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and bill colour, is diagnostic of the present species. -Ed.)

Bucorvus abyssinicus Ground Hornbill - one on dry flats between Abadam and Yo on 18th March 1965.

Oenanthe deserti Desert Wheatear - a single example on the dunes near the lake shore, 15th February, 1965.

In addition, European Coots Fulica atra (see Fry, Bull. N.O.S. 2 : 13; Hopson, Bull. N.O.S. 4 : 12 & 15) were seen regularly in small numbers during January, February and March 1965 on the marshes at Malamfatori. They were at all times extremely shy and invariably kept to the densest cover of Polygonum and Echinochloa. For this reason it is likely that we have overlooked the species previously and that it is in fact a regular winter visitor to the area. The habitat is different from that of F. atra wintering in the British Isles which in our experience are usually seen on open water rather than in thick vegetation.

J. & A.J. Hopson

Plateau Province over 3,000 ft. With reference to the Provisional check-list of the birds of Plateau Province over 3,000 feet (Ebbutt et al., Bull. N.O.S. 3 : 9-14) and the Additions (Sharland, Bull. N.O.S. 4 : 18-19), the following birds may be added :

- Rostratula benghalensis Painted Snipe. One, Sabon Gida, 23.x.'64  
Erolia testacea Curlew Sandpiper. One, Sabon Gida 23.x.1964  
Glottis stagnatilis Marsh Sandpiper. Two, Pan Yam Fish-farm, 3.ii.'65  
Rhinoptilus chalcopterus Bronze-winged Courser. One found dead Vom, 24.xi.1964  
Charadrius dubius Little Ringed Plover. One shot Sabon Gida  
Hippolais pallida opaca Olivaceous Warbler.  
Sylvia atricapilla Blackcap. One netted Vom, 22.xi.1964

D. Ebbutt & V.W. Smith

Mambila Plateau. D. Ebbutt was able to spend some two days on the Mambila Plateau from 23rd February, 1965 and has deposited a full list of the birds he recorded at three localities with the Editor - Mayo Selbe at the foot of the escarpment at 1,000 ft.; the escarpment; and the Plateau proper. Ebbutt records most of the species noted by Boulter (The Mambila Plateau, Bull. N.O.S. 4 : 17-18) and his more interesting records are listed below :

- |                                  |                        |   |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| <u>Sphenorhynchus abdimii</u>    | Abdim's Stork          | 1, Plateau  |
| <u>Sagittarius serpentarius</u>  | Secretary-Bird         | several, Plateau  |
| <u>Pseudogyps africanus</u>      | White-backed Vulture   | several, Plateau & Escarpment   |
| <u>Aquila rapax</u>              | Tawny Eagle            | 2, Plateau; 1, Escarpment   |
| <u>Neotis denhami</u>            | Denham's Bustard       | 2, Plateau, where apparently commoner around Christmas;<br>1, Mayo Selbe  |
| <u>Streptopelia semitorquata</u> | Red-eyed Turtle-Dove   | Common, Mayo Selbe  |
| <u>S. vinacea</u>                | Vinaceous Dove         | Common, Mayo Selbe  |
| <u>S. hypopyrrhus</u>            | Adamawa Turtle-Dove    | 1, Plateau  |
| <u>S. decipiens</u>              | Niger Mourning Dove    | Very common, Plateau  |
| <u>Colinus striatus</u>          | Bar-breasted Mousebird | 4, Plateau  |
| <u>Micropus melba</u>            | Alpine Swift           | 200+, Plateau. This large flock was under observation for some minutes in a valley North of Gembu. Might this be the winter quarters of the species? They were larger |

cont/.

<i>Micropus caffer</i>	White-rumped Swift
<i>Bucorvus abyssinicus</i>	Ground Hornbill
<i>Anthus richardi</i>	Richard's Pipit
<i>Myrmecocichla nigra</i>	Sooty Ant-Chat

than *M. apus*, with a very powerful 'rowing' flight (no gliding with wings held above the body as in *Colletes affinis*); pale grey throat and belly separated by dark band across the lower throat. Seen in good light with 10 x 50 binoculars.

3, Escarpment

1, Mayo Selbe

(see p. 23)

Common, Plateau. A pair was kept under intermittent observation all of one day while I was occupied with netting activities. Courtship included much excited whistling and wing flapping reminiscent of the Ant-Chat *M. aethiops*. Song a slightly flat or discordant fluty whistle.

<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>	Amethyst Starling	1 male, Mayo Selbe.
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<i>Cinnyris coccinigaster</i>	Splendid Sunbird	1 male, Escarpment.
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<i>Melanopteryx nigerrimus</i>	Viellot's Black Weaver	Small colony with Village Weavers, Escarpment
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All the above identifications have been substantiated with descriptions.

D.E. Macgregor, whose death is announced on p. 1, visited the Mambila Plateau three times and his notes have been deposited with the Editor. On 22nd October 1964 he noted that "European Swallows and Yellow Wag-tails seem to make up most of the bird population (between Serti and Mayo Selbe)"; again, an "enormous cloud of Swallows" (European?) at a fire on 25th December 1964. Other records are :

<i>Halcyon striatus</i>	Striped Kingfisher	Beli, 21.x.1964
<i>Colius passer ardens</i>	Long-tailed Black Whydah	Near Mayo Selbe ?, 25.xii.1964
<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Tree Pipit	Pair, near Mayo Selbe ? No plumage details given.
<i>Delichon urbica</i>	House Martin	200-300 near Mayo Selbe?, 26.xii.1964. No plumage details.

#### NOTES

Secretary-Birds at Zaria. Since Hartert's 1915<sup>1</sup> record of Secretary-Birds *Sagittarius serpentarius* at an unspecified locality (or localities) in Zaria Province, there have been no further records until 26th February 1965, when N.J. Skinner and C.H.F. saw one 1½ miles from Ahmadu Bello University. On 1st March 1965, one was brought to the Dept. of Zoology, A.B.U., Zaria, supposedly caught in a baited snare the previous day at Funtua, some 40 miles to the North-West. Then on 23rd March 1965 no less than four were seen by a school-teacher at Kufena, Zaria, one being snared. The snared birds, both of which unfortunately had had their wings clipped, are now in captivity. One subsists largely on dead *Agama* lizards (which the other rejects or regurgitates however). The other is fed on all manner of freshly-dead meat or animals, which are invariably 'killed' by several powerful kicks before ingestion. That the kick is remarkably quick and powerful, and is used in defence as well as attack, I can personally testify! Very curiously, the only item of food my bird has not kicked before eating was a moribund but still moving 2' Beauty Snake *Psammophis*, which was casually picked up by its middle and equally casually swallowed. However the bird had only been in captivity for 2 days and was probably reacting abnormally.

C.H. Fry

1. Hartert, E. (1915) List of...birds from Hausaland... *Novitates Zool.* 22 : 244-266.