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The races of Olive Sunbird *Nectarinia olivacea* on the Gulf of Guinea islands.

Olive Sunbirds *Nectarinia olivacea* are found on two of the Gulf of Guinea islands, Bioko (formerly called Fernando Po) and Príncipe. Both populations have hitherto been referred to the race *N. o. obscura* (Jardine), regarded as endemic to the two islands, with the type described from Bioko. The subspecies on the opposite mainland is *N. o. cephaelis*, which occurs from Nigeria to Angola.

If this allocation to subspecies is correct, the Olive Sunbird is the only bird species to have a subspecies shared by and endemic to the two islands. However, examination of specimens at the British Museum (Natural History) and American Museum of Natural History suggests that Príncipe birds are more correctly assigned to the mainland race.

Four plumage types occur in all three populations (Príncipe, Bioko, mainland) which correspond with adult male, adult female, immature male and immature female, although it seems probable that the youngest males would have plumage indistinguishable from young females. Adult males have greyish-yellow underparts and bright yellow pectoral tufts; adult females have greyish-yellow underparts without tufts; immature males have brighter yellow underparts, with bright yellow pectoral tufts; immature females also have brighter yellow underparts but without pectoral tufts.

Among the adult specimens (aged as above) at BM(NH), the underparts of mainland *cephaelis* are tinged yellow-green. Bioko birds are noticeably greyer, although not pure grey but still showing a yellowish tint. The small sample of Príncipe birds appears closer to the mainland birds in underpart colour, all four having a stronger yellow tint than Bioko birds. At AMNH, specimens from the mainland and Bioko confirm the colour differences outlined above. Amadon (1953) placed the three Príncipe specimens at AMNH in *obscura*, but Macaulay, S. Keith, M. LeCroy and R. Sloss could not detect colour differences between this small sample of Príncipe birds and the Bioko and mainland populations.

Table 1. Wing measurements (mm) of populations of *Nectarinia olivacea* from coastal W Africa, Príncipe and Bioko as represented by specimens in BM(NH) and AMNH. Figures are: mean \pm SE (n) range. One Bioko "female" with wing 69 and bright pectoral tufts and one Gabon "male" with wing 56 and no pectoral tufts were omitted from the analysis as probably wrongly sexed.

	adult males	adult females
Cameroon	63.3 \pm 0.3 (35) 61-66	56.3 \pm 0.3 (22) 54-60
Gabon-Angola	63.6 \pm 0.5 (16) 60-68	57.8 \pm 0.4 (13) 55-60
Mean mainland	63.4 \pm 0.2 (51) 60-68	56.8 \pm 0.3 (35) 54-60
Príncipe	62.6 \pm 0.7 (5) 61-65	56.5 \pm 1.5 (2) 55,58
Bioko	65.9 \pm 0.3 (37) 63-70	60.7 \pm 0.6 (12) 57-64

Size differences among adult birds from the three populations are shown in Table 1. The wing lengths of Príncipe birds fall within the size range of mainland *cephaelis* and the means are not significantly different (*t*-tests, $P > 0.05$), while the Bioko population is significantly larger than both mainland birds (males, $t_{87} = 6.512$, $P < 0.001$; females, $t_{46} = 6.525$, $P < 0.001$) and Príncipe birds (males, $t_{41} = 3.792$, $P < 0.001$; females, $t_{13} = 2.654$, $P < 0.02$).

These results indicate that Príncipe birds should be regarded as part of the mainland subspecies *N. o. cephaelis*, while Bioko birds are recognizably larger and greyer and form a subspecies *N. o. obscura*, endemic to that island. It is more likely that colonization of Príncipe took place directly from the mainland rather than from Bioko, given the relative sizes of the two potential source areas and populations, so these results are not unexpected.

We thank the staff of AMNH and BM(NH), Tring, for access to specimens in their care. Dean Amadon, Humphrey Crick and Peter Jones provided useful comments on a draft and Humph re-assumed his old Editor's mantle to ensure impartiality in the referee process.

References

- Amadon, D. (1953) Avian systematics and evolution in the Gulf of Guinea. *Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.* 100: 393-452.

Received 20 July 1992

Revised 3 September 1992

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Book Reviews

Conservación de los Ecosistemas Forestales de Guinea Ecuatorial. By John E. Fa, 1991. 221 pp. IUCN, Gland. ISBN 2-88032-993-0. Paperback £10 from IUCN, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge, UK.

This is another in the IUCN Tropical Forest Programme series on West African countries (see reviews of others in previous issues of *Malimbus*). Written entirely in Spanish, it deals with one of the least-known and least-developed states in the region, 50% of whose export revenue comes from timber. The book reports strong pressure to increase timber extraction, which is regarded by the authorities as the only way to rehabilitate their country. This depressingly familiar attitude has led to enormous