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J.A. Button

## II Forest and Savannah Residents (Passerines)

Part B: Campephagidae to Ploceidae

Cyanograucalus azureus : Blue Cuckoo-Shrike (For. Res. FL)  
Frequently observed at Ipake in the forest canopy; the secondary growth at Egbado College (Ilaro) E.C.I. does not seem to be sufficiently mature for the species. Has a characteristic sideling way of running along the branches. Voice: a loud ringing "Peep - peep etc", noted. Observed at lower levels only as a member of a bird army.

Dicrurus modestus: Velvet Mantled Drongo (For. Res. C.)  
The common species of Dicrurus in the area and frequently netted. Favours a wide range of habitat from fairly dense secondary forest growth to parkland and Derived Savannah. A fearless mobber of raptors, I have seen it attack Black Kites Milvius migrans and West African Harrier Hawks Gymnogenys typicus. Frequently noted making Flycatcher - like flights for insects returning often to same vantage point. On a number of occasions observed in groups of 20/30 in company with White-Throated Bee-Eater Aerops albicollis hawking for insects at tree-top height in parkland. Immature birds have the eye black. (Eyes of adult birds dark red). It has a loud harsh song; the sub-song delivered with less vehemence is much "sweeter" in tone.

Display and breeding : May 11th 1965: courtship behaviour noted at Ilaro: pair of birds facing each other on branch at height of 50 feet (approx.) three feet apart; both singing vigorously and bobbing up and down alternately. The performance was interrupted by another Drongo and one of the participants flew off with the newcomer. August 30th 1965: two birds bobbing similarly on branch about three feet apart, but silent. June 15th 1963: flimsy cup constructed in fork at top of tree 60 feet high (approx.); at least two young visible through the fabric of the nest; in a clearing near the edge of the forest. May 28th 1966: nest at top of dead tree in clearing about 50 feet high; two young being fed. May 8th 1967: a pair building nest 60 feet high in tree 20 yards inside forest clearing. All at E.C.I. Simultaneously with last instance a pair of Shining Drongos Dicrurus atripennis were building about 100 yards to the south about 20 yards inside thick secondary forest from the edge of the clearing.

Dicrurus atripennis: Shining Drongo (For. Res. F.)  
Two breeding records at E.C.I. only. May 6th 1966: nest built in thick secondary forest growth about 20 yards from main path from College. Flimsy cup of fibres slung between horizontally forking twigs near the end of a trailing branch 15 feet high. The position of the nest was given away by the posture of the sitting bird, the construction being so insubstantial that it was hardly noticeable while the bird was in occupation. No eggs were recorded and the nest was subsequently destroyed. Voice: like that of D. modestus, but less harsh and "discordant". Bursts of loud song: "Chee; chee; kleet, klooeet" delivered in dashing flights through the lower levels of the forest (under 30 feet). Explosive nasal chirp also noted. May 6th 1967: unsuccessful breeding attempt in same area of forest as before. (V. note on D. modestus). Similar nest siting: about 20 feet high at fork near end of trailing branch. One bird noted receiving building material from mate for nest construction. The only other place I have noted this bird is at Agodi, Ibadan

(The two other *Dicrurus* species : adsimilis and sharpei have not been noted in the area; I have recorded adsimilis in Dahomey north of Parakou; its range probably extends much farther south and it may be present on Topo Island. D. sharpei the Square - Tailed Drongo is fairly common at Ibadan).

Sigmodus caniceps: Red-Billed Shrike. (For. Res. C.)  
Resident and common at Ipake and E.C.I. Invariably seen in parties of 5 to 15 which move noisily through the forest. Cry: a loud "Quar; quar" etc. Immature birds have a "querulous" call: "wee-wee-wee" etc. readily delivered. Also "tik-tew" second syllable accentuated and with descending tone.

Corvinella corvina: Long-Tailed Shrike (Sav. Res. AL)  
Noted on the Derived Savannah patches west of Ilaro; status common along the bush roads to the Dahomey border. Occasional main Ilaro - Abeokuta road; usually seen in groups of 3 to 8.

