ibis* 85 : 413-437) considered all the wintering Kestrels at Zaria to be of the local race.

Short-toed Eagle *Circus gallicus* The genus *Circus* presents considerable difficulty in identification; all four West African species have been recorded from Zaria Province (Bannerman), but I do not pretend to know the genus well and assume most of the records of the large *Circus* to be the present species rather than *beaudouini* since occurrences are in the winter months (but note paragraph above); P. Ward, who knows the Short-toed Eagle in Europe, was sure that all seen by him were *C. gallicus*. Regularly seen from the last week of October to the second week of May, with one (*C. beaudouini?*) on 17th June, an immature bird.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* (Table 1.)

Montagu's Harrier *C. pygargus* (Table 1.) 'Ringtail' harriers (the females and immatures of these two species and the Hen Harrier *C. cyaneus* which has not been shown to occur in West Africa) are commonly seen from 4th week October until 3rd week April. The Pallid Harrier is much the commoner, and I have seen only 11 male Montagu's Harriers at Zaria in 3 years. The earliest date for *C. macrourus* is 25th October; the earliest undoubted *C. pygargus* is in the 1st week January, and the latest ringtail 18th April.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* (Table 1.) Regular but rather uncommon 4th week October to 3rd week March. It prefers fadamas or flooded areas near the river, but also hunts widely over degraded savannah and farmland.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* (Table 1.) An uncommon migrant on the river Galma and smaller streams. One Autumn record, 1st November; several occurrences from February to April, generally of parties of 3 or 4 birds.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* Sporadic from 4th week October to 4th week April (22nd). Generally single birds or pairs, but an Autumn flock of 13.

Common Snipe *Capella gallinago*

Great Snipe *C. media* Snipe are regular in small numbers in marshes, on the river Galma flood-plain, and on water-meadows, notably the lower end of the airport, but are seldom identified specifically. The majority are *C. media*, but *C. gallinago* has been identified positively on a few occasions. From 1st November to 21st March.

Curlew-Sandpiper *Erolia testacea* 3. Spring records, in 1965 : 2nd February and 21st March; and 29th March (N.J. Skinner). All single birds.

(Dunlin *Erolia alpina* Two birds very probably of this species on 27th October 1963.)

Little Stint *Erolia minuta* (Table 1.) Fairly regularly noted on receding lakes and pools from 1st October to 21st April, but on the River Niger near Patoggi I have seen small flocks as late as 19th May. Many Zaria records from all months between October and April, of flocks of 5 to 15 birds. Temminck's Stint *E. temminckii* has never been positively identified here, and all observations of stints are thought to refer to the present species. (Addendum : one, Samaru, 8th May (N.J. Skinner).)

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*. Rare; four, Samaru lake 6th May. 1963.

Ruff Philomachus pugnax (Table 1.) Small flocks recorded from Maska Dam, Samaru lake and the river Galma in all months except February from 4th October to 22nd May. In March and April the legs become more intensely red-orange, and April records of Redshank (q.v.) which have been given to me very likely refer to Ruffs.

Common Sandpiper Actitis hypoleucos (Table 1.) Regular, but never very common 1st week October (earliest : 4th) to the first week May, with peaks in October/November and April :

X	XI	XII	I	II	III	IV	V	
18	10	5	7	5	8	22	4	... summed monthly totals.

A single bird at Maska on 7th July.

Green Sandpiper Tringa ochropus (Table 1.) Evenly but thinly distributed along sandy streams, in ones and twos. More than five will seldom be seen in a day's walk along such streams. About March, when the streams are drying, there is a tendency for Green Sandpipers to move onto lakes, but they certainly prefer less open situations. Earliest, 6th October; latest 15th April.

Wood Sandpiper Tringa glareola (Table 1.) There is a very sharp habitat separation of this and the preceding species, the Wood Sandpiper favouring the edges of lakes, and less commonly, wider stretches of the river Galma, while the Green Sandpiper is restricted during the earlier winter months to the many sandy streams, more or less well wooded, which meander through the savanna; such streams are about 5 metres wide and flow ceases soon, although standing pools remain until February or March.

At Maska and elsewhere Wood Sandpipers occur in flocks up to 30 on Autumn and Spring passages, and are common and widespread throughout the winter months, arriving in the 4th week October (earliest : 26th) and staying until the end of April (latest : 2nd May). Display and copulation have been seen in April. (/ 8th May - N.J.Skinner)

Redshank Tringa totanus One, 25th November 1962.

