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A commentary on a list of birds collected on the 1841 naval expedition to the Niger River

by Amberley Moore

1 Uppingham Road, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6JB, U.K.

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Summary

During the 1841–2 British Royal Naval Expedition to the River Niger, a bird collection was made in the area, including the islands of the Gulf of Guinea. Published and unpublished sources are used to establish the chronology of the expedition. These sources and a published list of the birds collected are used to locate and identify specimens of this historical collection.

Résumé

Commentaire sur une liste d'oiseaux collectés au cours de l'expédition navale de 1841 sur le fleuve Niger. Au cours de l'expédition de 1841–2 de la Marine Royale Britannique sur le fleuve Niger, une collection d'oiseaux fut effectuée dans la région, y compris les îles du golfe de Guinée. La chronologie de l'expédition fut établie à partir de documents publiés et inédits. Ces documents, ainsi qu'une liste publiée des oiseaux collectés, sont utilisés pour localiser et identifier les spécimens de cette collection historique.

Introduction

A popular account of the 1841 naval expedition to the Niger River (Allen & Thomson 1848) contains many references to the natural history and geology of West Africa and includes an appendix list of 45 bird species collected between June 1841 and July 1842, and one, *Vanellus albiceps*, collected on an earlier visit to the Niger in 1832 (Allen & Thomson 1848, vol. 2, pp. 488–508). The appendix is reproduced here with comments on the status of the species. An attempt has also been made to establish the history and present locations of the specimens mentioned below.

The three ships of the expedition, the *Albert*, the *Wilberforce* and the *Soudan* sailed from Devonport on 12 May 1841. Zoological and botanical collections were made as the expedition called at the Atlantic islands and the coast of West Africa before reaching the Niger Delta and entering the river at Akassa on Friday, 13 Aug

1841. The ships slowly ascended 422 km of the Niger and reached the confluence of the Niger and Benue rivers by 11 September (Allen 1841–2). However, by this time many of the members of the expedition had developed fever and some had died. The *Wilberforce* and *Soudan*, with the sick on board, withdrew from the Niger to the naval base at Clarence (now Malabo) on Fernando Po (now Bioko) on 21 September (Allen 1841–2). The *Albert* continued 112 km upstream to Eggan, but the increasing casualty rate and the falling river level, as the dry season advanced, made further progress impossible and exploration had to be abandoned. The *Albert* withdrew to Malabo on 5 October. The first party of survivors, including the commander of the expedition, Captain Dundas Trotter, returned to Britain from Bioko in November 1841. The remaining survivors sailed in the *Albert* and *Wilberforce* to Ascension in November and December (Allen 1841–2). These two ships returned to West Africa in March 1842 and the expedition was based on Bioko until July 1842. The present day territories of Madeira, Canary Islands, Ascension, Cape Verde Islands, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea (Bioko and Annobón) and São Tomé and Príncipe were visited and 534 km of the Niger were examined during the expedition.

The ornithological collections listed in the Natural History Appendix were made by the two authors, Captain William Allen and the surgeon Thomas Thomson, and by two of the five civilian scientists appointed to the expedition, Louis Fraser and William Stanger (Allen & Thomson 1848). Dates and places given in the text can be confirmed by Government papers relating to the expedition held in the Public Records Office at Kew (herein cited as PRO unpubl.) and the U.K. Hydrographic Office at Taunton (cited as UKHO unpubl.), by published accounts by other survivors (Schön & Crowther 1842, McWilliam 1843), by unpublished letters in the papers of the 13th Earl of Derby (1840–51), held in the Liverpool Record Office (cited as LRO Derby unpubl.) and in the Maritime Archives of the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside (cited as MAL Derby unpubl.), and by unpublished material in the William Jardine papers held in the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh (cited as RSM Jardine unpubl.).

Birds listed in the Natural History Appendix

The 46 species listed in the Natural History Appendix of Allen & Thomson (1848) include birds from eight political areas of West Africa (Table 1), and are only part of a larger bird collection made on the expedition. All but three species in the Natural History Appendix, *Cypselus parvus* [*Cypsiurus parvus*], *Zizorhis gigantea* [*Corythaeola c. cristata*] and *Corythaix macrorhyncha* [*Tauraco macrorhynchus verreauxi*], were described as new, and 38 of the 43 species are recognised as valid today, 37 by Urban *et al.* 1986, 1997, Fry *et al.* 1988, 2000, Keith *et al.* 1992 (hereafter summarised BoA) plus *Terpsiphone rufiventer tricolor* (see below). The

type localities of five taxa given by Allen & Thomson (1848) are erroneous: the type locality of *Drymoica* [*Cisticola*] *lateralis* is Liberia not Accra; that of *D. strangei* [*C. natalensis strangei*] is Accra not Cape Palmas; that of *Nectarinia chloropygia* [*Cinnyris chloropygius*] is Nigeria not Bioko; that of *Tchitrea* [*Terpsiphone*] *atrochalybeia* is São Tomé not Bioko; and that of *Muscipeta smithii* [*Terpsiphone rufiventer smithii*] given as Western Africa, is restricted to Annobón.

Table 1. Type-localities of birds listed in the natural history appendix of Allen & Thomson (1848). Localities have been corrected where necessary (see text).

