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RECENT OBSERVATIONS OF BIRDS FROM THE IVORY COAST

by C. S. Balchin

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Four weeks in December and January 1987/88 were spent in the Ivory Coast with B. Reed and S. Cook. The status of some species appears to have changed since Thiollay (1985a). The list below shows only sightings of rarer species including four Red Data Book (Collar & Stuart 1985) species Agelastes meleagrides, Picathartes gymnocephalus, Campephaga lobata and Criniger olivaceus and sightings in new areas, with eight additions to the Ivory Coast list. Particularly note-worthy were the observations made during seven days spent in Tai forest, a rich area which deserves further study. A list of 233 species for Tai has been made by Thiollay (1985b). A nest of Prinops caniceps was found in Tai, which has not been described before.

COMMENTS

These records tend to show continuing southern movement of species into the Ivory Coast from the drying Sahel region, the apparent increase in Bush Petronia (Petronia dentata) being the best example. Similar observations of arid-zone species occurring further South than previously noted have been made by Fry (1973, 1975) in Nigeria. There also appears to be an increase in the number of Palearctic migrants especially in Hirundines. There is a vast amount of work still to be done and the extra 20-30 possible species mentioned by Thiollay may be conservative.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Phalacrocorax africanus Reed Cormorant. One or two seen on the river at Lamto, an area not mentioned by Thiollay (1985a).

Egretta gularis Western Reef Heron. Small numbers noted on river at Lamto, this habitat is not mentioned by Thiollay. Also one seen from the barrage east of Duékoué. (cf. Walsh, 1987)

Anas acuta Pintail. New record - six seen together at Dabou, originally found by L. Fishpool and R. Demey.

Plectropterus gambensis Spur-Winged Goose. One seen at Dabou, further south than noted by Thiollay (1985a).

Dryotriorchis spectabilis Congo Serpent Eagle. One seen at forest edge overlooking river at Lamto by B. Reed.

Hieraaetus dubius Ayres' Hawk Eagle. One seen deep in forest at Yapo.

Falco chicquera Red-Necked Falcon. Two birds seen in Comoé, presumably a pair.

Agelastes meleagrides White-Breasted Guinea fowl. This species is considered to be "endangered" in the Red Data Book (Collar & Stuart 1985). Two parties seen in late afternoon at Tai, the first party

consisted of 4-5 adults with a very young chick, the second consisted of c. 20 adults. On both occasions the birds drew attention to themselves by their noisy scraping of the leaf litter in search of food. The sightings were all in closed forest but with a fairly open understory. We never heard the more numerous Crested Guineafowl (Guttera edouardi) feeding, so this behaviour may be a good way of locating the species. Also noted by Thiollay (1985b).

Philomachus pugnax Ruff. One seen at Dabou.

Rostratula benghalensis Painted Snipe. One seen at Dabou.

Glareola pratincola Common Pratincole. Flock of 10-12 birds on farm at ORSTOM, Adiopodoumé.

Glareola cinerea Grey Pratincole. New record - A flock of five seen flying up the River Bandama at Lamto by S. Cook.

Chlidonias hybrida Whiskered Tern. One seen at Dabou.

Rynchops flavirostris African Skimmer. One spent whole morning flying up and down River Bandama at Lamto.

Columba livia Feral Pigeon. Not included in Thiollay, but seen in Abidjan and Ferkességoudou.

Psittacus erithacus Grey Parrot. The birds seen in Tai appeared to have all-grey tails, rather than the maroon colour reported in Fry et al. (1988). This species was noted by Thiollay (1985b).

Agapornis pullaria Black-Collared Lovebird. Five seen feeding in palm in clearing at Yapo. This is a regular site according to L. Fishpool.

Chrysococcyx flavigularis Yellow-throated Green Cuckoo. A female seen at Tai and noted by Thiollay (1985b).

Caprimulgus nigriscapularis Black-shouldered Nightjar. New record - One seen well in spotlight on lower slopes of Mount Tonkoui.

