



West African Ornithological Society
Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest
Africain



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| | Neocossyphus | Stizorhina | |
|---|--------------|------------|------------------------------|
| N. Congo forest & Zanzibar coast | rufus | = fraseri | Congo forest E. to Uganda |
| | | | |
| Upper Guinea & middle Congo forests | poensis | - finschi | Upper Guinea forest |

One can postulate evolution between the pairs to be either vertical or horizontal in this diagram; i.e. either (horizontal) rufus and poensis gave rise to fraseri and finschi respectively in Central Africa and Upper Guinea (or the flycatchers gave rise to the thrushes); or (vertically) ^a/Neocossyphus and ^a/Stizorhina say in Central Africa each speciated on migrating to Upper Guinea.

As horizontal evolution here would require sympatric speciation, the postulate of vertical evolution is more acceptable.

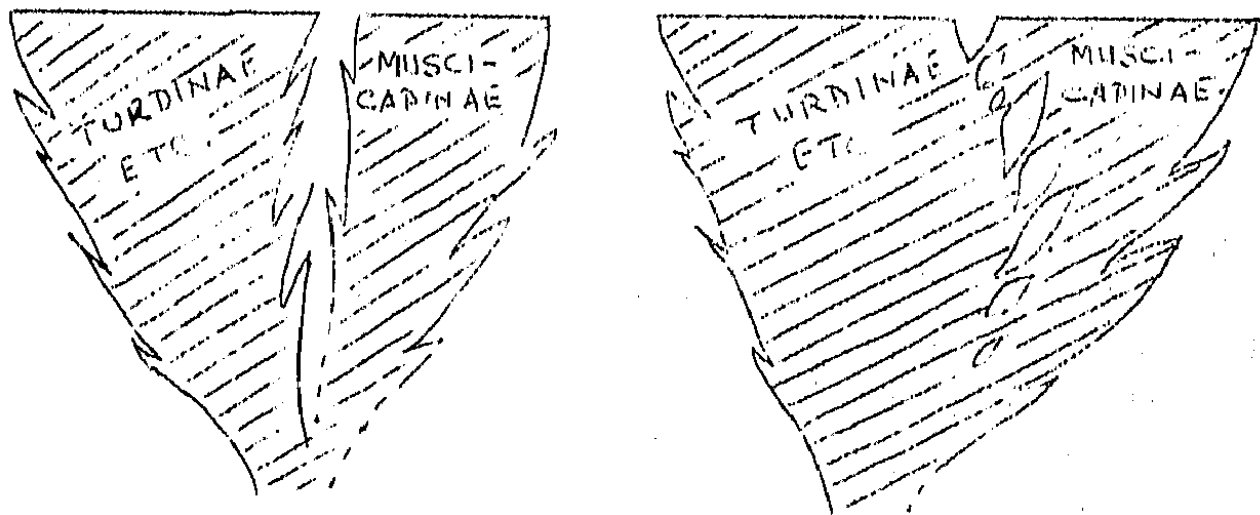


fig. ii. Dendrograms of monophyletic (left) and polyphyletic origins of the Muscicapinae from turdine stock.

References

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NOTES

Lanner Falcon Attacking Pied Crow. On the morning of 16th March 1964 V.W.S., C.H.F. and myself were at Kaffo Rock near Vom on the Jos Plateau, watching swallows and swifts hawking insects along the cliff-face. Our attention was drawn to a fissure in the cliff-face which appeared to contain a sitting bird, which was subsequently disturbed and proved to be a Lanner Falcon Falco biarmicus. The bird flew up to

join its mate which was somewhat playfully harrying a Red-tailed Buzzard Buteo auguralis. The falcons broke off this engagement and commenced planing on thermal currents, at a height of approximately 300 ft.

Meanwhile a pair of Pied Crows Corvus albus appeared flying at approximately 25 ft. above the ground, and calling loudly; they were two or three hundred yards from the presumed Lanner nest, and oblivious of the falcons nearby. One of the falcons immediately stooped upon one of the crows, at fantastic speed, hitting it a glancing blow. The crow fell to earth and the falcon pulled out of its dive, gained height and flew off. Thinking the crow to be cowering in fright we went over to see if it was injured and found it to be dead, with blood seeping from the bill. Subsequent examination showed the thoracic cavity to be filled with blood, and a discolouration in the occipital region of the skull. We concluded that the crow had been concussed by an original blow to the head, the thoracic haemorrhage and death resulting from impact with the ground. None of us had ever witnessed such a display of savagery.

D. Ebbutt

Extension of Range of the Fire-crested Alethe. In May 1964 I netted a Fire-crested Alethe Alethe castanea in Gambari Forest Reserve, Ibadan. The bird is known from Benin Division, but this is the first record of the race so far West.

pp J.H. Elgood

The Coot : a New Nigerian Bird. On 14th January 1963 I had a distant view of a Coot Fulica sp. at the far side of a 200-yd. wide flood lake at Mallam'faturi, on the shore of Lake Chad a few miles from the Yobe outfall. I would like to have been nearer to try to make a specific identification, but the generic characters noted were : an all-black wigeon-sized bird, riding rather high on open water some yards from a reed-bed, with rather small head and conspicuous white forehead shield. This could have been the Crested Coot F. cristata, which is a non-migratory bird distributed over the whole of S. and E. Africa and Madagascar with a relic population in S. Spain and Algeria (Voous, K. Atlas of European Birds, 1960), but is far more likely to have been the partial migrant F. atra of Europe. This winters (inter alia) in the Sudan North of Khartoum, and was recorded for the first time in West Africa in Senegal by Morel & Roux (Donnees nouvelles sur l'Avifaune du Senegal, l'Oiseau 1962 : 32). In any case there are grounds for regarding the two forms as conspecific.

C.H. Fry

The Ortolan Bunting : a New Nigerian Bird. A fine Ortolan Bunting Emberiza hortulana was watched at close range in excellent light by C.H.F. and C. Wood-Robinson at 0930 hrs on 25th December 1963 on Kufena Rock, Zaria. The bird was active and approachable, and