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A COLOUR VARIANT OF SPREO PULCHER AT KANO, NIGERIA - During the course of an intensive study of the biology of the Chestnut-bellied starling *Spreo pulcher* at Kano I observed a number of very pale coloured individuals which are described below. The normal plumages of adult and juvenile Chestnut-bellied Starlings are fully described by Bannerman (1948) and I am familiar with these. In adult plumage the pale variant differs from the normal in that those feathers which are normally dark glossy green are instead a dirty fawn glossed with silver, the normally dark brown areas of the remiges are diluted to a dull steel grey (and show considerably more evidence of wear than in normal plumage) and the belly is a pale cinnamon-orange rather than chestnut. Such pale variants are not represented in the skin collection of the British Museum (Natural History) and to my knowledge have not previously been recorded.

One pale variant was observed at the Agricultural Department Farm, some 8 kilometres east of Bayero University, but all other sightings were of starlings on the University campus. In January 1980 at least four of the pale birds, all of which belonged to the same social group, whose focal area centred around the staff school, were present on the campus. The Chestnut-bellied Starling is a cooperative breeder with birds other than the parents helping to feed the nestlings (Wilkinson *Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc.* 14, 1978, 71-72) and at least three pale variants and four normal plumaged birds were associated with one nest of this group in April 1980. A single nestling which had been colour-ringed at a different nest of the same social group in October 1979 proved to be a pale variant which in juvenile plumage was already recognisable by its generally pale colouration. The percentage of this nestling was unknown but a nest in the same bush in June 1980, where both parents were of normal colouration, produced a mixed brood of pale and normal coloured chicks. Of three birds known to fledge from this brood of five nestlings, two were of normal plumage and one a pale variant. No pale variants fledged from nests of this group in 1981 and by July 1981 all pale birds had disappeared from the study area.

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SPANISH BLACK KITES IN WEST AFRICA - Recent notification of ringing and recovery data indicates that some Black Kites *Milvus migrans* reared in Spain evidently winter as far east in West Africa as Ghana. Details are:

- DE 08949 14/06/1972 (pullus), Reserva Biológica Doñana, Spain 37°02'N 03°27'W  
-/11/1973, Agbenchoe, Ghana 07°00'N 00°25'E (road casualty)
- MD 14782 22/06/1977 (pullus), Pescueza, Cáceres, Spain 39°54'N 06°39'W  
07/12/1977, Bolgatanga, Ghana 10°44'N 00°53'W (caught alive)
- MD 12641 25/06/1977 (pullus), Nava del Rey, Valladolid, Spain 41°19'N 05°05'W  
15/01/1979, Tamale, Ghana 09°26'N 00°49'W (shot)

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