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The birds of the Soyo area, northwest Angola

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Summary

At Soyo (6°8'S, 12°22'E), Zaïre Province, Angola, during 16–25 May and 17–24 Oct 2006, 114 bird species were recorded. The area is a mosaic of woodlands, sub-littoral savanna and wetlands, and remnant forest patches. The coastal fringe, where most observations were made, is littoral steppe, thicket and savanna including palm savanna, on sands. Bird species richness and abundance were low, possibly due to post-breeding dispersal and the general dryness of the area. There was little bird breeding activity, and few plants flowering and fruiting. New records extend known ranges south from Cabinda or fill the gap between Bengo Province and Cabinda, for Red-backed Mousebird *Colius castanotus*, Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*, Crowned Hornbill *Tockus alboterminatus*, Arrow-marked Babbler *Turdoides jardineii* and Brown Sunbird *Anthreptes gabonicus*.

Résumé

Les oiseaux de la région de Soyo, au Nord-Ouest de l'Angola. Il a été recensé 114 espèces d'oiseaux à Soyo (6°8'S, 12°22'E), province du Zaïre, Angola, au cours des périodes du 16–25 mai et du 17–24 oct 2006. La région est une mosaïque de marécages et de savane sub-littorales, de bois, ainsi que de zones forestières relictuelles. La frange côtière, où la plupart des observations ont été faites, est constituée de steppe littorale, de fourrés et de savane, y compris de savane à palmiers, sur des sols sableux. La richesse spécifique et l'abondance des oiseaux étaient faibles, peut-être en raison de la dispersion après la reproduction et de la sécheresse dans la région. Il y avait peu de reproduction d'oiseaux, et peu de plantes en fleurs ou portant des fruits. Les observations nouvelles étendent les aires de répartition connues au sud de Cabinda ou comblent le vide entre la province de Bengo et Cabinda pour le Coliou à dos roux *Colius castanotus*, le Rolle violet *Eurystomus glaucurus*, le Calao couronné *Tockus alboterminatus*, le Cratérope fléché *Turdoides jardineii* et le Souimanga brun *Anthreptes gabonicus*.

Introduction

The avifauna of Soyo, Zaïre Province, NW Angola (6°8'S, 12°22'E), is poorly known (Dean 2000). Only 25 species have been collected in the area, some during the late 1800s (probably by A. Lucan and L. Petit: Sharpe & Bouvier 1876, 1877, 1878) but mostly by Rudyerd Boulton between 7 and 9 August 1957, who collected 19 species labelled "San Antonio" (= Soyo), presumably from around the town and surrounding palm savanna, mangroves, woodland and the forest remnants.

From 16 to 24 May and 17 to 23 Oct 2006, WRJD surveyed birds in different habitats around Soyo, including Kwanda Base, situated on the south bank of the Congo River on the western edge of the town. We present a list of birds seen and include a few records of birds recorded by DCLM in January 2005 during a survey of the vegetation. Not all the places visited in May were visited in October, when some new areas were explored, including the edges of some forest patches east and southeast of Soyo. For various reasons, mainly security and the suspected presence of unexploded devices, the interior of remnant forest patches was not sampled. The terrestrial habitats seemed poor in soil nutrients and plant species, with most dry habitats being of rather low-growing rank vegetation, with few patches of trees. The sandy soils appear to be well drained and probably lose nutrients quickly through cultivation and fire. The grass layer has a high percentage cover of unpalatable sedges. The seemingly low nutrient status of the soils is supported by the condition of crops; most cassava, bean and sesame plants seen in cultivated patches were variable in size across and along rows, generally stunted and showed signs of nutrient stress.

Species richness and abundance of birds in May seemed generally low, but this could have been due to post-breeding dispersal and the general dryness of the area. Furthermore, by May, intra-African breeding migrants would have departed for their non-breeding areas, and Palaearctic migrants would have passed through the area at least a month prior to the survey. Even in October the area was very dry and there was very little bird breeding activity, and few plants flowering and fruiting, which would affect the movements of locally nomadic bird species dependent on these resources. Palaearctic migrants were scarce at this time.

Bird species collected at Banana (6°0'S, 12°16'E), about 18 km northwest of Soyo across the Congo River, and at Muanda (5°56'S, 12°21'E), 8 km northwest of Banana, both in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and that could potentially occur at Soyo are listed in Appendix 1. Species collected and recorded at N'Zeto (7°14'S, 12°52'E) and Ambriz (7°50'S, 13°6'E), south of Soyo in Zaïre Province, Angola, and which have similar habitat to Soyo are listed in Appendix 2. It is evident that for some species the lower Congo River forms an effective barrier. We have noted whether species have been collected on both sides. What is uncertain, however, is whether species that were recorded at Soyo but not at Banana, Muanda or elsewhere in *W Neder-Congo* (Schouteden 1948–58) do not occur there or whether their absence from lists is simply due to poor coverage by collectors. We suspect the latter.

Museum collections from which we have drawn data are: Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago (FMNH), Forschungsinstitut und Museum Alexander Koenig, Bonn (ZFMK), Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris (MNHN), Peabody Museum of Natural History, New Haven, the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren (RMCA), and The Natural History Museum, Tring (BMNH).

Bird habitats

The vegetation of the area was surveyed by DCLM in 2005. The area falls into the Guineo-Congolian/Zambeian transition zone (White 1983), and is a mosaic of moist forest, sub-littoral savanna and wetlands. Plants of this zone include Baobab *Adansonia digitata*, Monkey Apple *Strychnos henningsii*, *Acacia* spp. and *Hyparrhenia* and *Setaria* grasses. The coastal fringing vegetation is littoral steppe, thicket and savanna, including palm savanna, on quaternary marine sand deposits (Grandvaux Barbosa 1970). Descriptions of the similar communities north of the Congo River are given by Duvigneaud (1949) and Lebrun (1954).

