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RECENT OBSERVATIONS OF BIRDS IN W NATIONAL PARK (NIGER)

by B. Shull, M. Grettenberger and J. Newby

Received 10 February 1986

Since the publication, in 1983, by Koster and Grettenberger of a survey* of the birds of Niger's sector of W National Park (Malimbus 5: 62-72), a considerable amount of new data has come to light. The present authors have identified a further 25 species (Appendix I), bringing the grand total for the park to 308. Amongst the sightings, that of the Finfoot (Podica senegalensis: Heliornithidae) brings a new family to the park's avifauna. We also include here additional month records for a further 101 species (Appendix II).

We should like to take this opportunity of stressing our concern for the future of W National Park, and in particular of its unique gallery forest habitats, which are so important for many of the park's breeding birds. W National Park encloses Niger's last remaining stands of forest of any importance and they are today threatened by the construction of dams on both the Niger and Mekrou rivers. The latter project, if implemented, would guarantee the destruction of most of W's remaining gallery forest. Habitats on the park's other main watercourse, the Tapoa river, are also threatened by the exploitation of phosphates lying nearby. Both dam and phosphate projects are progressing and unless pressure is brought to bear on the government and the projects' financiers (World Bank, United States Agency for International Development amongst others) the 'heart' of the park will be irrevocably destroyed.

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APPENDIX I: NEW BIRD SPECIES FOR W NATIONAL PARK (NIGER)

	<u>Months</u>		<u>Months</u>
Flegadis falcinellus	Mar	Apus apus	Aug
Aegypius tracheliotus	Aug Nov (breeding)	Apus caffer	Oct Nov
Gyps fulvus	Nov	Merops superciliosus	Mar
Neophron percnopterus	Jan Mar	Mirafraga nigricans	Oct
Hieraaetus africanus	June July Sept	Eremopterix nigriceps	Oct Nov Dec
Pernis apivorus	Jan Feb May	Delichon urbica	Oct
Pandion haliaetus	Jan Nov	Lanius excubitor	Feb
Podica senegalensis	Aug Oct	Lanius senator	Nov
Sterna nilotica	Mar Apr	Spreo pulcher	Dec
Sterna caspia	Mar	Malimbus nitens	Aug
Clamator glandarius	Nov	Quelea erythrops	June Sept
Ceuthmochares aereus	Apr May	Euplectes afer	Dec
		Lonchura cucullata	Dec

* Errata

Cursorius temminckii: transpose to follow C. chalcopterus and add Nov (Tapoa R.).

Caprimulgus climacurus: replace July with June and Feb with Jan.

Plocepasser superciliosus: add Mekrou R. and Woodland.

APPENDIX II: NEW MONTH RECORDS FOR W NATIONAL PARK

	<u>Months</u>		<u>Months</u>
<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>	Mar	<i>Caprimulgus inornatus</i>	Mar
<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>	July Aug	<i>Macrodipteryx longipennis</i>	Dec
<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	May July Aug	<i>Apus affinis</i>	July
<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	Feb Mar July	<i>Phoeniculus aterrimus</i>	Oct Nov Dec
<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	Feb Apr	<i>Merops nubicus</i>	Aug Sept
<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Aug	<i>Merops albicollis</i>	Sept Oct
<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	July Aug	<i>Merops pusillus</i>	June Nov
<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>	May	<i>Lybius dubius</i>	Mar Apr May
<i>Ciconia abdimii</i>	Aug Oct	<i>Indicator minor</i>	Nov
<i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>	Nov-Jan(nesting)	<i>Eremopterix leucotis</i>	Apr
<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	Apr	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Dec
<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>	Jan Feb	<i>Muscicapa cassini</i>	Aug
<i>Nettion auritus</i>	June Sept	<i>Batis senegalensis</i>	Apr
<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Jan Nov	<i>Platysteira cyanea</i>	Oct
<i>Falco chiquera</i>	Feb Dec	<i>Trochocercus longicauda</i>	June
<i>Hieraetus spilogaster</i>	Apr Dec	<i>Genanthe hispanica</i>	Oct Nov Dec Mar
<i>Aquila rapax</i>	July Oct Nov	<i>Myrmecocichla aethiops</i>	Apr
<i>Aquila wahlbergi</i>	July	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>	Dec
<i>Elanus riocourii</i>	Jan Dec	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	Mar
<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	Feb Mar	<i>Cercotrichas podobe</i>	Apr Aug
<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>	May Oct	<i>Turdus pelios</i>	June Aug Dec
<i>Butastur rufipennis</i>	Jan	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	Dec
<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	Apr	<i>Cisticola cantans</i>	Feb Sept
<i>Circaetus cinereus</i>	Apr May Oct Dec	<i>Sylvietta brachyura</i>	Oct Dec
<i>Melierax metabates</i>	Nov Dec	<i>Hypergerus atriceps</i>	Nov
<i>Terathopus ecaudatus</i>	Feb (breeding)	<i>Prinia subflava</i>	Mar Apr June
<i>Polyboroides radiatus</i>	Nov Dec Mar Apr		Oct Nov Dec
<i>Circus macrourus</i>	Oct Nov Dec	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Oct
<i>Gallinula angulata</i>	Nov	<i>Hirundo leucosoma</i>	Nov
<i>Balearica pavonica</i>	Apr	<i>Hirundo senegalensis</i>	Mar July
<i>Otis arabs</i>	Nov	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>	Feb Oct Dec
<i>Eupodotis senegalensis</i>	Mar	<i>Dryoscopus gambensis</i>	Oct
<i>Burhinus senegalensis</i>	Aug	<i>Camephaga phoenicea</i>	Sept
<i>Burhinus vermiculatus</i>	May	<i>Parus leucomelas</i>	July
<i>Burhinus capensis</i>	Apr	<i>Corvus albus</i>	Apr
<i>Vanellus spinosus</i>	June Oct	<i>Ptilostomus afer</i>	Apr
<i>Vanellus tectus</i>	Oct	<i>Lamprotornis purpureus</i>	June
<i>Vanellus albiceps</i>	Oct	<i>Nectarinia cuprea</i>	Jan
<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Mar Nov	<i>Nectarinia senegalensis</i>	Apr Sept
<i>Tringa hypoleucos</i>	Aug	<i>Anthreptes platura</i>	Oct
<i>Tringa glareola</i>	Jan Dec	<i>Emberiza flaviventris</i>	Dec
<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Feb Nov	<i>Emberiza forbesi</i>	May
<i>Glareola cinerea</i>	Apr	<i>Ploceus luteolus</i>	Oct May
<i>Larus cirrhocephalus</i>	Apr May June	<i>Ploceus heuglini</i>	Aug
<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	Mar	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>	May
<i>Rhynchops flavirostris</i>	Mar	<i>Vidua funerea</i>	Mar
<i>Pterocles exustus</i>	June	<i>Vidua macroura</i>	Aug
<i>Streptopelia roseogrisea</i>	Aug Oct	<i>Vidua orientalis</i>	Feb Aug
<i>Clamator levaiillanti</i>	Aug	<i>Vidua chalybeata</i>	Jun Aug Oct Dec
<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Apr	<i>Quelea quelea</i>	Feb Mar Oct
<i>Centropus senegalensis</i>	Nov	<i>Pytilia melba</i>	Oct