West African Ornithological Society
Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest Africain

Join the WAOS and support the future availability of free pdfs on this website.

http://malimbus.free.fr/member.htm

If this link does not work, please copy it to your browser and try again.

If you want to print this pdf, we suggest you begin on the next page (2) to conserve paper.

Devenez membre de la SOOA et soutenez la disponibilité future des pdfs gratuits sur ce site.

http://malimbus.free.fr/adhesion.htm

Si ce lien ne fonctionne pas, veuillez le copier pour votre navigateur et réessayer.

Si vous souhaitez imprimer ce pdf, nous vous suggérons de commencer par la page suivante (2) pour économiser du papier.

February / février 2010

TRINGA OCHROPUS Green Sandpiper. Fairly common and seen in several suitable localities. Their preference for overgrown streams made them unusual visitors to the sewerage farm.

TRINGA GLAREOLA. Wood Sandpiper. The most common wader after Actitis hypoleucos, with 10 to 15 present throughout the observation period. Maximum numbers of 30+ in late November and 60 at the end of January.

TRINGA ERYTHROPUS Dusky Redshank. Three birds present from October 19 to December 18. This is apparently the first record of the species in Ghana. Bannerman regards it as being accidental in West Africa, though Elgood finds it a regular visitor in small numbers, mainly to the northern lakes in Nigeria.

GLOTTIS NEBULARIUS Greenshank. Between three and six birds present from October 29 to February 19. In late January and early February irregularity of numbers suggested a small passage movement. In December a very dark bird with black legs but green feet was seen; this seemed unlikely to have been caused by staining.

GLOTTIS STAGNATILIS Marsh Sandpiper. One or two present for a few days in early November.

PHALAROPUS FULICARIUS Grey Phalarope. One was seen on April 3 on a reservoir at Obuasi goldmine, some 30 miles south of Kumasi. The bird was very tame, allowing approach to within four or five yards. It was till in winter plumage. A bird was seen to alight on one of the stilling ponds at the sewerage farm for a few minutes on the evening of November 20. Bannerman knows of no inland records for this species, and Elgood does not mention it from Nigeria. As far as is known, there were no unusual storms preceding either of these records, and it is perhaps conceivable that there is a small but regular inland passage.

A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE COMMON BIRD FAUNAS OF A SMALL AREA OF N.NIGERIA AND A SIMILAR SIZED AREA IN N.UGANDA.

D. P. Ebbutt.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION. I have attempted in this report to compare the common Ethiopian birds in two regions south of the Sahara. I realise that such a report suffers from many defects. I am not a trained ecologist, two more similar regions could be found in the countries concerned, the zones I have chosen may not be valid ones from an ecological point of view. However, I hope to show some interesting comparisons and a few anomalies between the common birds of the two areas.

The areas compared occur within a four-mile radius of Vom volcanoe (N. Nigeria) and a similar radius of Sir Samuel Baker School, Gulu (N.Nigeria). Whereas I was stationed near Vom for some forty months I have only been in Uganda some five months, consequently I have relied heavily on the (unpublished) records of Mr. J. Lindley who has been in the area for four years.

I define 'common birds' as those which can normally be seen at least once in the course of a day within the relevant zone.

Because birds are such mobile organisms they cannot be expected to keep rigidly to zonations within such small areas, so that a zone where a species feeds predominantly or breeds is considered the typical one rather than a zone where it may alight fleetingly.

Where a species appears to be not represented in Vom but present in Gulu, a blank appears in the Vom column or vice-versa, except where I consider two related species occupy the same niche, or are closely related, then they appear opposite each other (this is a largely subjective process).

Some species are ubiquitous e.g. bulbuls and thus must appear in several zones.

It may be relevant to note that the distance separating the two areas is approximately 1,650 miles (or for example between London and the Black Sea, or New Orleans and Los Angeles).

English names cause problems as these vary with each standard regional text, mine tend to follow Bannerman, however some from Praed & Grant are used arbitrarily.

There are no zones in the Uganda Region to compare with the open water around Vom, or with the granite outcrops, these zones are therefore omitted.

SECTION 2: The Areas.