The palm savanna is dominated by Lala fan palms *Hyphaene guineensis* with patches of poorly drained swamp grasses, thickets and tall shrubs and rank tall grasses on drier patches between clumps of palms. There are scattered Baobabs and other trees, including figs *Ficus* spp., *Albizia gummifera* and occasional Kapok *Ceiba pentandra* and Cashew *Anacardium occidentale* trees. Adjacent to mangrove creeks there are also Coconut *Cocos nucifera* and Wild Date palms *Phoenix reclinata*, *Hibiscus tiliaceus*, *Dalbergia ecastaphyllum* and *Drepanocarpus lunatus*.

Thickets form extensive or small, scattered patches of 2–5 m tall shrubs and trees with woody scrambling species and climbers, surrounded by grasslands. The tall grassland bears the scars of intensive agricultural use and frequent fires, and is a mosaic of current and abandoned cultivated and burned patches of various ages and stages.

Mangroves are abundant, as almost continuous belts along the edges of the Congo River and the creeks reaching into the palm savanna. The main species are *Rhizophora racemosa* and *R. harrisonii*, with *Avicenna germinans* in smaller creeks. Other species present on the landward edge of the mangrove patches include *Laguncularia racemosa*, *Conocarpus erectus* and *Hibiscus tiliaceus*. Much of the mangrove community is not much more than about 5 m tall, but in sections of the creeks with freshly deposited sediments, mangroves reach 20 m or more, and provide nest sites for Palm-nut Vultures *Gypohierax angolensis* and possibly Woolly-necked Storks *Ciconia episcopus*.

Systematic list

Order and nomenclature follows *The Birds of Africa* (1982–2004), with a few scientific names corrected for gender or spelling. We have included, in square

brackets, species not seen during the survey but reliably reported by persons at Kwanda Base, or collected at Soyo in about 1876 (specimens in the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, precise dates and collectors not clear: Sharpe & Bouvier 1876, 1877, 1878), and during 7–9 Aug 1957 (specimens in FMNH collected by Rudyerd Boulton, labelled San Antonio, the former name of the town).

Phalacrocoracidae

Phalacrocorax africanus Reed Cormorant. Singles seen flying along the Congo River in the early part of every day, and perched on trees and mangrove roots. Very young juveniles suggested a breeding colony in the area. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1948).

Anhinga melanogaster Darter. Singles seen in backwaters of the Congo River, Oct. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1948).

Ardeidae

Bubulcus ibis Cattle Egret. Seen foraging on short grass patches and flying to roost in the evenings near the town, May and Oct. Present in low numbers in Jan 2005 (DCLM).

Butorides striata Green-backed Heron. Three records of single birds in swamps with dense grass cover and in mangroves along the edge of the Congo River, May. Collected at Banana and Muanda (Schouteden 1948).

Egretta garzetta Little Egret. One record in May, a single bird foraging with Sacred Ibises in a shallow swamp near Soyo. Seen every day in Oct, single birds foraging at a number of ponds adjacent to the river. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1948).

E. alba Great Egret. Seen every day foraging at grassy swamps at several localities, May and Oct.

Ardea purpurea Purple Heron. Single birds seen flying towards the main stream of the Congo River pre-dawn every day in May and Oct. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1948).

A. cinerea Grey Heron. Two records: one foraging with Great Egrets in a grassy swamp adjacent to Kwanda Base in May; a single bird at a pond on Kwanda Base in Oct. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1948).

A. melanocephala Black-headed Heron. Two records: an adult and a juvenile perched in trees on the edge of the Congo River near Figo in May; a single bird foraging in short grassland in Oct.

A. goliath Goliath Heron. One on the edge of the Congo River at Kwanda Base in Jan 2005 (DCLM) and one at the same place in Mar 2006 (Brian Cleator pers. comm.). There are no recent records of the species north of the Cuanza River in Angola, and only an old record for Cabinda (Dean 2000). These records thus fill a gap in the distribution of the species.

Scopidae

Scopus umbretta Hamerkop. Seen every day in May and Oct, usually flying over Kwanda Base, but also foraging in swamp patches and shallow waters along the Congo River. At least 16 present at a roost in swampy palm savanna in May. Several

nests in baobab trees southwest of Soyo, May and Oct. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1948) and Muanda (RMCA).

Ciconiidae

Mycteria ibis Yellow-billed Stork. A group of five adults and two juveniles at a pond adjacent to the river, 18 Oct; thereafter pairs and groups of up to eight seen every day, either at ponds adjacent to the Congo River or flying along the river. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1948).

Ciconia episcopus Woolly-necked Stork. Seen every day in May, but not recorded at all in Oct. Frequently seen flying to roost in tall mangroves and seen roosting on palms, and commonly foraging at short-grass swampy and muddy patches. Groups of up to six often seen, frequently associating in similar numbers with Great Egrets and African Sacred Ibises in foraging flocks. Collected at Banana (RMCA).

Threskiornithidae

Bostrychia hagedash Hadeda. Not heard or seen in May, but heard and seen every day in Oct, flying along the edge of mangrove forests and over open woodland southwest of Soyo. Collected at Banana (RMCA).

Threskiornis aethiopicus Sacred Ibis. Seen every day in May and Oct, foraging at shallow swamps, on garbage heaps and flying to roosts in the evenings.

