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Short Notes

Yellow-billed Egret *Egretta intermedia* on the coast of Cameroon

On 20 Feb 1993, on the small lagoon behind Six-mile Beach, Limbe, excellent close views were obtained of a single Yellow-billed Egret *Egretta intermedia*, feeding often only 1-2 m from a Great White Egret *E. alba*, the striking difference in size and appearance being immediately obvious. This species was, until recently, known in Cameroon only from L. Chad (Louette 1981), but it has since been found on the Rio del Rey estuary by Green (in press) and in the Benue Valley by Girard *et al.* (in press).

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Historical records of birds from the Republic of Benin

A recent list of birds from the Republic of Benin (Dowsett 1993) omitted reference to some of the earliest publications on the ornithology of that country, formerly known as Dahomey. One of these early papers documented species, listed below, which should be added to the list for the country.

Francisco Newton collected specimens of 16 species which were deposited in the Lisbon Museum and documented by Sousa (1887). This collection contained little very unusual material but a second collection of Newton's, described by Bocage (1892), added a further 13 species including *Charadrius* ("Aegialitis") *tricoloris*. This bird, a male, was probably a Forbes's Plover *C. forbesi*, which taxon was only described by Shelley in 1883 and was sometimes treated as a subspecies of the Three-banded Plover *C. tricoloris* (e.g. by Sclater 1924). *C. tricoloris* is however also possible as it has been recorded in neighbouring Nigeria (Elgood *et al.* 1994). Unfortunately, the identity of the specimen cannot be checked as all the collections in the Bocage Museum, Lisbon, were destroyed by fire in 1978 (C. Almacá *in litt.*). Neither species is included by Dowsett (1993).

Bouet (1914) recorded 141 species from Benin, of which four were omitted by Dowsett (1993), namely Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca*, Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*, White-backed Duck *Thalassornis leuconota* and Zebra Waxbill *Aman-dava subflava*. Bouet also recorded two other species absent from Dowsett's list: Violet-tailed Sunbird *Anthreptes aurantium* which, like the record of *A. aurantium* in Nigeria (Elgood *et al.* 1994) was probably a mis-identification for Violet-backed Sunbird *A. longuemarei*, and Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus*. Records for the latter were based on hearsay regarding the species' presence, albeit rare, in forests north of Sakété (6°43'N, 2°40'E) and on captive specimens said to be from that region. In a later publication, Bouet (1955) did not mention the record of the White-backed Duck, but the original paper gave no hint of any doubts, when referring to the duck as rare and seen on the banks of the R. Niger at Bodjécali (11°53'N, 3°27'E). As the R. Niger forms the border with the Niger Republic at this site, *T. leuconota* should, perhaps, also be added to the list for Niger. It was not included by Giraudoux *et al.* (1988).

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