Neafrapus cassini Cassin's Spinetail. Small groups seen frequently at Tai and noted by Thiollay (1985b).

Merops muelleri Blue-headed Bee-Eater. Uncommon, but not rare in Tai, recorded by Thiollay (1985b), also one seen in Yapo.

Dendropicos gabonensis (lugubris) Gabon Woodpecker. Singles seen at ORSTOM, Adiopodoumé and Mount Tonkoui.

Riparia riparia European Sand Martin. A flock numbering over 1,000 birds was observed going to roost in marshes to the west of Ferkessédougou and two were seen from the barrage east of Duékoué.

Delichon urbica European House Martin. Flocks seen regularly from Dabakala to Comoe, mostly seen over areas of water also one seen over the River Cavally near Tai.

Anthus cervinus Red-throated Pipit. One seen on paddies at Dahou, further south than noted by Thiollay (1985a).

Anthus novaezeelandiae Fichards Pipit. Pairs seen on recently burnt grass in Maraoue and Comoé.

Prinops caniceps Red-billed Shrike. Surprisingly Serle *et al.* (1977) states that this species' nest is undescribed. A nest was found in Tai, it was about 15 m up in a fork just below the canopy in an isolated patch of tall second growth. The nest itself was a neat, solid looking cup-shape, greyish-green in colour. Though an adult sat on the nest it appeared to be too small for it.

Dryoscopus sabinii Sabine's Puffback. Fairly easy to see in Yapo, always in the upper canopy in feeding parties.

Lanius gubernator Emin's Shrike. New record - A pair was seen well in open savannah about 10 km South of Kafolo in Comoé.

Oriolus oriolus European Golden Oriole. A female was seen at the forest edge in Tai, on this day there appeared to have been a "fall" of palearctic migrants in the weather station clearing.

Oriolus nigripennis Black-winged Oriole. Only seen a few times in Tai, Black-headed Oriole (Oriolus brachyrhynchus) was more numerous.

Lamprotornis splendidus Splendid Glossy Starling. Omitted in error from Thiollay's list though fairly numerous around ORSTOM, Adiopodoumé, also noted at Dahou.

Lamprotornis iris Emerald Starling. A single bird and a flock of eight seen around burnt areas in Maroue, when flushed disappear into tree canopy.

Picathartes gymnocephalus White-necked Rockfowl. Considered to be "vulnerable" in the Red Data Book (Collar & Stuart 1985). A single bird was seen hopping along a gully at Lamto, apparently this species has been seen here 5 or 6 times this decade. As there is apparently no suitable breeding habitat the presence of this species is hard to explain.

Coracina azurea Blue Cuckoo-shrike. Regularly noted in fruiting trees at Tai and by Thiollay (1985b).

Campephaga lobata Western Wattled Cuckoo-shrike. Listed in the Red Data Book as "vulnerable" (Collar & Stuart 1985). A male was seen well on the edge of the weather station clearing at Tai; also noted by Thiollay (1985b).

Calyptocichla serina Golden Serine Bulbul. Seen a few times at Yapo, always high up, often sitting motionless on a high bare branch.

Criniger olivaceus Yellow-throated Olive Greenbul. Seen in most feeding parties of Pycnonotidae at Yapo. This site may be of significance for this species in view of its "vulnerable" status in the Red Data Book (Collar & Stuart 1985).

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus Sedge Warbler. Singles seen in Comoé, near Dabakala and from the barrage East of Duékoué.

Hippolais pallida Olivaceous Warbler. One seen in a garden at ORSTOM, Adiopodoumé.

Sylvia atricapilla Blackcap. Small parties seen on Mount Tonkoui.

Sylvia communis Whitethroat. Seen three times on Comoé.

Cisticola ruficeps Red-pate Cisticola. One seen by B. Reed in northern Comoé.

Apalis flavida (caniceps) Yellow-chested Apalis. One seen in a small flock of Sharpe's Apalis (Apalis sharpii) on the upper slopes on Mount Tonkoui.

