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What was Boyd Alexander's Bioko vulture?

The recent exchange between Moore (2000) and Pérez del Val (1996, 2000) seems to have missed two key points which would, I believe, have led them to a decisive conclusion as to the identity of the supposed White-backed Vulture *Pseudogyps africanus* collected by Alexander (1903) on the island of Bioko. An important principle for such records is that they should not be admitted to regional lists unless fully proven.

The Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis* is common and widespread on Bioko (Pérez del Val 1996) and has been so throughout the 20th century (Amadon 1953, Basilio 1963). Most inhabitants were said to consider the brown juvenile as a different species from the pied adult (Basilio 1963). Alexander (1903), however, failed to see it, but determined a vulture specimen to be an adult female White-backed Vulture which, he said, was “locally distributed along the coast-line” and “much prized for food”. This species has never since been reported on the island, nor Alexander's field notes corroborated. Yet the species should be well-known if these statements are correct, and could never, *pace* Moore (2000), be considered a “vagrant”.

More telling is that White-backed Vultures have not been recorded as flying across water anywhere in Africa, and Bioko is 32 km from the mainland. Their manner of flight may simply not permit them to reach the island.

It seems clear that Alexander made an error in identification. Alexander (1900) similarly saw 100 supposed Egyptian Vultures *Neophron percnopterus* “on migration ... at great altitude” at the Zambezi River. I and others are sure these were White

Storks *Ciconia ciconia* (Mundy 1978). Early explorers were by no means infallible in their identifications.

What then did Alexander have as his Bioko specimen? Probably it was simply an immature Palm-nut Vulture. Although vagrant White-backed Vultures occur in odd places (e.g. Brosset & Erard 1977), but on the mainland, the whole tenor of Alexander's remarks is that the species was fairly common on Bioko. This cannot refer to White-backed Vulture, which should be removed from the Bioko (and Equatorial Guinea) list.

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Correspondence on this matter is now closed. (Ed.)

First breeding record of Hadada *Bostrychia hagedash* from Senegal

On 5 August 2000, a nest containing two nestling Hadada *Bostrychia hagedash*, was discovered in a holiday resort at Saly Portudal on the Atlantic coast of Senegal, northwest of Mbour, Thiès Region (coordinates of the nest: 14°26.40'N, 17°0.75'W).

The nest, made of sticks, was rather loosely built on a forked branch of a eucalyptus *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* tree, at a height of c. 10 m. The tree was part of a stand of eucalyptus planted between the apartments of the hotel. The nest was small, diameter c. 50 cm, with some longer sticks supporting the base (Fig. 1). The nestlings