Locality	Species collected	New types collected	New types recognised as valid taxa in BoA
Annobón	1	1	1
Bioko	22	21*	17*
Cameroon	1	0	0
Ghana	7	6	6
Liberia	3	3	3
Nigeria	8**	8**	8**
São Tomé	3	3	2
Sierra Leone	1	1	1
Total	46	43	38

*Includes *Terpsiphone rufiventer tricolor* (Fraser).

**Includes *Vanellus albiceps*, collected 1832.

Allen and Thomson presented birds from their collections to the British Museum in 1842 and 1843. Others were bought by the Museum: 64 skins from Fraser in 1847; two on the disposal of the Zoological Society's collection in 1855; seven at the sale of the Eyton Collection in 1881 (Sharpe 1906); and one from Gerrard, purchased at Simpson's sale of bird skins from the Jardine collection in 1886. Listed in the accession register of the museum between 1842 and 1886 are 114 birds known to have been collected on the expedition. Of the 46 species listed in Allen & Thomson's (1848) appendix, 42 are represented among these acquisitions, including 39 type specimens presently held at The Natural History Museum (BMNH), Tring. Type specimens of the other four were not acquired by the museum: *Strix poensis*, *Bucco subsulphureus*, *Pitta pulih* and *Nectarinia stangerii*. Unsuccessful searches for these were made in the collections held in the Academy of Natural Sciences at Philadelphia, the Cambridge University Museum of Zoology, the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris and the museums of Bolton, Liverpool, Manchester and Norwich (M. Germain, C.T. Fisher, P. Francis, M. Germain, A.G. Irwin, H. Mcghe, N.H. Rice, R.J. Symonds, pers. comms).

Other birds collected on the expedition but not included in Allen and Thomson's (1848) list were also acquired by BMNH; their details in the acquisitions register are brief, but include the country of collection of 16: eight of which were from Fraser's collection (*Passer iagoensis* from St Vincent; *Sterna* sp. and *Phaeton* sp. from Ascension; *Cuculus* sp. from Ghana; *Ethiops canicapillus* [*Nigrity canicapilla*], *Anthreptes fraseri*, [*Deleornis fraseri* holotype BMNH 1847.1.18.38] and *Vulture angolensis* BMNH 1847.1.18.62 from Bioko; *Psittacus timneh* [*P. erithacus timneh* holotype BMNH 1855.12.19.368] from Sierra Leone). The other eight were from Thomson's collection, four with the country probably correct (*Turdus* sp. and *Euplectes* sp. from Bioko; *Euplectes* sp. from Idda; *Cinnyris Eboensis* [*C. venusta* male] BMNH 1842.9.24.7 from Aboh in Nigeria) and the other four with the country of collection listed as Bioko but probably incorrectly (*Halcyon* [*H. malimbica dryas*, holotype BMNH 1847.11.4.6], *Muscipeta* sp., *Gallinula* sp. and *Sula* sp.).

The collectors and their collections

William Allen R.N., F.R.S., (1793–1864)

Allen commanded H.M.S. *Wilberforce* and took command of the expedition after Captain Trotter was invalided home in November 1841. He returned to Britain with the main party in July 1842. His collection held in BMNH includes three species listed in the Allen & Thomson (1848) appendix. He had made an earlier visit to the Niger when he joined the private Macgregor Laird expedition to the Niger of 1832–4 at the request of the Admiralty, to chart the river. During that expedition he had made a zoological collection from the Niger and Bioko, which was presented at a meeting of the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) on 10 June 1834. The collection included the new *Vanellus albiceps*, described by Gould (1834), which is included in Allen and Thomson's list (1848). The type specimen was presented to the ZSL and was acquired by BMNH in 1881, via the Eyton Collection.

In 1843, 15 birds acquired by BMNH (nos. 1843.3.31.1–15), were listed in the accessions register as "Presented by Mrs Heywood [possibly a relative of Thomson: J.A. Jobling, pers. comm.] Niger Expedition" and a further seven presented on the same day (nos. 1843.3.31.15–22) were listed as "Niger Exp. Presented by Mrs Heywood and Cpn. Allen". These 22 specimens are of 11 species and include two of the 39 type specimens listed in the Appendix: *Hirundo nigrita* (Gray 1845) and *Glareola cinerea*, described by Fraser (1843c). Both were collected at the entrance to the River Nun, one of the mouths of the Niger Delta. There is an account of their collection in Allen & Thomson (1848, vol. 1, pp. 166–167).

Louis Fraser (c. 1819–1883)

Fraser was Curator of the ZSL's collection when he was appointed naturalist to the Niger Expedition. Instructions for him were drafted by Sir William Jardine (RSM

Jardine unpubl. 6/137). Almost nothing is written about Fraser in any of the accounts of the expedition, although he is listed as on the *Wilberforce* with Allen (Allen & Thomson 1848, vol. 1, p. 467).

