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BIRD NOTES FROM THE CENTRAL CAMEROONS.

R. J. Dowsott.

In June 1968 I spent a week in the central Cameroons, most of the time at the Campment des Cobas, midway between Garoua and N'gaoundero (about 8°N., 13°30'E.). The country is well wooded plateau at about 3,000 to 4,000 feet. The rains had recently started. As published records from this area are few and far between it is worth mentioning the species I observed. Unless stated, records are from Campment des Cobas (within a ten mile radius) and between 14th and 16th June.

Black-headed Heron Ardea melanocephala: One in savanna woodland 12 miles North of Garoua on 16th.

Abdim's Stork Ciconia (Sphenorhynchus) abdimii: Small numbers breeding south to about 24 miles north of Garoua.

Gabar Goshawk Melierax (Micornisus) gabar: One grey phase.

Red-tailed Buzzard Buteo auguralis: An adult at Mayo Zadra hills, between Sahuda and Garoua on 11th.

Yellow-billed Kite Milvus migrans parasitus (tenebrosus): One 11 miles north of Garoua on 16th, the only one seen.

Peregrine Falcon Falco peregrinus: One seen over woodland.

Stone Partridge Ptilopachus petrosus: One in rocky woodland.

African Crake Crex (Crecopsis) agraria: Quite common in damp drainage areas.

Senegal Bustard Eupodotis senegalensis: One and two respectively seen in light woodland 37 miles and 40 miles north of Garoua.

Senegal Thick-knee Burhinus (Oedinenomus) senegalensis: One on the Bonno at

Garoua on 16th.

Egyptian Plover Pluvianus aegyptius: Many on the Benue at Garoua on 11th, but none on 16th when the river had risen considerably.

Standard-winged Nightjar Macrodipteryx longipennis: Many at night on 11th between Garoua and Campement des Cobas, and in the latter area seen by day in woodland.

Black Cuckoo Cuculus olamosus: One calling on 12th.

Didric Cuckoo Chrysococcyx (Lampromorpha) caprius: Heard once only, one on 15th.

White-fronted Bee-eater Merops (Melittophagus) bullocki: Small numbers in riparian, including one party of more than 20. The call is strikingly more metallic and less disyllabic than that of the southern bullockoides.

Broad-billed Roller Eurystomus glaucurus (afer): Several in woodland, including one party of 12.

Grey Hornbill Tockus (Lophoceros) nasutus: One at Campement des Cobas on 13th and 4 or 5 52 miles north of Garoua on 16th, are the only records.

Red-billed Hornbill Tockus (Lophoceros) erythrorhynchus: Small numbers in light woodland south to 12 miles north of Garoua.

Crested Lark Galerida cristata: 3 at Garoua on 16th.

Lesser-striped Swallow Hirundo abyssinica: 2 at nest under bridge, carrying faecal sacs on 13th.

Crimson-breasted Shrike: Laniarius barbarus erythrogaster: Two well seen in thicket at Campement des Cobas were clearly this race. This locality must be near its northern limit in Cameroons, as according to White (1962, Rev. Check List Afr. Shrikes etc. :29) the yellow-crowned barbarus comes south at least to Marua.\*\*\*

Short-tailed Golssy Starling Lamprolornis (Lamprocolius) chalcurus: 2 adults accompanied by two juveniles less than one month old on 13th.

Paradise Flycatcher Terpsiphone (Tchitrea) viridis: One pair, male with white tail.

Yellow-mantled Bishop Euplectes (Coliuspassor) macrourus: Two males in 80% breeding dress on 12th.

Pin-tailed Whydah Vidua macroura: Numerous males in full breeding dress from Campement des Cobas northwards.

Other species recorded at Campement des Cobas were:

Bateleur Terathopius ecaudatus; Long-crested Eagle Lophaetus occipitalis; Double-spurred Francolin Francolinus bicoloratus; Helmeted Guineafowl Numida meleagris; Black Crake Limnocorax flavirostris; Black-billed Wood Dove Turtur abyssinicus; Green Loerie Tauraco (Turacus) persa; Spotted Eagle Owl Bubo africanus; Palm Swift Cypselurus parvus; Little Bee-eater Merops (melittophagus) pusillus; Red-billed Wood-hoopoe Phoeniculus purpureus (erythrorhynchus); Ground Hornbill Bucconus abyssinicus;

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A specimen of Laniarius barbarus erythrogaster in the collections of the Zoology Museum, Univ. of Ibadan, was collected by P. Ward on 24th February 1961, at Wulgo, N. Nigeria on the Cameroons border (12.30'N., 14.10'E.), about 300 miles North of Campement des Cobas. Ed.

West African Barbet *Lybius vieilloti*; Yellow-fronted Tinker-barbet *Fogonius chrysoconus*; Black-throated Honeyguide *Indicator indicator*; Ethiopian Swallow *Hirundo aethiopia*; Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica (rufula)*; White Helmet Shrike *Prionops plumata*; Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegala*; Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike *Malaconotus (Chlorophoneus) sulphureopictus*; Fork-tailed Drongo *Diorurus adsimilis*; Black-eyed Bulbul *Ecnonotus barbatus*; Sudan Babbler *Turdoides plebejus*; Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythropus*; Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava*; Glass-eye *Camaroptera brachyura (brevicaudata)*; Moustache Warbler *Melocichla mentalis*; Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Nectarinia (Chalcomitra) senegalensis*; Yellow-eye Canary *Serinus mozambicus*; Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus*; Orange-checked Waxbill *Estrilda molpoda*; Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu *Estrilda (Uraeginthus) bongala*; Bar-breasted Firefinch *Lagonosticta rufopicta*; Bronze Mannikin *Lonchura (Spermestes) oucellata*.

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NOTES.

PALAEARCTIC TERNS ON THE RIVER NIGER

IN JULY AND AUGUST 1969.

On 17th July I made a canoe journey along the Niger from Yelwa (10° 54'N., 4° 44'E.) to a point about eight river miles north, just above Sakace rapids. The water level had recently risen sharply and a large quantity of vegetation was being carried downstream. Very little remained of the sand banks which are extensive in May - June, but a large number of rocks still broke the water surface. Apart from a few Little Terns *Sterna albifrons* and about sixty Skimmers *Rynchops flavirostris* which, judging by the prevalence of young birds, had nested in the area, there were, surprisingly seventy to eighty Palearctic Terns of three species. These were:

- (a) White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucoptera*: About 30 were present, all being in non-breeding dress. No juveniles were noted.
- (b) Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*: About 20 birds present mingling with parties of White-winged Black Terns. All were non-breeding adults.
- (c) Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias leucopareia*: About 30-40 birds present. Two birds in a flock of 18 seemed to be in complete breeding plumage even having reddish beaks. About half had complete black caps, and all had dark underparts, often rather mottled. At least six birds with complete black caps had dark rather than red beaks.