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## BIRD NOTES FROM NORTH-EASTERN SOKOTO PROVINCE

C.H.Fry

Having the use of a Land-Rover over the weekend 30th-31st March 1964, I decided to visit one of the relatively inaccessible northern perennial lakes, and went to "Lake Filinga" in company with R.B.Walker, J.M.Lyall and K.A.Kershaw. The inverted commas are used advisedly, since this lake apparently does not exist although marked large and clear on various maps e.g. the Fed. Survey Dept. Nigeria 1:500,000 Sheet 2 (1953), which shows a lake about a mile in diameter at  $13^{\circ} 4' N., 6^{\circ} 9' E.$ , south-west of Isa in north-eastern Sokoto Province. On arrival at Filinga village we made extensive enquiries about the lake but were assured that the nearest lakes were 2-3 days' march to the north-west (doubtless Lakes Mazafara and Kanangundumi) and that there was no other local water apart from a small tubki or watering-hole which was dried up at present. We took a bearing on the supposed lake's grid reference and walked to its 'centre', to find ourselves in parched Combretum bush, on the edge of a plateau from which a hazy view of several miles of similar country to the south was obtained.

The absence of a lake was disappointing, but 1½ days' birding in the bush was interesting because of, not in spite of, the extraordinary uniformity of the vegetation. Except for farmed land within a mile's radius of Filinga village (we were the first whites to visit this village), the country carried a more-or-less dense almost uniform stand of the small grey tree Combretum micranthum. The purest stands of this held an extremely poor fauna - a 2-hour walk from 1500 hrs. produced only 1 Lesser Wood-Hoopoe Scoptelus aterrimus, 2 Drongos Dicrurus adsimilis, an unidentified song, and 2-3 unidentified sparrow-like passerines. Everything was very shy.

Where there were open grassy spaces in the Combretum bush, with a few other species of tree interspersed, some birds were quite common and characteristic, such as the Golden or Yellow-bellied Bunting Emberiza flaviventris, the Melba-finch Pytilia melba and the Rosy-grey Dove Streptopelia roseogrisea. Interesting records from positive field identifications were an Upper Volta Francolin Francolinus coqui, several Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse Pterocles exustus, several Swallow-tailed Kites Chelictinia riocourii, and occasional Lark-like Button-Quails (to coin a new colloquial name for Ortyxelos meiffrenii).

Several species of birds were restricted to the immediate environs of Filinga village, where farmland, a well, cattle, and a more varied flora (Sclerocarya, Anogeissus, Cassia sieberiana, Diospyros and Combretum nigricans and lamprocarpum) provided a more diversified habitat : Laughing Dove Stigmatopelia senegalensis, Long-tailed Dove Oena capensis, Oxpecker Buphagus africanus, Long-tailed Glossy Starling Lamprotornis caudatus (may also occur in Combretum bush), Grey Canary

Poliospiza leucopygia and Cordon-bleu Uraeginthus bengalus. Other species noted in the area were :

Gabar Goshawk	Micronisus gabar	Fine-spotted Woodpecker	Camptothera punctiflora
Chanting Goshawk	Meliorax metabates	Least Woodpecker sp.	Dendropicos (obsolatus)
White-throated Francolin	Francolinus albogularis	Chestnut-backed Finch-Lark	Eremopteryx toucotis
Black-bellied Bustard	Lissotis melanogaster	Common Bulbul	Pycnonotus barbatus
Senegal Bustard	Eupodotis senegalensis	(Wood) Warbler	Phylloscopus (sibilatrix)
Thick-knee sp.	Burhinus (capensis)	Wheat-eater	Oenanthe oenanthe
(Four-banded Sand-Grouse	Pteroclus quadricinctus)	Eremomola sp.	Eremomola (pusilla)
Vinaceous Turtle-dove	Streptopelia vinacea	Barbary Shrike	Laniarius barbarus
Senegal Parrot	Poicephalus senegalus	Long-tailed Shrike	Corvinella corvina
Abyssinian Roller	Coracias abyssinica	Black-crowned Tchagra	Tchagra senegala
Hoopoe sp.	Upupa (senegalensis)	Gladiator Bush-Shrike	Malacocotus poliocephalus
European Bee-eater	Morops apiaster	Long-crested Helmet-Shrike	Prionops plumata
Little Green Bee-eater	M. orientalis		
Grey Hornbill	Lophoceros nasutus	Rufous Scrub-Robin	Erythropygia (Agrobates) galactotes
Red-beaked Hornbill	L. erythrorhynchus		
Grey-headed Woodpecker	Mesopicos goortae		

