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Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest
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AN INEXPENSIVE TELEPHOTO AND CLOSE-UP UNIT FOR BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY

R. B. Walker

Partly as a result of experience in photographing birds in the field and in the hand on a recent University expedition to Lake Chad, it was recommended that money allocated to the purchase of a single expensive laboratory camera be utilised for the purchase of two inexpensive single lens reflex camera bodies, a 450 mm. telephoto lens, two 50 mm standard lenses, close-up rings, microscope attachment, tripod and lightmeter. This equipment has been purchased and tried in the field; because it is highly versatile and not entirely outside the pocket of an enthusiast, and because of the huge potentialities of photography to the naturalist in Nigeria, it may be valuable to communicate the facts.

Equipment purchased with current London prices (prices abstracted from photographic journals for March and April 1964) :

	£
450 mm telephoto lens; f8 Soligor (Japanese)	29 17 0
Praktica 35 mm camera body (Eastern Germany)	
Meritar F 2.9 lens 50 mm, single lens reflex body with roller shutter blind	39 16 6
Praktica 35 mm camera body with Tessar lens F 2.8 50 mm	49 19 6
Leather Ever-ready camera cases, two	8 2 6
Set of 3 extension tubes for close-up work (Pentax)	4 14 0
Pentax extension bellows set for varied macro work	10 2 3
Cable release	6 8
Weston V Exposure Meter	9 4 11
Linhoff tripod S 79 (aluminium)	12 19 6
Ball-and-socket head	2 16 8
Locally-purchased fibre suitcase hold-all	17 6

Notes on the practical use of the equipment

Single-lens reflex cameras have a number of advantages, viz. no parallax at close range; unnecessary to measure distance of subject from lens; guarantee framing and focus with every picture; depth of field calculable by stopping down the lens and making a visual check; complete interchangeability of lenses; ability to utilise close-up rings or a bellows attachment for close-ups. In addition there are several advantages in laboratory work, e.g. in photomicrography. The Praktica incorporates all these advantages at a reasonable cost, the only disadvantage being that there is no incorporated delayed time release mechanism.

An electronic flash was felt to be essential for night photography and work in caves and indoors, and we chose the Mecablitz 502. This can be recharged from the mains and will give 200 flashes at full output or 400 flashes at reduced output. A practical aperture calculator and two signal lamps, one showing that the flashgun is ready for the next flash and another indicating whether on full or half output are incorporated. Using Agfa C.T. 18 the flash apparatus covers a distance of 105 feet.

In practice the equipment works well. The twin camera bodies enable black-and-white and colour to be used on the same subject with a single lens. The telephoto gives a brilliant image, and is equal to any of the lenses in the higher price range. This long lens gives an image roughly equal to that of a 7 x 50 binocular at full range, and by the addition of close-up rings between the camera and the lens allows close-up work at a safe distance (not too near the subject). The Linhoff tripod is a multi-purpose instrument; by removing the pillar from its socket in the tripod and attaching it to the long lens it can be set back at a convenient angle and used as a rifle-butt camera support which is excellent for photographing birds in flight, or birds on a shore-line continually on the move. The alloy tube is gripped under the right arm and the camera pulled into the face, thus giving an extra-firm grip not normally achieved with the ordinary gun-butt camera support.

Close-up facilities

For long exposures or close-up work on the ground the tripod pillar can be reversed so as to suspend the camera under the tripod a few inches above the ground. This is an essential facility (though most tripods do not provide it) for photographing nests, eggs etc. on a time exposure. Minute details of plumage, nest construction and materials etc. can be photographed either by using the long lens with extension tubes if the subject is inaccessible, or using the close-up rings and standard lens if the subject is within range.

Using one of the cameras mounted on the tripod and extension tube No. 1, a bird about 7" long can be held and photographed to fill the frame. A camera set at one metre with the same tube and lens will give adequate details of the head, eye colour etc.

A review of some recent equipment

Some of the following equipment may be of use to those contemplating the purchase of new equipment or adding to their range of lenses in order to increase their photographic scope in the field.

Telephoto lenses. During the last few years the lenses produced by Japanese manufacturers have improved in quality to such an extent that they are now considered to be amongst the finest in the world; Canon are an example. Telephoto lenses are now available at a fraction of their original prices as made by the Germans and a lens of 450 mm. which would have cost in the region of £150 at the lowest, now has a Japanese counterpart costing around £30. Here are a few examples of inexpensive Japanese Tele. units :

	£
Tamaron 400 mm to fit Edixa, Praktica, Exakta, Pentax, Yashica (all of these cameras have interchangeable lenses and a single lens reflex system)	19 9 0
Tamaron 135/225 mm with adaptors for Exakta, Minolta, or any of the above cameras (Both from Paul Frazer's, 24 Oxford St.)	19 9 0
Soligor 35 mm wide-angle lens	15 19 0
" 180 mm tele.	26 19 0
" 450 mm tele.	29 17 0
(From Wallace Heaton Ltd., 127 New Bond St., W.1)	

Micro TM 11 lens unit for single lens reflex cameras; 1,000 mm Zoom; goes through 400, 600, 800 & 1,000 mm. A monocular unit, only a few inches long. *	22 11 6
Extension bellows. To fit Pentax, Edixa, Praktica, Pentacon & Yashica cameras *	4 19 6
Set of 3 extension tubes for close-up with telephoto or standard lenses *	1 5 0
25 ft. extension cable release *	1 8 6
A new close-up flash unit which will illuminate the interior of nest holes as well as any other close-up subject which would normally be impossible to photograph due to the field being blocked by the proximity of the subject to the lens (or there being no room for both flash unit and camera side by side in a small space) is the Minicam Ringflash for A.C. & battery. 1/300th sec. f flash duration. The flash tube is circular and fits closely around the lens unit .	
	25 9 3

BIRD RINGING IN NIGERIA AND GHANA, 1963

Sixth Annual Report

R.E. Sharland

Improved catching methods and the discovery of a large wagtail roost near Vom resulted in an increase of over 100% in birds ringed in 1963. The roost at Vom seems to hold considerably more wagtails than the Kano roost holds at its peak. Six hundred and seventy-four birds were ringed in six evenings during the period 16th November to 24th December, yet not one was recaptured. At the same time in Kano one thousand one hundred and twenty-seven wagtails were ringed, 49 of which were recaptured. Vic Smith's ringing team in Vom averaged 112 birds per evening whereas my team in Kano averaged just over 50. The Vom roost is an attractive marsh in a Forest Reserve whereas the Kano one is a rather insalubrious borrow-pit partly surrounded by houses.

Considerably more and a greater variety of warblers and other passerines were ringed in Kano, Vom, Ife in Western Nigeria by Mr Ludlow and Tafo in Ghana by Mr Donald. Most of the ringing was done in the autumn as in previous years, but I left some nets up in a borrow-pit in Kano throughout April and caught several Reed and Sedge Warblers Acrocephalus scirpaceus and schoenobaenus, and 2 Great Reed Warblers A. arundinaceus. Other interesting captures were a Blackcap Sylvia atricapilla by Mr Ludlow at Ife and a Nightingale Luscinia megarhynchos by Vic Smith at Vom.

One notable recapture was a Grey-backed Camaroptera Camaroptera brevicaudata ringed in Vom on 20th September 1961 and recaptured there on 18th October 1963.

The only recovery from abroad during the year was a Yellow Wagtail