Platalea alba African Spoonbill. One record in May, a group of nine flying to a roost; seen daily in Oct, foraging at shallow waters or flying to roosts. Collected at Banana (RMCA).

Anatidae

Dendrocygna viduata White-faced Whistling-Duck. Seen every day in May, all sightings associated with the Congo River: groups of up to six at shallow swampy patches on the edge of the river; groups of up to eight flying along the river; smaller groups foraging on the sandy shore. Not seen or heard in Oct.

Accipitridae

Pandion haliaetus Osprey. One perched on top of a tall riverside mangrove, 20 May; a single flying along the Congo River, 20 May; one at Sereia beach, 23 Oct.

Macheiramphus alcinus Bat Hawk. One hunting over woodland on the east end of Kwanda Base at dusk, 17 Oct. Recorded at Boma (5°51'S, 13°3'E) (Chapin 1932) and near Matadi (7°46'S, 13°4'E) in the DRC (Chapin 1932, Schouteden 1948).

Elanus caeruleus Black-shouldered Kite. Two individuals at different cultivated patches southwest of Soyo, 18 May. Not seen in Oct.

Milvus migrans parasitus Yellow-billed Kite. One flying along the river, 20 May; one hunting over mangroves and palm savanna, 24 May. In Oct, seen every day over Kwanda Base, and over Soyo and surrounding villages. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1948).

Haliaeetus vocifer African Fish-Eagle. Pairs and singles seen high in the air and heard calling throughout the area, including over open woodland, every day in May. Less often seen in Oct, with only scattered records of birds perched along the Congo River.

Gypohierax angolensis Palm-nut Vulture. Seen over palm savanna and patches of baobab woodland, and particularly along the edges of the Congo River, frequently dropping to

inspect objects on the water surface, or scavenging dead fish from the water and shore. More visible in May than Oct, foraging along the Congo River, with similar proportions of adults and subadults but fewer juveniles in Oct. Counts in May (see Dean 2006 for methods) showed 55% adults, 28% subadults and 17% first- or second-year birds (n = 132) (Dean 2006). Counts in Oct, using the same methods, showed 63% adults, 36% subadults and 8% juveniles (n = 63). The sampling method (counting birds flying downstream only) does not allow the difference to be tested statistically, since birds in certain age groups may have circled back unseen resulting in repeat counts of the same individual. Breeding records include: two birds building a nest in a tall mangrove southwest of Soyo, one bird sitting as though incubating and the other bringing nest material, 19 May 2006; single birds carrying nest material in palm savanna west of Soyo, 20 and 21 May; two nests with adults in attendance in tall mangroves near Kwanda Base, 21 Oct 2006; nests with adults in attendance high in baobab trees southwest of Soyo, 21 Oct. *Polyboroides typus* African Harrier-Hawk. A single adult, probably the same individual, at Kwanda Base 16 and 19 May. Several records of single birds circling over Soyo and dry woodland southwest of Soyo in Oct.

Accipiter minullus Little Sparrowhawk. A single bird in mangroves, 21 Oct.

A. melanoleucus Black Sparrowhawk. One, an adult, probably female by size, perched high and prominently on a tall mangrove west of Soyo, 19 May.

Buteo auguralis Red-necked Buzzard. A pair and two single birds circling over woodland south of Soyo, 23 Oct. Collected at Banana (RMCA).

Lophaelus occipitalis Long-crested Eagle. One seen flying across open swamp grass in palm savanna, 19 May; a single bird circling over forest south of Soyo; 23 Oct. Schouteden (1948) has no records closer to Soyo than Boma, DRC.

Falconidae

Falco ardosiaceus Grey Kestrel. One perched on a tree in open, recently burnt grassland southwest of Soyo, 18 May; one perched above a disused Hamerkop nest in a baobab, 23 May. Seen more often in Oct, with single birds perched in dry woodland southwest of Soyo, 20 Oct. Seen every day on Kwanda Base, where a pair was nesting in a Lala palm *Hyphaene guineensis*. An adult carrying lizard prey to feed an incubating female or chicks, 21 and 22 Oct.

Turnicidae

Turnix sylvaticus Kurrichane Buttonquail. Two individuals flushed at separate localities in tall grass in open woodland, 18 May. Collected at Muanda (RMCA).

Jacaniidae

[*Actophilornis africanus* African Jacana. One on a patch of emergent aquatic vegetation on the edge of the Congo River near Kwanda Base in March (Paul Buys pers. comm.). Not previously recorded from Zaïre Province (Dean 2000) but collected at Banana (Schouteden 1949).]

Recurvirostridae

Himantopus himantopus Black-winged Stilt. A flock of 16 flying over the E end of Kwanda Base, 22 Oct.

Burhinidae

Burhinus vermiculatus Water Thick-knee. Six sightings in May, foraging on open spaces around houses at Kwanda Base and along the sandy shores of the river near Soyo. Two records of 3–4 birds roosting during the day at a muddy patch on the edge of the river. Collected at Banana and Muanda (RMCA).

B. capensis Spotted Thick-knee. A pair in dry grassland southwest of Soyo, 20 Oct. Collected at Banana (RMCA).

Glareolidae

Cursorius temminckii Temminck's Courser. A pair on a burnt patch in grassland southwest of Soyo, 18 May. Not seen in Oct. Collected at Banana (RMCA) and Muanda (Schouteden 1949).

Charadriidae

Charadrius tricollaris Three-banded Plover. At least five on the muddy margins of a pond in the E end of Kwanda Base, 18 Oct.

C. marginatus White-fronted Plover. Together with Three-banded Plovers at a pond on Kwanda Base, 18 Oct; single birds foraging along the sandy shore of the Congo River, 19–23 Oct. Collected at Banana (RMCA) and Muanda (Schouteden 1949).

