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RECORDS OF BIRDS SEEN IN NORTH-EASTERN GUINEA IN 1984-1985

by J. Frank Walsh

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From independence in 1961 until very recently the Democratic Republic of Guinea (Guinea Conakry) has not been a very suitable place for the ornithologist. The pages of *Malimbus* contain only two papers dealing with Guinea. Both concern the birds of the region surrounding the capital, Conakry, (Richards 1982, Browne 1984). A review of the relatively sparse amount of previous work in the country is given in Morel & Morel (in press).

During the last three years Guinea has become much more open to western visitors and the government is now actively seeking Western European cooperation in development projects for rural areas. I had the opportunity of visiting the north-eastern parts of the country in October-November 1984, and again in February-April 1985. In 1984 I travelled into the country from Bamako, staying at Kankan, a Provincial capital, and at Beyla, a Prefecture. I made four journeys along the Bamako-Kankan road, and one along the Kankan-Beyla road (returning by helicopter), together with a number of bush trips in the Beyla prefecture. In addition I made a number of helicopter survey flights in the country east of $10^{\circ}50'W$. In 1985 I was based in Odienne (Ivory Coast). From there I made several helicopter flights into eastern Guinea, surveying the eastward flowing tributaries of the Sassandra river basin. I made one flight further west to visit the Loffa river, and during this flight landed for fuel at Beyla. However, during 1985 I did not stay overnight in Guinea.

In 1984, while staying at Beyla, I was accused of infringing security by using binoculars in a 'restricted military area'. As far as I could see this consisted of a junk yard of ex-military vehicles, mostly Landrovers, but also other jeep-type 4WD vehicles. This caused me no great problem because I was an official visitor in a team which had previously established good relationships with the Military Governor of the Province, and with the Prefet of Beyla (also a military man). It might be more awkward for a solitary traveller and serves to suggest that a cautious approach is still advisable. However, village people could not have been more friendly, while my stay in Kankan was notable for the fact that, even in the town itself, I could walk along the river bank using binoculars, without being approached even by children.

The area in which I operated lay generally east of $10^{\circ}W$ and north of $8^{\circ}N$. It is essentially part of the upper Niger river drainage system, with a series of fine perennial rivers flowing northwards to coalesce about 100 km south west of Bamako. North of $10^{\circ}N$ the rivers are often wide with extensive sandbanks. At the time of my 1984 visit water levels were still declining, exposing ever more sand. Further south the rivers are rocky, several with spectacular rapids and waterfalls. Much of the Beyla prefecture drains eastwards into the Sassandra river of Ivory Coast. The prefecture has a considerable area of land over 1000 m altitude, with peaks in the Fon chain at 1656 m and in the Going chain at 1504 m. Unfortunately, I did not set foot on any of the fifteen or so peaks above 1100 m in the Beyla prefecture. However, I did have the opportunity to visit the isolated Konossou peak (1346 m), though our helicopter landed just below the peak at 1300 m.

The zone south from Bamako to half way between Kankan and Beyla is classed as 'Sudanian woodland with abundant Isoberlinia' by White (1983), this being roughly equivalent to the Northern Guinea Savanna of earlier authors. Beyla is situated in a 'Mosaic of lowland rain forest and secondary grassland'. Alas there isn't much sign of the rain forest near Beyla itself. Even at the end of the rains the tops of the higher hills were covered in very short grass, though some of the deeper valleys and ravines were well wooded.

During my travels I saw very few game animals, and hippo Hippopotamus amphibius numbers are down drastically compared with those recorded in the 1960s (R. Garms pers. comm.). Large species of birds were rarer than I had expected, and I was struck by not seeing a wild Guinea Fowl Numida meleagris in 1984, possibly symptomatic of severe hunting pressure and of the excessive numbers of firearms seen in the countryside.

Given the paucity of recent information about Guinea I have given a complete systematic list of bird species seen. Where I have mentioned a widespread, common, and essentially sedentary species, seen at Kankan or Beyla I have indicated this by the letters K and B respectively, without date or other reference. I was in Kankan for 12 nights during the period 23 October to 29 November 1984. I made a few short walks along both banks of the Milo river, upstream of the bridge. At the time the river carried quite a lot of water and not much sand was exposed. Other observations were made while waiting at the airport for refuelling helicopters, and in the garden of the government rest-house, the 'Maison Syli'. In all I noted about 80 species of birds in Kankan. I slept in Beyla on 9 nights between 25 October and 22 November 1984. I stayed at the 'Villa Syli', formerly a presidential villa, alas sadly decayed, which is situated on a small hill to the south west of the town. There is no garden, just baked earth, but the hill is fringed by a single row of trees, mostly exotics. The avenue leading to the villa is lined for 100 m by Gmelina arborea, which were flowering at the time. The Beyla area is one of rolling hills, almost completely treeless. The woodland birds were thus seen in the immediate vicinity of the villa, or in a large densely wooded garden of another large, deserted villa. Near the Villa Syli there was a small dam covering about 2 acres (less than 1 hectare), with a little rank grass at the stream inlet. I saw about 50 species of birds in Beyla.

