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Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest
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A BROWN NIGHTJAR (CAPRIMULGUS BINOTATUS) NESTLING FROM LIBERIA

On 29 Feb 1980, near the camp of the Liberian Timber Company, at c.6°16N, 8°40W, a half-grown nestling Brown Nightjar was brought in by locals. This species was only recently discovered in Liberia: Colston & Curry-Lindahl (1986) mention two specimens from Mt Nimba, both collected in 1971.

The present locality is situated 135 km to the south of Nimba, in what was then primary forest, opened for timber felling only a number of months previously. According to Fry & Harwin (1988) the nest and eggs of this forest nightjar are unknown, and no description appears to exist for the nestling. This can be given here, but the nest and eggs remain unknown.

The bird weighed 26 g, its wing chord was 91 mm and its tail measured 45 mm (all feathers in sheath) whereas one adult's weight was 63 g (Fry & Harwin 1988) and mean wing and tail lengths respectively 154 and 103 mm. The present bird is referable to C. binotatus, because of the characteristic colour pattern and implantation of the tail; the ten rectrices are very dark brown, barred with rufous, without the buff vermiculations present in other species or any trace of white. The left and right halves of the tail form a pronounced V, resulting in a 'tented' shape and the tail already has a tendency to downward curvature. The head has a triangular 'toadlike' shape, as mentioned by Fry & Harwin (1988). The nostrils are small and covered in part with feathers as in the adult (shown well in Fry & Harwin 1988). Dorsal down is buffish with brown at the tips and there are dark brown emergent feathers. On the crown, brown feathers have just begun to appear above the eye. The wings are brown, each remex marked with rufous spots at regular intervals.

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

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COLLARED FLYCATCHER (FICEDULA ALBICOLLIS) IN SENEGAL

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

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