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### **Odd observations from bird ringing in Nigeria**

In 1960 I began ringing birds in Kano, Nigeria, using mist nets from China and British-made rings bearing the address Jos Museum Nigeria. I passed rings to friends in Jos and Ibadan, who began ringing there too and at one time Yellow Wagtails *Motacilla flava* were being ringed in all three places. Eventually we changed to using British Trust for Ornithology rings with the British Museum return address. I published annual ringing reports in the *Bulletin of the Nigerian Ornithological Society* and subsequently *Malimbus* and details were summarised by Elgood *et al.* (1994). A few additional observations, which did not appear in these reports, are summarised here.

In Kano in September 1962, I caught a Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* with a piece of paper on its leg on which was written “Santa Maria”.

In December 1963, I found a village near Nguru where they had a small flock of White Storks *Ciconia ciconia* which they used as decoys for trapping wild storks. During my annual visits to this village up to 1980, I got several rings off storks captured by the village. Two of these had been put on by the same Catholic Father in Algeria.

In December 1965, I received a cable from the British Embassy in Cairo, saying that a bird had been handed in with a ring marked Jos Museum on its leg. I was never able to get the ring number.

In 1966, I received a letter in Greek from a shepherd enclosing a ring (Jos Museum no. 16872) from a Yellow Wagtail ringed at Kano on 23 Nov 1963 and recovered in Lamia (38°53'N, 22°27'E) on 12 Dec 1965, and saying that these birds “follow our flocks and we call them the travellers”.

### **Reference**

ELGOOD, J.H., HEIGHAM, J.B., MOORE, A.M., NASON, A.M., SHARLAND, R.E. & SKINNER N.J. (1994) *The Birds of Nigeria*. Checklist 4, 2nd ed., British Ornithologists' Union, Oxford.

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### **Bird observations from Aouk, S Chad, including additions to the avifauna**

We document observations of three bird species (Blue-breasted Kingfisher *Halcyon malimbica*, Yellow-throated Leaflove *Chlorocichla flavicollis*, Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis*) that are either new to Chad or confirm previous unsupported

reports, as well as other records of note at the Campement de l'Aouk (9°9'N, 20°12'E), on the Bahr Aouk in S Chad, where PB spent 16–22 Feb (dry season) 2003. This is in the Sudanian woodland zone (= Guinea–Sudanian of some authors) on the border between Chad and the Central African Republic. The nearest towns of any size are Massèbagne (Chad, 9°29'N, 20°53'E) and Garba (CAR, 9°12'N, 20°30'E). The camp is in a cleared area on the edge of the river Aouk, which was some 20 m wide at the time. The riverine vegetation on the CAR side had been greatly cleared, being just grassland with some widely spaced palms *Borassus aethiopicum*. On the Chad bank the vegetation was denser, with some good gallery forest. There was thorny *Acacia* scrub, high grass, some aquatic vegetation and large fig *Ficus* sp. trees. There is a single rainy season falling between May and October.

Observations and mist-netting were carried out in the immediate vicinity of the camp. Species new to Chad are prefixed with an asterisk.

### **Scolopacidae**

*Tringa erythropus* Spotted Redshank. One seen well in a small marsh, in winter dress, its long red legs and generally pale plumage being distinctive. There are records from further north in Chad (Salvan 1968). Rejected from the CAR list by Dowsett *et al.* (1999), but occurs in N Cameroon (Scholte *et al.* 1999) and widely in S Sudan (Nikolaus 1987).

### **Psittacidae**

*Agapornis pullarius* Red-headed Lovebird. Present in small numbers in the Aouk area (one caught and ringed), the only certain previous record for Chad being south of Moundou (8°35'N, 16°1'E) (Malbrant *in* Salvan 1968). In CAR, north to the Manovo area (Green 1983).

