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We watched the bird at a distance of about 100 m for about 1 h 15 min., using telescopes. During that time the bird rested, sometimes with its head in its feathers, sometimes sitting. It also cleaned itself, took short walks now and then, and stretched its wings. Drawings and photographs were made (Fig. 1).

Previous records of Franklin's Gull in Africa include two records at Beira, Mozambique, and four on the South African coast, plus the following W African records: one paired with a Grey-headed Gull and nesting in the Saloum Delta, Senegal, May 1983; one at Bund Road, Banjul, 1984; a first-winter bird at Ile de Gorée, Senegal, Jan 1986; an adult in the Siné-Saloum NP, Senegal, Apr 1986; an adult at Hann, Senegal, Dec 1988; a first-winter at Hann, Feb 1991 (Urban *et al.* 1986, Baillon & Dubois 1992). It seems that Franklin's Gull is a not uncommon vagrant to Senegambia.

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A major range extension of Locust Finch *Ortygospiza locustella* in West Africa

The Locust Finch *Ortygospiza locustella* has two distinct sub-species with the nominate in southern Africa and *uelliensis* with a scattered distribution in east and central Africa. It was only recently found in W Africa, with 20 seen near the Benoué National Park in 1998 (S. de Kort pers. comm.) and in the extreme south of Cameroon (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 2000), probably part of the Congo Basin population. However, on 27 Oct 2002, a pair with three fledged young was found at Rockwater Fish Farm, Jos, on the Jos Plateau in central Nigeria (9°53'N, 8°52'E).

The birds appeared to be of the race *uelliensis*, the male showing a plain dark greyish back with no white spots, flanks plain charcoal grey with no white barring, upper breast, neck, ear coverts, lores and supercilium bright orange-red, and rump and wings similarly reddish. The female showed red only on wings and rump, pale fawn

(rather than black) underparts, no white spotting on the back, and a small amount of diffuse barring on the flanks (considerably less prominent than that illustrated for the nominate race in either Clement *et al.* 1994 or Borrow & Demey 2001). The dark greyish on the head was browner than in the male and extended down onto the lores and ear coverts. The pale yellowish eye was very prominent in both sexes (eliminating other *Ortygospiza* spp.) as was the two-toned bill: blackish upper mandible and red lower mandible. The legs were whitish pink. The birds were distinctively very small and squat, with prominent bulging lores that gave the head a blunt appearance, even in flight. They flew with very rapid wing beats in shallow bounding flight, often giving a distinct *tinka-tinka-tinka...* call, quieter and softer than the harsh metallic calls most often given by Quail Finch. This call was extremely helpful in locating and identifying birds as Locust Finch.

A return visit to the same site on 30 Oct revealed a second pair still lining their nest, which was domed, made entirely of fine grasses, sparsely lined with feathers (mostly white feathers, probably from Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*) and 10 cm above the ground. The habitat was very disturbed damp grassland on the edge of a fish farm. Nearby was a small market garden and harvested millet and maize fields. The area was heavily disturbed daily, as people moved through with livestock. The nest was in a patch of rushes on the edge of a shallow ditch that was used to move water between the fishponds. During the nesting period the ground below the nest became slowly wetter but water never reached the nest. On 30 Oct, it contained two eggs. On 8 Nov there were four eggs, being brooded by the female. The female was brooding on 2, 5, 11 and 22 Nov and the male on 15 and 18 Nov. Four chicks were first recorded on 18 Nov, when they were estimated to be about 3–4 days old. This suggested that incubation lasted from 1 November and that hatching was synchronous. As most small passerines begin incubation at the end of egg laying (Perrins & Birkhead 1983), we assumed that brooding began on 1 or 2 Nov. As the chicks were 3–4 days old on 18 Nov, we estimate that incubation took 13–15 days: normal for a small passerine (Perrins & Birkhead 1983). Both adults were seen feeding the chicks on several occasions. The nestlings were ringed on 27 Nov when their feathers were still in pin but close to emerging. On 2 Dec the flight feathers were approximately half grown and on 9 Dec the chicks had fledged.

During this period, what was possibly another pair was noted about 100 m from the first nest, but no nest could be found in the dense, rank grass. On 18 Dec a flock of 15 Locust Finches was seen at the same site.

These are the first records of this species for Nigeria and represent a major extension of range. It is known to wander widely within its breeding range (Clement *et al.* 1994) and the occurrence of a flock of 25 in W Kenya (Stevenson, 1992) clearly shows that it wanders out of its normal breeding range. However, Clement *et al.* (1994) state that these movements are temporary and birds return to their normal breeding areas at the onset of the rains. While Aspinwall (1982) suggests that Locust Finches only move very locally within their range, the occurrence of birds in Kenya

(Stevenson 1992) demonstrates that they sometimes undertake wider extra-limital movements. This new record being of breeding birds suggests that it is a genuine range extension rather than a case of vagrancy. The site has been popular with birdwatchers since the 1970s, has been visited at least annually by birdwatchers since then, and since 2001 has received much more attention by staff and students of the A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute. Consequently it seems unlikely that the species remained undetected for very long at this site. However, African Quailfinch *O. atricollis* and Zebra Waxbill *Amandava subflava* are common there, so Locust Finch may have been overlooked. All three are highly terrestrial species and therefore difficult to see except in flight. We initially spotted a male on the ground in the open with fledglings. Further survey, including by calls, is recommended. The site is now managed by ECWA (Evangelical Church of W Africa) Rural Development, so it is ~~likely~~ hoped that the wet grassland habitat of the Locust Finches will be maintained.

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A high altitude sighting of the São Tomé Short-tail *Amaurocichla bocagei*

São Tomé in the Gulf of Guinea is well known for its endemic, restricted range, bird fauna (Peet & Atkinson 1994), and it has been recognised by Fishpool & Evans (2001) as an Important Bird Area. Eleven species of breeding land birds are listed by