	Vom. Jos Plateau N.Nigeria	Sir Samuel Baker School, Gulu N. Uganda.
LAT.	09° 52'N.	02° 45'N.
LONG.	08° 54'E	32° 15'E.
MEAN ANNUAL RAIN:	56.4"	60".
RAIN NORMALLY EXPECTED:	MARCH to OCTOBER	MARCH to NOVEMBER
TEMPERATURE RANGE:	82.2°F (Max)	88.5°F (Max.)
	61.9°F (Min.)	58.0°F (Min.)
HUMIDITY RANGE:	14% (Min-JAN)	10% (Min.
	76% (Max.AUG.)	96% (Max.
HEIGHT:	4233' a.s.l.	3500' a.s.l.

Vegetation:

Vom is situated within the Guinea Savannah belt. Originally the area was probbably a climax zone of Savannah Woodland, degraded by man to high level grassland with granite hills rising to 5,800' a.s.l. The grass is kept short by constant grazing.

Gulu is situated in a belt of Wooded Savannah in which Combretum sp. are dominant with Hyparrhenia grasses sp. in association. Acacia sp. occur throughout, and would thus be included under 'dry woodland' by Moreau. The tree canopy is discontinuous and underlaid with grasses up to 8 feet tall. It is a fire climax.

SECTION 3: The Zones:

Zone A: Gardens - including tree orientated grassland species. Defined as an area of decorative cultivation around the typical expatriate type of dwelling in the tropics; and including some of the following trees and shrubs:- Spathodea, Bougainvillea, Frangipani Hibiscus, Thevitia, Oleander, Eucalyptus (W.A.) Acacia & Cassia sp. Magnifera indica & some taller trees e.g. Khaya sp. & Ficus sp.

Vom N. Nigeria	Gulu N. Uganda.
	Lizard Buzzard. (Kaupifalco monogrammicus)
Shikra (Accipiter badius) ——→	
Vinaceous Dove (Streptopelia-vinacea) ——→	
Senegal Dove (Stigmatopelia hypopyrrhus)	
Black-billed Wood Dove. (T.abyssinica) ——→	
	Red eyed Dove (S.semitorquata)
	Green Pigeon (T. austraralis)
Senegal Coucal (Centropus senegalensis) ——→	
	White browed Coucal (C.superciliosus)
Levaillants cuckoo (C. levaillanti) ——→	
Klass' cuckoo (Lampromorpha klaasi) ——→	
Didric cuckoo (L. caprius) ——→	
	White headed Turaco (T.leucolophus)
	Eastern Grey P antain-Eater (Crinifer zonurrus).
	Green Wood Hoopoe. (Phoeniculus aterrimus).
Speckled Mousebird (Colius striatus) ——→	
W.African Barbet (Lybius vielloti).	
	Double-toothed Barbet. (Lybius bidentatus)
	Black-billed Barbet (L.guifsobalito)
	White-headed Barbet. (L. dubius).

Gardens contd.

Vom N. Nigeria.	Gulu N. Uganda
Yellow fronted Tinker Bird. (P. chrysoconus)	
Black throated Honeyguide. (I.indicator)	
Grey Woodpecker (Mesopicos goertoe) →	
	African Pied Wagtail (Motacilla aguimp)
	Brown Babbler. (Turdoides plebeja).
Common Bulbul (Pyconotus barbatus) =	Black capped Bulbul. (Pyconotus tricolor).
Blue fairy Flycatcher (Eranornis longicauda) →	
Black Flycatcher (Melaenornis edoloides) →	
Pale Flycatcher. (Bradornis Pallidus) →	
Paradise Flycatcher (Tchitrea viridis)	
Kurrichane Thrush	African Thrush (Turdos pelios)
Snowy Crowned Robin Chat. (C. niveicapilla) =	White.browed Robin Chat. (Cossypha heuglini).
Crombec. (Sylvietta brachyura) →	
Grey backed Cameroptera (Cameroptera brevicaudata) →	
	Drongo. (Dicrurus adsimilis).
	Tropical Boubou (Laniorius aethiopicus).
Gonolek (Lanius barbarus).	
Black Crowned Tchagra (Tchagra senegala) →	
	Puffback Shrike (Dryoscopus gambensis)
Long tailed Shrike (Corvinella corvina)	
White shouldered Black Tit. (Parus leucomelas) →	
Pied Crow. (Corvus albus). →	
	Ruppells long-tailed Starling (Lamprotornis purpuropterus)
Purple Glossy starling (Lamprocolius purpureus) →	
Blue-eared Glossy starling (L.chalybaeus) →	
Yellow White eye (Zosterops senegalensis) →	
Copper Sunbird (Cinnyris cupreus) →	
Scarlet chested Sunbird (Chalocomitra senegalensis) →	
Pygmy long tailed Sunbird (Hedydipna platura)	Not present
Red cheeked Cordon Blue (Ureaginthus bengalus) →	
Bronze Manikin (S.cucullatus) →	
Grey headed Sparrow (Passer griseus) →	
Silverbill (Euodice malabarica)	
	Emins Weaver (Othyphantes Emini).

