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RECORDS OF PALEARCTIC MIGRANTS IN GHANA

by M. A. Macdonald

Received 9 August 1978

This paper lists my records of Palearctic migrant birds in Ghana from December 1975 to July 1978. I have already dealt with the Ciconiiformes (Macdonald 1977) and waders (Macdonald 1978), and I include here only those recently-collected data about them that alter or extend my conclusions. For other species, if individual records are detailed they embrace all of my records. For some common species only extreme dates and a general statement of status and distribution are given.

- Ardea cinerea Early records at Nakwa 4 Oct 1977 (six birds) and Iture 8 Oct 1977 (one bird). (For localities see Fig. 1).
- Anas acuta Seven at Nakwa on 18 Dec 1977 and one there on 11 Feb 1978.
- Circus macrourus A sub-adult male at Amedzofe on 8 Aug 1976; a 'ringtail' (and therefore possibly C. pygargus) at Nakwa on 13 Jan 1978.
- C. aeruginosus Seven records between 3 Jan and 6 May (Jan three, Feb two, Mar and May one each) from Nakwa, Atsotsuare and Fryfusu.
- Circaetus gallicus One Cape Coast 17 Dec 1975, one near Kintampo 2 Apr 1976, one Mole 5 and 8 Apr 1976, two east of Accra 22 May 1976. It is possible that some of these, especially the May record, refer to the African C. g. beaudouini. An unidentified large Circaetus, probably this species, was seen at Nakwa on 12 Mar 1978.
- Milvus migrans (migrans) Single black-billed pale-headed birds at Mole on 5 Apr 1976 (Taylor & Macdonald 1978) and Cape Coast on 15 May 1976.
- Pernis apivorus Eight records between 8 Aug and 15 Apr (Aug one, Oct one, Nov one, Dec two, Feb one, Apr two) from New Debiso, Daboase, Akutuase, Tafo, Accra and Amedzofe.
- Pandion haliaetus Six records between 15 Dec and 3 Jun (Dec two, Mar one, Apr to Jun one each) from Elmina, Nakwa, Accra Plains and Amedzofe.
- Falco subbuteo An immature at Mole on 6 Apr 1976 (Taylor & Macdonald 1978).
- F. tinnunculus One Cape Coast 20 Dec 1975, one Damongo 10 Apr 1976, two Mole 8 Jan 1978, about two 90 km south-west of Tamale 10 Jan 1978, one Atsotsuare 6 May 1978. The May bird was not seen well and the possibility that it was the African race F. t. rufescens was not excluded.
- Haematopus ostralegus Two at Weija on 11 Feb 1978, one Shama 10 Mar 1978.
- Numenius arquata One at Elmina on 15 Jan 1978.
- Limosa limosa One at Elmina on 12 Nov 1977.

- Tringa ochropus One at Ankaful on 15 Jan 1978, few Tafo 29 Jan 1978.
- Gallinago media One at Ankaful on 4 Feb 1978.
- G. gallinago Three at Tafo on 29 Jan 1978.
- Calidris alpina One at Elmina, 12-14 Mar 1978.
- Philomachus pugnax One at Elmina on 12 Nov 1977 and 13 Mar 1978.
- Stercorarius pomarinus Not uncommon offshore in the Cape Coast area during the dry season. Highest concentration off Elmina; most in immature plumage.
- S. parasiticus Occurred together with the last species but probably generally less common.
- Larus ridibundus One at Elmina on 11 Jan 1976 and one at Weijsa on 11 Feb 1978; both sub-adults.
- L. fuscus Two adults and a first-winter bird at Weijsa on 14 Oct 1976; two ads. there on 11 Feb 1978. Known to occur regularly at Weijsa and offshore from Accra (Grimes 1972). Apparently rare or absent farther west.
- Sterna caspia Three moving west off Dixcove on 10 Mar 1978.
- S. sandvicensis Fairly common offshore and on saltpans in winter, some remaining in summer.
- S. dougallii About ten at Shama on 23 Aug 1976; one moving west off Dixcove on 10 Mar 1978. Perhaps overlooked.
- S. hirundo Small numbers offshore and on saltpans in winter, a few remaining in summer.
- S. paradisaea An immature bird on Anisa Lagoon on 14 Mar 1978, another at Elmina on 10 Apr 1978, and an adult off Elmina on 10 Apr 1978. Perhaps overlooked.
- S. hybrida An adult at Weijsa on 11 Apr 1976, one at Cape Coast on 3 June 1977 with Black Terns.
- S. leucoptera Six adults at Weijsa on 11 Apr 1976.
- S. nigra Abundant on the coast in winter with fair numbers remaining throughout the summer.
- Cuculus canorus ssp. One at New Debiso on 8 Apr 1977 (Taylor & Macdonald 1978). The race of this bird was not determined but it was probably canorus. In Ghana the African race gularis is strictly a savanna species and would be most unlikely to occur in the forest zone.
- Clamator glandarius One at Cape Coast in mid-Jan 1976. The bird is not known to breed closer to Cape Coast than Accra and this was the only local record, but the possibility of it being a dispersing African bird cannot be excluded.
- Caprimulgus europaeus A male at Cape Coast on 4 Jan 1976.
- Apus apus A common winter visitor over the forest zone with passage only on the coastal strip. First dates: 8 Aug 1976 (but next not until 10 Oct), 9 Oct 1977; last dates: 2 May 1976, 20 May 1977, 11 May 1978. Passage on coast: 1 Apr to 2 May 1976, 17-20 May 1977, 28, 30 Apr, 9-11 May 1978; 7-13 Oct 1976. Several in Mole on 9 Apr 1976. Prospecting behaviour with A. affinis at Cape Coast May 1977, Apr and May 1978.
- A. pallidus Two at Cape Coast on 30 Nov 1976, several at Tafo on 29 Jan 1978. Maybe overlooked among A. apus over forest, but certainly in the minority there.