Lanius ferrugineus: Bell Shrike (Sav. Res. C.)  
Heard twice only on Ilaro Government Reservation area September 9th and 14th 1963. Noted within the area under study at Ishaga near Abeokuta where it is common.

Dryoscopus gambensis: Gambian Puff-Back Shrike (Sav. Res. C.)  
Regularly noted parkland and gardens of Government Reservation Area Ilaro, where I have netted it several times on the edge of thick new secondary growth; also in patchy grassland west of Ilaro towards Dahomey. Groups of 4 to 6 birds recorded, often indulging in excited chases when the white "puff" on the back and rump displayed to good advantage and there is much noisy calling. Wide variety of calls recorded:  
(a) Sparrow-like "C hip-chip-chip" etc. (b) Harsh chattering by parties in excited chases. (c) A harsh scolding note. (d) A prolonged "metallic" trilling when netted and held in the hand. (e) A high-pitched rather querulous "wee; wee" etc.

Chaunonotus sabinii: Sabine's Puff-Back Shrike (For. Res. F.)  
Common in thick forests of the area and once netted (male) at F.C.I. June 30th 1963. The species would easily be overlooked but for its characteristic call: a prolonged descending sequence of loud pealing notes, the delivery lasts two or three minutes (a); (b) A harsh grating trill - presumably an alarm call (similar to one of the cries of D. gambensis) often given in flight with much wing-clapping and white "puff" display. (c) A rapid sequence of percussive notes: "Tick-tick-tick" etc. (d) A loud "Tew-tew-tew" etc.  
A common member of ejak or bird armies.

Tchagra senegala: Black-Crowned Tchagra (Sav. Res. C.)  
Common resident on Derived Savannah environment in the area and especially on the patchy grasslands between Ilaro and the Dahomey border. Occasionally noted school farm E.C.I.

Chlorophoneus multicolor: Many - Coloured Bush - Shrike (For. Res. F.)  
Present in secondary forests around Ilaro; netted and observed in the field and probably fairly common; but as I am not familiar with its call the status is not clear. Several ejak sightings near Ilaro. The species is one of the more extreme examples of polymorphism, three phases or morphs occurring in West Africa. The colour variations are limited to the underparts from the chin to the lower breast, and the extremities of the rectrices; the belly and under - tail coverts are yellowish orange and the rest of the tail dark green in each case. Each of the three Upper Guinea phases has been recorded at Ilaro. Bannerman (1953) mentions Serle's collection of the three varieties at Kumba in the then Cameroons (1950).

This would appear to be the only other instance where the three Upper Guinea phases have been recorded in one locality. They are:

- (i) Chin to lower breast scarlet; tips of rectrices reddish-orange. A specimen caught in a friend's kitchen at Ilaro on November 22nd 1961 was of this phase. Five sightings.
- (ii) Chin to lower breast orange; tips of rectrices yellowish orange. Specimen netted near Government Reservation Area February 18th 1964 belonged to this phase. Three sightings.
- (iii) The rare black phase: chin to lower breast black, continuous with black eye-mask; tips of rectrices yellowish-orange; mantle and crown blueish-grey, forehead whitish; green wings and yellow spotted remiges, green rump, and yellow - orange belly and under-tail coverts; a strikingly handsome variety. Observed in thick forest at E.C.I. in bird army September 7th 1965.
- V. Button (Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 2 (8): 107-108).

Malaconotus cruentus: Orange-Breasted Bush-Shrike (For. Res. F.) Occasionally recorded in forests and edges of clearings around Ilaro; though not at Ipake. Netted January 7th 1963 in new secondary growth behind the girls' dormitories E.C.I. Seen in bird armies.

Nicator chloris: West African Nicator (For. Res. C.) Common in the thick new secondary vegetation around Ilaro; much less at Ipake in more matured forest. Alarm call "Chack-chack" etc.; has been likened to the call of the Yellowbill *Ceuthmochares aereus*. Song usually delivered from depths of thick vegetation.