Gardens: contd.

Indigo bird.(Hypochera sp.)
African Firefinch (L.rubricata) ——→
Bar breasted Firefinch. (L.rufopicta) ——→
Yellow fronted Canary (Serinus mozambicus) ——→
Grey rumped Seedeater (Serinus leucopygius)

} see also Grassland.

Zone B. Buildings.

Defined as large edifices of comparatively recent construction (none older than 50 years) such as labs, assembly halls, dining halls, hostels, inhabited by species which may once have been cliff-nesters.

Vom N.Nigeria.	Gulu N.Uganda.
Barn Owl. (Tyto alba)	
Speckled Pigeon.(Columba guinea)	
Lesser striped Swallow(Hirundo abyssinica)	
Ethiopian Swallow(H.aethiopica)	
Little Swift.(Apus affinis)	
	Wire tailed Swallow(H.smithii)
	Mosque Swallow(H.senegalensis).

Zone C: Low lying Wet Areas.

Areas which are damp for at least six months, no open water, no exposed mud, thick vegetation e.g. sedges, rushes and in E.Africa only dense stands of Papyrus sp. & Phoenix sp.

Vom N.Nigeria.	Gulu N.Uganda.
	Little bittern(Ixobrychus minutus).
Grey heron(Ardea cinerea)	
Purple heron(Pyrrheroidia purpurea) ——→	
Hadada(Hagedashia hagedash) ——→	
Hammerkop.(Scopus umbretta)	
Black Crake(Limnocorax flavirostra) ——→	
Senegal Thicknee(Burhinus oedicnemus)	
Jacana (Actophilornis africanus) ——→	
Wattled Plover(Afibyx senegallus)	
Malachite Kingfisher(Cristata) ——→	
Little Bee-eaters(M.pusillus) ——→	
Marsh Owl (Asio capensis)	
Senegal Coucal(Centropus senegalensis) ——→	
	Black capped Bulbul(Pyconotus tricolor)
Winding Cisticola(C.galactotes)	
Singing Cisticola(C.cantans)	Cisticola sp.
	Black-headed Gonolek(L. erythrogaster).
Red Bishop(Euplectes orix)	

Wet Area contd.

Vom N.Nigeria	Gulu N.Uganda.
Napoleon Bishop(Euplectes afra)	
	Black Bishop(E.Gierowi)
	Black Winged Red Bishop (E. hordacea)
Zebra Waxbill(Estrilda subflava)	
	Fawn breasted Waxbill. (Estrilda paludicola)
Yellow mantled Widow Bird. (Coliuspasser macrourus) ——→	
	Fan tailed Widow Bird. (Coliuspasser axillaris)
	Golden backed Weaver(Ploceus capitalis)
	Holubs Weaver(Xanthophilus xanthops)
	Emins Weaver. (O. emini)
Parasitic Weaver(Anomalospiza imberbis)	

Zone D. Grassland with Native Cultivation.

As stated in Section 2 the Vom area is high level grassland approaching montane conditions resultant upon burning, cultivation and grazing; cultivation includes Sugar Cane, Guinea Corn, Maize, Cassava and Beans. The 'grassland' of the Gulu region (see Section 2) is much different - little grazing and a more intensive cultivation mosaic including Maize, Millet, cassava, cott n, tobacco and sweet potatoes on a 'bush fallow' rotation. The savannah trees regenerate from rootstock as do the grasses.

Vom N.Nigeria.	Gulu N.Uganda
Black headed heron (A. melancephala) ——→	
Grey heron (A. cinerea)	
Cattle Egret(Bubulcus ibis)	
Double spurred Francolin (F. bicalceratus)	
Senegal Bustard.(Eupoditis senegalensis)	
Black Bellied Bustard.(Lissotis melanogaster)	
	Heuglins Francolin (F. icterorhynchus)
Crowned Crane (B. pavonia) ———	S.A. Crowned Crane(B.regulorum)
Kestrel (F.tinnunculus)	
Black Winged Kite (Elanus caeruleus)	
Temminks Courser(Cursorius temminkii).	
Crested Lark (Galerida cristata)	
Red-capped Lark.(Calandrella cinerea)	
Chestnut backed finch Lark (Eremopterix leucotis)	
Yellow throated long claw. (Macronyx croceus) ——→	