- Merops apiaster Some 30 near Legon on 13 Oct 1976.
- Coracias garrulus One at Mole on 6 Apr 1976 (Taylor & Macdonald 1978).
- Upupa epops One at Mole on 7 Apr 1976 (Taylor & Macdonald 1978).
- Jynx torquilla One at Cape Coast on 6 Mar 1976.
- Hirundo rustica An abundant winter visitor, especially in the forest zone, from Aug to Apr.
- H. daurica One at Cape Coast on 7 Nov 1976. This may have been one of the West African breeding population which, however, does not breed locally.

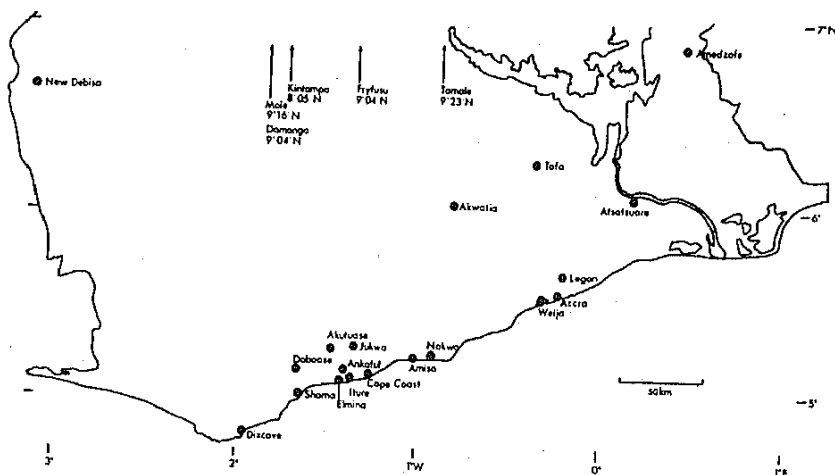


Figure 1 Map of southern Ghana showing localities mentioned in the text.

Delichon urbica Up to eight at Mole, 4-9 Apr 1976, one at New Debiso on 8 Apr 1977, and one at Mole on 8 Jan 1978.

Motacilla flava An abundant winter visitor in all habitats except closed forest from October to April. First dates: 13 Oct 1976, 17 Oct 1977; last dates: 1 May 1976, 1 May 1977, 7 May 1978 (but only two seen after 24 Apr). Males of races flavissima (one Weija 11 Apr 1976), cinereocapilla (one Cape Coast 24 Apr 1976), flava and thunbergi identified in the field. The last named was the commonest form judging from spring observations, with flava not uncommon. Ten of eleven

spring flava identified were in March (the other on 18 Apr) while 26 of 28 thumbergi were recorded in the last three weeks of April (the others on 18 Feb and 19 Mar). This suggests an earlier moult or passage of the more southerly breeding flava than the most northerly thumbergi. A few individuals of both races were identified in autumn. All birds identified racially were males with fully moulted head plumage.