The other locations which occur for several species are the ferry crossings over the Tinkisso river (Tinkisso Bac = T), just south of Siguiri and that over the Niger river (Djelibakoro Bac = D) at Niandokoro.

I have followed the systematic order and nomenclature used by Serle & Morel (1977). The coordinates of named localities are provided as an Appendix.

PHALACROCORACIDAE

Phalacrocorax africanus Long-tailed Shag One over K on 1 November.

ARDEIDAE

Nycticorax nycticorax Night Heron One juvenile at D on 13 November and one adult at K on 29 November.

Ardeola ralloides Squacco Heron Two at K on 1 November and one at Niandan on 26 November.

Ardeola ibis Cattle Egret Seen at D in October, widespread in the Niger basin in November with a noticable influx at K on 28 November. Several were seen at B on 13 March and several flocks were in the Sassandra basin on 15 April, indicating a continued movement south as the dry season progressed.

Butorides striatus Green-backed Heron Seen at T, K and Loffa. Also common along the tributary streams of the Sassandra basin in February-April.

Egretta alba Great White Heron K, D, and Katakora-Dion confluence in November.

Egretta garzetta Little Egret Singles at K, D, Kouroussa and upper Dion in November. Also widely scattered along Sassandra tributaries in February and March.

Egretta gularis Reef Heron See Walsh (1987) for details.

Ardea cinerea Grey Heron Widely scattered, usually singly, in Niger basin in October and November, and along the Sassandra tributaries in February-April.

Ardea purpurea Purple Heron One near Djilemba outfall on 13 March.

SCOPIDAE

Scopus umbretta Hammerkop Several records for the Milo river in November and seen at Lamodou on the Boa in April. A nest was seen on the Bagbe at 8°30'N, 7°56'W on 13 March.

CICONIIDAE

Ciconia episcopus White-necked Stork Four at Diabaseridou on 14 November, and singles at 9°27'N, 8°10'W on the Gbanhala on 22 November and at the Gouan outfall on 21 February.

THRESKIORNITHIDAE

Bostrichia hagedash Hadada Ibis Seen upper Dion on 25 October and common in the Sassandra basin in November and February-March.

ANATIDAE

Dendrocygna viduata White-faced Tree-Duck Common in Milo near K in November.

Plectropterus gambensis Spur-winged Goose Several large flocks on the lower Dion on 25 October, and also on the Milo and Niandan in November. A pair at Lamodou in February-April.

Pteronetta hartlaubii Hartlaub's Duck A pair on 11 March and 3 on 21 March on the Loffa, 1 pair on the Bafing at 8°03'N, 8°10'W on 12 March.

Anas sparsa African Black Duck Seen at two sites in the Sassandra basin in

October-November. These are the first sightings west of the extreme east of Nigeria. See Walsh (1985) for details.

Anas acuta Pintail A female with Spur-winged Geese and White-faced Duck near Kouroussa on the Niger 26 November.

Anas clypeata Shoveler A flock of 18 south over K towards sunset on 28 November.

ACCIPITRIDAE

Gyps bengalensis White-backed Vulture A flock of 20 was at K airfield from 25 to 28 November.

Neophron monachus Hooded Vulture Common in larger settlements from Siguiri to Beyla.

Gypohierax angolensis Palm-Nut Vulture Seen in the Loffa and Niger valleys and very common in the Sassandra basin.

Circus macrourus Pallid Harrier One male at K on 28 November and a Ring-tailed female 48 km N of K on 30 November.

Circus aeruginosus Marsh Harrier Widespread and numerous in flood plain areas south to K in October-November. Also a male at 8°35'N, 8°05'W on 20 February.

Polyboroides radiatus Harrier Hawk Widespread and common in both the Niger and Sassandra basins and also in the Loffa valley.

Terathopius ecaudatus Bateleur One adult at 9°34'N, 8°33'W on 22 November.

Circaetus cinerascens Banded Harrier-Eagle One near Fandou 13 March.

Accipiter badius Shikra Encountered from Siguiri to Beyla in October-November.

Melierax metabates Chanting Goshawk One 10 km south of Doko on 30 November.

Kaupifalco monogrammicus Lizard Buzzard Two near B on 30 October, one near Doko 30 November.