Vom N.Nigeria.	Gulu N.Uganda.
Antchat.(Myrmecocichla aethiops)	
Red breasted wheatear(Oenanthe heuglini)	
	Moustached Warbler(Melocichla mentalis)
	Whistling Cisticola.(Cisticola lateralis).
	Croaking Cisticola.(C.natalensis)
	Siffling Cisticola(?) (C.brachyptera)
	Red-faced Cisticola(C.erythrops)
Singing Cisticola(C.cantans)	
Fantail Warbler.(C.juncidus)	
Pin tailed Wydah.(Vidua macroura) →	
←	Bar breasted fire finch. (L.rufopicta)
←	African firefinch.(L.rubricata)
←	Red billed firefinch.(L.senegala)
Black Magpie(Ptilostomus afer) →	
Quail finch(Ortygospiza atricollis)	
Indigo bird.(Hypochera sp.)	
Bronze manikin (S.cuculatus) →	
Rock bunting(Fringillaria tahapsi)	

Vegetation Specific Species.

Vom N.Nigeria	Gulu N.Uganda
Palm Swift(Cypsiurus parvus) →	

Zone E: Overhead.

I include in this division all species which soar e.g. storks, raptors and species traversing the area.

Abdinis Stork(Sphenorynchus abdimii) →	
Hooded Vulture(Necrosyrtes monachus). →	
White Backed Vulture(Pseudogyps africanus) →	
Black Kite (Milvus migrans) →	
Bataleur(Terathopius ecaudatus) →	
Grey hornbill(Tockus nasutus.) →	
White throated bee-eater (aerops albicollis) →	
Red tailed Buzzard(B.auguralis)	
	Augur Buzzard(Buteo rufofuscus)

SECTION 4: Analysis.

I have tabulated below the common bird species of Vom, N.Nigeria and Sir Samuel Baker School, Gulu, Uganda, according to the zones delineated earlier.

	Total Species Involved:	Not Occuring Vom.	Not Occuring S.S.B.S.	Shared by both:
Zone A:	61	20	12	29 (49%)
Zone B:	7	2	5	0 (0%)
Zone C:	29	10(-1Cisticola sp.)	10	8 (29%)
Zone D:	33	6	18	9 (27%)
Zone E:	9	1	1	7 (78%).

Expressing the common species shared by both areas as a percentage of the total number of common species involved a figure of 38% emerges, and as a statement this may be stated:-

Conclusion 1: An examination of the more abundant bird species of a small area of N.Nigeria and a similar sized area of N.Uganda choosing comparable ecological zones reveals that 38% of all species involved occur in much the same status in both areas.

If now the complete checklist for the whole of Plateau Province (N.Nigeria) above 300ft. a.s.l. including all bird species known to have occured at least once (i.e. palaearctic migrants, partial migrants, residents and vagrants) is compared with the equivalent list for Sir Samuel Baker School (N.Uganda) the following results emerge:-

Total Species Involved:	Not Occuring Plateau:	Not Occuring S.S.B.S.	Shared by both:
379	66	175	135
100%	17%	46%	36%

The figure of approximately 36% is admittedly very unscientific (compared with the relatively large area of Plateau Province above 3,000' the small size of and paucity of observers in the Gulu area makes the comparison a poor one). However a very loose and approximate conclusion can be reached.

Conclusion 2:
An examination of all bird species of P ateau Province above 3,000' and a small area of N.Uganda shows that very approximately 36% of all species have occured in both areas.

Conclusion 1 is obviously the most important and most accurate one, although Conclusion 2 is useful as two zones (a) Outcrops; (b) Open water, have no counterpart in the Uganda area.

SECTION 5: Discussion.

As would be expected the greatest correlation is shown by species delegated to Zone E (78%), as all these species are either transequatorial migrants, or at least intra African migrants, or else are species which have large territones or distribute themselves according to weather conditions.

Section 5: contd.

The lack of any correlation whatsoever between species utilising Zone B is interesting. The absence of the Little Swift or indeed any similar swift from Gulu is puzzling when climatically the areas are so similar. Is this and related species specific upon a group of insects for food, which in turn are specific upon vegetation or even open water absent from Gulu ? Has the Little Swift, as postulated for the White-crowned Cliff-chat (Thamnolea coronata) only recently colonised buildings on the Plateau, from the nearby cliffs which are absent from Gulu ? This is almost certainly the case with another Zone B species, the Red-throated Rock martin, and perhaps even the Striped Swallow. It is well recorded that the Mosque Swallow perches on, and nests in trees, so its presence in Gulu might be expected, and certainly does not invalidate the idea of transference of favoured nest sites from cliffs to buildings.