### **Musophagidae**

*Musophaga violacea* Violet Turaco. Seen well in riverine trees. Already reported from S Chad at Fort-Archambault (Vielliard 1972) and in CAR at Ndélé (8°25'N, 20°38'E) (Bouet 1961), but a record from Bamingui has been rejected (Green 1990). P. Christy (*in litt.*) also questions the report from neighbouring Manovo (Carroll 1988), where he has failed to find the species. On the Aouk *M. violacea* is near the eastern limit of its range. In Cameroon it occurs commonly in gallery forest as far north as the Benoué (including one caught at Buffle Noir, 8°6'N, 13°50'E: F. Dowsett-Lemaire & RJD pers. obs), and reported north even to Gashiga-Demsa (9°32'N, 13°13'E) (Club Ornithologique du Cameroun unpubl.).

### **Alcedinidae**

\**Halcyon malimbica* Blue-breasted Kingfisher. Ten were ringed. Reported from S Chad by Fry *et al.* (1988), possibly based on the map in Snow (1978), but C.H. Fry (*in litt.*) could provide no details and we have not traced any documented locality record. Reported from c. 9°30'N, 21°0'E in Manovo, just over the border in CAR (Carroll 1988), and it occurs in similar gallery forest in the Benoué valley (Cameroon), north to Buffle Noir at 8°6'N, 13°49'E (F. Dowsett-Lemaire & RJD pers. obs.).

**Picidae**

*Campethera abingoni* Golden-tailed Woodpecker. Seen in the Aouk area (including one netted), the only previous record from Chad being a specimen collected in 1905 by Boyd Alexander in the Chari valley (Neumann 1908), probably in the area of Banda, c. 9°1' N, 18°29' E, judging by his itinerary (Alexander 1907).

**Pycnonotidae**

\**Chlorocichla flavicollis* Yellow-throated Leaflove. One netted and photographed. This is further north than the most northerly report in CAR (Bozoum, 6°19' N, 16°23' E; type-locality of the race *simplicicolor*) (Grote 1924). However, it is known in similar riparian habitat from as far north in Cameroon as Grand Capitaine (8°32' N, 13°54' E) and other places in the Benoué National Park (F. Dowsett-Lemaire & RJD pers. obs.).

**Sylviidae**

*Locustella luscinioides* Savi's Warbler. One ringed 19 Feb, the most southerly record in central Africa; previously known in Chad from north of Kohal (Kanem, 14°30' N, 16°45' E) (Salvan 1968).

*Hippolais opaca* Eastern Olivaceous Warbler. Seen daily, and from its broad bill distinguished from *H. pallida* (*sensu stricto*), which breeds south to Maïlao (11°35' N 15°17' E: Vielliard 1972). *H. opaca* has been reported once before, at Ndjamena (Fort-Lamy: Salvan 1968). *H. pallida* (*sensu lato*) was rejected from the CAR list by Germain (1992), but both species occur in N Cameroon (Louette 1981, Scholte *et al.* 1999).

**Muscicapidae**

*Myioparus plumbeus* Lead-coloured Flycatcher. Seen in the Aouk area, the only previous record from Chad being that collected by Boyd Alexander in 1905 at Irena, 8°34' N, 19°1' E (Vielliard 1972), on the border with CAR.

**Platysteiridae**

*Batis orientalis* Grey-headed Batis. A male was watched closely each day; its crown and upperparts were strikingly grey, and the broad white eye-stripes joined on the nape. The distribution of this and Black-headed Batis *B. minor* in this part of Africa is not clear, but *B. orientalis* is known from Birao (10°16' N, 22°48' E) in N CAR (Bretagnolle 1993). The Aouk area is notably drier than the areas in which *minor* is often found..

**Ploceidae**

\**Ploceus ocularis* Spectacled Weaver. One netted and photographed. Reported from just over the border in Manovo, CAR (Carroll 1988) and north to 9° in W Sudan (Nikolaus 1987). It occurs in similar gallery forest in the Benoué valley (Cameroon), north to Buffle Noir (F. Dowsett-Lemaire & RJD pers. obs.).

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