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WEIGHTS OF GHANAIAN BIRDS AND DISTRIBUTION DATA FOR TWO SPECIES

by L. G. Grimes

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While living in Ghana I collected the following weight data (in gm, accurate to 0.1 gm) using a conventional laboratory balance; they supplement data already published on Ghanaian birds (Harvey & Harrison 1970, Karr 1976, Greig-Smith & Davidson 1977). Unless otherwise stated, the birds were collected within the campus of the University of Ghana, Legon (5.63°N, 0.19°W), and in most cases were sexed by dissection. Those not sexed are also listed. The average rainfall data for Legon show a major peak in rainfall between May and July and a minor one in September and October, with little or no rainfall in the remaining months. The nomenclature and sequence follow that of Mackworth-Praed & Grant.

Centropus senegalensis ♂ 159.4 (4 Dec)

Aerops albicollis 22.3 (10 Nov), 22.1 (11 Nov), 20.6 (8 Dec), 20.5 (10 Dec)

*Indicator indicator ♀ 44.1 (31 Dec)

*Turdoides plebejus ♂ 63.2 (8 Apr)

*T. reinwardii ♂ 82.5 (26 Nov); ♀♀ 69.1, 73.3, 76.5 (all on 26 Nov); 75.5, 75.7 (both on 1 Jan)

*Pycnonotus barbatus 37.6 (8 Dec)

*Pyrrhurus simplex ♂ 50.0 (28 Nov); ♀♀ 42.5, 43.1 (both on 11 Dec); 42.7 (30 Dec)

*Eurillas virens ♀ 25.2 (?)

*Platysteira cyanea ♀ 12.7 (30 Dec); Imm. 11.5 (30 Dec)

*Tchitrea rufiventer 14.5 (4 Jan)

*Turdus olivaceus ♀ 60.1 (30 Dec); 65.8 (7 Dec), 60.7 (8 Dec), 58.7 (10 Dec), 57.9 (31 Dec), 59.8 (?)

Luscinia megarhynchos 22.2 (5 Dec)

Sylvia borin 15.5, 19.6 (both on 12 Dec)

Acrocephalus scirpaceus 10.0 (12 Dec)

A. schoenobaenus 9.8, 10.2 (both on 30 Jan), 10.5 (?); all three were netted in Typha australis on the edge of a reservoir close to the Tema motorway.

Calamocichla rufescens ♂ 23.2 (5 Jan); 17.9, 19.6 (both on 30 Jan). The male was shot in Mangrove swamp along the Densu river west of Accra, the others were netted in the same Typha bed as the previous species.

*Sylvietta virens 7.9 (10 Dec)

*Prinia subflava 9.4 (8 Nov)

*Corvinella corvina ♂♂ 68.2 (14 May), 60.0 (24 May), 79.9 (23 Mar), 58.0 (5 Aug), 60.0 (20 Sep), 63.0 (? Sep), 60.4 (3 Dec), 68.8 (6 Nov); ♀♀ 70.4 (5 Nov), 62.1 (6 Nov), 68.5 (26 Nov)

- *Laniarius barbarus ♀ 44.9 (7 Nov); 48.1 (26 Nov)
 *Dryoscopus gambensis 36.4 (?)
 *Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus ♂ 29.8 (?); 25.5 (10 Dec)
Lamprocolius chalybaeus 83.0 (15 Dec)
L. chalcurus ♀ 80.5 (18 Jan)
L. purpureus 98.2 (11 May)
 *Ploceus nigricollis 23.7 (11 Dec)

My data for those species asterisked, that have been collected by other workers in Ghana are, in general, within the range of their values. The only notable difference is my weight for Indicator indicator which is approximately 20% less than that listed by Greig-Smith & Davidson (1977). The difference may well be real and not an error as their data were collected in the wet season and mine in the dry.

The A. scirpaceus specimen was netted in dense thicket within the Botanical gardens of the University; another was netted in the same Typha bed and during the same netting period as the A. schoenobaenus and Calamocichla rufescens specimens. The mention in Mackworth-Praed & Grant that C. rufescens probably occurs in Ghana presumably rests on the probable sighting of the bird by members of the Oxford University team that visited the Mole Game Reserve in the north of Ghana in the wet season of 1968 (Harvey & Harrison 1970). Serle & Morel used the present data in listing Ghana as part of its range but it is noteworthy that it has not been located, although looked for, in coastal areas west of the Accra Plains. All three skins are now in the University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge. They have been compared by C. W. Benson with 26 from Nigeria and Cameroun in the British Museum (Natural History), of which only three (one from Nigeria and two from Cameroun) have the same markedly tawny wash, especially on the rump and flanks. All six appear to be immature.

The Blue-eared Glossy Starling L. chalybaeus was shot while it was feeding with other glossy starlings on flying termites. The skin was sent to C. W. Benson and he has kindly compared it with other skins and confirmed the identification. This skin extends the southern limit of L. chalybaeus, quoted in Serle & Morel (1977) as 12°N, to the coastal areas of eastern Ghana.

References

- Harvey, W. G. & Harrison, I. D. (1970) The birds of the Mole Game Reserve, Parts 1 and 2. Bull. Nigerian Orn. Soc., 7(27): 43-52, 63-75
 Karr, J. R. (1976) Weights of African birds. Bull. Br. Orn. Cl., 96: 92-96
 Greig-Smith, P. W. & Davidson, N. C. (1977) Weights of West African savanna birds. Bull. Br. Orn. Cl., 97: 96-99