Butastur rufipennis Grasshopper Buzzard Common north of K in October-November.

Buteo auguralis Red-tailed Buzzard One north of Doko on 30 November, one Beni outfall 15 November, also occasional in Sassandra basin in March.

Hieraaetus spilogaster African Hawk-Eagle One Beyla district 31 October.

Haliaeetus vocifer River Eagle Widespread on larger rivers, but nowhere common, October-November. One sitting on nest in isolated tree on island in Niger river at 10°32'N 10°07'W on 26 November.

Milvus migrans Black Kite Common north of K in November. Twenty-two at waters edge T on 13 November.

Elanus caeruleus Black-shouldered Kite Several sightings in Milo and Niger valleys in November.

Macheirhamphus alcinus Bat Hawk One over K on evening of 13 November.

Pandion haliaetus Osprey One in Niandan valley at 9°22'N, 10°00'W on 27 November.

FALCONIDAE

Falco subbuteo European Hobby One at Konossou peak on 27 November.

Falco ardosiaceus Grey Kestrel One near Kouremale on 13 November and one at Sigiri on 30 November.

Falco tinnunculus Kestrel One north of D on 30 November.

PHASIANIDAE

Francolinus bicalcaratus Double-spurred Francolin K November, B October-November, Komodougou 31 October.

Ptilopachus petrosus Stone-Partridge Heard Komodougou 31 October.

Numida meleagris Grey-breasted Helmet Guinea-Fowl Six at Lamodou 20 February, one at Djilemba outfall 19 March.

RALLIDAE

Limnocorax flavirostra Black Crake K, B, November.

Gallinula chloropus Moorhen One Gbé outfall on 10 April.

HELIORNITHIDAE

Podica senegalensis Finfoot Common in upper Dion valley and Sassandra basin October-November, February-April. Also on the Loffa on 11 March.

OTIDIDAE

Eupodotis melanogaster Black-bellied Bustard One male K airfield 25 October.

JACANIDAE

Actophilornis africana Lily Trotter At K in October, and common in Sassandra basin.

BURHINIDAE

Burhinus senegalensis Senegal Thick-knee K November, central Milo 28 November, one Djilemba outfall 21 March. One sitting on a 2-egg clutch at Lamodou on 20 February.

CHARADRIIDAE

Vanellus spinosus Spur-winged Plover 4 at D on 2 November.

Vanellus albiceps White-headed Plover Widespread in lower Niger basin.

Vanellus senegallus Senegal Wattled Plover Widespread lower Niger basin.

Charadrius dubius Little Ringed Plover Six on Niger mud bank near Dioumabana on 30 November.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Tringa nebularia Greenshank Widely distributed in the Niger basin in November.

Tringa stagnatilis Marsh Sandpiper One near Dioumabana on 30 November.

Tringa ochropus Green Sandpiper Widespread on rocky rivers in both Niger and Sassandra basins in November and February-April.

Tringa hypoleucos Common Sandpiper Widespread and common along all types of rivers in November and February-April.

Calidris ferruginea Curlew Sandpiper One at Dioumabana on 30 November.

Calidris temminckii Temminck's Stint Four at Dioumabana on 30 November.

Himantopus himantopus Black-winged Stilt Two at K on 29 November, a pair at D on 13 November.

GLAREOLIDAE

Pluvianus aegyptius Egyptian Plover Very numerous on sandy stretches in the lower Niger basin. At D more than 25 birds were present on 2 November, while a loose flock of about 40 birds was there on 13 November.

Glareola nuchalis Rock Pratincole Three birds seen on the Loffa on 17 November had the white collars typical of the eastern nominate race, which was unexpected. However, Cheke (1982) has recorded G. n. nuchalis in Togo in October (the non-breeding season). Two pairs of birds at the same site on the Loffa on 11 March were unfortunately not subspecifically identified. Village children killed an adult and took a 2-egg clutch at the Djilemba outfall on 21 March, subspecific status was not noted; a 2-egg clutch was found on the upper Dion on 12 April by Frank Plesak (pers. comm.). Thus breeding appears to be taking place a little earlier in Guinea than it does in Togo, where two clutches have been found in the second half of May (Cheke 1982; Cheke & Walsh 1984).

Glareola cinerea Grey Pratincole A pair at D on 30 November.

LARIDAE

Sterna nilotica Gull-billed Tern One at D on 30 November.

PTEROCLIDIDAE

Pterocles quadricinctus Four-banded Sand-Grouse Pairs at Siguiri on 23 October and at D on 30 November.

COLUMBIDAE

Columba iriditorques Bronze-naped Pigeon One on the Bafing at 8°03'N, 8°00'W on 15 April.