Fraser's own account of the expedition is given in a series of unpublished letters, written from June 1840 to June 1842, to the 13th Earl of Derby (LRO Derby unpubl., MAL Derby unpubl.). In June 1840, Fraser wrote to Derby asking him to propose to the Council of the Zoological Society that a naturalist be appointed to the Niger Expedition. Derby supported Fraser's appointment and furnished him with additional funds to make collections on his behalf. Fraser's letters in 1840 and early 1841 make brief references to the preparations for the expedition, and four letters written in West Africa (13 Aug 1841, 6 Feb, 17 Mar and 6 Jun 1842) describe his part in it, from the start to the arrival at the mouth of the Niger, the ascent of the river to the confluence, withdrawal to Bioko and Ascension, and his return to Bioko in May 1842. He became very ill during the ascent, and was carried on the *Wilberforce* to Ascension in October 1841. He was considered too unfit to continue with the expedition when it returned to the West African mainland in March 1842. He made his own way to Bioko, reaching it by 15 May 1842, after spending six weeks along the Gulf of Guinea in other naval vessels. He found lodgings on the island and, despite the onset of the wet season, began a collection of birds, mammals, fish and crustaceans. The months spent in the Gulf of Guinea from March to July were profitable; he collected over 100 skins as well as specimens in spirits (Fraser 1842a, 1/59/2–39 in LRO Derby unpubl.). He is likely to have returned to Britain in HMS *Kite* with the main party of the expedition in July 1842; his return to London by 25 Sep 1842 is noted in a letter from the expedition collector Thomas Whitfield to Derby (MAL Derby unpubl.).

Fraser's was the largest contribution to the list of birds in Allen & Thomson (1848). It included 35 of the species listed; of which 34 were thought to be new, 20 from Bioko, one from Sierra Leone, three from Liberia, six from Ghana, two from Nigeria, one from Annobón and one from São Tomé. Of the 34 new species described, 30 are recognised as valid species or subspecies in BoA. After his return to London, his zoological collections were presented at meetings of the ZSL. During the autumn of 1842, Fraser (1842b,c,d) described 11 new bird species: *Platysteira castanea* [*P. c. castanea*], *P. leucopygialis* [*P. c. castanea*], *Euplectes rufovelatus* [*Malimbus rubricollis rufovelatus*], *Sylvia* [*Eremomela*] *badiceps*, *Coccothraustes* [*Linurgus o.*] *oliva-ceus*, *Nigrita fusconotus* [*N. f. fusconota*], *Amadina* [*Lonchura p.*] *poensis* and *Strix poensis* [*Tyto alba affinis*] from Bioko; *Ploceus collaris* [*P. grandis*] from São Tomé; *Amadina* [*Lonchura poensis*] *bicolor* from Cape Palmas; and *Pitta pulih* [*P. angolensis*] from Sierra Leone. At meetings during 1843 he described a further 18 new birds (Fraser 1843a,b,c,d): *Sylvicola* [*Camaroptera*] *superciliaris*, *Bucco* [*Pogoniulus s.*] *subsulphureus*, *Muscipeta tricolor* [*Terpsiphone rufiventer tricolor*] and *Halcyon* [*Corythornis l.*] *leucogaster* and *D.* [*Apalis*] *rufogularis* from Bioko; *Collurio smithii* [*Lanius collaris smithii*], *Drymoica* [*Melocichla m.*] *mentalis*, *D. strangei* [*Cisticola natalensis strangei*], *D. uropygialis* [*C. juncidis uropygialis*],

Estrilda [*Lagonosticta r.*] *rufopicta* and *Ixos inornatus* [*Pycnonotus barbatus inornatus*] from Ghana; *D. lateralis* [*C. lateralis*] and *Anthus gouldii* [*A. leucophrys gouldii*] from Liberia; *Muscipeta smithii* [*Terpsiphone rufiventer smithii*] from Annobón; *Drymoica ruficapilla* [*Cisticola anonymus*] and *D. rufa* [*C. rufus*] from Nigeria; *Glareola cinerea* collected by Allen (see above) in Nigeria; and *Treron crassirostris* [*T. sanctithomae*], which had been collected by Thomson. Fraser (1843d) gave no type locality for *Treron crassirostris*, but later believed it to be from São Tomé (Fraser 1849).

At a meeting of the ZSL on 25 Jun 1844 Strickland (1844) described *Cypselus* [*Cypsiurius*] *parvus* and the seven new species *Prinia olivacea* [*Apalis r. rufogularis*], *P. icterica* [*Camaroptera superciliaris*], *Cossypha* [*Neocossyphus*] *poensis*, *Andropadus latirostris*, *A. gracilirostris*, *Muscicapa* [*Neocossyphus*] *fraseri* and *Tephrodornis ocreatus* [*Fraseria ocreata*], all from Fraser's collection from Bioko.

In 1847, BMNH purchased 64 bird skins from Fraser (nos. 1847.1.18.1–62, 1847.3.12.2–3), which included 25 types. Six more types were purchased with the sale of the Eyton Collection in 1881 (nos. 1881.2.18.5,19,31,136,153,629) (Sharpe 1906). Three types described by Fraser were not acquired by BMNH: *Bucco* [*Pogoniulus s.*] *subsulphureus*, *Pitta pulih* [*P. angolensis pulih*] and *Strix poensis* [*Tyto alba affinis*], and their whereabouts are not known.

Fraser (1849) illustrated 21 new bird species from West Africa, including 20 of those listed in Allen & Thomson (1848); some additional field notes are given in the text. He refers to two specimens of *Vanellus albiceps* “procured” by Allen on Fernando Po and presented by him (Allen) to ZSL (Fraser 1849, pl. 64). It is not clear whether he was referring to the type of *V. albiceps* (collected 1832) or to other individuals collected in 1841 (see below). Fraser (1849) also included *Nigrita canicapilla* from Bioko, which had been described by Strickland (1841) from an 1833 specimen collected on the island. Fraser collected a specimen on Bioko in 1842 (acquired by BMNH, no. 1847.1.18.8), which was not listed by Allen & Thomson (1848).

