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ALBINISM AMONGST ETHIOPIAN BIRDS - Numerous instances of albinism in African birds have been recorded in recent years (e.g. Ostrich 37: 238; 38:205,281,288; 40:62; 41:220,261; 42:70,148,230; 43:176,184; 45:42) to which I can add the following.

In March 1971 at Sabon Gida dam, near Jos, I saw two White-faced Tree-Ducks Dendrocygna viduata which had large patches of white in their wings. Recently in a patch of thorn scrub on the outskirts of Kano I saw a small flock of Grey-headed Sparrows Passer griseus, one of which was pure white. There did not appear to be any animosity towards it, and as it was fairly approachable I was able to photograph it.

I would be interested to hear of any other reports of albinism amongst Ethiopian birds. R.E.Sharland

MENETRIES' WARBLER Sylvia mystacea NEW TO NIGERIA AND WEST AFRICA - On 17 April 1974 my wife and I netted a female-plumaged Sylvia warbler at Gaya, Kano State, in an overgrown dry river-bed, whose identity was unknown to us. The general impression of the bird in the hand was of a small grey Sylvia with sandy brown wings, dark tail and, as the only distinctive feature, rufous forehead. Detailed description :-

> Forehead rufous, crown grey-brown, lores pale grey, ear coverts grey-brown, nape grey-brown; mantle, back, rump and uppertail coverts grey-brown; chin white with buff wash, throat and belly white, breast, flanks and thighs buff; undertail coverts white with light brown feather centres; lesser wing coverts grey, median coverts brown-grey, greater coverts brown with light brown fringes, primary coverts brown, primaries and secondaries dark brown with light chestnut edges, tertiaries brown-grey; tail dark grey, outermost feathers with white edges and tips. Beak grey, with base of lower mandible flesh and mouth yellow-orange; iris brown-olive, eye-ring buff; legs light grey-brown, feet dirty yellow.
> Wing 57 mm, tail 51 (in moult, the outer 5 rectrices being replaced), beak 12. Wing tip p3=p4=p5, p1 = pc + 3, p2=p3 - 3.5, p6=p5 - 2, p7=p5 - 4, p8=p5 - 6, p9=p5 - 8, p10=p5 - 10; p3-5 emarginate; p2=p6/p7; p3 with notch 11 mm from tip. Weight 9.25g.

The bird was ringed, photographed and released. Mr I.J.Ferguson-Lees has very kindly compared our description with skins in the British Museum collection at Tring, and informs us that he has no doubt whatsoever that the bird was an adult female Menetries' Warbler S. mystacea, a species which, with most of its congeners, Mr Ferguson-Lees knows in the field. Menetries' Warbler breeds in southern Russia and Palestine

to Tadzhistan, and migrates southwestwards to winter in Arabia, Eritrea. Somalia and the Sudan. Our bird seems to have overshot its winter range by several hundred km, for it is the first record of the species west of Sudan. D. Best

AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT BY A GREATER HONEY-GUIDE TO PARASITISE RED-THROATED BEE-EATERS - During a study of Red-throated Bee-eaters Merops bulocki at Zaria I witnessed an attempt by a female Greater Honey-guide Indicator indicator to parasitise a nest of bee-eaters at a colony I had under observation.

At 11.00 hrs on 7 February 1975, the honey-guide flew into a tree a few metres from the colony. Groups of bee-eaters up to seven began chasing and mobbing it. It was reluctant to leave the area and for 1½ hours it remained inconspicuously perched deep in the foliage of bushes around the colony. Whenever the honey-guide left its cover it was immediately chased and mobbed by any bee-eaters in the area at the time. By a progression of short flights it positioned itself in a tree close to the colony. At 12.00 hrs, when no bee-eaters were apparent, it flew to the entrance of a nest tunnel and had inserted its head and shoulders into the tunnel when two bee-eaters converged onto it, one pulling aggressively at the tail and the other at the wing and scapular feathers of the intruder. A few seconds of this treatment forced the honey-guide from the nest entrance, and it flew off and was not seen again during the observation period.

Most of the bee-eaters at this colony had previously been marked for identification in the field, but the events surrounding the eviction of the honey-guide happened so quickly that there was no opportunity to determine whether or not the bee-eaters involved in the fracas were the occupants of the nest. These particular bee-eaters may have been the only two to have seen the honey-guide fly to the colony, and perhaps the reaction to honey-guides by all bee-eaters in a colony is the same, regardless of which nest the honey-guide is attempting to enter. Similar aggressiveness by host birds towards honey-guides has been documented for Black-collared Barbets Lybius torquatus with the Lesser Honey-guide I. minor in Rhodesia (Steyn & Scott 1974, Ostrich 45:143).

The attentiveness of bee-eaters around a colony and the degree of harrassment given to honey-guides would suggest that colonially nesting bee-eaters make difficult hosts to parasitise. Presumably colonial birds (including bee-eaters) are parasitised at a lower frequency than solitary-breeding ones. M. Dyer