Streptopelia semitorquata Red-eyed Dove Widespread in both Niger and Sassandra basins in November and February-March.

Streptopelia vinacea Vinaceous Dove Regular at K and B also Kouremale on 13 November.

Streptopelia senegalensis Laughing Dove Widespread and common, recorded from Doko to Beyla.

Oena capensis Long-tailed Dove Several pairs seen from D northwards on 30 November.

Turtur abyssinicus Black-billed Wood-Dove Regular north of K on 30 November.

Treron australis Green Fruit-Pigeon One central Milo 15 November, one B 23 November.

Treron waalia Yellow-bellied Fruit-Pigeon Three near B in a patch of swamp forest on 27 October.

PSITTACIDAE

Poicephalus senegalus Senegal Parrot A pair 16 km north of Doko on 30 November.

Psittacus erithacus Grey Parrot One pair at Koué ourfall on 21 February.

MUSOPHAGIDAE

Tauraco persa Green-crested Touraco One near B on 31 October.

Musophaga violacea Violet Plantain Eater Occasionally seen in B district in October-November.

Crinifer piscator Grey Plantain-Eater Seen B district in October.

Corythaedola cristata Blue Plantain-Eater One in Loffa valley 17 November; widespread and not uncommon along well wooded tributaries of the Sassandra basin in October-November, February-April.

CUCULIDAE

Clamator levaillantii Levaillant's Cuckoo One K on 1 November, and one T on 13 November.

Chrysococcyx klaas Klaas's Cuckoo One calling at Badala on 13 March.

Centropus grillii Black Coucal Singles at B and Sidikidougou in October.

Centropus senegalensis Senegal Coucal K, T and Sidikidougou in October.

STRIGIDAE

Tyto alba Barn Owl One at B on 29 October and one at K on 28 November.

Otus leucotis White-faced Owl One at B, calling on 30 October.

Glaucidium perlatum Pearl-spotted Owlet One heard at K on 24 October.

CAPRIMULGIDAE

Caprimulgus climacurus Long-tailed Nightjar A female at B on 29 October and a male near Kouroussa on 26 November, the latter was in tail moult.

Macrodipteryx longipennis Standard-wing Nightjar A male road kill 5 km south of Doko on 30 November was in full breeding plumage.

APODIDAE

Apus melba Apline Swift Between 30 and 40 moving ESE at 09.00 hours on 21 March at B. The birds appeared rather dark, but no other species was present for comparison. Also a single bird with A. apus at Bafing on 15 April.

Apus apus European Swift Several at Gueasso and 40 circling over 8°03'N, 8°00'W on the Bafing on 15 April, no direction of movement being obvious.

Apus affinis Little African Swift Common K, B and T.

Cypsiurus parvus Palm Swift Several at Fereboredougou on 29 October, also several at T on 30 November.

ALCEDINIDAE

Ceryle maxima Giant Kingfisher One central Milo on 28 November, one Loffa on 11 March and widespread, not uncommon, Sassandra basin in February-April.

Ceryle rudis Pied Kingfisher One central Milo 28 November, one Kouroussa Bac on 23 October, a pair at K on 29 November.

Alcedo quadribrachys Shining-Blue Kingfisher One at Gbé outfall on 10 April, one at Badala 6 March.

Ceyx picta Pygmy Kingfisher One Gueasso 15 April.

Halcyon senegalensis Senegal Kingfisher One at K on 25 October.

Halcyon malimbica Blue-breasted Kingfisher One M'boo outfall on 7 March.

Halcyon chelicuti Striped Kingfisher One north of Siguiri on 23 October, one at Fereboredougou on 29 October, also near Doko on 13 and 30 November.

Halcyon leucocephala Grey-headed Kingfisher One at B on 16 and 17 November and one at Badala on 13 March.

MEROPIDAE

Merops apiaster European Bee-Eater Fourteen on wires at 07.00 hours on 29 November beside the Milo river at K.

Merops superciliosus Blue-cheeked Bee-Eater One over a large island in the Niger river at 10°32'N, 10°07'W on 26 November.

Merops nubicus Carmine Bee-Eater Four north of Doko and singles at T and Dioumabana on 23 October. Two pairs at T on 13 November.

Merops albicollis White-throated Bee-Eater Twelve moving SSW over K at 11.10 hours on 1 November. Six at Bitiendougou on 21 February and three at Badala on 19 March were probably in wintering quarters.

Merops bullocki Red-throated Bee-Eater Fairly common in Milo and Niger valleys, also seen north of Doko on 30 November.

CORACIIDAE

Coracias abyssinica Abyssinian Roller Singles at Doko on 23 October and 13 November, also one at K on 29 November.