Dusky Redshank Tringa erythropus (Table 1.) Occasional from 25th November (11 birds) until 25th March, plus a probable on 29th May (G.Jones).

Greenshank Glottis nebularius (Table 1.) A rather common and widespread visitor during the winter months, arriving in the 1st week of October (earliest : 1st) and staying until the end of April (25th). The habitat is similar to that of the Green Sandpiper - small sandy streams in savannah, but the Greenshank also takes to the larger rivers like the Galma and Kaduna. (On the middle Niger this species was noticed daily from 18th to 22nd May). (Addendum: 22nd May - N.J.Skinner).

Marsh Sandpiper Tringa stagnatilis Uncommon; single birds or pairs on 28.XI, 9.XII, 8.I and 21-25.III. (excluding pre-1962 records).

Curlew Numenius arquatus One, Maska, date? (P.Ward). E.Butler (pers. comm.) said he heard Curlews overhead at Samaru at night several times.

Caspian Tern Hydroprogne caspia One, R.Galma, May 1959 (P.Ward).

White-winged Black Tern Chlidonias leucopterus Rare, although probably regular on the River Kaduna. Three on 25th May; four marsh terns probably of this species on 21st November and one on 1st January.

Whiskered Tern Chlidonias leucoparcia. One, 1st May, 1958 (P.Ward).

European Turtle-Dove Streptopelia turtur (Table 1.) A flock of 11+ at Maska Dam on 8th January 1964, and 14 birds almost certainly of this species at the same place on 27th December 1964. These would refer to

S.t.turtur, of which there is also a wintering concentration near Hadejia ($12\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ N., 10° E.) and not to the Saharan S.t.hoggara.

European Swift Cypselus apus (Table 1.) A well-defined passage migrant, with rather few Autumn records however, from 4th October to 2nd November. On the Spring passage very large flocks are recorded, either moving leisurely over open country, or over lakes, or on inselbergs, where the birds roost.

Pallid Swift Cypselus pallidus This species is included only with reservation, since specimens would be desirable to confirm field identification. In May 1963 there was a remarkable passage of swifts of several species, observed at Kufena Rock, Zaria, where the birds gathered in the late afternoons to roost. Pallid Swifts were identified by direct comparison with undoubted C. apus, C. molba, C. caffer, C. aequatorialis and Colletoptere affinis. Palm Swifts Cypsiurus parvus were also present. Numbers of C. pallidus were as follows :

May 12,	13,	14,	15,	16,	21st
15	20	150	few	3	1

Alpine Swift Cypselus melba One, Kufena Rock, 21st May 1963.

Hoopoe Upupa epops (Table 1.) I have been unable to ascertain the race of Hoopoes at Zaria. All records fall between the end of November and the middle of June, and birds could be the European U.e.epops or the local U.(c)senegalensis. Hoopoes are fairly common in well-wooded savannah and large mature gardens and are commonly heard. There are no local breeding records from Zaria. Earliest : 23rd November; latest : 21st June.

European Bee-eater Merops apiaster Casual: 20 on 29th September 1963, and 14 three days later. The voice is similar to that of the White-throated Bee-eater Aerops albicollis, which is very common on passage from mid-October to mid-November, so that voice records of the latter should always be checked visually.

Wryneck Jynx torquilla (Table 1.) Rather uncommonly recorded from 25th October until 7th February (1962/3 : 0; 1963/4 : 6; 1964/5 : 1) without exception in scantily-wooded heavily eroded country. Not a bird which gives itself away, and probably more common and widespread than records would indicate.

White Wagtail Motacilla alba Rare. Single birds 30th November and 17th January (river Galma).

Yellow Wagtail Budytes flavus (Table 1.) The commonest Palaearctic migrant at Zaria. Earliest, 22nd October; it is common by the first week of November and remains so until mid-April. Up to 100 have been seen per day in March, but no roosts have been found and Yellow Wagtails are less abundant than on the Plateau. Latest : 17th May. Most racially identifiable males are B.f.flavus; occasional B.f.thunbergi/cinereocapilla have been noted in January, and one B.f.feldegg on 8th January.

Tree Pipit Anthus trivialis Rarely recorded, but may be in fact a regular and not uncommon passage migrant. Positive records on 7th November; 27th February, and 11th and 22nd March. (Table 1.)

Red-throated Pipit Anthus cervinus (Table 1.) A very common, if inconspicuous, bird in suitable habitats from November (earliest : 15th) to the end of April (latest : 24th May). On short-grass meadows bordering Maska Dam, Samaru lake, and - particularly - on the river Galma flood-plain.