Anthus campestris One at Ankaful on 27 Feb 1977; one at Nakwa on 21 Jun 1977. These records are well to the south of the normal range of species, and the Jun one out of season. Despite that, the identification is beyond doubt.

A. trivialis Recorded at Mole on 9 Apr 1976 (one), 4-8 Jan 1978 (one to two). Also at Tafo on 13 Feb 1977 (one), 29 Jan 1978 (at least three). Apparently widespread but very local as not recorded from Cape Coast area.

A. cervinus Found regularly only on a small area of salt pans near Cape Coast. First dates: 28 Nov 1976, 31 Dec 1977; last dates: 31 Mar 1976, 30 Mar 1977. Two (probably migrating) at Mole on 5 Apr 1976 (Taylor & Macdonald 1978). Other localities: Nakwa and Ankaful, once each.

Lanius senator Two at Mole, 6-9 Apr 1976, one or two there 4-9 Jan 1978 (Jan birds all L. s. senator). One (still in juvenile plumage) at Nakwa on 13 Nov 1977 (probably L. s. badius). One at Cape Coast 20 Feb-20 Mar 1977 and 23 Jan-17 Feb 1978 (definitely both L. s. badius). This accords with Bannerman's (1953) statement that badius has a more southerly winter range than senator. The long stay of the two Cape Coast birds suggests a rather sedentary habit in the wintering area.

Saxicola rubetra A fairly common winter visitor to coastal areas. First dates: 13 Oct 1976, 30 Oct 1977; last dates: 8 Apr 1977, 9 Apr 1978. Recorded also at Mole, 4-9 Jan 1978, Tafo and New Debiso. Seasonal distribution of records was as follows (number of records per month):

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
1976-77	1	1	4	5	5	8	1
1977-78	1	3	4	6	6	6	2

Luscinia megarhynchos Seven records fell between 14 Dec and 7 Apr, at Cape Coast, Accra Plains, Tafo and New Debiso. Because of its skulking habit it is probably much commoner than these records suggest.

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus At least two at Nakwa on 13 Jan and 11 Feb 1978; at least six at Tafo on 29 Jan 1978.

A. scirpaceus Several Tafo 11-12 Feb 1976.

A. arundinaceus Several Tafo 11-12 Feb 1976.

Hippolais polyglotta A fairly common visitor, more numerous on the Accra Plains. Recorded also at Cape Coast, Nakwa, Tafo, Mole. First dates: 28 Nov 1976, 10 Nov 1977; last dates: 2 Apr 1976, 30 Apr 1977, 12 Mar 1978.

Sylvia borin A common winter visitor to the Cape Coast area: also recorded at Nakwa. First dates: 28 Dec 1976, 11 Dec 1977; last dates: 10 Mar 1976, 14 Mar 1977, 11 Mar 1978 (but one possible at Akutuase on 15 Apr 1978).

Phylloscopus trochilus Ten records between 10 Nov and 19 Mar at Cape Coast, Nakwa and Accra. Scarce in Cape Coast area but perhaps commoner around Accra. Song heard Jan to Mar.

P. sibilatrix Seven records between 15 Jan and 20 Apr, all from forest clearings and cocoa farm at New Debiso, Jukwa area, Akwatia and Tafo. No song heard. Late dates suggest that it is mainly a passage bird.

Muscicapa striata In the Cape Coast area it appears to be mainly an autumn passage migrant. First dates: 17 Oct 1976, 14 Oct 1977; last dates: 27 Feb 1977, 19 Feb 1978. The seasonal distribution of observations (number of records per month) on the coast was as follows:

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
1976-77	3	3	0	0	2
1977-78	3	3	1	0	1

Other records were from Tafo on 13 Feb 1977, 5-6 Nov 1977, 29 Jan 1978; and Mole on 5-6 Jan 1978. They suggest that the species may winter in inland areas, both forest clearings and savanna, but precise data from these areas are required (cf. Gass 1957).

Ficedula hypoleuca Found only at Mole on 4-9 Apr 1976 and 4-9 Jan 1978.

Acknowledgements

Several people shared in a number of the records listed here, notably Dr I. R. Taylor, G. Vanderstichelen, R. and M. Lockwood, E. J. Pilcher and A. J. M. Smith. I am grateful to R. and M. Lockwood for their hospitality at Tafo, and to the Department of Game and Wildlife for permission to visit Mole National Park, Bia National Park (New Debiso), and Shai Hills Game Production Reserve. Prof P. Jarvis kindly provided facilities at the University of Edinburgh where the paper was prepared.

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