Coracias naevia Rufous-crowned Roller Two near Doko on 13 November and one at B on 18 November.

Coracias cyanogaster Blue-bellied roller One 60 km north of Kouroussa on 23 October, one at Fandou on 29 October and one 30 km south of Doko on 13 November. It was fairly numerous in the Sassandra basin in March.

Eurystomus glaucurus Broad-billed Roller One at T on 23 October.

UPUPIDAE

Phoeniculus purpureus Senegal Wood-Hoopoe Three 24 km north of K on 30 November and a pair north of Doko on same day.

BUCEROTIDAE

Tockus nasutus Grey Hornbill One at Kourémalé on 30 November, and 16 moving south at T on the same day. Also seen at K and B in November.

Tockus fasciatus Black-and-White-tailed Hornbill Fairly commonly encountered in the Sassandra basin in October-November and February-April.

Bycanistes fistulator Piping Hornbill Regularly seen in the Sassandra basin in October-November and March, but less common than T. fasciatus. Also a party of five seen at 10°00'N, 8°23'W on 22 November.

CAPITONIDAE

Lybius dubius Bearded Barbet A pair at Komodougou on 31 October.

Pogonius chrysoconus Yellow-fronted Barbet One 10 km south of Doko on 30 November.

PICIDAE

Mesopicos goertae Grey Woodpecker A female at B on 18 November and a male at Badala on 6 March.

ALAUDIDAE

Galerida modesta Sun-Lark Two pairs at K airfield throughout November and a pair in riverine fields at K on 28 November. These birds were much darker than the form which occurs in Togo, and can clearly be ascribed to the race nigrita.

Eremopterix leucotis Chestnut-backed Finch-Lark A female at K airfield on 28 November.

HIRUNDINIDAE

Riparia paludicola African Sand Martin Seen on each visit to D. Three pairs visiting newly excavated holes in vertical sand cliff on 2 November and about 20 birds present there on 13 and 30 November.

Hirundo rustica rustica European Swallow Eight flying about Konossou peak on 27 November were presumably in winter quarters. A dozen over B on 11 March, and several at Badala on 13 and 21 March and at Gueasso on 15 April were doubtless migrating through.

H. rustica lucida Red-chested Swallow A few at K in November, one at B on 30 November, several at Dioumabana on 30 November.

Hirundo smithii Wire-tailed Swallow A pair at the K bridge over the Milo in October-November.

Hirundo daurica Red-rumped Swallow Recorded K in November, in B district in October and at Badala on 21 March.

Hirundo abyssinica Lesser striped Swallow One at B on 17 November and eight there on 21 November.

Hirundo spilodera Preuss's Cliff Swallow Several at K airfield on 26 November and one at 8°03'N, 8°00'W on the Bafing on 15 April.

Delichon urbica House Martin Sixteen high over T at 15.54 hours on 13 November seemed to be moving downstream (i.e. eastwards).

Psalidoprocne obscura Fanti Rough-winged Swallow A pair at Badala on 21 March.

MOTACILLIDAE

Motacilla flava Yellow Wagtail Many were disturbed from the laterite road between B and K on 31 October, after a rainy night. A flock of 40 to 50 beside the Milo river at K on 28 November included four males showing characteristics of the race thunbergi and one of the nominate race. Also seen at 8°30'N, 8°09'W on the Bagbe and at Bitiendougou on 21 February.

Motacilla aguimp African Pied Wagtail Occasionally seen on the Milo and Dion in October-November. Four on the Loffa on 11 March. Also scattered throughout the Sassandra basin in February-April.

Anthus leucophrys Plain-backed Pipit A pair at K airfield in November and two or three pairs beside the Milo river there on 15 and 28 November.

Anthus trivialis Tree Pipit One at B on 18 and 23 November.

Anthus cervinus Red-throated Pipit One at K on a dry rice field on 28 November was associating with the M. flava flock.

Macronyx croceus Yellow-throated Long-Claw Two pairs at K airfield on 26 November and another pair beside the Milo at K on 28 November.

LANIIDAE

Prionops plumata Long-crested Helmet Shrike A flock of seven at B on 30 October.

Tchagra senegala Black-crowned Tchagra B and K, also at Doko on 30 November.

Lanarius ferrugineus Bell-Shrike This species was fairly common at B in October-November. The colour of the underparts varied, most birds being washed salmon-pink below, but at least one bird was pure white; all had well developed white wing markings.

Lanarius barbarus Barbary Shrike Heard at K in November and at T in October and November.

Malaconotus blanchoti Grey-headed Bush-Shrike Recorded at B in October and November.

Corvinella corvina Long-tailed Shrike Flocks seen at B and K.

Lanius collaris Fiscal Shrike One at Sinko on 30 October and one at B the following day.