On 29th-30th November, 1964 I visited Lake Natu with N.J. Sklaner and R.B. Walker. This lake is 12° 42' N., 5° 54' E., 30 miles S.W. of Filinga. It is about 1 mile in diameter, bordered on one side by farmland (belonging to the Sardauna of Sokoto; permission should be obtained to visit the area) and on the other by an extensive fadama. On the South side of Lake Natu there is an open shore-line backed by a line of dense clumped trees giving way to very open thorn savanna, rather heavily cultivated. The fadama system at the south-east corner consists of 1-metre high Polygonum and sedges, with a 50-metre thick border of dense impenetrable Mimosa nigra backed by trees or grassland.

Due to the lack of reed cover on the lake and its shores, there were not many waterfowl (list 1.); the Mimosa thickets produced a Woodchat Lanius senator and an Isabelline Shrike L. isabellinus and Least Bee-eaters Melittophagus pusillus, and were very probably full of skulking warblers and rails. The dense leafy Combretum trees behind the shore-line were very productive; here Olivaceous Warblers Hippolais pallida opaca were common, singing throughout the day; many Chiffchuffs Phylloscopus collybita were seen, and Redstarts Ph. phoeniceus and Niger Mourning Doves Streptopelia decipiens were very common. A 60 ft. net sited crosswise in the line of trees along the shore caught 28 birds of 16 species (asterisked below) in the 2 days. The most interesting of these was a European Scops Owl Otus scops and no less than 4 honey-guides - the net was inadvertently placed in front of a bees' nest and scattered honey-comb on the ground attracted bulbuls and honey-guides, of which a Lesser Honey-Guide Indicator minor, 2 male and 1 female Greater Honey-Guides I. indicator were netted. One male was retrapped twice.

Of birds inhabiting the thorn savannah, the most significant records were Blue-naped Mousebirds Colinus macrourus (N.J.S.) and a Black Scrub-Robin Corcotrichas podobe (C.H.F.). Other typical Sudan Savannah species (which do not occur, I believe, in Guinea Savannah) were Little Green

Bee-eater, Long-tailed Glossy Starling, Golden Bunting (cf. the Filinga list); Chestnut-bellied Starling Spreo pulcher and Buffalo Weaver Bubalornis albirostris. There follow lists of the waterfowl, Palaearctic migrants, and remaining local birds seen at Lake Natu, with brief notes as to abundance. ( ) = identity uncertain.

