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Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest
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Museum observations are consistent with geographical variation in eye-colour of *L. chalybaeus* suggested by descriptions in field guides: yellow in West Africa, orange-yellow in East Africa and orange in southern Africa (Serle & Morel 1977, Williams & Arlott 1980, Prozesky 1974). However, such geographical variation in eye colour is complicated by the considerable individual variation within each subspecies (Table 1) and at least in the case of *L. c. chalybaeus* even within a single population.

REFERENCES

- PROZESKY, O.P.M. (1974) A Field Guide to the Birds of Southern Africa. 2nd edition, Collins: London.
- WILLIAMS, J.G. & ARLOTT, N. (1980) A Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern Africa. Collins: London.

R. Wilkinson, North of England Zoological Society, Upton-by-Chester, CH2 1LH, UK

LONG-TAILED NIGHTJAR DRINKING IN FLIGHT - Pettet (1982, *Brit. Birds* 75: 377) reviews published records of nightjars (*Caprimulgus* spp.) taking water in flight; in view of the difficulties inherent in observing nightjars, the habit of drinking in flight seems rather common. The following observation adds the Long-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus climacurus* to the list of published records.

The observation was made after dark on 29 March 1983 at Tambacounda, Senegal. Many bats, primarily Microchiroptera, were drinking from a swimming pool by skimming the surface in the manner of hirundines drinking on open water. A Long-tailed Nightjar made a circuit of the pool, without attempting to drink, before disappearing into the darkness outside the circle of pool lighting. It reappeared after a few seconds, flew slowly and low to a position about 20 cm above the water where it hovered briefly and clumsily before dropping to the surface, dipping its beak and flying away. The tail was raised while the bird was close to the water surface. The same or another nightjar returned to drink three more times in the following hour. On one of these occasions the bird mis-timed its descent and caught its wings in the water, causing it to land on the surface, but it succeeded in raising itself and flew away. On two of the approaches, the bird hovered more than once, at successively lower altitudes above the water, before drinking. This drinking technique seems more laboured than that used by hirundines and other nightjars (Pettet, *loc. cit.*) and may indicate that Long-tailed Nightjars are less adept at slow or skimming flight, although the proximity of trees to the pool may have restricted the flight path.

The pool was chlorinated, but that did not deter bird or bats from drinking. At the end of the dry season in the Sahel, there were few other sources of water available in the area. However, hirundines frequently drink from swimming-pools in West Africa (pers. obs.) even when other water sources are available nearby.

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