William Stanger M.D., F.G.S. (1811–1854)

Stanger was appointed geologist and explorer to the expedition. He sailed with Trotter in the *Albert* and returned with him to Britain in November 1841, after ascending the Niger to Eggan. His small bird collection included two new sunbirds listed by Allen & Thomson (1848): *Nectarinia chloropygia* [*Cinnyris chloropygius*] and *N. stangerii* [*Chalcomitra rubescens stangerii*]. They were probably actually collected by Thomson and given to Stanger (Allen & Thomson 1848, vol. 2, p. 222). On Stanger's return to Britain in January 1842, he gave them to George Waterhouse of ZSL. Waterhouse showed the collection to Jardine in July 1842 (6/138 in RSM Jardine unpubl.) and Jardine (1842) described the four species in the collection: *Chrysococcyx auratus* [*C. cupreus*], from the description a male; and three sunbirds *N. chloropygia*, *N. stangerii* and *N. cyanocephala* [*Cyanomitra verticalis cyanocephala*]. *Chrysococcyx auratus* and *Nectarinia cyanocephala* were not included by Allen & Thomson (1848).

Jardine had a single male of *N. chloropygia*, which he compared with one evidently retained by Stanger (Jardine 1842). The holotype was included in the sale of Jardine's collection in 1886 (Anon. 1886), when it was purchased for BMNH (no. 1886.6.24.314). It is catalogued "River Niger Dr Strange" in the 1881 Quaritch Sale Catalogue of Jardine Bird Skins (Anon. 1881). The whereabouts of Stanger's other specimen are unknown.

Jardine refers to only one specimen of *N. stangerii*, in breeding dress, which he describes as "the Niger bird" leading to some confusion subsequently about the type locality. However, there is an account of the collection of *N. stangerii* from Bioko by Thomson, probably from Bassa Pu (Allen & Thomson 1848, vol. 2, p. 221, Moore 1995, Cheke 2001). The type seems to have been lost. There is no record in the accessions register of BMNH to suggest that other birds of Stanger's collection were acquired, although he presented other zoological specimens to the museum in 1842 and a visit he paid to the museum in October 1842 is recorded in the visitors' book. Enquiries elsewhere in Britain and South Africa, where Stanger lived from 1843, have so far been unsuccessful (Moore 1995).

Thomas R.H. Thomson, M.D., Surgeon R.N. (c. 1813–1876)

Thomson was Surgeon on the *Wilberforce*, with Allen, transferred to the *Soudan* as she ran down the Niger and left for Bioko on 26 September 1841. He stayed on the island for some weeks before joining the *Albert* when she left Bioko on 18 December 1841 for Ascension Island, giving an opportunity to collect on Príncipe (20 Dec) and São Tomé (24 Dec) where the ship anchored at the islet of Rollas, before going on to Annobón and Ascension, which was reached on 28 Jan 1842. He rejoined Allen on the *Wilberforce* and returned to the coast of West Africa from March to July 1842.

Thomson's collection of 19 birds now held at BMNH includes six species listed in the appendix of Allen & Thomson (1848). The six include the types of four species described as new: *Porphyrio alleni*, collected from the Niger by the town of Idda and Tchitrea [*Terpsiphone*] *atrochalybeia* from São Tomé (Thomson 1842); *Treron crassirostris* [*T. sanctithomae*] from São Tomé (Fraser 1843d); and *Cinnyris eboensis* [*Nectarinia adelberti eboensis*] collected from Aboh on the banks of the lower Niger (Jardine 1843). The other two were species of turaco, *Corythaeola c. cristata* from Bioko and *Tauraco macrorhynchus verreauxi* from the seldom-visited Mondoleh Island in Ambas Bay, on the coast of Cameroon. Thomson presented 18 birds to BMNH between September and November 1842 (nos. 1842.9.24.1–8; 1842.10.13.1, 1842.11.4.1–9). He presented *Treron crassirostris* to ZSL in 1842; it was acquired by BMNH on the dispersal of the Society's collection in 1855 (no. 1855.12.19.304).

The birds of Allen & Thomson's (1848) natural history appendix

The following list of 46 bird species, presented in the order in which they appear, is taken from the natural history appendix of Allen & Thomson (1848). The entries on

the list, the name of the taxon, the authority and locality (“habitat”) and extracts from the notes accompanying them are given in quotes (“...”) as they appear in the original text of Allen & Thomson (1848). The modern scientific and English names given follow BoA. The BMNH registered number for specimens held in the collections at Tring is given; the type status for these birds follows Warren (1966) and Warren & Harrison (1971). Where I refer to only one syntype, this is the one placed by Warren & Harrison in the BMNH Type Collection. Unless otherwise mentioned, I did not locate the other syntypes in the general collection. Place names are given as in the Allen & Thomson (1848), with changes noted where necessary.

“*STRIX POENSIS* (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Dec. 1842). Habitat: Fernando Po, West Africa. A very scarce bird.”

