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Short Notes — Notes Courtes

First records of Didric Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius* parasitizing Cricket Warbler *Spiloptila clamans*

On 6 Nov 2002, whilst carrying out bird survey work in *Acacia* woodland near Alagarno (13°9'N, 13°33'E), Borno State, Nigeria, our attention was drawn to a pair of Cricket Warblers *Spiloptila clamans* repeatedly alarm-calling. A recently fledged Didric Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius* was located close to the warblers, and soon both individuals began feeding the cuckoo. The juvenile cuckoo's lack of white in the outer tail and indistinct whitish eye-stripe in front and behind the eye excluded Klaas's Cuckoo *C. klaas*. The observations were also north of the latter species' expected range. On 8 Nov 2002, a second recently fledged Didric Cuckoo was observed being fed by a pair of Cricket Warblers at a site approximately 15 km NE of the first. In both cases the juvenile cuckoos appeared to have fledged very recently, with flight appearing cumbersome and awkward. The cuckoos were observed being fed only by the Cricket Warbler pairs, and begging responses did not appear to be stimulated by the proximity of other birds (Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida*, Black Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas podobe*, Speckle-fronted Weaver *Sporopipes frontalis*). It therefore seems likely that the Cricket Warblers were the foster parents. These appear to be the first observations of Didric Cuckoo parasitizing Cricket Warbler. In Nigeria the main hosts of Didric Cuckoo are Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus* and Black-necked Weaver *P. nigricollis* (Elgood *et al.* 1994). Fry *et al.* (1988) also give *Ploceus* species as the main hosts and list several others known, although the only warblers included are Chestnut-vented Tit-Babbler *Parisoma subcaeruleum*, Rattling Cisticola *Cisticola chiniana* and Spotted Prinia *Prinia maculosa*.

Didric Cuckoo is a relatively common rains migrant in N Nigeria, breeding north to the Sahel and Sudan zones during Jul–Oct (Elgood *et al.* 1994). The first nests of Cricket Warbler in Nigeria have only recently been found (pers. obs.) but the species is a common resident in the Sahel and northern Sudan zones of the country (Elgood *et al.* 1994) and recent observations suggest breeding occurs at least Oct–Nov and Mar–Apr (pers. obs.). Doubt has been expressed over the veracity of several reported Didric Cuckoo hosts, particularly sunbirds building enclosed nests with side entrance (Fry *et al.* 1988). All Cricket Warbler nests observed in Nigeria have been domed with side entrances (pers. obs.), though elsewhere its nests have been described as variable, with both domed or partly domed known (Urban *et al.* 1997).

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On the occurrence of the Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* in Nigeria

Both Brown *et al.* (1982) and Dowsett & Forbes-Watson (1993) class the Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* as a scarce winterer in West Africa, a conclusion that remained valid even considering the rather large number of observations published by Walsh (1991). Recently, its status has been discussed further, mainly about whether it should formally be regarded as a vagrant or rare migrant (Salewski *et al.* 2000, Walsh 2002), rather than a regular winter visitor. In that context we add some observations of Black Storks made in northern Nigeria during the last decade, by Philip Hall and by people working on the Lake Chad Bird Migration Project and at the Leventis Ornithological Research Institute near Jos.

Elgood *et al.* (1994) give the status of Black Stork in Nigeria as an uncommon Palaearctic migrant recorded between November and April, from Lake Chad south to the Benue River in the east and the Kainji National Park in the west. The maximum number mentioned was 30, seen in the Hadeija wetlands east of Kano. Our observations are as follows: Dagona1 (2°45'N, 10°35'E), four, 22 Jan 1993; Doguntshugu, L. Chad (13°22'N, 13°30'E), one, 23 Feb 2002; Falgore GR (10°50'N, 8°40'E), six, 4 Dec 2002; W of Maiduguri (11°49'N, 13°09'E), 20, 22 Oct 2001; Vom (9°42'N, 8°45'E), one, 7 Dec 2001; Yankari NP (9°45'N, 10°30'E), 20, 21 Mar 1999; and multiple observations in Sambisa GR (11°40'N, 14°20'E): three, 20 Jan 1993; two, 20 Jan 1997; 35, 11 Nov 2000; five, 9 Nov 2001; four, 28 Jan 2002; three, 25 Feb 2002; five, 8 Nov 2002.

It thus seems that Yankari, from which there are several older records (Walsh 1991, Elgood *et al.* 1994), and Sambisa hold small regular wintering populations of Black Stork. Both are protected reserves with intact riverine gallery forest, which was suggested by Walsh (1991) to be the preferred habitat. Yankari lies within the