ORIOLIDAE

Oriolus auratus African Golden Oriole Seen at B, K and D in November.

DICRURIDAE

Dicrurus adsimilis Glossy-backed Drongo Seen at B in October-November, at Siguiri on 23 October and a pair at Doko on 30 November.

STURNIDAE

Lamprotonis purpureus Purple Glossy Starling A pair at K on 1 November; three at T on 13 November.

Lamprotonis chalybaeus Blue-eared Glossy Starling Half a dozen 12 km south of Kourémalé frontier post on 30 November.

Lamprotornis caudatus Long-tailed Glossy Starling Probably three different individuals made repeated visits to a hole 4 m up in river bank tree at T on 13 November, doubtless feeding young. Birds in the same tree on 30 November.

Lamprotornis iris Emerald Starling Three of this restricted species seen at Badala on 10 April.

Cinnyricinclus leucogaster Amethyst Starling A pair at Gbé outfall on 20 February, and flocks of about eight birds at Badala on 12 and 19 March.

CORVIDAE

Ptilostomus afer Black Magpie A flock at D on 30 November.

Corvus albus Pied Crow Present at K where there was probably a roost in the town centre.

CAMPEPHAGIDAE

Coracina pectoralis White-breasted Cuckoo-Shrike One 34 km north of K on 30 November.

PYCNONOTIDAE

Pycnonotus barbatus Common Bulbul Widespread south to Beyla.

Chlorocichla flavicollis Yellow-throated Leaf-Love Many at K in October-November. Also at Leleko on 31 October.

Chlorocichla simplex Simple Leaf-Love One at Badala on 13 March.

Thescelocichla leucopleurus Swamp Palm Bulbul Two at Badala 13 March.

TURDIDAE

Saxicola rubetra Whinchat Four by the Milo river at K on 1 November, by 28 November numbers had increased to about 25. At K airfield there was one on 15 November, but seven on 26 November, falling to three on 28 November. Thus there appears to have been an influx at K between 15 and 26 November. At B two were seen on 28 October with three the following day. Also one at D on 1 November.

Oenanthe oenanthe Wheatear Two at K airfield on 27 November.

Turdus pelios West African Thrush One at K on 27 November.

TIMALIIDAE

Turdoides plebejus Brown Babbler A flock 30 km north of Kouroussa on 23 October.

Turdoides reinwardii Blackcap Babbler Flock beside Milo at K on 1 November.

SYLVIIDAE

Sylvia borin Garden Warbler Two or three in a small garden at B on 23 November.

Phylloscopus trochilus Willow Warbler One in K garden throughout November; at B three on 29 October and one on 23 November.

Cisticola cantans Singing Cisticola Two recently fledged birds with an accompanying adult by the Milo river at K on 28 November. Also one at B on 23 November.

Cisticola lateralis Whistling Cisticola One in song at B on 17 and 18 November.

Cisticola aberrans Rock-loving Cisticola Three pairs near top of Konossou peak on 27 November, some territorial behaviour.

Cisticola juncidis Common Fantail Warbler Three at K airfield on 28 November, one beside the Milo river on same day, suggesting a movement into the area.

Prinia subflava West African Prinia B and K in October and November.

Camaroptera brachyura Grey-backed Camaroptera One heard at B on 30 October.

MUSCICAPIDAE

Muscicapa striata Spotted Flycatcher One on 28 and two on 29 October, and one on 18 November at B.

Ficedula hypoleuca Pied Flycatcher One female at B on 26 and 27 October, increasing to 11 on 28 and 29 October. There were still 'many' on 17 November but only 3 on 23 November. Thus there was a clear influx at B on the night of the 27-28 October but by late November most of the arrivals had passed on, presumably for wintering quarters further south. There were four birds, including two moulting males, at B on 11 March and several other records from elsewhere in the Sassandra basin in October-November and February-April.

Bradornis pallidus Pale Flycatcher One 16 km north of Doko on 30 November.

Hyliota flavigaster Yellow-bellied Flycatcher A pair with two young in the Gmelina trees at B on 28 and 29 October.

Terpsiphone rufiventer Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher Several birds were present in a large garden at B on 28 October and 17 November.

PARIDAE

Parus leucomelas White-shouldered Black Tit One 30 km north of Siguiri on 23 October.

NECTARINIIDAE

Anthreptes collaris Collared Sunbird A male at B on 28 October.

Nectarinia verticalis Olive-backed Sunbird Many at B on November all
visiting a tree with Magnolia-type flowers in a large d ed garden.

Nectarinia senegalensis Scarlet-breasted Sunbird At B a in October-
November; many at Gmelina flowers in November at B.