[*Vanellus lugubris* Lesser Black-winged Lapwing. Collected at Soyo (Sharpe & Bouvier 1878).]

Scolopacidae

Numenius phaeopus Common Whimbrel. Two flying along the Congo River, 22 May. Scattered small groups and one larger group of 30 seen on the edge of the Congo River, 20–23 Oct. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1949).

Tringa stagnatilis Marsh Sandpiper. One at a pond on the E end of Kwanda Base, 18 Oct.

T. glareola Wood Sandpiper. Up to three at ponds on the E end of Kwanda Base, 18–21 Oct. Collected at Banana and Muanda (RMCA).

Actitis hypoleucos Common Sandpiper. Single birds in mangroves along the Congo River, 22 Oct, and at ponds on the E end of Kwanda Base, 23 Oct. Collected at Banana (RMCA).

Laridae

Sterna maxima Royal Tern. Singles and pairs flying up and down the Congo River on most days in Jan 2005 and Oct 2006. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1949).

Sterna balaenarum Damara Tern. One flying along the Congo River, 21 Oct.

Columbidae

Treron calva African Green-Pigeon. Flocks of five and eight seen in dry woodland southwest of Soyo, 19 Oct. Collected at Banana (RMCA).

Turtur chalcospilos Emerald-spotted Wood Dove. Heard at all woodland and palm savanna sites, seen foraging on roads through mixed baobab and palm patches and cultivation, every day in May and Oct. At least ten flushed from burning thickets southwest of Soyo, 23 May. New distribution record, not previously known from Zaire Province (Dean 2000) but the dry open habitat at Soyo is suitable for it, and it has been recorded at Boma and Matadi, DRC, east of Soyo (Schouteden 1950).

Streptopelia semitorquata Red-eyed Dove. Scattered records of single birds flying over Kwanda Base, and calling in palm savanna, May and Oct, but not seen every day. Collected at Banana and Muanda (Schouteden 1950).

S. capicola Cape Turtle-Dove. Seen daily throughout the area, in all types of woodland. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1950).

Cuculidae

[*Oxylophus jacobinus* Jacobin Cuckoo. Collected at Soyo (Sharpe & Bouvier 1878).]
Chrysococcyx caprius Diderik Cuckoo. One perched on a fallen tree on the east end of Kwanda Base, 18 Oct; heard calling every day in Oct. Collected at Muanda (Schouteden 1950).

Centropus superciliosus White-browed Coucal. Single birds seen and heard in rank swamp grasses daily in May and Oct. Collected at Muanda (RMCA).

C. senegalensis Senegal Coucal. One seen in a swampy patch southwest of Soyo, 19 Oct. May have been heard on other occasions, but call similar to previous species. Collected at Banana and Muanda (Schouteden 1950).

Tytonidae

Tyto alba Barn Owl. One flushed from a roost site in a Lala palm, 17 Oct.

Caprimulgidae

Caprimulgus fossii Square-tailed Nightjar. One hawking flying insects at lights on Kwanda Base 23 May. Collected at Soyo (FMNH), Banana and Muanda (Schouteden 1951).

Apodidae

Cypsiurus parvus African Palm-Swift. Seen every day wherever there were palms throughout the Soyo area. Nests seen on dead Lala palm fronds at a number of places. Birds incubating and feeding chicks at one small colony, 24 May. Much more nesting activity evident in Oct, with birds incubating or feeding young at all sites where there were Lala palms. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1951).

Apus affinis Little Swift. Seen every day, often in mixed flocks with Palm Swifts, and common at all sites in May and Oct. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1951).

Coliidae

Colius castanotus Red-backed Mousebird. Two groups, five foraging and six sunning in tall shrubs, 22 May; one or two birds in Lala palms, 23 and 24 May. Seen daily in palm savanna, with clear views of the rufous rump, in Oct. New distribution records, as formerly known to occur north only to about the Bengo river in northern Angola. However, both Traylor (1963) and Dean (2000) overlooked a record of a single bird collected at Banana, date and collector not given (Schouteden 1952).

C. striatus Speckled Mousebird. A group of four (of *C. striatus nigricollis*) sunbathing in a tree near the pump station on the road to Vunda, 18 May; several groups foraging and sunning in tall shrubs in palm savanna near Soyo, 22–24 May. Collected at Banana and Muanda (Schouteden 1952).

Alcedinidae

Halcyon albiventris Brown-hooded Kingfisher. One heard calling in a woodland patch south of Soyo, 23 Oct.

H. senegalensis Woodland Kingfisher. Seen and heard every day throughout the area in May and Oct, in mangrove edges, palm savanna and mixed woodlands. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1951) and Muanda (RMCA).

H. chelicuti Striped Kingfisher. One calling at Kwanda Base, 17 May. Not seen or heard in Oct. Collected at Soyo (FMNH).

Ispidina picta African Pygmy Kingfisher. A pair on the edge of palm savanna, 21 Oct. Collected at Soyo (FMNH).

Megaceryle maximus African Giant Kingfisher. One calling in woodland on the edge of the Congo River, 23 Oct. Collected at Banana (RMCA) and Muanda (Schouteden 1951).

Ceryle rudis Pied Kingfisher. Common in Jan 2005 (DCLM). Only one record in May, but seen every day in Oct, with several birds regularly seen foraging on the Congo River, and a family of two adults and a juvenile on the edge of the river on 21 Oct. Collected at Banana and Muanda (RMCA).