Oriolus auratus: African Golden Oriole (Sav. Res. C.) Resident and frequent at Ilaro especially park and of E.C.I. A catlike snarling call noted besides the usual Oriole type notes.

Oriolus brachyrynchus: Black-Headed Oriole (For. Res. F.) Common Ilaro forests. Variety of calls noted: "Tloo-wit" & "Orquill" etc. Confusion with the Black-Winged Oriole, Oriolus nigripennis is very easy, but O. brachyrynchus has a small white wing bar which is a fairly distinctive field characteristic.

Oriolus nigripennis: Black-Winged Oriole (For. Res. AL.) Present in the forests of Ilaro area. Status not certain though probably common.

Corvus albus: Pied Crow: (Sav. Res. A.) One sighting reported (pers. comm.) E.C.I. March 16th 1966 at E.C.I. Also May 21st 1967: single bird flying over College Compound. Regularly seen at all times of the year at points on the Ilaro-Papalanto Road, especially near the village of Ajegunle, in groups of 4 to 6. August 4th 1967: Single bird flying south along Abeokuta-Lagos Road between Otta and Agege. Frequently seen (pers. comm.) on the Blue Elephant Cement Works residential area at Papalanto. The species is common north of Abeokuta.

Lamprocolius chalcurus: Short-Tailed Glossy Starling (Sav. Res. AL.) A Short-Tailed Starling believed to be of this species seen frequently on more open parts of Derived Savannah between Ilaro and Abeokuta. Parties of 3 to 4 or singly at all times of the year.

Lamprocolius splendidus: Splendid Glossy Starling (For. Res. A)  
Extremely common in the forests of the area. A species with very strong social instincts - and a wide range of distinctive calls: "Kweea"; "Keelo" etc., also a call which sounds like the creaking of a rusty door-hinge. Added to this the wings make a loud rasping noise in flight. A colony of Splendid Glossies makes its presence felt in the forest in no uncertain way. At E.C.I. and Ipake I have noted colonies of 4 or 5 birds to 30 individuals, their favorite haunts being the upper branches of high Silk-Cotton trees often near streams. This social urge seems to be strongest between September and March. Breeding would appear to take place at the height of the dry season; December and January. December 28th 1966: bird seen carrying nesting material into Rapphia Palms in swamp land near Ado-Odo just within the area of study. (25 mile radius of Ilaro). On Topo Island (section opposite Badagry) where the bird is abundant breeding recorded regularly December and January. Breeding however is not colonial. On Topo the cocoa-nut plantations which extend for miles along the island are "divided" into territories by breeding pairs, the favorite nesting site being the hollow in the top of a diseased cocoa-nut trunk. The area near the Rest House on Topo would appear to afford ideal conditions for the study of the species. At E.C.I. pairs establish territories in farm clearings and parkland often at a considerable distance from the colonial perching and roosting sites. January 29th 1966: a pair observed "investigating" the old hole of Mesopicus pyrrhogaster about 30 feet high in a dead tree on a farm clearing; the birds later flew off to join about 20 Splendid Glossies congregating in high trees about 200 yards away. On February 16th 1966 a pair, presumably the same, noted feeding young in the same hole. Strong possibility that the group instinct remains strong throughout breeding. (December 19th 1967: bird carrying nesting material noted flying over mangroves near Ikoyi Park at dusk in vicinity of roost of 25-30 L. splendidus).

Onychognathus fulgidus: Chestnut-Winged Starling (For. Res. C.)  
Frequent forests and farms of the area. September 19th 1964: I examined a female shot by a neighbour on the G.R.A. (Reservation) Ilaro. January 17th 1967: E.C.I. farmland: pair building in hollow at top of 60 foot high tree killed by ringing. Invariably in small groups of 4 to 7 individuals.

