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THE EGG COLOUR OF *Clamator levaillantii* (Swainson) IN NIGERIA - On 17 September 1975 a *Clamator levaillantii* trapped for ringing by R.E.S. was kept in a bird bag overnight when it laid an egg. It is characteristically broader and rounder than the eggs of the *Turdoides* species which are the usual hosts in Africa, and measures 25.3 x 19.5 mm. The breadth is 0.5 mm less than the smallest breadth of a series of ten *C. levaillantii* eggs recorded by Harrison (1971). The shell weight could not be determined because the egg was unblown and contained dried-up soft matter. The surface is smooth and slightly glossy and uniformly pale immaculate blue with a dingy grey tinge, the latter perhaps due to the dried-up contents.

*Clamator levaillantii* eggs in South and East Africa are pale blue to bluish-green, but in Nigeria eggs attributed to *C. levaillantii* on strong presumptive evidence are pink, matching the aberrant pink variety of *Turdoides plebejus* egg (the host species) sometimes found in Nigeria (Serle 1939). The egg here described shows that the blue-coloured *C. levaillantii* egg also occurs in Nigeria where *Turdoides plebejus* eggs show a remarkable variation in colour, from blue through grey-blue and mauve to pink.

R. E. Sharland and W. Serle

#### References

- Harrison, C. J. O. 1971 Notes on the identification of eggs, egg mimicry and distributional history and the status of the form *serratus*, in the parasitic *Clamator* cuckoos. Bull. Br. Orn. Cl. 91 : 126-131
- Serle, W. 1939 Field observations on some northern Nigerian birds Ibis 14(3) : 654-699

THE FOOD PASS MOVEMENT IN RAPTORS - This movement, characteristic of certain raptors, has been described by P. Brown (1969, Birds of Prey, A Survival Book, Andre Deutsch), quoting Balfour, as it is performed by the Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*. On two occasions at Enugu, I have seen what appeared to be a comparable manoeuvre, performed once by a pair of Black-shouldered Kites *Elanus caeruleus* and once by a pair of Shikras *Accipiter badius*. The birds passed one another at high speed on opposite but parallel upper and lower flight paths and it appeared that something was "passed" between them in the air.

S. G. Cowper

BLACK DUCK *Anas sparsa* ON MAMBILLA PLATEAU, FIRST RECORD FOR NIGERIA - During the period October 1974 to January 1975, two sightings were obtained of a duck in a small marsh near Yelwa on Mambilla Plateau, in October and December. On both occasions I had only brief glimpses but

the immediate impression was of a very dark blackish-brown duck with noticeable white spots on the upperparts, wings and tail. The flight was noticeably laboured, and once settled back in the marsh it proved impossible to flush a second time. These characteristics alone suggest a Black Duck, and the sightings constitute the first records of this little known duck in Nigeria. Bannerman (1953) and Mackworth-Praed and Grant (1970-73) describe it as essentially a highland bird and give records from the Cameroun Highlands, an area verging on and showing considerable ornithological affinities with the Mambilla Plateau.

P. Hall

Two other firsts for Nigeria, Dendropicos poecilolaemus and Artomyias ussheri, are recorded on pp. 73 and 76.

Ed.

THRUSH-NIGHTINGALE Luscinia luscinia NEW TO NIGERIA AND WEST AFRICA - During September 1975, while netting in the grounds of the Zoological Gardens in Kano, I trapped a bird which although superficially resembling a Nightingale Luscinia megarhynchos, was obviously of a different species. The more striking differences were the dull brown plumage, the lack of rufous in the tail and indistinct linear spots on the throat and breast.

A detailed description and measurements were made of the bird all of which fitted descriptions of the Thrush-Nightingale L. luscinia. A skin was prepared and has been lodged with the British Museum collection, where the identification was confirmed.

This would appear to be the first record of this north-west Palaearctic species (which winters in eastern Africa) as far west as Nigeria.

I would like to acknowledge my thanks to P. R. Colston of the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), Tring, for his confirmation of the identification of the skin.

J. R. Best

#### ADDITIONS TO LOCAL AVIFAUNAS

**YANKARI.** In their paper on the birds of Yankari Game Reserve, Dyer & Gartshore (1975, Bull. Nigerian Orn. Soc. 11, 40 : 77-84) recorded Secretary-Birds Sagittarius serpentarius just outside, but not inside, its boundaries. During my stay at Yankari in April 1974 I observed a Secretary-Bird in an open grassland area on Coulthard's Way between Mawulgo Spring and Sir Gawain Bell Falls. The accompanying game guard also recognised the bird on sight and did not seem to be surprised, so presumably it occurs regularly in the Reserve.

Andrew Demeter