Spotted Flycatcher Muscicapa striata (Table 1.) The situation at Zaria is almost exactly the same as on the Plateau (Smith, Bull. N.O.S. 6). In the last three years I have only one Autumn record, a single bird on 26th October, but each Spring there is a short, well-defined passage involving a very large number of birds. Peak numbers occur from

about 24th April to 12th May, during a few days of which period in each year Spotted Flycatchers are very much in evidence in well-formed woodland as at Anara Forest Reserve near Kaduna, or in Zaria Forest Reserve. Earliest and latest dates for the Spring passage are 19th April and 13th May.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* (or Collared Flycatcher which is however very much rarer in Nigeria). Rare. A *Ficedula* identified on 27th February, and probables have been noted on 24th January and 16th March.

Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis* (Table 1.) This bird is thinly distributed from the beginning of November until mid-March (28th October; 15th March) in open erosion areas where low shrubs are scattered in stony gullies, or better wooded land and even gardens. As with Redstarts (to which I consider *Monticola* is closely related) there is considerable fidelity to a chosen circumscribed wintering area or territory. I have only 24 records in three years, spread evenly over the winter months.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* (Table 1.) Widespread and common from the middle of November until 1st week March. One of the earliest Palaearctic migrants to leave. Latest at Zaria 21st March (R.B.Walker); at Filinga (12° 40' N.), 31st March.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* (Table 1.) Another common and widespread winter visitor, in equivalent sorts of habitats to its Palaearctic ones - open farmland, edges of fadamas, fences and telegraph wires, degraded savannah with low shrubs, and particularly the wide floodplain of the river Galma. From mid-October to mid-May (9th October; 6th June).

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* (Table 1.) Common and widely distributed wherever there is sufficient cover; notably suburban, and along lightly wooded sandy streams, and in forest reserves, and thickets anywhere. Appears at Zaria with regularity about the first of November (earliest, 31st October), remaining within the same small area until mid-March (latest, 24th). Breeding plumage is acquired, or nearly so, before departure.

Bluethroat *Cyanosylvia svecica cyanecula* An adult netted at Maska Dam on 3rd December 1962. An immature bird had been glimpsed there the previous day. Inhabiting dense growths of *Mimosa pigra* and grasses standing in a few inches of water at the edge of the lake.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* (Table 1.) Frequently observed from 1st November until 24th March, but skulking, and doubtless commoner than records indicate. Little more than 50 casual records only, in 3 years.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* Rarely recorded, but probable frequent in dense thickets, although whether throughout the winter, or on passage only I cannot say. Netted on 17th and 26th November, and probable sight records on 31st October and 5th May.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* A female, A.B.U., 16th November 1964, (C.H.F.) and one same place 28th November 1964 (N.J.Skinner). An exceptional number of Blackcaps were recorded in Nigeria that Autumn.

Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans* One shot (*S.c.cantillans?*), a male, A.B.U. 13th December 1962. A male watched same place 25th February 1964. Both in garden hedges.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta* There is a useful and well-illustrated discussion of this difficult genus in Wallace (1964: Field-identification of *Hippolais* warblers. Brit. Birds 57: 282-301).

There are 4 definite Spring records of H. icterina at Zaria : 19th April (killed at night against wires at Jaji Transmitting Station, Kaduna road), 25th April (2 birds, field obs.), 12th May (netted) and 31st May (killed by cat). In addition field records on 13th, 22nd (2) and 23rd April probable refer to icterina. Thus the pattern of migration at Zaria is similar to that at Vom (Smith, *ibid.*). The question is, what happens to the Melodious Warblers which winter over much of Nigeria - why do they not appear on Spring passage in the North? Undoubtedly H. polyglotta is much more widespread and frequent in Nigeria in winter than H. icterina, and it winters exclusively in West Africa (Bannerman). At Zaria I have identified singing Melodious Warblers on 12th December, 12th and 16th March, with a probable on 24th February.

Olivaceous Warbler Hippolais pallida One stayed in my garden (I failed to net it) from 11th December 1964, when it was singing, until 8th March 1965. No other Zaria record, although this species I would judge to be common further North in the dry season e.g. in Kano, Potiskum, Maiduguri, Lake Watu (near Sokoto) and at Kwatarkwashi I have found singing H. pallida frequently to commonly from November to February. A Potiskum bird was H. p. opaca.

