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BIRD OBSERVATIONS ON A LIVERPOOL-LAGOS VOYAGE

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The following is an account of the bird-life encountered on a voyage from Liverpool to Lagos made on the m.v. Apapa (Elder Dempster Lines) between 28th August and 10th September 1964. Brief excursions were made ashore at the three ports of call - Bathurst, Freetown and Tema. The ship's route and position at sundown each day are shown in Fig. 1.

The trip was memorable for the happy concurrence on board of a fair number of ornithologists; it was decided to summarise records of observations in a joint report.

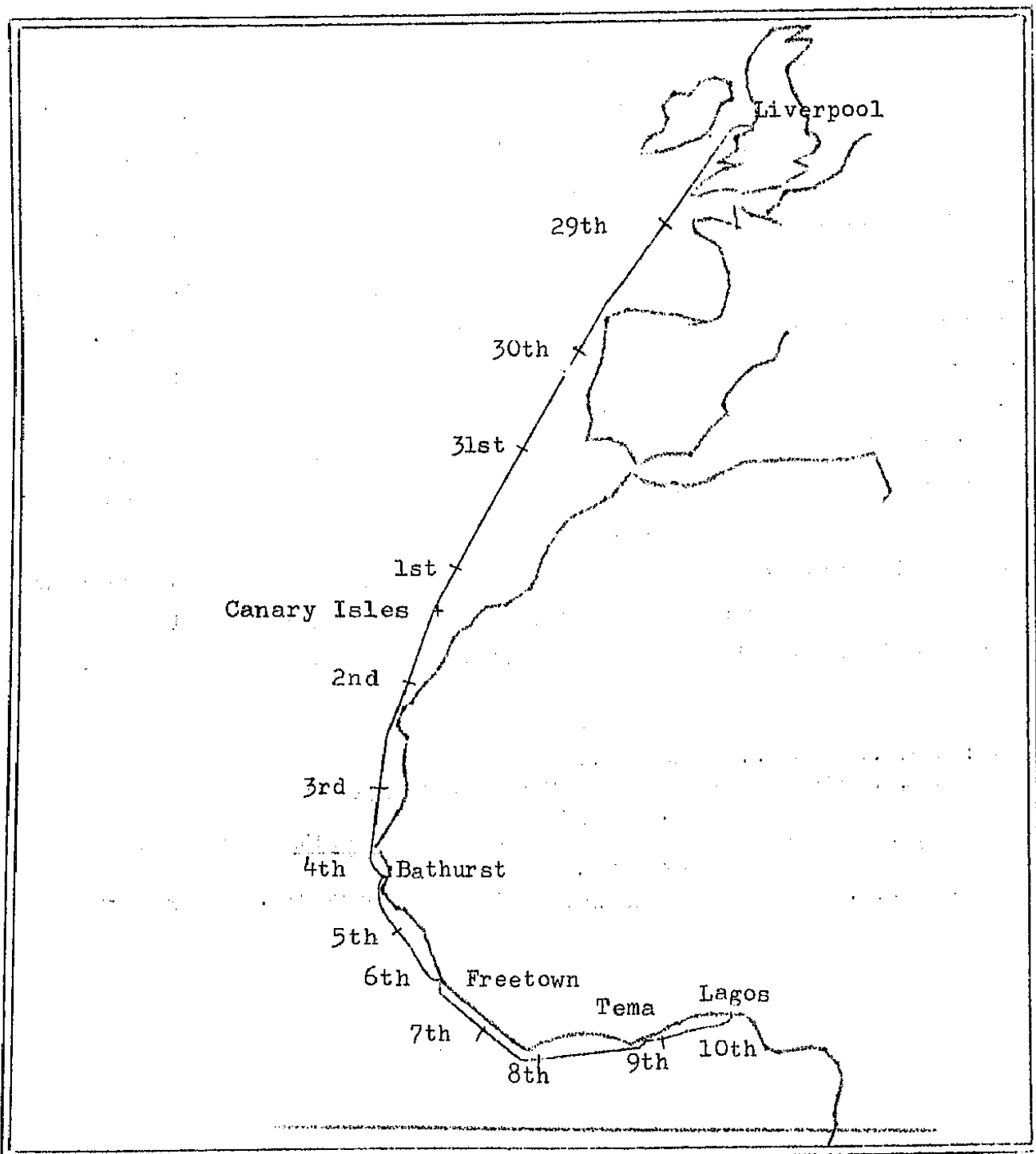


Fig. 1. Route of m.v. Apapa, 28th August to 10th September. The approximate position at sundown each day is indicated.

28th August. Left Liverpool evening - an Arctic Skua Stercorarius parasiticus seen mobbing Common Terns Sterna hirundo from docked ship. Following the ship in the Irish Sea : Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls Larus argentatus and L. fuscus, Gannets Sula bassana and Kittiwakes Rissa tridactyla.

29th August. a.m.: a few Lesser Black-backs and Herring Gulls still following the ship, at a distance. Kittiwakes and Gannets common. An abundance of Manx Shearwaters Procellaria puffinus, and a single Greater Black-backed Gull Larus marinus.

