



West African Ornithological Society
Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest
Africain



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Chlorophoneus multicolor is one of the more extreme examples of polymorphism throughout its wide African range; there are five varieties (phases or morphs) altogether (Huxley, 1964) of which three occur in West Africa. The colour variations are limited to the underparts from the chin to the lower breast, and the extremities of the retrices; the belly and under-tail coverts are yellowish-orange and the rest of the tail dark green in each case. The three Upper Guinea phases are:

(i) Chin to lower breast scarlet; tips of retrices reddish-orange. The specimen caught in the house was of this phase.

(ii) Chin to lower breast orange; tips of retrices yellowish-orange. The example netted belonged to this phase.

(iii) Chin to lower breast black, continuous with black eye-mask; tips of retrices yellowish-orange; mantle and crown blueish-grey, forehead whitish; green wings with yellow-spotted remiges, green rump, and yellowish-orange belly and under-tail coverts - a strikingly handsome variety.

Of the nine sightings at Ilaro five have been of the scarlet phase, three of the orange and one of the black, observed on 7th September 1965 in a bird army consisting mainly of bulbuls and malimbes. The scarlet phase is restricted to West Africa and is evidently the commonest one there; the orange phase is the most widespread in the Continent and is quite common in West Africa, but the black phase has a discontinuous and restricted distribution (Huxley, op. cit.) and is rare. Chapin (1947) cites only five records of the black phase from West Africa, but Serle (1950) collected four more at Kumba, 60 miles North of Victoria in the Cameroons, where he also collected 7 scarlet and 4 orange phase birds. Bannerman (1953) gives this Kumba instance as the only record to date of the three phases turning up at one locality, and the present Ilaro instance is a second.

J. A. Button

References Bannerman, D.A. (1953) *The Birds of West and Equatorial Africa* 2. Edinburgh

Chapin, J.P. (1947) Color variations in shrikes of the genus Chlorophoneus. *Auk* 55: 53-64.

Huxley, J.S. (1964) Article 'Polymorphism' in Thomson, A.L. (ed.) *New Dict. Birds*. London & New York

Serle, W. (1950) A contribution to the Ornithology of the British Cameroons. *Ibis* 92: 343-376, 602-638.

Birds of Tivland. The following observations of Birds in Benue Province are supplementary to those made by Gray (1) though I appreciate that he did not intend to make his list comprehensive.

Pygmy Goose Nettapus auritus. A pair on the flooded Katsina Ala River on 15th August 1959.

White Throated Francolin Francoolinus albogularis. Two shot on the edge of farmland near Yandev 14th August 1958. I noticed that in this area this Francolin could often be heard and flushed from rank grass beside cultivated areas. In the South of Kano Province I have only seen this bird on ironstone outcrops in fringing forest. See Fry (2) also in Zaria Province.

Red Headed Lovebird *Agapornis pullaria*. I have frequently wondered at the source of the large number of Lovebirds that are exported periodically or sold locally. Whilst driving round Makurdi town I saw cages containing several hundred lovebirds suggesting that this Province is one of the sources.

White Breasted Cuckoo Shrike *Coracina pectoralis*. One seen near Yandev
14 August 1958.

Cabani's Bunting *Emberiza cabanisi*. A pair seen near Yandev on 15th August 1958

Compact Weaver *Pachyphantes pachyrhynchus*. A pair of Compact Weavers were found beside a small stream of Yandev Agricultural Department Farm.

R. E. Sharland.

(1) Gray, H.H. (1965) Some notes on the birds of Tivland. Bull. Nig. Orn. Soc. 7: 66-68.

(2) Fry, C.H. (1965) The birds of Zaria. III - Residents, vagrants and checklist (non-passerines). Bull. Nig. Orn. Soc. 7: 68-79.

Netting Hirundines by Flicking. One of the methods used in bird catching in both Britain and South Africa is known as 'flicking'.

It is a more active sport than most netting and can be used for Swallows, Martins and Swifts.

Select a site where your birds fly low (as they frequently do in Eastern Nigeria). Secure one end of the net to a pole or tree, fasten a short length of string to the upper ^{loop} of the other end of the net and tie the other end of the string on to a short pole which you hold in your hand much the same way as a fishing rod.

Let the net lie flat on the ground and as the birds fly over it raise the rod smartly.

Most of the Swallows caught at Cape Province in South Africa are caught by this method. I have found it works quite well in Kano but nearly all the Swallows here are the local non-migratory H. aethiopica.

R. E. Sharland.

Pygmy Goose Breeding in Nigeria I can find no records of the Pygmy Goose Nettapus auritus breeding in Nigeria though Sander (Nigerian Field XXI:153) records young birds near Lagos in June, and on 19th September 1961 I saw two adults accompanied by a pair of juveniles on a seasonal marsh near Kano.

On 15th August 1965, I stopped at a bridge near Birnin Kudu on the main Maiduguri Road. The river was high as a result of recent rains. A short way upstream there was a bare tree about 80ft high standing in deep water.

Four pairs of Pygmy Geese were sitting on the tree. Occasionally one of the birds would fly down to the river and return with food in its beak. If a male bird it would then pass it to a duck, who would hop along the branch to a hole and feed young birds inside. Ducks sometimes fetched food themselves but most of the 'fishing' seemed to be done by drakes.

It was impossible to scale the tree without a boat and ropes and it was very difficult to see into the holes but a bird's head was definitely seen at one hole. Pygmy Geese were seen to carry food to three separate holes.