Meropidae

Merops pusillus Little Bee-eater. A pair perched on a shrub on the river edge, 19 May; a group of seven going to roost in tall shrubs, 22 May; a pair perched on a dead shrub on the edge of a thicket, 23 May. At least seven nest burrows in sandbanks along roads southwest of Soyo, 21 Oct. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1951) and Muanda (RMCA).

M. variegatus Blue-breasted Bee-eater. One perched in the open on the edge of rank growth southwest of Soyo near the forest patch, 18 May. Several in this general area in Oct. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1951).

M. bullockoides White-fronted Bee-eater. Present at breeding colonies in sandpits on the edge of Soyo, and at sandpits south of Soyo, 20 and 23 Oct. At least five pairs feeding young at the Soyo colony, 20 Oct. Not recorded away from the nest sites.

Coraciidae

Eurystomus glaucurus Broad-billed Roller. Seen flying over Kwanda Base, and in palm savanna and open baobab woodland southwest of Soyo on four occasions in May. Much more prominent in Oct, particularly on the E end of Kwanda Base, and seen and heard every day. Nests in holes in Lala palms, 20 and 22 Oct. New distribution records: not previously known from Zaïre Province (Dean 2000) but collected at Banana and Muanda (Schouteden 1951).

Bucerotidae

Tockus fasciatus African Pied Hornbill. A group of three, 19 May, and probably the same group flying over palm savanna west of Soyo, 21 May. Not seen in Oct. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1951) and Muanda (RMCA).

T. alboterminatus Crowned Hornbill. Two in a tall mangrove at 6°16.42'S, 12°31.802'E, 23 May. Not seen in Oct. Traylor (1963) and Dean (2000) overlooked a specimen from Soyo, listed in Schouteden (1951) without details. The closest other records to Soyo are from Vista (5°52'S, 12°17'E) and Matadi in the DRC (Schouteden 1951).

Capitonidae

Pogoniulus bilineatus Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird. One calling from a forest patch southwest of Soyo, 20 Oct.

Indicatoridae

Indicator indicator Greater Honeyguide. One calling from mangroves on the edge of the Congo River, 21 Oct.

Alaudidae

Mirafra sabota Sabota Lark. One in grassland southwest of Soyo, 23 May.

Hirundinidae

Hirundo semirufa Red-breasted Swallow. Pairs seen at Kwanda Base every day in Oct. Not recorded in May. Collected at Banana (Sharpe & Bouvier 1877).

H. senegalensis Mosque Swallow. One hawking insects over short, mowed grass on Kwanda Base, 20 May. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1955) and Muanda (RMCA).

H. abyssinica Lesser Striped Swallow. Seen every day in May and Oct at all localities in the Soyo area. Several nests seen on houses at Kwanda Base in May and Oct. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1955).

H. rufigula Red-throated Cliff Swallow. Two at a pond on Kwanda Base, 17 May; two in a mixed flock of Lesser Striped Swallows west of Soyo, 21 May. At least six foraging in the smoke from a grass fire southwest of Soyo, 23 May. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1955).

H. rustica Barn Swallow. Three flying across Kwanda Base, 23 Oct. Collected at Banana and Muanda (Schouteden 1955).

Motacillidae

Anthus pallidiventris Long-legged Pipit. Seen every day in May and Oct, on mowed or short or recently burnt grass throughout. Collected at Banana and Muanda (RMCA).

Pycnonotidae

Chlorocichla falkensteini Yellow-necked Greenbul. Two seen in small forest patch near Soyo, 22 Oct. Collected at Soyo (FMNH) and Muanda (Schouteden 1954).

Pycnonotus barbatus Common Bulbul. Seen every day in May and Oct throughout the area, in rank growth, palm savanna, thickets and edges of mangroves. Seen eating Wild Date palm fruits *Phoenix reclinata* and fruits of Kanoti Grass *Flagellaria guineensis*. Collected at Banana and Muanda (Schouteden 1954).

[*Nicator vireo* Yellow-throated Nicator. Collected at Soyo (FMNH).]

Turdidae

Cichladusa ruficauda Rufous-tailed Palm-Thrush. Seen every day in palm savanna and around the houses, buildings and open steel-framed sheds on Kwanda Base. Adults carrying food to nests in the warehouses on Kwanda Base, 17 May. Two nests with young, in Lala palms on the E edge of Kwanda Base, 23 Oct. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1954).

Sylviidae

Cisticola bulliens Bubbling Cisticola. Seen every day, in rank growth on mangrove edges and in tall grasses and edges of thickets in palm savanna throughout the area in May and Oct. Almost certainly breeding in Oct, with calling, displaying males and many interactions between males noted. Collected at Soyo (FMNH), Banana and Muanda (Schouteden 1955).

C. aridulus Desert Cisticola. Heard calling over grassland west and southwest of Soyo every day in May and Oct. Collected at Soyo (FMNH).

Camaroptera brachyura Bleating Warbler. Heard calling from dense woodland on the W edge of Kwanda Base, 23 Oct. Collected at Soyo (FMNH).

[*Sylvietta virens* Green Crombec. Collected at Soyo (FMNH) and Muanda (RMCA).]

Phylloscopus trochilus Willow Warbler. One in a cassava patch southwest of Soyo, 18 Oct.

Sylvia borin Garden Warbler. One foraging in dry palm leaves and shrubs in palm savanna, 23 Oct.

Muscicapidae

Platysteira cyanea Brown-throated Wattle-eye. A pair seen in mangroves near Kwanda Base, 20 May. Collected at Soyo (FMNH) and Muanda (Schouteden 1955).

[*Platysteira albifrons* White-fronted Wattle-eye. Collected at Soyo (FMNH).]