Tyto alba affinis Barn Owl. Holotype not held in BMNH, whereabouts unknown. From Fraser’s (1842a) description it seems that he had only one specimen, but there is a skin in BMNH Tring (*Tyto alba*, 1842.7.19.14, bearing a flimsy label with “Morgan” and “poensis” written on it), which was acquired from the Rev. D.F. Morgan in July 1842. Sharpe (1875) remarks that, unlike the other birds received from Morgan registered at the same time, which were from The Gambia, no locality is given for this specimen “a true *S. insularis*” and he suggests that it may have been collected in the Cape Verde Islands. Morgan was Colonial Chaplain of Sierra Leone for 10 years (Schön & Crowther 1842). In the course of his duties he would almost certainly have visited the British base then on Bioko, and probably the other islands of the Gulf of Guinea, so the possibility that the bird was collected on Bioko or São Tomé cannot be discounted. He did, in fact, meet members of the 1841 expedition on Sunday 28 June 1841 in Freetown (Schön & Crowther 1842).

“*TEPHRODORNIS OCREATUS* (Strickland, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., June 1844). Habitat: Fernando Po, West Africa”

Fraseria ocreata Fraser’s Forest Flycatcher. Holotype: BMNH 1847.1.18.33, adult.

“*COLLURIO SMITHII* (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Feb. 1843). Habitat: Cape Coast Castle”

Lanius collaris smithii Fiscal Shrike. Holotype: BMNH 1847.1.18.30, adult male.

“*DRYMOICA MENTALIS* (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Feb. 1843). Habitat: Accra, West Africa”

Melocichla m. mentalis Moustached Grass-Warbler. Holotype: BMNH 1847.1.18.29, adult.

“*DRYMOICA LATERALIS* (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., 1843). Habitat: Accra, West Africa”

Cisticola lateralis Whistling Cisticola. Syntype: BMNH 1847.1.18.55, adult. “Accra” must be a typographical error. In Fraser (1843b) and subsequent literature, the type locality cited is Cape Palmas, Liberia. The skin is labelled “Cape Palmas July 1841”. Fraser (1843b) did not say how many specimens he collected. This skin was purchased from Fraser by the museum in 1847.

“*DRYMOICA STRANGEI* (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Feb. 1843). Habitat: Cape Palmas, West Africa”

Cisticola natalensis strangei Croaking Cisticola. Syntype: BMNH 1847.1.18.28, adult male. “Cape Palmas” is an error. Fraser (1843b) gives the habitat as Accra. It was purchased by the museum in 1847 from Fraser. Fraser (1843b) did not say how many he had collected.

“*DRYMOICA RUFICAPILLA* (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Feb. 1843). Habitat: River Nun, West Africa”

Cisticola anonymus Chattering Cisticola. Holotype: BMNH 1847.1.18.57, adult male. *Drymoica ruficapilla* was renamed *Cisticola anonyma* by Müller (1855); the name given by Fraser was already occupied by *Drymoica ruficapilla* A. Smith 1842, now *Cisticola fulvicapillus ruficapillus*.

“*DRYMOICA RUFUS* (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Feb., 1843). Habitat: River Niger opposite Iddah.”

Cisticola rufus Rufous Cisticola. Syntype: BMNH 1847.1.18.42, immature male, relaxed mount. Lynes (1930) calculated that the birds had been collected in August 1841 or July 1842. The expedition itinerary suggests a slightly later date in 1841: Iddah was not reached before 4 September that year. While the *Wilberforce*, with a limited crew that did not include Allen, Thomson or Fraser, reached Iddah on 10 July 1842 during the second brief ascent of the Niger, such was the difficulty of that ascent that it is unlikely any collecting would have been done (Allen & Thomson 1848, PRO unpubl., UKHO unpubl.). *D. rufus* was purchased by the museum in 1847 from Fraser. Fraser (1843b) does not say how many specimens he collected.

“*DRYMOICA RUFUGULARIS* (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Feb, 1843). Habitat: Clarence, Fernando Po.”

Apalis rufogularis Buff-Throated Apalis. Holotype: BMNH 1847.1.18.52, adult. See *Prinia olivacea*.

“*DRYMOICA UROPYGIALIS* (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Feb. 1843). Habitat: Accra, West Africa”

Cisticola juncidis uropygialis Zitting Cisticola. Holotype: BMNH 1847.1.18.54, adult male.

“*MUSCICAPA FRASERI* (in Strickland, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., June 1844). Habitat: Fernando Po, West Africa.

Neocossyphus fraseri Rufous Flycatcher-Thrush. Syntype: BMNH 1847.1.18.34, adult male. From his description, Strickland had a male and female before him. No. 1847.1.18.34 bears two labels, one marked “1159”, the other “*Muscicapa fraserii* Strickl”.

“*MUSCIPETA TRICOLOR* (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Jan., 1843). Habitat: Clarence, Fernando Po”

Terpsiphone rufiventer tricolor Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher. Holotype: BMNH 1847.1.18.56 adult female. Cited as *Muscipeta* (*Tchitrea*) *tricolor* Fraser (1843e) in subsequent literature. Urban *et al.* (1997) cite Neumann as authority for *T. rufiventer tricolor*, but this is almost certainly an error. Fraser’s (1843a) description suggests he had only one specimen “in deep moult”.