Reed Warbler Acrocephalus scirpaceus Included on the strength of one singing at Birni'n Gwarri on 30th March, but almost certainly occurs regularly, if sparsely, around Zaria.

Sedge Warbler Acrocephalus schoenobaenus Regular in reedy water-side situations, riverine Mimosa thickets etc., from 25th October to 23rd March. Not particularly common.

Willow Warbler Phylloscopus trochilus (Table 1.) Regular, but recorded less frequently than for example the Whitethroat, from mid-October (earliest, 4th) to April. Latest certain record 8th April; but Phylloscopi very probably of this species on 27th April and 12th May. Once heard singing in February.

Wood Warbler Phylloscopus sibilatrix Rarely recorded, but probably commoner than records would indicate on passage. Positively identified on 30th March (Birni'n Gwarri), 13th April, 19th April (killed at Jaji Transmitting Station), 13th April and 15th May. A probable Wood Warbler on 28th November.

European Swallow Hirundo rustica (Table 1.) Passage migrant in very substantial numbers. Flocks of 10 - 30 in Autumn from 27th September (earliest) to 28th October (latest), and larger flocks or broad-front movements in Spring from 25th March to 2nd May. One mid-winter record, of 3 birds at Samaru lake on 5th January.

Sand Martin Riparia riparia (Table 1.) Passage migrant in small numbers. Outside dates : 4th to 27th October; 21st March to 10th May. A single bird on 17th January was of the present species and not R. paludicola which is widely distributed locally.

House Martin Delichon urbica (Table 1.) Passage migrant, often seen in large flocks (c.200 birds). Outside dates : Autumn, 6th October to 9th December; Spring, 16th March to 30th May. The peak Autumn passage is in the last week of October to 3rd week November, but House Martins have been seen regularly until the December date. There is no defined Spring peak. An interesting mid-winter record is of a flock of 30 birds on 19th January.

Great care should be taken to distinguish House Martins from Preuss' Cliff-Swallow Lecythoplastes preussi, since the two birds resemble each other closely in plumage, size, behaviour (even voice) and habitat, and frequently occur in mixed flocks together. In fact, given a reasonable view, there should be no difficulty; the House Martin is cleaner cut, more boldly black-and-white, with black cap sharply demarcated from pure white throat and underside, white rump, and black back. Preuss'

Cliff-Swallow is less boldly contrasted. The rump is off-white or pinkish, the black back streaked with whitish, the underside off-white rather than pure white, and there is a dark chestnut wedge through and behind the eye. It is not at all the rare bird that Bannerman makes it out to be.

Red-tailed Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* One, 8th January 1964 and one on 21-23rd March 1964. The former was on the river Galma flood-plain, and the latter, which was shot after prolonged unsuccessful attempts to net it and proved to be *L.i.speculigerus*, was at Samaru lake.

Woodchat *Lanius senator* (Table 1.) A regular visitor, common and widespread outside the more heavily wooded areas, from the beginning of November to the end of April (earliest, 20th October; latest, 15th May). Peak numbers apparently in November, January and April :

X	XI	XII	I	II	III	IV	V	
3	10	3	16	5	7	20	5	... summed monthly totals.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* A male, Kufena Rock, Zaria on 25th December 1963.

BREEDING OF THE YELLOW-THROATED LONG-CLAW

MACRONYX GROCEUS GROCEUS

J.R.Lang

The Long-claw has a long breeding season, as noted by Bannerman (Birds of Trop. West Afr., Vol IV p. 83-87) who states that August seems to be the principal month, but gives evidence of eggs found at Lokoja on 10th April, and half-fledged young at Ikoyi on 24th October, and details of nests found in every intermediate month. He also gives a good description (p. 87) of building operations. Vol. VIII p.372 contains a good description of the typical nest.

On the Jos Plateau, July and August have been accepted as the main breeding months by V.W.Smith^{1,2}. Last year I found five nests within full view of our house at Vom, from July to October, and already this year the birds are paired off, and one of a pair was seen collecting nesting material on 15th May. On 29th December, at the Vom wagtail roost, I saw a family of three long-claws consisting of male, female and a youngster. This is six miles from our house, so presumably indicates another very late brood (perhaps late October?). How long is a Yellow-throated Long-claw family likely to remain together ?

All nests found have been constructed of an outer grass structure and a neat inner lining of rootlets; they have all been open cups placed at the base of a tussock of grass. Only two of the nests were occupied, each having two eggs only.