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Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest Africain

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February / février 2010

Grey Heron Ardea cinerea	
Black-headed Heron Ardea melanocephala	
Hammerkop Scopus umbretta	
White-headed Vulture Trigonoceps occipitalis	
Common Vulture Necrosyrtes monachus	X
Lanner Falco biarmicus	
Kestrel Falco tinnunculus	
Grey Kestrel Falco ardosiaceus	
Black Kite Milvus migrans	X
Bataleur Terathopius ecaudatus	
Palm-nut Vulture Gypohierax angolensis	
Red-tailed Buzzard Buteo auguralis	
Chanting Goshawk Melierax metabates	
Rock Partridge Ptilopachus petrosus	
Crowned Crane Balearica pavonina	
Senegal Wattled Plover Afribyx senegallus	
Speckled Pigeon Columba guinea	X
Adamawa Turtle-dove Streptopelia hypopyrrhus	
Red-eyed Turtle-dove Streptopelia semitorquata	
Laughing Dove Stigmatopelia senegalensis	X
Spotted Eagle Owl Bubo africanus	
Didric Cuckoo Lampromorpha caprius	
Senegal Coucal Centropus senegalensis	
Palm Swift Cypsiurus parvus	X
Pied Kingfisher Ceryle rudis	
Senegal Kingfisher Halcyon senegalensis	
Grey Hornbill Lophoceros nasutus	
Black-throated Honey-guide Indicator indicator	
Buckley's Bush-Lark Mirafra buckleyi	X
Crested Lark Galerida cristata	
Yellow-throated Longclaw Macronyx croceus	X
Common Bulbul Pycnonotus barbatus	
Yellow-throated Leaf-love Pyrrhurus flavicollis	
Red-tailed Chat Cercomela familiaris	
Ant-Chat Myrmecocichla aethiops	X
Fantail Warbler Cisticola juncidis	
Rock-loving Grass-Warbler Cisticola emini	X
Rufous Grass-Warbler Cisticola galactotes	X
Red-rumped Swallow Hirundo rufula	X
Bell-Shrike Laniarius ferrugineus	
Black-crowned Tchagra Tchagra senegala	
Pied Crow Corvus albus	X
Yellow-billed Oxpecker, Buphagus africanus	X
Rock Bunting Fringillaria tahapisi	X
Grey-headed Sparrow Passer griseus	X
Village Weaver Ploceus cucullatus	X
Orange Bishop Euplectes orix	X
Yellow-mantle Whydah Coliuspasser macrourus	X
Long-tailed Black Whydah Coliuspasser ardens	
Bronze Mannakin Spermestes cucullatus	X
Quail Finch Ortygospiza atricollis	X
Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu Uraeginthus bengalus	X
Combassou sp. Hypochera sp.	
Pintailed Whydah Vidua macroura	

BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY BY STALKING

J.G.M.Scoberton

Finding photography 'at the nest' almost an impossibility in this country, firstly for lack of time, and secondly because of the insecurity of hides, the very prongst of materials proving attractive to the local population, I decided to try the stalking method.

A 35mm single lens reflex was obviously the best type of camera for the purpose, so, influenced by numerous reports on the all-round excellence of the Takumar lenses I purchased a Pentax SV. At first I worked with a Takumar 200mm f5.6, a lens light enough (13.1 ozs.) to be hand-held at speeds of 1/125 or faster, and with excellent definition. Focussing is done by twisting part of the lens mount, and I found difficulty in doing this and keeping the camera steady when attempting to photograph a moving bird. I also found that a lens of longer focal length was required for the smaller species and the shyer less approachable birds. The Novoflex system with its follow-focus pistol-grip and its interchangeable lens cells giving various focal lengths from 200mm to 640 mm proved to be exactly what I wanted. When used with a chest-pod the longest focal length lens can be used at 1/125 without camera shake, and after some practice the act of keeping the target in focus is almost as automatic and unconscious as focussing one's own eyes. The f5.6 400mm Novoflexar focusses from infinity to 26 feet, and the f9.0 640mm from infinity to 65 feet, but extension tubes can be used thus enabling one to fill the frame with small birds at much reduced distances from the camera; the aperture is reduced of course and you lose infinity. The Novoflex can be used with a tripod where poor light and slow film require longer exposures, but I have found that a telescopic monopod of ultra-light material fitted with a universal swing head is quite adequate to prevent camera shake even down to exposures of 1/30, the chest-pod is then converted into a shoulder-butt.

Most of my photographs are taken on colour reversal film, and, after much experimenting, I use only two kinds. For most situations I use Kodachrome X : it gives good colour saturation which bird plumage requires, and its speed rating of 64 ASA I find accurate. Where film of higher speed is necessary I use High Speed Ektachrome which has a weaker colour saturation than Koda-chrome and a larger grain but, for example, in shade or heavy woodland, if a compensating filter is used, no other film can compare with it. I find it about one stop faster than the maker's rating of 160 ASA. It can also be used at 320 ASA with compensation being made during processing, but the size of grain is greatly increased.

With the faster reversal colour films exposure must be as accurate as possible, and I have found the cadmium sulphide meters much more accurate than the selenium cell type. I use a Sekonic Super Microlite L 96 because of its narrow angle of acceptance and therefore more accurate reading. Nevertheless, as with any light meter, one must avoid measuring the light reflected from the leaves surrounding the bird which is the target - the shiny surfaces of leaves are very efficient reflectors.

The actual stalking itself can be most exciting, and one's knowledge of the habitats and reactions of the birds is greatly improved

by the close observation entailed in getting the bird and one's self into a position where a photograph is possible. Some birds are much easier than others to photograph, for example kingfishers, bee-eaters and flycatchers will return again and again to the same perch; birds of prey often have favourite observation points, and even woodpeckers appear to have their favourite trees and will often oblige by keeping still long enough for one's purpose. Each area with its bird population must be studied closely before embarking on a photographic foray. It is surprising how patterns emerge and one's routes or points of vantage can be planned in advance of the actual expedition.

I would very much like to hear from anyone who is using the same or similar apparatus and method as my own.

THE BIRDS OF ZARIA. I - AFRICAN MIGRANTS

C.H.Fry

Introduction This article will appear in four parts as above, and is basically a checklist incorporating notes on breeding, distribution, migration, habits etc., from which African and Palaearctic migrants are separated out for specific treatment. It leans rather heavily on a paper (Fry, in press, The ecological distribution of birds in Northern Guinea Savanna, Nigeria; Proc. 2nd pan-Afr. Ornith. Congr.) which does not however contain notes other than on distribution; and incorporates where relevant typescript notes on the birds of Zaria left by E.Butler (1958) and P.Ward (1961). Other reference titles will be quoted in full at first mention and listed at the end of the fourth section. No apology is made either for the checklist nature of Sections III & IV of this paper or for the very inadequate observation on which the first two sections are based. Despite the fact that more and more is becoming known about the overall distribution and migrations of birds in West Africa, still very little fine detail can be confidantly given and it will be a long time before the checklist era can be closed on this side of the Continent; again, although two years' residence at a locality is miserably little for the observation of migration, yet I feel that the recording of my data here could provide a basis for further discussion and a stimulus for observation, especially - as concerns Section I - in view of two other relevant