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BATES'S WEAVER PLOCEUS BATESI NEAR VICTORIA, AND OTHER OBSERVATIONS FROM WESTERN CAMEROUN - On 13 April 1979 I investigated some small forest patches near the coast a few km west of Victoria, Cameroun. Much of the low-lying ground in this area has been cleared for oil-palm plantations but a particularly dense patch of forest was located along a small rocky river. In places the river was overhung by large trees and creepers, and in one such area my attention was drawn to a weaver which was moving in a zig-zagging manner up a creeper-covered tree trunk about 15 m away. It was plain olive-green above, including wings and tail, and yellow below. The head pattern was distinctive, the entire head to the nape, including the face, being bright chestnut and the chin and throat being black, this colour extending in a narrow band around the edge of the chestnut face to the side of the neck at about the level of the eye. The yellow of the underside extended around the side of the neck below the black band and continued on to the nape, where it formed an ill-defined narrow collar between the chestnut nape and green back. The lores were black, the bill was black and the eye was dark. Leg colour was not seen. The bird was apparently searching for insects and was unconcerned by my presence. I watched it until it moved out of sight in the upper part of the tree. No other weaver was seen in this tree. On returning to my car I immediately identified the bird from Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1973) as a male Bates's Weaver *Ploceus batesi*. I subsequently returned to the same area but failed to relocate the bird.

Bates's Weaver is a rare forest species which has been seen by very few observers in the field (Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1973 and M. Dyer *in litt.*). It is confined to lowland forest in southern Cameroun (Hall & Moreau 1970) and this record represents an extension of range westwards. Hall & Moreau (1970) consider it to be closer to the *P. ocularis* super-species than any other, but its behaviour reminded me strongly of the insectivorous Bar-winged Weaver *P. angolensis* with which I am familiar and which is placed in the *P. insignis* group by these authors. The habits of this group appear to closely resemble those which I observed in *P. batesi*, and I have seen *P. angolensis* move in a zigzag fashion along tree trunks and branches searching for insects.

The following records are from four areas: Cameroun Mountain, the Buea area, the Victoria area and primary forest some 20 km west of Muyuka off the Buea-Kumba road. They relate to the period 12-23 April 1979.

Hieraaetus africanus CASSIN'S HAWK-EAGLE One circling over forest on Cameroun Mountain, 18 April.

Bubo poensis FRASER'S EAGLE OWL At about midday on 13 April I flushed one from dense cover in tall trees along a rocky river west of Victoria. The bird emerged from cover while I was some distance away and sat in partial cover for a time before flying off.

Turtur brehmeri BLUE-HEADED DOVE This dove is confined to lowland forest and is said not to come out to feed on paths or in clearings (Snow 1978). A little after daybreak on 23 April I had excellent views of one in the open on a well-used dirt road running through primary forest near Muyuka. The bird was a few metres from cover and was apparently feeding.

Apus batesi BATES'S SWIFT At least one over an area of partly-cleared forest near Buea on 14 April. (Identified by small size, rather slender appearance, forked tail and entirely black colour; fast flight.)

Neafrapus cassini and *Raphidura sabini* CASSIN'S and SABINE'S SPINETAILS Seen together over clearings in primary forest near Muyuka on 23 April, but neither species seen in less heavily-forested areas.

Telacanthura melanopygia BLACK SPINETAIL At least four were well-seen over tall trees in partly-cleared forest near Buea on 15 April.

(Identified by large size, strong flight, entirely black colour with pale chin and throat - no white on rump or belly - and square-ended tail, quite long for a spintail. The trailing edge of the wings was indented at the join with the body.) Apparently rare (Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1970), and Snow (1978) gives no records for this area.

Indicator willcocksi WILLCOCKS'S HONEYGUIDE A single bird (distinguishable from *I. exilis* by its lack of loreal and malar streaks, pale grey underside and rather greenish-grey colour on the upperside) was seen fluttering in a butterfly-like manner around the trunk of a large tree in primary forest near Muyuka on 22 April. It occasionally perched on twigs and was probably catching insects.

Dryoscopus sabini LARGE-BILLED PUFFBACK Both sexes were seen in several bird parties in heavy forest near Muyuka. They appear to be reasonably common in this area.

Alethe diademata FIRE-CREST ALETHE On 16-17 April this species was widespread in forest near Muyuka, being seen on the ground in dense forest in several places along 1½ km of track. None were encountered in the same area four days later.

Platysteira tonsa WHITE-SPOTTED WATTLE-EYE A female on 17 and a male on 22 April, the former in a bird party which also contained *P. castanea*; lowland forest near Muyuka. *P. castanea* was seen in several bird parties in this area and appeared to be quite common.

Platysteira concreta GOLDEN-BELLIED WATTLE-EYE A pair moving very low down in dense undergrowth along a stream on Cameroun Mountain on 18 April.

Nectarinia seimundi LITTLE GREEN SUNBIRD Two were in a small patch of degraded secondary forest surrounded by cultivation near Buea on 12 April. *N. batesi* was seen on other occasions elsewhere and was noted as being duller below and having a much more noticeably-curved bill, the bill of *seimundi* being fairly straight and quite long with a downcurve at the tip.

Speirops lugubris BLACK-CAPPED SPEIROPS On 18 April I observed a flock of about 15 at the tree limit on Cameroun Mountain (2000 m). They were feeding at flowers in the canopy at the forest edge and they called frequently, uttering contact notes which I rendered *sieu* and *twit* and also musical chirps.

Ploceus melanogaster BLACK-BILLED WEAVER A female with other birds in the canopy of fairly open forest along a steep-sided gully on Cameroun Mountain on 19 April was perhaps in unusual habitat, as Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1973) state that this species keeps to undergrowth and creepers and is not found in the overhead canopy.

Ploceus tricolor YELLOW-MANTLED WEAVER On 22 April a single bird of this uncommon species was seen in the canopy of primary forest near Muyuka. It was moving along small branches searching for insects.

Malimbus coronatus RED-CROWNED MALIMBE One was with a bird party in dense forest near Muyuka on 22 April. It kept at fairly low levels in the denser growth. This locality is farther west than the range shown in Hall & Moreau (1970). Other malimbuses in the area were *M. rubricollis*, *M. nitens* and *M. malimbicus*.

P.B. Taylor