1. Grey Pelican	<i>Pelecanus rufescens</i>	5	Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i>	frequent
Long-tailed Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax africanus</i>	2	Sacred Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>	1
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	frequent	Abdim's Stork	<i>Sphenorhynchus abdimii</i>	12
Black-headed Heron	<i>A. melanocepala</i>	2	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>	15
Purple Heron	<i>Pyrherodia purpurea</i>	2	White-faced Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>	100 approx.
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzotta</i>	1	Pygmy Goose	<i>Netapus auritus</i>	common
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	common	Spur-winged Goose	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>	2 +
2. Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> 4 ( could be African not Palaearctic race)					
Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circus gallicus</i>	1	* Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	common
Marsh Warbler	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	3 +	Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	3
Garganey	(above)		Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	1
Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	8	Blackcap	<i>S. atricapilla</i>	1
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	1	Subalpine Warbler	<i>S. cantillans</i>	3 +
(Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	1)	* Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	frequent
Green Sandpiper	<i>T. ochropus</i>	1	* Olivaceous Warbler	<i>Hippolais pallida</i>	frequent
Greenshank	<i>Glottis nobularius</i>	1	Woodchat	<i>Lanius senator</i>	1
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>G. stagnatilis</i>	1	Isabellino Shrike	<i>L. isabellinus</i>	1
* Scops Owl	<i>Otus scops</i>	1	(Red-throated) Pipit	<i>Anthus (cervinus)</i>	1
3. Common Vulture <i>Necrosyrtes monachus</i> common					
(White-backed Vulture	<i>Psudogyps africanus</i>	3 )	Grey Hornbill	<i>Lophoceros nasutus</i>	2 +
Red-necked Kestrel	<i>Falco chiquea</i>	2	Red-beaked Hornbill	<i>L. erythrorhynchus</i>	frequent
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	frequent	* Yellow-fronted Tinker-bird	<i>Pogoniulus chrysoconus</i>	frequent
Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	1	* Greater Honey-guide	<i>Indicator indicator</i>	3
Grasshopper Buzzard	<i>Butastur rufipennis</i>	1	* Lesser Honey-guide	<i>I. minor</i>	1
Bat Hawk	<i>Machaerhamphus alcinus</i>	1	* Grey-headed Woodpecker	<i>Mesopicus goertae</i>	3
Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	1 +	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	few
* Gabar Goshawk	<i>Micronisus gabar</i>	frequent	Chestnut-backed Finch-Lark	<i>Eremopteryx leucotis</i>	2
Chanting Goshawk	<i>Mellierax motabatos</i>	frequent	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Cadytes flavus</i> (see footnote)	20 approx.
Common Bush-fowl	<i>Francolinus bicaratus</i>	4	Brown Babbler	<i>Turdoides plebeja</i>	1 flock
Black Crake	<i>Limnocorax flavirostris</i>	1	* Common Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>	common
Lily Trotter	<i>Actophilornis africanus</i>	common	Swamp Flycatcher	<i>Alcedonax aquaticus</i>	2
Spur-winged Plover	<i>Hoplopterus spinosus</i>	6 prs.	* Black Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis edolioides</i>	2-3
(4-banded Sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles quadricinctus</i>	heard)	Rufous Scrub-Robin	<i>Erythropygia (Agrobates) galactotes</i>	2
Speckled Pigeon	<i>Columba guinea</i>	frequent	Black Scrub-Robin	<i>Cercotrichas podoba</i>	1
Vinaceous Turtle-Dove	<i>Streptopelia vinacea</i>	common	Nest African Prinia	<i>Prinia subflava</i>	4 approx.
Niger Mourning Dove	<i>S. decipiens</i>	common	(Nigerian Cloud-scraper)	<i>Cisticola (eximia)</i>	5 approx.
Red-eyed Turtle-Dove	<i>S. semitorquata</i>	2 + prs.	Ethiopian Swallow	<i>Hirundo aethiopica</i>	few
Laughing Dove	<i>Stigmatopelia senegalensis</i>	common	Barbary Shrike	<i>Laniarius barbarus</i>	frequent
Long-tailed Dove	<i>Oena capensis</i>	3 parties of about 10	Gambian Puff-back Shrike	<i>Dryoscopus gambensis</i>	1
* Black-billed Wood-Dove	<i>Turtur abyssinica</i>	frequent	Long-tailed Shrike	<i>Corvinella corvina</i>	4
Yellow-bellied Fruit-Pigeon	<i>Vinago wanlia</i>	3	Black-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra senegala</i>	1
Senegal Parrot	<i>Poicephalus senegalus</i>	frequent	Gladiator Shrike	<i>Malaconotus poliocephalus</i>	1
Long-tailed Parrakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	1	Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>	frequent
Spotted Eagle-Owl	<i>Bubo africanus</i>	1	Black Magpie	<i>Ptilostomus afer</i>	frequent
Grey Plantain-eater	<i>Crotopus (senegalensis)</i>	1	Oxpecker	<i>Dufhagus africanus</i>	5
(Senegal) Coucal	<i>Centropus (senegalensis)</i>	1	* Long-tailed Glossy Starling	<i>Lamprolornis caudatus</i>	common
Blue-naped Mousebird	<i>Colius microrous</i>	5 approx.	Starling sp.	<i>Lamprocolius chalybaeus/chloropterus</i>	3
Little African Swift	<i>Collinoptera affinis</i>	frequent	Chestnut-bellied Starling	<i>Spreo pulcher</i>	frequent
Palm Swift	<i>Cypselurus parvus</i>	few	Yellow White-eye	<i>Zosterops senegalensis</i>	3
Abyssinian Roller	<i>Coracias abyssinica</i>	5 approx.	Pygmy Long-tailed Sunbird	<i>Hedydipna platura</i>	frequent
Rufous-crowned Roller	<i>C. naevius</i>	1	Scarlet-chested Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>	3 +
* Guinea Wood-Hoopoe	<i>Phoeniculus erythrorhynchus</i>	frequent	Grey-headed Sparrow	<i>Passer griseus</i>	common
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	frequent	Bush Sparrow	<i>Gymnoris dentata</i>	frequent
Grey-headed Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon leucocapala</i>	1	Grey Canary	<i>Poliocapiza leucopygia</i>	frequent
Carmine Bee-eater	<i>Mercops nubicus</i>	10 approx.	Buffalo Weaver	<i>Bubalornis albirostris</i>	frequent
Little Green Bee-eater	<i>M. orientalis</i>	3	Scaly-fronted Weaver	<i>Sporopipes frontalis</i>	frequent
Least Bee-eater	<i>Mulittophagus pusillus</i>	6 approx.	Village Weaver	<i>Plesiositagra cucullatus</i>	frequent
			* Slender-billed Weaver	<i>Sitagra luteolus</i>	frequent