Timaliidae

Turdoides jardineii Arrow-marked Babbler. Two in rank shrubs west of Soyo, 22 May. Not previously known from Zaïre Province (Dean 2000). Distribution (of *T. j. hypostictus*) includes Cabinda and Cuanza Norte (Traylor 1963), but closest specimen records are Boma, DRC (Schouteden 1954) and Calanda, Angola (7°18'S, 15°3'E) (Dean 2000).

Paridae

[*Parus leucomelas* White-winged Black Tit. Collected at Soyo (Sharpe & Bouvier 1877).]

Nectariniidae

Anthreptes gabonicus Brown Sunbird. A pair in mangroves on the S edge of Kwanda Base, 19 May; frequent in mangroves westward along the river, 20 May. Not previously known south of Cabinda (Traylor 1963, Dean 2000), but one specimen collected at Banana (Büttikofer 1888) so not unexpected at Soyo.

Cyanomitra verticalis Green-headed Sunbird. An adult female foraging in the top of a Lala palm at Kwanda Base, 17 Oct. Collected Soyo (FMNH) and Banana (Schouteden 1956).

[*Chalcomitra fuliginosa* Carmelite Sunbird. Collected at Soyo (FMNH), Banana and Muanda (Schouteden 1956).]

Cinnyris bifasciatus Purple-banded Sunbird. A pair in tall shrubs west of Soyo, 19 May; a pair feeding at shrub flowers at Vunda; a pair feeding at a flowering shrub in a cassava patch, 18 May; at least six foraging at and defending flowering creepers southwest of Soyo, 23 May. Seen daily, mostly in pairs, at all sites in Oct. Two recently used nests, another being built and a nest with two eggs found on the edge of Kwanda Base and southwest of Soyo, 19 Oct. A female gathering spider web and building a nest in a small tree on the edge of the old golf course at Kwanda Base, 21 Oct. Collected at Soyo (FMNH), Banana and Muanda (Schouteden 1956).

C. cupreus Copper Sunbird. A female foraging at a flowering *Lantana camara* shrub west of Soyo, 18 May. Collected at Banana (RMCA) and Muanda (Schouteden 1956).

Laniidae

Lanius collaris Fiscal Shrike. A pair near tennis courts on Kwanda Base, 20 and 22 May; one in open grassland southwest of Soyo, 23 May. Heard in palm savanna west of Soyo on four occasions in May and Oct. Collected at Muanda (Schouteden 1956).

Malaconotidae

[*Malaconotus sulfureopectus* Orange-breasted Bush-Shrike. Collected at Soyo (FMNH).]

Laniarius bicolor Swamp Boubou. Seen every day in rank, swampy patches throughout the area in May and Oct. Collected at Banana (Schouteden 1956).

Corvidae

Corvus albus Pied Crow. Seen every day, associated with settlements and disturbances. Roosts of 16 and 30 birds in trees at the E end of Kwanda Base, 21 May. A bird incubating on a nest in a tall Lala palm at the E end of Kwanda Base, 18 Oct; another incubating on a nest in a similar site adjacent to the Base, 23 Oct.

Sturnidae

Lamprotornis nitens Cape Glossy Starling. Seen on four of eight days in mixed woodland, edges of thickets and cultivated lands southwest of Soyo in May. Seen daily in Oct, with pairs flying over Kwanda Base and perched on baobab trees in and around Soyo. Collected at Soyo (Sharpe & Bouvier 1878).

Passeridae

Passer griseus Northern Grey-headed Sparrow. Seen daily around houses and buildings in the town of Soyo and at Kwanda Base, and on the edges of palm savanna on several occasions in May and Oct. Collected at Soyo (FMNH), Banana and Muanda (Schouteden 1958).

P. domesticus House Sparrow. Seen daily, only at buildings in the more industrial parts of Kwanda Base.

Ploceidae

Ploceus pelzelni Slender-billed Weaver. Two records of birds in tangled reed beds and swamp grasses west and southwest of Soyo in May. Not recorded in Oct.

P. subpersonatus Loango Weaver. A male with partial blackish hood seen in reeds south of Kwanda Base, 17 May. Not previously recorded south of the Congo River, but not unexpected given that there is abundant reed habitat in the area. Schouteden (1958), cites a specimen collected between Muanda and Vista, and a Chapin record at Boma, DRC. Another specimen was collected east of Soyo at Matadi, DRC by the Laenen expedition (study skin in ZFMK).

P. nigricollis Black-necked Weaver. Several foraging in tall grasses on the edge of the Kwanda Base, 23 Oct. Collected at Muanda (Schouteden 1958).

P. ocularis Spectacled Weaver. Single birds foraging in rank growth on edges of palm savanna west of Soyo, 21 and 24 May.

P. xanthops Holub's Golden Weaver. Single birds and small groups foraging in rank growth on the river, and large flocks going to roost in palm savanna west of Soyo on several evenings in May. Nesting in reeds in swamp patches near Soyo, 22 Oct.

P. cucullatus Village Weaver. Flocks of *P. cucullatus collaris* seen daily in mangroves on the S edge of Kwanda Base; a very large flock in a cassava patch southwest of Soyo, 18 May. Breeding at Kwanda Base in Oct, with several colonies of > 70 pairs each in introduced palms and *Eucalyptus* trees. Collected at Soyo (FMNH) and Muanda (Schouteden 1958).

Pachyphantes superciliosus Compact Weaver. A male in rank grass on the E end of Kwanda Base, 22 May; a female and juvenile in the same area, 22 Oct. Compact build, heavy bill, mask and greenish back on both sexes unmistakable. Collected at Matadi, DRC (Schouteden 1958).