30th August. A few Lesser Black-backs following the ship in the morning. 3 Sandwich Terns Sterna sandvicensis; small flocks of Grey Phalaropes Phalaropus fulicarius; Kittiwakes; and a Turtle-Dove Streptopelia turtur flying over the ship and seen to perch in the afternoon.

Aboard in afternoon : Willow Warbler Phylloscopus trochilus; Wood Warbler P. sibilatrix, Spotted Flycatcher Muscicapa striata, Pied Flycatcher Ficedula hypoleuca, Wheatear Oenanthe oenanthe and Redstart Phoenicurus phoenicurus. Also seen : Dunlin Calidris alpina, Cory's Shearwater Procellaria diomedea, Storm Petrel Hydrobates pelagicus, Great Skua Stercorarius skua, and Sooty Shearwater P. grisea.

31st August. At dawn, a Redstart in a state of exhaustion; a Turtle-Dove keeping close to the ship.

1st September. A Turtle-Dove on board in morning. One Sooty Shearwater in the afternoon.

2nd September. The Canaries were passed about 0300 hrs. Cory's Shearwater and c.150 Wilson's Petrels Oceanites oceanicus in the wake.

3rd September. Madeiran Petrels Oceanodroma castro were around the ship during the morning, and three were found aboard at 1230 hrs. Little Tern Sterna albifrons, Pomarine Skua Stercorarius pomarinus, Noddy Anous stolidus, Sandwich Tern, Common Sandpiper Actitis hypoleucos; a few Wilson's Petrels in the wake in the evening.

Turtle-Doves were on board and around the ship all day; a Hoopoe Upupa epops and a Wood Warbler appeared on board.

4th September. At Bathurst from 1230 hrs to 1730 hrs. Dunlin, Common Tern, Whimbrel Numenius phaeopus, Hoopoe, Turtle-Dove (on board), African Royal Tern Sterna maxima, Pomarine Skua, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Brown-headed Gull Larus ridibundus.

During a visit to marshes behind Bathurst from 1500 to 1800 hrs. (a 'maritime savannah' environment with mangrove, Zyziphus scrub, and Baobabs) the following were recorded :

<u>Phalacrocorax lucidus</u>	White-breasted Cormorant	8	<u>Limosa limosa</u>	Black-tailed Godwit	15
<u>P. africanus</u>	Long-tailed Shag	2	<u>Numenius phaeopus</u>	Whimbrel	3
<u>Pelecanus(rufescens)</u>	(Grey) Pelican	39	<u>Larus fuscus</u>	Lesser Black-backed Gull	3
<u>Ardea cinerea</u>	Grey Heron	6	<u>Larus cirrocephalus</u>	Grey-headed Gull	20
<u>Casmerodius albus</u>	Great White Heron	2	<u>Hydroprogne caspia</u>	Caspian Tern	30
<u>Dendrocygna gularis</u>	W.Afr. Reef Heron	8	<u>Sterna sandvicensis</u>	Sandwich Tern	15
<u>Butorides striatus</u>	W.Afr. Green-backed Heron	5	<u>S. maxima</u>	Royal Tern	50
<u>Ibis ibis</u>	Wood Ibis	108	<u>S. albifrons</u>	W.Afr. Little Tern	20
<u>Necrosyrtes monachus</u>	Common Vulture	7	<u>Chlidonias niger</u>	Black Tern	200
<u>Oedinenus senegalensis</u>	Sonagal Thick-knee	15	<u>Columba guinea</u>	Speckled Pigeon	10
<u>Charadrius hiaticula</u>	Ringed Plover	1	<u>Streptopelia semitorquata</u>	Red-eyed Turtle-Dove	1
<u>Squatupia squatarola</u>	Grey Plover	1	<u>Stigmatopelia senegalensis</u>	Laughing Dove	15
<u>Hoplopterus spinosus</u>	Spur-winged Plover	10	(<u>Turtur afer</u>	Red-billed Wood-Dove	1
<u>Himantopus himantopus</u>	Black-winged Stilt	12	<u>T. abyssinica</u>	Black-billed Wood-Dove	1
<u>Erolia alpina</u>	Dunlin	7	<u>Centropus senegalensis</u>	Sonagal Coucal	3
<u>E. minuta</u>	Little Stint	1	<u>Colletoptera affinis</u>	Little African Swift	60
<u>Calidris canula</u>	Knot	1	<u>Cypsiurus parvus</u>	Palm Swift	26
<u>Philomachus pugnax</u>	Ruff	6	<u>Corylo rudis</u>	Pied Kingfisher	3
<u>Arenaria interpres</u>	Turnstone	10	<u>Melittophagus pusillus</u>	Least Bee-eater	2
<u>Actitis hypoleucos</u>	Common Sandpiper	12	<u>Galerida cristata</u>	Crested Lark	10
<u>Tringa totanus</u>	Redshank	12	<u>Ixobrychus flavus flavus</u>	Blue-headed Wagtail	20
<u>Glottis nebularius</u>	Greenshank	1	<u>Cisticola juncidis</u>	Gold Coast Fantail Warbler	13
<u>G. stagnatilis</u>	Marsh Sandpiper	5	<u>C. galactotes</u>	Rufous Grass-Warbler	8

