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habitat is stony grassland with low bushes. We were familiar with the species in Syria. As we had only recently taken up our new assignment in Ghana, we merely noted the observation.

Subsequently, on 27 July 1997, we saw Temminck's Courser *C. temminckii* along a track which runs in a northerly direction parallel to the Kpeshie Lagoon just at the eastern outskirts of Accra. We noted a clear difference between that species and the birds seen in May 1996, *i.e.* the chestnut cap. We only realized the significance of the May observation at a much later date, when we found that Grimes (1987) does not list the species for Ghana, while in Urban *et al.* (1986) Ghana is not included in the distribution area of the species. Similarly, Hayman *et al.* (1986) indicate a southern limit to the West African range of Cream-coloured Courser somewhat north of Ghana. Elgood *et al.* (1994) report it in northern Nigeria.

This, therefore, appears to be the first record of Cream-coloured Courser in Ghana. However, the migratory habits of the species, particularly Mediterranean populations, make such an occurrence relatively unsurprising.

We should like to thank Guy Manners for his inspiring bird-watching support in Syria and for critically reading the manuscript.

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First records of Xavier's Greenbul *Phyllastrephus xavieri* in Nigeria

On 13 December 1997, while walking along an old logging track in Cross River National Park, Oban Division, Nigeria (5°47'N, 8°26'E) our attention was drawn by nasal calls coming from members of a mixed bird party, at a height of about 10–15 m. Two birds responded immediately to playback by approaching and calling excitedly.

They were bulbuls and differed strikingly in size: whereas the larger bird appeared to be close in size to Golden Bulbul *Calyptocichla serina*, the second was noticeably smaller and similar in size and appearance to Icterine Greenbul *Phyllastrephus icterinus*. Their upperparts were uniformly olive-green, their underparts drab yellowish washed olive-green on the breast and flanks, with the pale throat contrasting with the breast. The tail was olive-green, only slightly washed with rufous. Differences with *P. icterinus*, which also occurred at the site, included the larger size of one individual and the less rufous tail (noticeable when the birds came into a more well-lit spot). These characters pointed to Xavier's Greenbul *P. xavieri*. Although Dowsett-Lemaire (1997) found the bill to be conspicuously longer in *P. xavieri* than in *P. icterinus* and considered this the best field character, apart from voice, to distinguish between them, we failed to find this a striking feature; perhaps it requires more experience to be useful as a field mark. The greenish tail came as a surprise to RD, who had recently observed both species in Makokou, Gabon, and had not noticed any significant difference in tail colour. Brosset & Erard (1986), however, state that Xavier's indeed has less rufous rectrices, noticeable when both are seen together. The difference in voice was most significant. Calls included a short nasal "kwah, kwah, kwah,... kwahkwah..." and a more drawn-out, squeaky "kweh" and "keh". Both calls were uttered in shorter or longer series of either similar or combined notes ("kwah-keh") and were quite different from the "fast, nasal chatter, slowing down at the end" (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1991), typical of *P. icterinus*. The tape-recording proved identical to the recording of what is erroneously presented as *P. icterinus* by Chappuis (1975) but which has recently been shown to be of *P. xavieri* (Dowsett-Lemaire 1997). Vocalisations of *P. icterinus* can be found at the end of Chappuis's (1975) second sequence of *P. albigularis*. About 1 km further into the forest another pair was encountered, also in a mixed flock.

This record appears to be the first documented for Nigeria (Elgood *et al.* 1994). The presence of the species in the area is not surprising, however, considering its occurrence in the same forest block, in Korup National Park on the other side of the nearby border with Cameroon, where it is uncommon in primary and secondary forest (Rodewald *et al.* 1994). The species had already been observed in SE Nigeria, in Oban near the Ebe River, on 9–12 April 1988, and near Awai, on 13–15 April 1988, by F. Dowsett-Lemaire and R.J. Dowsett (*in litt.*), but their reliance on Chappuis's (1975) recording led to the birds being misidentified as *P. icterinus*. As presently known, Cross River N.P. thus holds the westernmost population of the species.

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First documented records of Green-throated Sunbird *Nectarinia rubescens* for Nigeria, with a discussion of the distinctive race *crossensis*

On the evening of 4 July 1995, MTEH observed a sunbird perched on a treetop in the middle of the village of Buru in Taraba State, Nigeria (7°1'N 10°53'E). Buru is situated in an area of relict forest and derived savanna whose annual precipitation (2563 mm at Abong, 15 km west of Buru: Bawden & Tuley 1966) is due to orographic rainfall generated by the Mambilla Plateau, a few kilometres to the east. On its southern flank, the village abuts directly onto the forest; in other directions it is surrounded by derived savanna. Though the sunbird was over 50 m away, a 30 × 80 telescope permitted adequate views in the last rays of sunlight. In its warm, chocolate-brown coloration it closely resembled a male Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Nectarinia senegalensis* or Buff-throated Sunbird *N. adelberti*. Like *N. senegalensis*, it had an