Nectarinia venusta Yellow-bellied Sunbird One male at B 3 October.

Nectarinia cuprea Copper Sunbird A male at B on 28 Octo

Nectarinia coccinigaster Splendid Sunbird Seen regularly 3 in October-
November. At least 12 visiting flowers of Magnolia-type on 29
October. Also a pair at Gbé outfall on 20 February.

EMBERIZIDAE

Emberiza tahapisi Rock Bunting Three singing at Konosso uk on 27
November.

FRINGILLIDAE

Serinus mozambicus Yellow-fronted Canary A small party south of
Doko on 30 November.

Serinus gularis Streaky-headed Seed-Eater At least two Canaries south
of Doko on 30 November.

PLOCEIDAE

Ploceus cucullatus Village Weaver Seen at K and D in Nov .

Ploceus nigerrimus Vieillot's Black Weaver The chestnut black race
castaneofuscus was building at small colonies at Leleko near
Kerouané on 31 October.

Ploceus melanocephalus Black-headed Weaver Seen at both l D on 2
November.

Malimbus rubriceps Red-winged Malimbe A male in Gmelina on 30
October.

Euplectes afer Yellow-crowned Bishop Several males in f plain grass-
land at D in late October-early November.

Euplectes ardens Long-tailed Black Whydah This patchily tributed species
was common in the treeless, rolling grassland surroundi n October and
November. There were also two males in breeding dress c ossou peak on
27 November.

Euplectes hordeaceus Fire-crowned Bishop One male near l 18 October.

Euplectes macrourus Yellow-mantled Whydah A pair at Fanc 29 October.

Euplectes orix Red Bishop Common at K and D in October-l er, also at T
on 23 October.

Passer griseus Grey-headed Sparrow Common at Sinko on 30 October and at K.

Petronia dentata Bush-Sparrow A pair 10 km north of Doko on 30 November.

Vidua macroura Pin-tailed Whydah A male at B on 29 October.

Vidua sp. Indigo Finch Breeding dress males seen at Fandou on 29 October, Sidikidougou on 30 October and at K on 28 November, were not specifically identified.

ESTRILDIDAE

Nigritia canicapilla Grey-crowned Negro-Finch One at B on 18 November.

Pytilia hypogrammica Yellow-winged Pytilia Two pairs, seen separately, at B on 16 November; also a pair at Leleko on 31 October, the male of which entered a weaver's nest suspended over a stream.

Estrilda melpoda Orange-cheeked Waxbill Regular at B in October-November.

Estrilda bengala Cordon Bleu A pair 10 km north of Doko on 30 November.

Lagonosticta rufopicta Bar-breasted Fire-Finch A pair at Leleko on 31 October.

Lagonosticta senegala Senegal Fire-Finch Many at K October-November. Also seen at Sinko on 30 October and several at T on 13 November.

Ortygospiza atricollis Quail-Finch A pair by Milo river at K on 28 November.

Lonchura cucullata Bronze Mannikin The commonest Estrildid at B and K. Also seen at Gbé outfall on 20 February.

DISCUSSION

In this paper, details are given of 204 species of birds seen in north-eastern Guinea during short, and largely casual, periods of observation in 1984-1985, suggesting that the area has a reasonably rich and varied avifauna. The extreme northern part is blessed with wide sandy rivers and can be expected to harbour numerous waders, terns and other water birds. Only the briefest observations were possible there. Nevertheless, about 30 species were seen, including the Grey Pratincole, a species which has an essentially West African distribution, and which does not seem to have received detailed study.

The rocky rivers further south, in more forested areas, harbour substantial populations of the Finfoot. A significant population of Rock Pratincoles also occurs, and includes non-breeding birds of the eastern, nominate race. The finding of the African Black Duck in the Sassandra basin represents an extension westwards of the previously known range by about 2000 km (Walsh 1985). This species should be searched for in the montane streams of Mount Nimba, the Fouta Djallon, and the Loma Mountains of Sierra Leone. Another notable aquatic species seen is Hartlaub's Duck. This little known, though widely distributed and once common, duck is becoming increasingly rare in Ghana, and seems to be absent from Togo.

Of the forest species encountered, the Emerald Starling, which has a puzzlingly restricted range, and the Bronze-naped Pigeon are, perhaps, the most notable. They are listed by Collar & Stuart (1985) in their Appendix G, as candidate species for treatment as threatened in Africa. However, the justification for considering the dove, which can tolerate secondary forest conditions and ranges from Guinea to the Congo basin, as rare eludes me. It was especially pleasing that the Blue Plantain-Eater was regularly encountered in eastern Ghana and Togo. Sadly by late March 1985 virtually no rain had fallen and fierce fires raged over the Beyla prefecture. These fires were sufficiently intense to eat into the riparian woodlands, destroying extensive Screw Pine Pandanus candelabrum and palm thickets Raphia sp. and doing severe damage to high quality gallery forests. Given the recent great increase in settlement and shifting cultivation, this damage will probably never be repaired. Thus from the viewpoint of most forest birds, and many other forest animals and plants, the quality of the environment in the Beyla prefecture is rapidly declining and will soon become totally unsuitable.