Estrildidae

Estrilda perreini Grey Waxbill. A pair with a juvenile in tall grass on the edge of the river west of Soyo, 21 May; a group of three foraging in tall grass in the same area, 22 Oct. Collected at Muanda (Schouteden 1958).

E. melpoda Orange-cheeked Waxbill. A pair in tall grass on the edge of palm savanna west of Soyo, 19 May. Seen on three occasions in Oct, once a flock of ten with c. 20 Common Waxbills in tall grass on 22 Oct. Collected at Banana and Muanda (RMCA).

E. astrild Common Waxbill. Flocks in tall grass west of Soyo, 22 and 23 May. Seen daily in that area in Oct, with flocks of up to 30 in tall seeding grasses. Collected at Muanda (Schouteden 1958).

Uraeginthus angolensis Blue Waxbill. Seen every day in May and Oct, in settlements and disturbed patches throughout. Less often in palm savanna and mixed woodlands. A pair building a nest in wire screens on a warehouse on Kwanda Base, 23 May. Foraging with Bronze Mannikins and Pin-tailed Whydahs on short grass patches around houses at Kwanda Base. Collected at Muanda (Schouteden 1958).

Spermestes cucullata Bronze Mannikin. Seen every day around houses and on short grass at Kwanda Base, and in tall grass in palm savanna, edges of thickets and cultivated patches. Flocks up to c. 90, of which usually c. 50% juveniles, foraging on short grass and bare patches in Kwanda Base in May. Far fewer juveniles present in Oct, indicating that breeding peak was later. Collected at Soyo (FMNH), Banana, Muanda (Schouteden 1958).

Viduidae

Vidua macroura Pin-tailed Whydah. Seen every day in most habitats, usually foraging with Bronze Mannikins on seeds of lawn grasses around houses at Kwanda Base. Males in full and partial breeding plumage present in May and Oct. Collected at Banana and Muanda (Schouteden 1958).

Fringillidae

Serinus capistratus Black-faced Canary. A pair in rather atypical habitat of tall shrubs on the edge of palm savanna west of Soyo, 23 May. At least four pairs on the edge of a small forest patch west of Soyo, 22 and 23 Oct. Interactions between males suggested that the birds were breeding, but no nests were found.

[*Emberiza tahapisi* Cinnamon-breasted Bunting. Collected at Soyo (Sharpe & Bouvier 1878), Banana (RMCA) and Muanda (Schouteden 1958).]

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Appendix 1

Additional species collected north of the Congo River at Banana (B) and Muanda (M), which might be expected to occur in the Soyo area.

Species	Sites	References ¹
<i>Sula capensis</i> Cape Gannet	BM	S (1948)
<i>Egretta ardesiaca</i> Black Heron	B	RMCA
<i>Phoenicopterus minor</i> Lesser Flamingo	B	RMCA
<i>Nettapus auritus</i> African Pygmy Goose	M	S (1948)
<i>Melierax metabates</i> Dark Chanting Goshawk	B	RMCA
<i>Accipiter tachiro</i> African Goshawk	B	RMCA
<i>Francolinus afer</i> Red-necked Francolin	M	S (1949)
<i>Sarothrura pulchra</i> White-spotted Flufftail	B	RMCA
<i>Crex egregia</i> African Crake	B	RMCA
<i>Gallinula angulata</i> Lesser Moorhen	B	RMCA
<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> Eurasian Avocet	B	RMCA
<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> Ringed Plover	B	RMCA
<i>C. pecuarius</i> Kittlitz's Plover	BM	S (1949)
<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> Grey Plover	B	RMCA
<i>Calidris alba</i> Sanderling	B	RMCA
<i>C. minuta</i> Little Stint	B	S (1949)
<i>C. ferruginea</i> Curlew Sandpiper	B	SB (1876), S (1949)
<i>Tringa nebularia</i> Common Greenshank	BM	S (1949)
<i>Philomachus pugnax</i> Ruff	B	S (1949)
<i>Arenaria interpres</i> Ruddy Turnstone	B	S (1949)
<i>Larus cirrocephalus</i> Grey-headed Gull	B	RMCA
<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i> Sandwich Tern	B	SB (1876), S (1949)
<i>S. hirundo</i> Common Tern	B	S (1949)
<i>S. paradisaea</i> Arctic Tern	BM	RMCA, C (2007)
<i>Chlidonias niger</i> Black Tern	B	SB (1876)
<i>C. leucopterus</i> White-winged Tern	B	RMCA
<i>Centropus grillii</i> Black Coucal	M	S (1950)
<i>Turtur afer</i> Blue-spotted Wood Dove	BM	S (1950)
<i>Oena capensis</i> Namaqua Dove	BM	S (1950)
<i>Tauraco schuettii</i> Black-billed Turaco	B	RMCA
<i>Bubo africanus</i> Spotted Eagle-Owl	M	RMCA