Black-faced Dicoch	Quelea quelea	5 approx.	* Cordon-bleu	Uraeginthus bengalus	frequent
Bishop sp.	Euplectes (orix)	few	* Combassou sp.	Hypochora sp.	frequent
* Senegal Firefinch	Lagonosticta senegala	common	Paradise Whydah	Steganura orientalis	frequent
Lavender Firefinch	L. caeruleus	10 approx.	Black-rumped Waxbill	Estrilda troglodytes	frequent

Yellow Wagtail races : thought to be flavus and flavus/thunbergi hybrids. See also Ward, P. (1964) : The fat reserves of Yellow Wagtails Motacilla flava wintering in Southwest Nigeria. Ibis 106 ; 370-375.

### SEASONAL MOVEMENTS OF BIRDS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

R.E. Sharland

I quite agree with Macgregor (Seasonal movements of some birds in Northern Nigeria : Nig. Orn. Soc. Bull. 3 : 2-5) that a very substantial proportion of the avifauna is locally migratory. These movements can be roughly divided into the following three categories :

- A. A Northward movement during the rains, either before or after breeding. Most of the birds fall within this category.
- B. A dispersion and in some cases a Southward movement during the rains; this group consists of ducks.
- C. Long range movements within Africa, possibly from as far as South Africa.

In the list below I have tried to show the movements I have noticed in the Kano area (with a few notes from other localities). As the climatic changes in Kano are more marked than in Zaria or Kaduna the seasonal movements are more definite. After each species I have indicated the category into which its migration falls. Palearctic (European) migrants have been excluded.

Rosy Pelican Pelecanus onocrotalus A. A large Northward passage of about 1,200 Rosy Pelicans near Kano was watched by my wife and myself on 12th June 1957. Several parties landed and could be approached fairly close. This species is reported to breed on Waso Rock (9° N., 10° E.)

Abdim's Stork Sphenorhynchus abdimii C. A regular wet season visitor from Southern Africa. Breeds from June onwards. Large flocks may be seen in April and October/November.

White-faced Whistling Duck Dendrocygna viduata B. Very widespread in the rains. I have found a nest on a borrow-pit in the middle of Kano City. There is probably a Southward movement as this bird is quite common round Kano during the rains.

Hottentot Teal Anas punctata C. There are records from October to April. I have seen or shot them in December, February and March.

Swallow-tailed Kite Chelictinia riocourii . I have only seen this bird round Kano in March. In Sokoto it is more numerous and in December 1953 I watched an impressive passage of over 1,000 in just under an hour. Similar movements were reported by Neville Crane when he was in Kano in 1962.

S.R.A.