



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



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Ventrally the bird is covered with fluffy down, greyish-brown barred with buff. The thighs are pale greyish white. On the throat, in the nuchal area and on the part of the supercilium behind the eye, long, pale, whitish down appears. On the throat this indicates the position of white spots in the adult, but the other spots correspond with buff adult feathers.

References

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M. Louette,

Koninklijk Museum voor Midden-Afrika, 1980 Tervuren, Belgium.

COLLARED FLYCATCHER (FICEDULA ALBICOLLIS) IN SENEGAL

On 16 Jan 1988 I was birdwatching alongside the River Gambia in Niokolo Koba National Park, Senegal (at about 12°56N, 13°10W) when I saw what I initially took to be a Pied Flycatcher Ficedula hypoleuca flycatching in the lower branches of a small tree overhanging the river, at the foot of 20 m high, loose earth cliffs. The bird was keeping close to cover but it allowed me to approach to distances of 5-6 m while it perched and made short flycatching flights just above ground level. It closely resembled a Pied Flycatcher, but appeared rather grey in upperpart tone (not brown as in Pied) and its wings looked rather long and pointed, due to considerable extension of the primaries beyond the secondaries and tertials, which gave the bird a more attenuated appearance than Pied. The white bar at the base of the primaries (the visible part immediately beyond the primary coverts) reached almost to the leading edge of the wing, broadening from the inner primaries outwards to appear as a club-shaped white mark, a characteristic of Collared Flycatcher (Riddiford in press). Coupled with this, the suggestion of a pale wash across the nape (giving the effect of an indistinct collar) confirmed its identity as Collared Flycatcher. Other features noted include a relatively narrow white secondary and tertial bar.

The wintering habits and habitats of the Collared Flycatcher are poorly known. Moreau (1972) gives the winter distribution as East Africa, although he quotes three West African occurrences, two in Nigeria and one in Ghana. Dr G.J. Morel (in litt.) knows of no previous occurrence in Senegal and this is probably the most westerly record yet. The bird may have strayed away from its normal migration route as occasionally occurs within Europe (e.g. Dymond et al. 1989). However, the paucity of West African observations may have been caused by identification problems exacerbated by the bird's skulking behaviour. Given reasonable views it is possible to separate Pied and Collared Flycatchers in non-breeding plumage (Riddiford in press). Critical attention to Ficedula species may yet reveal Collared Flycatcher to be a regular visitor to West Africa.

Field work was supported by McHugh Ornithological Tours. Clarification of identification characters was facilitated by access to skins, kindly granted by the British Museum (Natural History).

References

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- RIDDIFORD, N. (1990 in press) A field character for the identification of Collared Flycatcher in female and non breeding plumages. Brit. Birds.

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE BIRDS OF GHANA by L.G. Grimes (1987), 276 pp. BOU Checklist 9. British Ornithologists' Union, London. ISBN 0-907446-08-6.

This is an essential book for members of the West African Ornithological Society. Hopefully the BOU Checklist on Sierra Leone will not be long in appearing to complete the quartet of Checklists covering birds of the Anglophone territories in West Africa. Malimbus is helping to complete the West African picture by publishing checklists for some of the Francophone countries of the region.

Llew Grimes' checklist has many special merits: some evocative habitat photographs, much more scientific data than its predecessors and a comparison of the avifaunas of Ghana and Nigeria being among those to appeal to the reviewer. Clearly the 'guts' of any checklist is the species by species treatment summarising what is known of the status, distribution, movements and breeding of each, in this case covering 721 species and occupying 150 pages. But one wonders whether the immediately following 'Summary of Status', occupying a further 20 pages, is necessary. This has become a traditional feature of BOU Checklists but might be regarded as unnecessary and the Editors might like to consider whether or not it could be dropped. It seemed especially unnecessary in this List because Appendices follow with data of ringing recoveries, museums and collectors, and weights that again involve systematic listing of the majority of the species so that the repetition became striking. But, of course, future research workers may find in any one of these tables just what they need to trace the data they seek. Appendix 5, locating specimens in the world's museums would seem to be particularly valuable to future workers.