Species	Sites	References ¹
<i>Apus horus</i> Horus Swift	B	SB (1876)
<i>Halcyon malimbica</i> Blue-breasted Kingfisher	B	S (1951)
<i>Corythornis cristata</i> Malachite Kingfisher	B	S (1951)
<i>Alcedo quadribrachys</i> Shining-blue Kingfisher	B	RMCA
<i>Coracias garrulus</i> European Roller	B	RMCA
<i>Merops breweri</i> Black-headed Bee-eater	M	RMCA
<i>M. persicus</i> Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	M	S (1951)
<i>M. malimbicus</i> Rosy Bee-eater	M	S (1951)
<i>Upupa epops</i> Hoopoe	M	S (1951)
<i>Tockus albocristatus</i> White-crested Hornbill	B	S (1951)
<i>Pogoniulus bilineatus</i> Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird	B	S (1952)
<i>Dendropicops fuscescens</i> Cardinal Woodpecker	M	RMCA
<i>Tricholaema hirsuta</i> Hairy-breasted Barbet	M	S (1952)
<i>Mirafra rufocinnamomea</i> Flappet Lark	M	S (1954)
<i>Eremopterix verticalis</i> Grey-backed Sparrow-Lark	M	S (1954)
<i>Hirundo smithii</i> Wire-tailed Swallow	B	S (1955)
<i>H. nigrita</i> White-throated Blue Swallow	B	S (1955)
<i>Riparia cincta</i> Banded Martin	M	S (1955)
<i>Anthus leucophrys</i> Plain-backed Pipit	M	S (1954)
<i>Macronyx croceus</i> Yellow-throated Longclaw	BM	S (1954)
<i>Campephaga flava</i> Black Cuckooshrike	B	SB (1876)
<i>C. petiti</i> Petit's Cuckoo-Shrike	B	S (1954)
<i>Neolestes torquatus</i> Black-collared Bulbul	M	S (1954)
<i>Nicator chloris</i> Western Nicator	M	S (1954)
<i>Myrmecocichla nigra</i> Sooty Chat	M	S (1954)
<i>Turdus pelios</i> African Thrush	BM	S (1954)
<i>Cisticola brachypterus</i> Short-winged Cisticola	BM	S (1955)
<i>C. juncidis</i> Zitting Cisticola	BM	S (1955)
<i>C. natalensis</i> Croaking Cisticola	M	S (1955)
<i>Prinia subflava</i> Tawny-flanked Prinia	BM	S (1955)
<i>Sylvietta virens</i> Green Crombec	M	S (1955)
<i>Apalis flavida</i> Yellow-breasted Apalis	B	S (1955)
<i>Fraseria ocreata</i> Fraser's Forest-Flycatcher	B	S (1955)
<i>Melaenornis pallidus</i> Pale Flycatcher	M	S (1955)
<i>Muscicapa comitata</i> Dusky-blue Flycatcher	M	S (1955)
<i>M. infuscata</i> Sooty Flycatcher	M	S (1955)
<i>Terpsiphone rufocinerea</i> Rufous-vented Paradise-Flycatcher	BM	S (1955)
<i>Batis molitor</i> Chinspot Batis	M	RMCA
<i>B. minulla</i> Angola Batis	M	S (1955)
<i>Dyaphorophya castanea</i> Chestnut Wattle-eye	B	S (1955)
<i>Cyanomitra obscura</i> Western Olive Sunbird	B	S (1956)

Species	Sites	References ¹
<i>C. cyanolaema</i> Blue-throated Brown Sunbird	BM	S (1956)
<i>Anabathmis reichenbachii</i> Reichenbach's Sunbird	M	S (1956)
<i>Hedydipna collaris</i> Collared Sunbird	M	S (1956)
<i>Chalcomitra rubescens</i> Green-throated Sunbird	B	S (1956)
<i>C. fuliginosa</i> Carmelite Sunbird	BM	S (1956)
<i>Cinnyris chloropygius</i> Olive-bellied Sunbird	BM	S (1956)
<i>C. superbus</i> Superb Sunbird	M	S (1956)
<i>Tchagra senegala</i> Black-crowned Tchagra	BM	S (1956)
<i>Lamprotornis splendidus</i> Splendid Glossy Starling	M	S (1956)
<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i> Violet-backed Starling	M	S (1956)
<i>Buphagus africanus</i> Yellow-billed Oxpecker	M	S (1956)
<i>Ploceus nigerrimus</i> Vieillot's Black Weaver	M	S (1958)
<i>Quelea erythrops</i> Red-headed Quelea	M	S (1958)
<i>Euplectes hordeaceus</i> Black-winged Bishop	M	RMCA
<i>E. albonotatus</i> White-winged Widowbird	M	S (1958)
<i>E. macrourus</i> Yellow-mantled Widowbird	M	S (1958)
<i>Pytilia afra</i> Orange-winged Pytilia	M	S (1958)
<i>P. melba</i> Green-winged Pytilia	BM	S (1958)

¹S = Schouteden; SB = Sharpe & Bouvier; C = Clark *et al.*

Appendix 2

Additional species recorded at N'Zeto and Ambriz, south of Soyo in Zaïre Province, which might be expected to occur in the Soyo area.

Species	References
<i>Nettapus auritus</i> African Pygmy Goose	PMNH
<i>Kaupifalco monogrammicus</i> Lizard Buzzard	Hartlaub & Monteiro (1860)
<i>Falco tinnunculus [rupicolus]</i> Common Kestrel	BMNH
<i>Gallinula angulata</i> Lesser Moorhen	BMNH
<i>Eupodotis melanogaster</i> Black-bellied Korhaan	BMNH
<i>Glareola nordmanni</i> Black-winged Pratincole	Sharpe (1869)
<i>Coracias naevia</i> Purple Roller	Sharpe (1869)
<i>C. caudata</i> Lilac-breasted Roller	Sharpe (1869)
<i>C. spatulata</i> Racket-tailed Roller	BMNH
<i>Campethera abingoni</i> Golden-tailed Woodpecker	Sharpe (1869)
<i>Hirundo angolensis</i> Angola Swallow	BMNH
<i>Motacilla aguimp</i> African Pied Wagtail	BMNH
<i>Cisticola juncidis</i> Zitting Cisticola	BMNH