“MUSCIPETA SMITHII (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Feb., 1843). Habitat: western Africa”

Terpsiphone rufiventer smithii Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher. Holotype: BMNH 1881.5.1.629 adult male. Listed as the type by Sharpe (1881). This taxon is restricted to Annobón (Peters *et al.* 1986). Fraser (1843d) only specifies the type locality as “western Africa”; in view of what is known now of his itinerary he may not have visited Annobón and was therefore unable to be more precise. His acquisitions do include specimens that he had not collected live, *e.g.* *Pitta pulih* (Fraser 1842d), *Felis rutilus* (Allen & Thomson 1848) and *Pelicanus rufescens* (Fraser 1842c). The specimen was procured and described by Fraser in 1843 and was later acquired by BMNH at the sale of the Eyton Collection in 1881. However, it carries a label reading “Presented by T.R. Thompson [*sic*], Esq., R.N. 27 Sept. 1842”. The reverse side reads “Muscipeta smithii. Orig. of descr.” (M.P. Walters pers. comm.).

“ANTHUS GOULDII (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Feb., 1843). Habitat: Cape Palmas, [Liberia] West Africa”

Anthus leucophrys gouldii Plain-Backed Pipit. Syntype: BMNH 1881.2.18.153, adult. Fraser (1843c) does not say how many he collected. This skin was purchased at the sale of the Eyton collection in 1881.

“SYLVICOLA SUPERCILIARIS (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Jan.1843). Habitat: Clarence, Fernando Po”

Camaroptera superciliaris Yellow-Browed Camaroptera. Holotype: BMNH 1847.1.18.45, adult male. See *Camaroptera superciliaris*.

“TCHITREA ATROCHALYBEIA (Thomson, in Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist., Vol.X p.104 [error for p. 204] 1842). Habitat: Fernando Po”

Terpsiphone atrochalybeia São Tomé Paradise-Flycatcher. Holotype: BMNH 1842.9.24.3, adult male. The type locality is São Tomé (Peters *et al.* 1986). To his description of *T. atrochalybeia*, together with those of *Porphyrio alleni* and a new species of *Genetta*, Thomson (1842) added that it was his intention to deposit his collection in the British Museum. The specimen is listed in the accessions register of BMNH on 24 Sep 1842, in a collection of eight birds headed “Expedition of African Society Presented by TRW Thomson RN”, as “*Muscipeta atrochalybeia* Th Fernando Po”. However, like most of the specimens in BMNH from the Niger Expedition, it lacks the original collector’s label and written on the present label is “F. Po Fraser”: see *M. smithii* above.

“PRINIA OLIVACEA (Strickland, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., June 1844). Habitat: Fernando Po, Western Africa.”

Apalis r. rufogularis Buff-Throated Apalis. Holotype: BMNH 1847.1.18.53, relaxed mount. Synonymous with *Drymoica rufogularis*, of which Strickland’s description was “based on a young bird” (Sclater 1930).

“PRINIA ICTERICA (Strickland, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., June 1844).”

Camaroptera superciliaris Yellow-Browed Camaroptera. Holotype: BMNH 1881.2.18.25, adult. Habitat not given in Allen & Thomson (1848), but Fernando Po

cited by Strickland (1844). Synonymous with *Sylvicola superciliaris*: see this species above.

“PITTA PULIH (Fraser in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Dec., 1842). Habitat: Sierra Leone, West Africa.”

Pitta angolensis pulih African Pitta. Holotype not held in BMNH, whereabouts unknown. Originally procured by Thomson. Fraser (LRO unpubl.) complained that, during the expedition’s only stay at Freetown, in June 1841, it had not been possible to travel inland. Fraser was “indebted” to Robert Clarke, Assistant Colonial Surgeon at Sierra Leone, for the single specimen, which Thomson had observed was “found only in the Timneh country” (Fraser 1842b).

“SYLVIA BADICEPS (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Oct., 1842). Habitat: Fernando Po, West Africa.”

Eremomela badiceps Rufous-Crowned Eremomela. Holotype: BMNH 1847.1.18.58, adult male.

“COSSYPHA POENSIS (Strickland in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., 1844). Habitat: Fernando Po, West Africa”

Neocossyphus poensis White-Tailed Ant-Chat. Holotype: BMNH 1847.1.18.35, adult male.

“IOXOS INORNATUS (Fraser in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., 1844). Habitat: Cape Coast, West Africa.”

Pycnonotus barbatus inornatus Common Bulbul. Holotype: BMNH 1881.2.18.19, adult.

“ANDROPADUS LATIROSTRIS (Strickland, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., 1844). Habitat: Fernando Po, West Africa.”

Andropadus latirostris Yellow-Whiskered Greenbul. Syntype: BMNH 1881.2.18.136, adult female. The bird was purchased for the museum at the sale of the Eyton collection. Strickland mentions two other specimens collected by Fraser, “probably younger individuals”; these are BMNH 1847.1.18.16 and 17. Fraser (1849) figures a specimen, which he explains is not the female from his collection that was described by Strickland, which could not be found at that time. Fraser’s figure was of an immature, without the yellow streak each side of the chin. Strickland (1844) had noted that the mandible of the young bird lacked serrations and had only a small sub-terminal notch. Benson (1999) suggests that only 1847.1.18.17 is an immature *A. l. latirostris*, and considers 1847.1.18.16 to be an *A. v. virens*.

“ANDROPADUS GRACILIROSTRIS (Strickland, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., June, 1844). Habitat: Fernando Po, West Africa.”

Andropadus gracilirostris Slender-Billed Greenbul. Holotype: BMNH 1847.1.18.11, adult male.