Poeoptera lugubris: Narrow-Tailed Starling (For. Res. O)  
Noted E.C.I. only, usually in small numbers with the first flocks of Cinnyricinclus leucogaster Amethyst Starling. However whereas C. leucogaster remains in the locality all through the dry season, P. lugubris disappears after a few days. September 26th 1963: 6 birds noted in thick bush (no Amethyst Starlings). August 30th 1965: 30-40 with about 100 C. leucogaster feeding on berries with the other species in parkland. September 4th about 50 birds present; gone by September 11th 1965. August 9th to 16th 1966: small parties 10 to 15 individuals associating with C. leucogaster in parkland. Soft "Starling-like" calls and "Klee; klee" etc.; also a trilling call c/f Aerops albicollis White-Throated Bee-Eater.

Cinnyris superbus: Superb Sunbird (For. Res. F.)  
Three records only. July 31st 1967: farm clearing in thick forest near Ijado village 4 miles north of Ilaro a pair. November 20th 1967: male perching at the top of a tree E.C.I. near forest. December 31st 1967: three pairs probing blossom in high trees at Ebute-Igboro near the Yewa River.

Cinnyris cupreus: Copper Sunbird. (Sav. Res. C.)  
Frequent on patchy Derived Savannah in the area; nearest to Ilaro mile 3 on the Idogo Road west of the town. Octosyllabic call.

Cinnyris coccinigaster: Splendid Sunbird (Sav. Res. FL.)  
Status frequent on Adu grasslands and the Idogo road.

Cinnyris venustus: Yellow-Bellied Sunbird. (Sav. Res. F.)  
Local in distribution; recorded in Derived Savannah patches generally in sandy areas where the vegetation is sparsest; the neighbourhood of the Ilaro Fish Pond and the sandy area between Oja-Odan (12 miles west of Ilaro) and the Ohumbe Forest Reserve 4 miles further west). Common on Topo Island.

Cinnyris chloropypius: Olive-Bellied Sunbird (For. Res. C.)  
Common in forests and gardens of the area; frequent visitor to Hibiscus flowers close to house on Government Reservation Ilaro. Regularly noted at Ipake. Breeding in new secondary growth at edge of G.R.A. Ilaro September 15th 1963; nest ovoid in shape with "porched" entrance hole slightly above mid-point on the side, suspended from branch 8 feet above the ground. An untidy structure of coarse grass lined with finer grass, strips of bark and leaves loosely embodied in the fabric. Much less compact than the nest of Anthreptes collaris Collared Sunbird. Two eggs: plain white.

Chalcomitra adelberti: Buff-Throated Sunbird (For. Res. F.)  
Frequent parkland and gardens at Ilaro; occasionally at Ipake near ruined bridge over stream. Noted close to house probing Hibiscus flowers Ilaro Reservation. Call: "Pitchew-tlweet".

Cyanomitra verticalis: Olive-Backed Sunbird (Sav. Res. F.)  
Occasionally on the Adu grasslands; commoner around Abeokuta.

Cyanomitra cyanolaema: Blue-Throated Brown Sunbird (For. Res. F.)  
Occasionally seen in Ipake Forest; but not at E.C.I.

Cyanomitra olivacea: Olive Sunbird (For. Res. A.)  
Common in the forests of the area, though nowhere as abundant as Anthreptes collaris: Collared Sunbird. Frequently netted. November 10th 1963; female noted feeding young at nest suspended from creeper over stagnant pool near the broken bridge at Ipake.

Anthreptes collaris: Collared Sunbird. (For. Res. A.)  
Abundant in forests, gardens and parkland of the area and readily netted. Wide variety of calls noted. Breeding: nest a neat ovoid structure constructed of grasses and lined with some kind of vegetable down; "porched" entrance hole in the side. Suspended from branch eight feet high; one egg: whitish ground marked liberally with fine brown lines and spots. Young hatched April 23rd 1963; fledgling attempting flight on May 5th 1963.