Pholidornis rushiae Tit Hylia. Easily seen at ORSTOM, Adiopodoumé.

Muscicapa gambagae Gambaga Flycatcher. Identified twice in Comoé, probably more numerous.

Hyliota violacea Violet-backed Flycatcher. Often seen in flowering or fruiting trees at Tai. The females had brighter buffy-orange breasts than were expected from the descriptions of Mackworth-Praed and Grant (1970-73).

Megabyas flammulatus Shrike Flycatcher. Often seen in fruiting trees at Tai, also noted in Yapo and one seen in Maroue.

Trochocercus nigromitratus Dusky Crested Flycatcher. Seen three times in Yapo, where according to L. Fishpool it is not uncommon.

Salpornis spilonota Spotted Creeper. Two pairs easily seen in park-like habitat in Comoé near to Kakpin. Given the secretive behaviour of this species it may well be quite common here.

Anthereptes platura Eygmy Long-tailed Sunbird. Several seen in Northern part of Comoé.

Nectarinia reichenbachii Reichenbach's Sunbird. Not mentioned by Thiollay (1985a) though fairly common around coconut palms at Grand Bassam. See Eccles (1985) and Demey (1986).

Emberiza forbesi Brown-rumped Bunting. Five seen in Northern Comoé.

Serinus gularis Streaky-headed Seed-Eater. A pair seen feeding a youngster near Kakpin in Comoé.

Anaplectes melanotus Red-headed Weaver. Two sightings in Northern Comoé.

Petronia dentata Bush Petronia. Numerous in Comoé and south to Dabakala.

Vidua sp. Indigo Bird sp. Singles seen accompanying some flocks of Bar Breasted Firefinch (Lagonosticta rufopicta) in Comoé.

Pytilia phoenicoptera Red-winged Pytilia. One bird seen in gallery forest along the River Bavé in Comoé.

Lagonosticta rufopicta Bar-breasted Firefinch. Flocks of ten to twenty birds often seen around water in Comoé. In most cases there was at least one Indigo Bird (Vidua sp.) accompanying the flock.

GAZETTEER

ABIDJAN	5°19N-4°01W	GRAND BASSAM	5°15N-3°45W
ADZOPODOUME (ORSTOM)	5°19N-4°01W	KAKPIN (COMOE)	8°40N-3°51W
COMOE (Nat. Park)	9°25N-3°50W	LANTO	6°13N-5°02W
DABAKALA	8°19N-4°24W	MARAOUE (Nat. Park)	7°08N-5°55W
DABOU	5°20N-4°23W	MT. TONKOU (Man)	7°31N-7°37W
DUEKOUÉ	6°50N-7°22W	TAI (For. Station)	5°50N-7°25W
FERKESSEDOUGOU (Guiglo)	9°30N-5°10W	YAPO	5°60N-5°04W

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RESUME

L'auteur a passé quatre semaines en décembre et janvier 1987/88 en Côte d'Ivoire avec B. Reed et S. Cook. Il paraît que le statut de certaines espèces a changé depuis Thiollay (1985a). La liste ci-dessous ne contient que des rapports sur (A) les oiseaux plus ou moins rare que les observateurs a vus, y compris quatre espèces nommées dans le Red Data Book (Collar & Stuart 1985) - Agelastes meleagrides, Picathartes gymnocephalus, Campephaga lobata et Criniger olivaceus et (B) des oiseaux vus dans des régions nouvelles, ce qui a produit huit additions à la liste pour la Côte d'Ivoire. Dignes surtout de l'attention sont les observations faites pendant un séjour de sept jours dans la forêt de Tai, une région bien riche que mérite d'être le sujet d'une étude plus approfondie. Thiollay (1985b) a établi une liste de 233 espèces pour Tai. On a trouvé à Tai un nid de Prinops caniceps, un nid qui se trouve maintenant dépeint pour la première fois.

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