“HIRUNDO NIGRITA (Thomson) [sic but actually described by Gray 1845]. Habitat: River Nun West Africa; met with as high up as Abòh”

Hirundo nigrita White-Throated Blue Swallow. Holotype: BMNH 1843.3.31.2, adult. An account of the first sighting of this swallow is given in the narrative “... new and

beautiful species of swallow ... was discovered performing its rapid evolutions over a placid pool of water ...", 15 Aug 1841 at the entrance to the river Nun (Allen & Thomson 1848, vol. 2, p. 166).

"CYPSELUS PARVUS (Strickland, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond.). Habitat: Accra. From Mr Fraser's collection."

Cypsiurus parvus Palm Swift. BMNH 1847.1.18.26.

"PLATYSTEIRA CASTANEA (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Oct., 1842). Habitat: Fernando Po"

Diaphorophya c. castanea Chestnut Wattle-Eye. Holotype: BMNH 1847.1.18.46, adult female. *P. leucopygialis* (below) is the male of this species (Sclater 1930).

"PLATYSTEIRA LEUCOPYGIALIS (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Oct., 1842). Habitat: Fernando Po, Western Africa"

Diaphorophya c. castanea Chestnut Wattle-Eye. Holotype: BMNH 1847.1.18.48, adult male. Synonymous with *P. castanea* (above), which is the female.

"PLOCEUS COLLARIS (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Oct., 1842). Habitat: Island St. Thomas, West Africa"

Ploceus grandis São Tomé Giant Weaver. Syntype: BMNH 1847.1.18.3, adult male. Fraser's name was preoccupied by *P. collaris* Vieillot. Gray (1849) renamed it *Hyphantornis grandis*.

"EUPLECTES RUFOVELATUS (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Oct., 1842). Habitat: Fernando Po, West Africa."

Malimbus rubricollis rufovelatus Red-headed Malimbe. Syntype: BMNH 1847.1.18.50, adult male. Fraser collected several specimens; there are supposedly two other syntypes in the collection (Warren & Harrison 1971), of which I found only one (1847.1.18.51), which was acquired from Fraser at the same time.

"COCCOTHAUSTES OLIVACEUS (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Oct., 1842). Habitat: Fernando Po, West Africa"

Linurgus o. olivaceus Oriole-Finch. Holotype: BMNH 1847.3.12.2, adult female.

"AMADINA POENSIS (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Oct., 1842). Habitat: Fernando Po, West Africa"

Lonchura p. poensis Black-and-white Mannikin. Syntype: BMNH 1881.2.18.31, adult (Warren & Harrison 1971). From Fraser's (1842c) description, he collected several specimens and the BMNH acquisitions included another three which may have been *L. p. poensis* (listed only as "*Amadina*"): 1847.1.18.43 and 44 from Fraser and 1843.3.31.20 from Allen. I could not find these in the BMNH collections of *L. p. poensis* or *L. p. bicolor*.

"AMADINA BICOLOR (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Oct., 1842). Habitat: Cape Palmas, West Africa"

Lonchura poensis bicolor Black-and-white Mannikin. Syntype: BMNH 1847.1.18.22, adult male (Warren & Harrison 1971). Fraser (1842c) had three specimens. A second syntype (1847.1.18.23) is held in the general collections.

**“NIGRITA FUSCONOTUS (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Oct., 1842).
Habitat: Fernando Po, West Africa”**

Nigrita f. fusconota White-breasted Negrofinch. Holotype: BMNH 1847.1.18.19, adult.

**“ESTRILDA RUFOPICTA (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Feb. 1843).
Habitat: Cape Coast, West Africa”**

Lagonosticta r. rufopicta Bar-breasted Firefinch. Holotype: BMNH 1847.1.18.24, adult male.

“NECT. STANG. (Jardine, in Nat.Lib., Vol.XXXVI, p 198). Habitat: Fernando Po”
Chalcomitra rubescens stangerii Green-throated Sunbird. Holotype not held in BMNH, whereabouts unknown (Moore 1995). Jardine described a single specimen, given to George Waterhouse of the ZSL by Stanger, on his return (Jardine 1842).

“CINNYRIS EBOENSIS (Thomson) NECTARINIA ADELBERTI (Jard. Nat. Lib., Vol. XXXVI, p 244). Habitat: Abòh [Eboe], River Quorra. A very scarce bird. Presented by Dr Thomson to the British Museum.”

Chalcomitra adelberti eboensis Buff-throated Sunbird. Holotype: BMNH 1842.9.24.8, adult male. Thomson describes collecting two specimens from Aboh in August 1841 (Allen & Thomson 1848, vol. 1, p. 250). The type was “... presented by RW [*sic*] Thomson from the Niger Expedition” (Warren & Harrison 1971). Jardine (1843, p. 244) included *Nectarinia Eboensis* Thomson but “Subsequently [p. 257], in the same volume he regarded this species as synonymous with *N. adelberti* Gervais ...” (Warren & Harrison 1971).

**“NECTARINIA CHLOROPYGLIA (Jardine, Nat. Hist. Nectarinidæ p 172).
Habitat: Fernando Po.”**

Cinnyris chloropygius Olive-bellied Sunbird. Holotype: BMNH 1886.6.24.314, adult male. The type locality is Nigeria. Jardine (1842) used a bird brought back by Stanger, collected on the Niger, for the type description. Stanger apparently had another, with which Jardine (1842, 1843) compared it, but this skin is not with the Stanger collection held at the Wisbech and Fenland Museum, Cambridgeshire. The holotype is listed in the catalogue of the sale of the Jardine collection in 1881, “River Niger Dr Strange”. It was purchased by BMNH in 1886 from the dealer Gerrard. Fraser collected eight males and three females from Clarence, Fernando Po (Jardine 1843).