In more open habitats the very locally distributed Long-tailed Black Whydah was found in two widely separated localities. On Konosso peak the habitat it occupies is almost certainly natural, while near Beyla town it is strictly man-made. This is one of the species which is most likely to benefit from man's environmental destructiveness.

There were 28 species of undoubted Palaearctic origin among those recorded. None were unexpected, nor, with the exception of the European Hobby and Alpine Swift, especially noteworthy. However, some were unusually numerous. Thus there is little doubt that the lower Niger basin of northern Guinea will prove to be an important wintering area for the Marsh Harrier, while the rocky rivers further south seemed to harbour large populations of Common and Green Sandpipers at densities which noticeably exceed those in countries further east in West Africa. In addition the well wooded parts of the Sassandra basin may prove to be a major wintering area for the Pied Flycatcher, which was also regularly seen in the Mount Nimba area (Brosset 1984).

Although the area considered here lacks the grandeur, excitement, and indeed the ecological importance of Mount Nimba or the Fouta Djallon, it would repay more detailed study. Not least in that a pair of small weavers, the male of which was rather similar to the male Slender-billed Weaver Floceus luteolus, but which seems to belong to an undescribed species, was seen at Beyla on 28 October 1984.

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SUMMARY

Records of 204 species of birds seen in north-eastern Guinea during late 1984 and early 1985 are given. Included are 28 species of Palaearctic migrants, and several Afrotropical species of rare and local occurrence.

RESUME

Renseignements sont donnés sur 204 espèces des oiseaux vus au nord-est Guinée entre la fin de 1984 et la début de 1985. Inclus sont 28 espèces migrateurs paléarctiques, et plusieurs espèces afrotropicaux qui sont d'un événement rare et limité.

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APPENDIX

GAZETTEER OF GUINEA

BADALA	08°26'N, 08°14'W	KEROUANE	09°17'N, 09°02'W
BAMAKO (MALI)	12°39'N, 08°00'W	KOMODOUGOU	09°38'N, 09°04'W
BENI O/F	09°39'N, 08°43'W	KONOSSOU	08°53'N, 10°23'W
BEYLA (=B)	08°41'N, 08°41'W	KOUÉ O/F	08°03'N, 08°10'W
BITIENDOU	08°02'N, 08°07'W	KOUREMALE	11°58'N, 08°47'W
CONAKRY	09°31'N, 13°43'W	KOUROUSSA	10°39'N, 09°53'W
DIABASERIDOU	10°00'N, 08°08'W	KOUROUSSA BAC	10°42'N, 09°39'W
DION (UPPER) ca	09°40'N, 08°42'W	LAMODOU	08°46'N, 08°03'W
DION (LOWER) ca	10°07'N, 08°50'W	LELEKO	08°44'N, 08°51'W
DIOUMABANA	11°16'N, 09°08'W	LOFFA	08°10'N, 08°59'W
DJELIBAKORO (=D)	11°05'N, 09°15'W	LOMA MTS (S.LEONE) ca	09°13'N, 11°08'W
DJILEMBA O/F	08°31'N, 08°11'W	M'BOO O/F	08°33'N, 08°25'W
DOKO	11°47'N, 08°58'W	MILO (CENTRAL) ca	09°46'N, 09°14'W
FANDOU	08°34'N, 08°25'W	MT NIMBA (GUINEA) ca	07°40'N, 08°20'W
FEREBOREDUGOU	08°39'N, 08°26'W	NIANDAN ca	09°22'N, 10°00'W
FOUTA DJALLON ca	11°20'N, 12°20'W	NZEREKORE	07°45'N, 08°50'W
GBE O/F	08°31'N, 08°03'W	ODIENNE (I.COAST)	09°31'N, 07°34'W
GOUAN O/F	08°02'N, 08°10'W	SIDIKIDUGOU	08°50'N, 08°27'W
GUEASSO	08°02'N, 08°14'W	SIGUIRI	11°25'N, 09°10'W
KANKAN (=K)	10°23'N, 09°19'W	SINKO	08°53'N, 08°17'W
KATAKORA O/F	08°54'N, 08°46'W	TINKISSO BAC (=T)	11°21'N, 09°10'W

O/F = OUTFALL