Anthreptes rectirostris: Grey-Chinned Sunbird. (For. Res. OL)  
December 30th 1967; male noted in Oil Palms at the Ilaro Fish Pond. Probably A. rectirostris tephrolaema. The short straight bill was clearly visible; also emerald green "bib", head and mantle with metallic sheen; grey belly and lower breast; dark brown tail and primaries. Unfortunately the colour of the chin was not noted. Anthreptes collaris has metallic green head, mantle and "bib", but has bright yellow underparts. The bird in question was an adult in good plumage condition.  
Calls: (i) "Pweet; pweet; pweet" etc. (ii) "Pseek-pseek-pseek" etc., with more rapid delivery than (i).

Anthreptes seimundi: Little Green Sunbird (For. Res. O.)  
One sighting in dense growth Ipake July 17th 1965; a member of a bird army.

Hylia prasina: Green Hylia. (For. Res. C.)  
Common in forests of the area favoring well matured forest growth. Voice: (1) two piping notes; (ii) a harsh "tmrr".

Passer griseus: Grey-Headed Sparrow (Sav. Res. A.)  
Common at E.C.I. especially the surroundings of the dining hall dormitories and classrooms. Not noted in Ilaro town or forest villages. Breeding E.C.I.: adults feeding young at nest in classroom eves November 12th 1964; young present in nest in similar position June 27th 1967. Breeding activity probably not restricted to one season.

Melanopteryx nigerrimus: Vieillot's Black Weaver (For. Res. AL.)  
In his Provisional Check-List of the Birds of Nigeria: (Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. I (I): 13-25) Elgood designates Cinnamopteryx castaneofuscus: the Chestnut - and Black Weaver as a race of M. nigerrimus. This is the race inhabiting the area of study - and Southern Nigeria according to Bannerman, The Birds of West and Equatorial Africa (2 Vols.) 1953 p. 1369, as far East as the Cross River. M. nigerrimus, on the other hand has a distribution which extends eastwards and southwards from the Cameroon Republic. M. nigerrimus like "C. castaneofuscus" nests in colonies with Plesiositagra cucullatus, the Village Weaver. Elgood's nomenclature is therefore used here. Common in the locality and usually noted with Plesiositagra cucullatus, Village Weaver. Mixed colonies of breeding birds noted near human habitation and in oil palms over water at a distance from villages. Roosts in flocks of thousands with P. cucullatus, Hyphanturgus brachypterus, Spectacled Weaver, and Cinnyricinclus leucogaster, Amethyst Starling during the dry season in an "island" of dense secondary forest between the Ilaro General Hospital and the main Ilaro-Abeokuta Road. Large numbers netted here. August 5th 1967: colony of approx. 40 pairs mixed P. cucullatus and M. nigerrimus building 1 mile west of Ilaro on Ebute-Igboro road. September 17th 1967: approx 30 pairs entirely M. nigerrimus building in same tree. The species occasionally recorded in small groups of 3-7 in the forests of the area - sometimes in bird armies - though is generally met with on Derived Savannah.

Melanopteryx albinucha: White-Naped Black Weaver (For. Res. O)  
Occasionally noted in densest parts of the forest at Ipake and E.C.I. February 7th 1965: group of 20 approx. observed in Silk Cotton tree deep in the Forest Reserve at Ipake. Never seen in company with Plesiositagra cucullatus.

Melanop oecus tricolor: Yellow Mantled Weaver (For. Res. F).  
Frequent resident forests and farms of the area: nests regularly at E.C.I. on the edge of the forest in small colonies of 5 to 15 pairs. Nest an untidy straggly structure of the basic weaver-bird domed form suspended at the extremity of lower branches of large trees, seldom within 30 feet of the ground. Characteristic call: "Chip: chip" etc.

Plesiositagra cucullatus: Village Weaver (Wdsprd. Res. A).  
Most villages in the area have breeding colonies often shared with M. nigerrimus. Night roosts shared with other species (V.M. nigerrimus). Frequently netted.