**“HALCYON LEUCOGASTER (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Jan., 1843).
Habitat: Clarence, Fernando Po.”**

Corythornis l. leucogaster White-bellied Kingfisher. Syntype: BMNH 1847.1.18.25, adult male. Fraser (1843a), in his description of the male, does not say whether he collected other specimens. This male was bought by BMNH from Fraser in 1847. Thomson notes that he presented a *Halcyon leucogaster* to BMNH (Allen & Thomson 1848, vol. 2, p. 504), but the only kingfisher listed among the birds acquired by BMNH from Thomson is “Halcyon” BMNH 1842.11.4.6, which is *H. malimbica dryas* (Hartlaub 1854).

**“BUCCO SUBSULPHUREUS (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Jan. 1843).
Habitat: Clarence, Fernando Po”**

Pogoniulus subsulphureus subsulphureus Yellow-throated Tinkerbird. Type not held in BMNH, whereabouts unknown. Fraser (1843a) collected three or four from the same tree, but the whereabouts of these syntypes are unknown. He adds a footnote that he collected several young specimens of *Bucco*, some of which he considered might be a different species, but did not have sufficient material to name it. From his description of these, they were probably *Bucco stellatus* (*Pogoniulus scolopaceus stellatus*) (Jardine 1851), collected by Fraser when he returned to W Africa as British Consul at Whydah, 1851–3. A UMZC specimen of *P. s. scolopaceus* (26/Cap/7/i/3), collected by Fraser and labelled “1843?? ??”, was probably collected on the Niger Expedition.

“ZIZORHIS GIGANTA Blue Plantain Eater (Thomson). Habitat: Fernando Po”

Corythaeola c. cristata Great Blue Turaco. BMNH 1842.11.4.2 is noted in the accessions register of 4 Nov 1842, among nos. 1–5 “Musophaga gigas Presented by Mr Thomson on payment of expenses 10/0/-” with “exchanged with Dr Rüppell” added; this may refer to nos. 1842.11.4. 1 and 4, which are not in the collection. Nos. 3 and 5 are *Tauraco macrorhynchus verreauxi* (see no. 42 below).

**“CORYTHAIX MACRORHYNCHA (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., 1837).
Habitat: Bimbia and Cameroons”**

Tauraco m. macrorhynchus Yellow-billed Turaco. The date 1837 is a typographical error for 1839. Three specimens (BMNH 1842.10.13.1, 1842.11.4.3 and 5) were collected from the same tree on Mondoleh Island, the largest island of Ambas Bay, Cameroon, each having a crest “... in a different state ... we have reason to believe they have been divided into distinct species, although it is quite clear to us, they were merely of different ages...” (Allen & Thomson 1848, vol. 2, p. 290). The accessions register of 13 Oct 1842 contains “Musophagus Mr R.W. Thomson, Esq. Some sp[?] plain green crest with white band under the red, with red tips to the crest feathers”.

**“TRERON CRASSIROSTRIS (Fraser, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., Feb.1843).
Habitat: Islands of St Thomas and Rollas ... where it abounds, together with many other varieties of pigeons ... Dr Thomson sent a specimen to the Zoological Society’s Museum, from which it was described by Mr Fraser ...”**

Treron sanctithomae São Tomé Green Pigeon. Holotype: BMNH 1855.12.19.304, adult, mounted specimen.

**“PORPHYRIO ALLENI (Thomson, in Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. Vol.X 1842).
Habitat: Iddah, River Niger ... This very pretty species was shot among the reeds, on the inundated Island opposite Iddah, ... Dr Thomson called it Alleni, in honour of his distinguished commander, Captain W.Allen, R.N. Presented to the British Museum ...”**

Porphyrio alleni Allen’s Gallinule. Holotype: BMNH 1842.9.24.1 adult.

**“GLAREOLA CINEREA (Fraser, in Proc.Zool.Soc.Lond., Feb 1843). Habitat:
Banks of the mouth of the Nun River, West Africa”**

Glareola cinerea Grey Pratincole. Syntype: BMNH 1843.3.31.14, adult. Allen presented three specimens to BMNH; two syntypes (1843.3.31.13 and 14) are in the collections; the third, no. 15, was not found.

“VANELLUS ALBICEPS (Gould, in Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond., June 1834). Habitat: River Quorra, West Africa.”

Vanellus albiceps White-headed Plover. Holotype: BMNH 1881.2.18.52. Presented by Allen to ZSL and figured in Fraser (1849). Collected by Allen on the Macgregor Laird Expedition to the Niger in 1832, probably from the sandbanks of the Niger during the dry season, although the exact location is not clear from Gould's description, and the holotype carries an Eyton label “Fernando Po”. Fraser (1849) refers to two “procured” by Allen on Fernando Po and presented by him to ZSL; the whereabouts of these specimens are not known. If this refers to birds collected during the 1841 expedition they would not have been collected from Nigeria. The birds are absent from the Lower Niger when the river is in full flood (Moore 2000a).

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