Hirundo (aethiopica)	(Ethiopian) Swallow	40	Nectarinia pulchella	Beautiful Long-tailed Sunbird	2
Laniarius barbarus	Barbary Shrike	1	Plesiositagra cucullatus	Village Weaver	1
Corvus albus	Pied Crow	4	Euplectes hordacea	Fire-crowned Bishop	4
Ptilostomus afer	Black Magpie	13	Lagonosticta senegala	Senegal Fire-Finch	20

5th September. Grey Phalarope, Wilson's Petrel, Sandwich Tern.

6th September. Freetown from 0900 hrs to 1230 hrs. The hills above the town were visited; they consist of mature secondary growth with cultivated clearings along the streams; the avifauna apparently bears a close similarity to that at Ilaro (Western Nigeria) with two exceptions - Hooded Vultures and Crimson Seed-crackers Pyrenestes sanguineus (coccineus) were seen at Freetown.

The following species were noted :

Necrosyrtes monachus	Hooded Vulture	4	Andropodus virens	Little Green Bulbul	8
Turturoena iriditorques	Bronze-naped Pigeon	2	Melocichla montalis	Mustached Scrub-Warbler	2
Turtur afer	Red-billed Wood-Dove	1	Hirundo sonirufa	Rufous Chested Swallow	4
Turacus persa	Gold Coast Touraco	2	Dryoscopus gambensis	Gambian Puff-backed Shrike	2
Centropus senegalensis	Senegal Coucal	3	Tchagra senegala	Black-crowned Tchagra	2
Colletoptera affinis	Little African Swift	3	Nicator chloris	Green Nicator	1
Cypsiurus parvus	Palm Swift	2	Zosterops senegalensis	Yellow White-eye	1
Pogonotulus scolopaceus	Speckled Tinker-bird	1	Cinnyris chloropygius	Olive-bellied Sunbird	1
Hypergerus atriceps	Oriole Dabbler	2	Hylia prasina	Green Hylia	1
Pycnonotus barbatus	Common Bulbul	4	Spermestes cucullatus	Bronze Mannakin	1
Pyrrhurus simplex	Simple Leaflove	1	S. poensis	Blue-billed Mannikin	2
Baeopogon indicator	White-tailed Greenbul	2	Pyrenestes sanguineus	S. Leone Crimson Seed-Cracker	2
Phyllostrephus baumanni	Baumann's Greenbul	4	coccineus		

In Freetown Harbour : Wilson's Petrel, Whimbrel, Black Tern, Royal Tern, Sandwich Tern and Grey Phalarope.

7th September. Wilson's Petrel at stern, and 4 Sandwich Terns.

8th September. Pomarine Skua, Black Tern and Wilson's Petrel.

9th September. Ship docked at Tamo harbour, and we paid a visit to Sekume Lagoon 4 miles to the West, from 1030 to 1230 hrs. This is a shallow brackish lagoon on the Accra Plain savannah. Birds recorded :

Anhinga rufa	African Darter	15	Sterna sandvicensis	Sandwich Tern	4
Casmerodius albus	Great White Heron	12	S. maxima	Royal Tern	60
Egretta garzetta	Little Egret	10	S. albifrons	Little Tern	25
Butorides striatus	Green-backed Heron	1	Streptopelia semitorquata	Red-eyed Turtle-Dove	3
Elanus caeruleus	Black-shouldered Kite	1	Stigmatopelia senegalensis	Laughing Dove	6
Squatarola squatarola	Grey Plover	1	Colletoptera affinis	Little African Swift	20
Leucopolijs pecuarius	Kittlitz' Sand-Plover	6	Coryle rudis	Pied Kingfisher	8
Actitis hypoleucos	Common Sandpiper	6	Motacilla alba	White Wagtail	1
Tringa ochropus	Green Sandpiper	1	Macronyx croceus	Yellow-throated Long-claw	8
Numenius phaeopus	Whimbrel	6	Hirundo aethiopica	Ethiopian Swallow	6
Glottis nebularius	Greenshank	5	Cisticola sp.		6
Glaucola pratincola	W. Afr. Pratincolo	60	Cinnyrus cupreus	Copper Sunbird	1

ADDITIONS TO LOCAL AVIFAUNAS

Ilaro. A number of additional species have been observed at Ilaro, Western Region, since the account given in Bull. N.O.S. 1 (1964, p.5-7). Further work since September 1964, when I returned from leave, necessitates a reassessment of the status of some of the birds appearing in the original list.

Additional species :

Machaerhamphus alcinus	Bat Hawk	Occasional visitor
Coturnix delegorguei	Harlequin Quail	Rare visitor (see p.)
Afroxyechus forbesi	Forbes' Banded Plover	Frequent, dry season '64/5