Pachyphantes pachyrhynchus: Compact Weaver (Sav. Res. F).  
Resident; status occasional. Breeding regularly on Ado grasslands just outside area of study (25 mile radius of Ilaro). August 8th 1963: breeding 5 miles south of Aiyetoro (N. of Ilaro): 8 nests all within 30 yards of each other examined: compact domed grass structures fixed to two stout grass stems about 5 feet high. One nest with three eggs: pale mauvish-grey ground covered with fine darker spots: well defined zone around thicker end. January 16th 1964: group of 4-5 individuals. Noted in long grass at Maria, 9 miles north of Ilaro on the Abeokuta Road.



Hyphanturgus brachypterus: Swainson's Spectacled Weaver  
(Sav. Res. C.)

Resident but much more abundant in dry season when it shares mass roosts with several other species. (V. M. nigerrimus). Breeding on "Savannah" patches at E.C.I.: August 8th 1963: nest in early stages of construction in high grass attached to stems. Abandoned September 6th. Parties of 20 to 30 individuals noted in new secondary growth around the College during the dry season. Status frequent.

Malimbus malimbicus: Crested Weaver (For. Res. C.)

Occasional in thick parts of the forests of the area; netted more often than seen at E.C.I. 7 specimens netted since September 1962.

Malimbus rubricollis: Red-Headed Weaver (For. Res. C.)

Abundant in forests and parkland of the area. The commonest species of Malimbe. Breeding noted in most months of the year though reaching a peak during the dry season. Nests of the "inverted sock" type built high 60 feet and above in forest trees. Entrance tunnel much shorter than that of Malimbus scutatus being no more than 9 or 10 inches in length; two or three nests often fused together in construction. Characteristic "fizzling" malimbe song. Individuals sometimes noted perching on sides of tree trunks presumably searching crevices in the bark for insects. Frequents levels too high for successful mist-netting.

Malimbus nitens: Gray's Blue-Billed Weaver (For. Res. F)

Common in the denser parts of the forests of the area; seen usually in bird armies; occasionally netted: at E.C.I. 5 specimens netted since September 1962. Call a loud "Squeech"; song noted sweeter, softer variant of the typical Malimbe "fizzling" song. Nests in small colonies over stagnant water; nest a rather untidy wispy structure made of grass rather similar to that of Plesiositagra cucullatus, Village Weaver, and lacking the long "sock" of the typical Malimbe nest. May 11th 1961: pair noted active around several empty nests 3 feet over forest pool 2 miles South of Ilaro on the Badagry Road. June 8th 1966: colony of 20 to 30 pairs breeding over stagnant pool in thick secondary growth by the roadside 3 miles south east of Ifo on the main Abeokuta-Lagos road. Nests within 3 or 4 feet of the water; much noisy activity.

Malimbus scutatus: Red-Vented Weaver (For. Res. C.)

Common all over the area even on patches of Derived Savannah showing a special preference for Oil Palms. Nest a long "inverted sock" (V. Bannerman: p. 1405). Nest construction observed in Oil Palms at E.C.I. January 1st 1963: much sound and activity but the effort was abandoned the next day and never resumed. Bannerman: The Birds of West and Equatorial Africa: Two Vols. P. 1405; mentions the race M. scutatus scutopartitus, in which the female has the black of the chin and throat continued down the breast, thus dividing the scarlet crop-patch down the central line, as inhabiting the "coastal strip of Southern Nigeria from Ilaro, Abeokuta and Lagos to Duala". The race is said to extend to the vicinity of Porto Novo, just over the Dahomey border, where it intergrades with the typical subspecies M. scutatus scutatus. M.s. scutopartitus is certainly present at Badagry, and Ilaro.

Malimbus ibadanensis: Ibadan Malimbe (For. Res. FL).

Occasionally noted at E.C.I. in parkland, farm clearings and on the edge of the forest; twice seen in bird-armies in dense secondary forest. Rarely seen at Ipake and once at Ohumbe Forest Reserve near the Dahomey border 15 miles west of Ilaro.