Zone D shows a lower correlation (25%) than most other zones, and this is not surprising as the introduction shows how widely dissimilar are the two grassland types. The Rock Bunting, Larks and the Red Breasted Wheatear are all absent from Gulu, conversely the Moustached Warbler and the four Cisticola sp. are absent from Vom.

It is interesting to speculate upon the effect of man on the avifauna of the two regions. Obviously the degradation of the original Plateau vegetation is an extreme example. More especially however can any effects of European settlement - a biologically very recent phenomenon-be detected ? The correlation between species inhabiting Zone A is very high (49%). The two abundant sunbirds in Vom are the same two occuring with a similar status in Gulu, perhaps this is significant especially in so large a genus, although altitude alone may be the significant factor here.. Likewise the flycatchers. the unanswerable question arises as to whether these species are indeed distributed with some dependence on gardens or did they occur here anyway prior to European settlement ?

It is interesting to note two apparently unfilled niches in Gulu, that is, an abundant dove closely associated with Man e.g. The Senegal Dove in Vom.
- and The Barn Owl niche.

SECTION 6: References.

SMITH, V.W. HORWOOD. SHARLAND. EBBUTT, 'Checklist of Birds of Plateau Province'. N.O.S. N°3 1964. Vol.1

SMITH, V.W. WOODS.EBBUTT., - 'Breeding Notes on the White Crowned Cliff chat in C.Nigeria' Ibis Vol.108 N°1 1966.

SMITH, V.W. 'Palearctic Migrants in C.Nigeria' Ibis Vol.108 N°4 1966.

WALKINSHAW, L.H. - 'The West African Crowned Crane on the Jos Plateau'. N.O.S. Vol.3 N°9 1966.

ELGOOD, J.H. - 'Provisional Checklist of Birds of Nigeria' N.O.S. Vol.1 N°1 1964.

BANNERMAN, D.A. - 'The Birds of West and Equatorial Africa' Edinburgh, 1953.

MACKWORTH PRAED & GRANT., 'African Handbook of Birds' Series 1 Vols. 1 & 2: London 1957.

WILLIAMS, J.G. - 'The Birds of East & Central Africa' London 1963.

References: contd.

MOREAU, R.E. -'The Bird Faunas of Africa and its Islands' London & N.Y. 1966.

GOVT. PRINTER KAMPALA - An Atlas of Uganda. Kampala.

NOTES FROM IKOYI PARK, DECEMBER 1967 AND JANUARY 1968

G. Pettitt.

The following observations were made on twelve visits to the marsh adjacent to Ikoyi Park, Lagos. Visits were made in the evenings of December 8th, 13th, 17th, 19th and 27th, and of January 4th, 6th, 15th, 17th, 22nd, 25th and 30th. Nets were set in the mangrove swamps on January 4th, 15th, 17th, 22nd, 25th and 30th. I was accompanied by J.A. Button, to whom I am grateful for the initial identification of most of the Ethiopian species, on December 17th and 19th, and January 6th, and assisted in trapping by A.P. Mead on most of the ringing trips.

It is hoped to continue trapping regularly in this area for the next three years and to collect weight, moult, and retrap information on observatory lines.

Grey Heron Ardea cinerea: one or two most occasions.

Little Egret Egretta garzetta: single birds on three dates.

Green-backed Heron Butorides striatus: up to six regularly present.

Kestrel Falco tinnunculus: singly.

Black Kite Milvus migrants: up to ten often present.

Gabar Goshawk Micronisus gabar: one in my garden, west of the park, 8th December 1967.

Black Crake Limnocorax flavirostra: up to four present.

Grey Plover Squatarola squatarola: eight on 15th January 1968.

Ringed Plover Charadrius hiaticula: once only, 22nd January 1968.

Little Ringed Plover Charadrius dubius: up to twelve regular.

Forbes' Banded Plover Afroxyechus forbesi: two normally present.

Senegal Plover Stephanibyx lugubris: seven on the north Ikoyi grave-yard 9th January, 1968.

Common Sandpiper Actitis hypoleucos: up to 10 throughout the period.

Greenshank Glottis nebularius: one to four always present.