Spermestes cuculatus: Bronze Mannikin (Sav. Res. C)  
Abundant on farms and Derived Savannah patches of the area. Noted January 11th 1968 in large numbers with Estrilda melpoda Orange-Cheeked Waxbills, in reeds at the bottom of the Blue Elephant Cement Works quarry at Ewekoro 18 miles east of Ilaro. Breeds all the year round at Ilaro showing marked preference for the school orange orchard, peak period at the beginning of the rains; most nests are between 5 to 9 feet off the ground and a clutch generally consists of 7 to 8 eggs. April 21st 1963 a nest was discovered containing 15 eggs.

Spermestes poensis: Blue-Billed Mannikin (For. Res. F.)  
Common resident in the area in new secondary growth, farms and parkland on the edges of the forest. Only once noted at Ipake in high secondary vegetation. Breeding at E.C.I.; sometimes in colonies of several pairs. June 21st 1963 five nests similar to those of Spermestes cucullatus (i.e. small domed nest of grasses) in thick bushes quite close to school buildings. Four nests contained clutches of 6/7 eggs which were plain white as in the case of the previous species. Variety of nesting sites used at Ajilete 20 miles west of Ilaro on the main Ghana Road, September 4th 1963, I found it building in cassavas; on February 14th and March 27th 1964 it was noted building in a tree on the Ilaro Government Reservation approx. 30 feet high.

Nigrita canicapilla: Grey-Crowned Negro Finch (For. Res. C)  
A common resident seen in parkland and secondary growth of varying density in the area under study, and especially at E.C.I. Less common, though, at Ipake in thicker forest. Breeds mainly during the rainy season June to August, though I have a record of a nest with eggs for March 10th 1965. The nest is a large (9 or 10 inches in diameter) domed structure made loosely of grass; at E.C.I. it is usually placed in orange bushes or small trees at height of between 6 to 25 feet. Trees in the College orchard are again favoured breeding sites. The eggs are plain white and a clutch generally consists of 5 to 7 eggs. I have noted interesting regional variations in the song of this species - a subject worth investigating. Around Ilaro the usual song consists of four sweet notes followed by a single note pitched at a lower level. There is another call which may best be described as three soft whistles at wide intervals in a rising sequence. Young at the nest heard making persistent wheezing cries.

Nigrita luteifrons: Pale-Fronted Negro-Finch  
Rare. Family (?) party of 7 individuals noted at E.C.I. near staff quarters on May 5th 1962. Specimen netted in new secondary growth Government Reservation Area Ilaro November 25th 1963. Party of 4/5 observed in thick secondary forest at Ipake June 24th 1965: all the birds made "wheezing" calls similar to those associated with juvenile Nigrita canicapilla. Also a descending sequence "Wee; wee; wee".

Spermatina haematina: Blue-Billed Weaver (For. Res. F.)  
Numerous mist-netting records indicate that the species is quite common in the area; however it is an inveterate skulker and seldom seen in the field. Frequents secondary growth of varying degrees of maturity from the depths of the forest at Ipake to quite new vegetation on the edge of Ilaro Town. Song: a quiet twittering delivered from thick cover; alarm call: "seep-seep-seep", of Sunbird quality.

Breeding: a nest in process of construction was discovered on June 25th 1965 approx. 30 feet high in a small dead tree left in a farm clearing made in thick secondary bush at E.C.I. The "chamber" of the nest had been formed and work had just commenced on the entrance passage. Both birds shared in the work of building, the material used being strips of oil palm fronds and the dry curly tendrils of tree growing creepers. The "sock" part of the nest was completed by July 1st. The whole nest was similar in size and shape to that of Malimbus rubricollis Red-Headed Weaver though considerably neater in appearance. It was a single structure. On several occasions the male was seen to pass building material to the female inside the nest and during this stage of nesting the female showed a readiness to vacate the nest for the male. Typical malimbe "wheezing-fizzling" song noted; delivered by the male within a few feet of the nest.

was, On July 22nd an attempt was made to reach the nest by means of a bamboo ladder. This, prevented by wasps, probably Belonogaster, which had a nest in creepers near the foot of the tree, and several of my helpers were badly stung. Another nest of wasps of the same species was noted within two feet of the Malimbe's nest. By this time a pair of Anthreptes collaris Collared Sunbird were building a few feet on the other side of the wasp's nest. It is significant that Elgood found M. ibadanensis breeding in close proximity to a colony of Belonogaster on the occasion he found the species nesting at Ibadan.

June 27th: a male Ibadan Malimbe noted in a bird army in thick bush within 440 yards of the nest in construction but it was not ascertainable whether it was one of the nesting pair under observation.

Second brood: on September 3rd male bird noted singing at a fork near the same nest; subsequently seen to enter the "sock" and heard singing inside the nest. Male and female then emerged together and were observed feeding on small green caterpillars on a nearby tree. The wasp colony was still present. On September 4th the nest and the single egg it contained were collected for the British Museum. The dimensions of the egg were: 23mm x 15mm; pale green ground sparingly marked with irregular dark brown spots and with a few lilac shell markings.

In his article "A New Species of Malimbus" J.H. Elgood (Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. I 3 pp. 7-9) records the construction of two adjacent nests at Ibadan in June 1962 by the same pair: "the first was utilised right away for the first brood and the second completed by the male while the female was incubating in the first, but not used until October". At Ilaro there was only one nest, which was used for two broods in July and September.

Amblyospiza albifrons: White-Fronted Grosbeak (Sav. Res. O)  
Single record: September 1st 1963; group of 10 nests noted in water vegetation near Igbogila 15 miles north of Ilaro. The nests were built around plant stems 2 to 4 feet above the surface of water; one contained a dead and a live nestling.

Euplectes orix: Orange or Little Bishop. (Sav. Res. C)  
Seen regularly in wasteland and old farms near the Top Beer Factory by the railway level crossing at Abeokuta. Pair noted in long grass near Ohumbe Forest Reserve 20 miles west of Ilaro.

Colliuspasser macrourus: Yellow-Mantled Whydah (Sav. Res. CL)  
Males in breeding plumage noted in Savannah patches between Ilaro and Abeokuta, generally August, September and October.

Pirenestes ostrinus: Black-Bellied Seed-Cracker (Wdsprd. Res. C)  
One sighting near Ado-Odo in strip of forest on edge of stream in savannah country: juvenile in bird army consisting mainly of Sunbirds and Bulbuls. The species is fairly common on Topo where it favours the strip of swampy vegetation fringing the creek.

Lagonosticta rufopicta: Bar-Breasted Firefinch (Wdsp. Res. C)  
Rare: one sighting at E.C.I. in grassy patch of worked-out farmland.

Vidua macroura: Pin-Tailed Whydah (Wdsprd. Res. C)  
Common in the area in small groups of 6 to 20 birds, though sporadic in appearance. Occasionally much bigger groups: dry season 1963/4 flocks of up to 100 noted at E.C.I.

(While this issue was in production I netted two specimens of Chorophoneus multicolor, the Many Coloured Bush Shrike on the edge of thick secondary forest at E.C.I. on January 5th 1968. The two birds may have been moving together as they entered the net from the same direction during a period of 30 minutes between inspections. One was the Orange Breasted morph, the other the much rarer Black-Breasted phase).

Author's Note: The status designations which follow the English names of species treated in the article are taken from Elgood's Check List of the Birds of Nigeria (1964) and of course refer to Nigeria as a whole, and not the Ilaro area. E.g. Striped Swallow. (Sav. Res. C.)

References: Elgood, J.H. (1964) A Check List of the Birds of Nigeria (Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. I (1): 13-25).

Bannerman, D.A. (1952). The Birds of West and Tropical Africa (2 Volumes).

Button, J.A. (1967) The Birds of Ilaro (Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 4 (13/14): 19-20) for maps of the area.