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Two-stage northerly local migration of the Grey-headed Kingfisher,
Halcyon leucocephala.

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The Grey-headed Kingfisher, Halcyon leucocephala, is an annual visitor to the Zaria area between mid-March and early June. Some recent unexpected Zaria records in late October and early November, coupled with a similar October record in 1964, have prompted me to examine more closely the migration pattern of this species. So far as I am aware, there are no records for this kingfisher in Zaria between 11th June - 18th October, and 3rd November - 11th March.

The Table summarises most of the recent published records of H. leucocephala in or near Nigeria. It is divided into four main sections each corresponding to one clear phase in the migration pattern.

(a) From November to about the end of February, this kingfisher is found in open country within or on the edge of the forest zone of southern Nigeria and West Cameroun. It appears to be fairly common wherever there is derived savannah bush or cleared land within the latitude range $4.5 - 7.5^{\circ}\text{N}$. Breeding has not been reported within this zone during these months.

(b) In February (or perhaps late January) the first stage of northerly migration begins, which takes the birds into the true guinea savannah zone between latitudes of about 7.5° and 11.2°N . (In West Cameroun the southerly limit of the savannah zone in upland regions extends south to about 6°N). Breeding occurs within the period late January - early June in this zone, the earliest nesting records apparently being those of Shuel (reported in Bannerman, Vol. III, 1933) near Ilorin in late January and early February, and the latest that of Skinner and Fry (private communication) in Zaria in early June. Ilorin and Zaria are respectively near the southern and northern limits of the guinea savannah zone. In the intervening months, March - May, breeding is reported from several localities in the middle belt and Plateau provinces. Nest holes at the end of horizontal tunnels 3-4 ft. long are excavated in the banks of streams, borrow-pits, dried watercourses and in roadside embankments.

(c) As soon as the breeding season has finished in late May/early June, the second stage in the northerly migration occurs and Grey-headed Kingfishers appear in the Sudan and Sahel savannah zones north of latitude 12°N where they stay until about October. The most northerly record reported appears to be that of Bates who shot a specimen in June after rain in the Tazza basin (15°N) in Niger Republic. There are also records from Sokoto, Kano and Malamfatori (L. Chad) during this period.

(d) Southerly migration takes place in October and November as evidenced by the records near Zaria on 18th October 1964, 18th and 28th October 1968, 2nd November 1968 of birds presumably in passage. I would be interested to hear of other records of the Grey-headed Kingfisher from localities within the guinea savannah zones at this time of year. The southerly movement appears to be fairly rapid since the species is recorded in Southern Nigeria from November onwards. Migration of some birds may extend into late December as suggested by the late records for L. Natu (Bakura), L. Alo (Maiduguri) and Yankari Game Reserve, reported by Fry (1965).

The factor which appears to be the most important in determining the times of migration of many locally migrant species is the rainfall which, in turn, presumably controls the food supply. An examination

TABLE Summary of recent records of Halcyon leucocephala in or near Nigeria, grouped to show the migration pattern.

Dates of records	Place	Latitude	Observer	Notes on habitat, breeding, etc.
a) Nov - Feb	Ibadan	7.4°N	Elgood and Sibley (1964)	
Nov - Feb	Lagos	6.4°N	Sander (1957)	"Grass woodland country"
Nov - mid March	N.Okigwi divn.	6°N	Mann (1953)	"Open tree savannah"
December	Kumba	4.6°N	Serle (1950)	"Rush of migrants in 1st week Dec., most passing through"
early Dec - late Jan	Ilaro	6.9°N	Button (1968)	4 records only
late December	Mambila	7°N	Boulter (1964)	
Dec. 1962	Obudu	6.5°N	Elgood (1965)	"Forest edge"
late Dec - mid March	Owerri	5.5°N	Marchant (1942)	
Nov - March	Onitsha and Ogoja Province	6 - 7°N	Serle (1957)	"Open country"
Dry season	Umudin	6°N	Boulter (1965)	"Oil palm bush"
height of dry season	south	-	Elgood (1966)	
Feb. 1964	Tiv division	7.5°N	Gray (1968)	
b) late Jan - Feb	Ilorin	8.5°N	Shuel (vide Bannerman(1933)	Breeding in banks of Aser & Oyun rivers
March - April	Mesaje	6.6°N	Serle (1965)	"Upland savannah" - Breeding.
Feb - May	Vom	9.7°N	Smith (1964)	Breeding April-May
March - May	Benue & Niger Prov.	8-10°N	Serle (1939)	Breeding March-May
April	Birnin Gwari	11°N	Fry (1965)	"2 fledglings recently out of nest"
mid March - end May	Zaria	11.1°N	Fry (1965)	
late March - mid June	Zaria	11.1°N	Skinner (1968)	Breeding on banks of stream near Galma
18. April	nr. Kaduna	10.6°N	Skinner (1968)	Leaving nest hole on roadside bank
c) June - October	Malamfatori (L. Chad)	13½°N	Hopson (1964)	
May - October	Sokoto	13°N	Dobbs (1959)	
May - September	Kano	12°N	Sharland (1964)	
Rains (June)	Tazza (Niger)	15°N	Bates	
28. November	L.Natu, Bakura	12.9°N	} Fry (1965)	Isolated records
Late December	L.Alo, Maiduguri	12.7°N		
Late December	Yankari Reserve	10.1°N		
d) mid Oct - early November	Zaria	11°10' N	Skinner (1968)	On southerly passage

of the Table shows that the Grey-headed Kingfisher avoids the periods of very heavy rainfall in southern Nigeria on the one hand, and the periods of absolute drought in northern Nigeria at the other extreme. Instead, it shows a preference for localities with low to moderate rainfalls, of the order of 0.5 - 6.0 inches per month, and it is plausible to assume that these conditions produce a good supply of the large insects and particularly grasshoppers on which this kingfisher lives.

To summarise, it appears that the migration pattern of Halcyon leucocephala is as follows. About four months (November - February) are spent at the southern end of the range, in open country and clearings south of 7.5°N; and four to five months (June - October) are spent at the northern end of the range, north of 12°. The northerly migration takes place in two distinct stages and breeding occurs mainly between March and June in the intermediate guinea savannah zone. The southerly passage, which is fairly rapid, occurs in October and November.

Note: The vegetation zones referred to in this paper are as delimited by Keay (1959).

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FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON VICTORIA ISLAND, LAGOS.

APRIL TO OCTOBER, 1968

J. B. Heigham.

This year produced a sensational rainy season and Victoria Island was much wetter and had more standing pools and vegetation than during the same period in 1967 so that a number of differences in the bird population were noted. The chief of these was the continual presence of numbers of Palearctic waders, principally Whimbrels Numenius phaeopus, which were present throughout the period but whose numbers vastly increased during June (when they could be heard until as late as 10 o'clock at night calling as they flew over my flat) and went on increasing until it was estimated, through August and September, that about 1,000 were coming every night from east and west, but principally east, to roost round the stagnant pools in the middle of the sandflats. These numbers decreased in October and on the 28th October only one was seen on the Island. Greenshank Glottis nebularius, Redshank Tringa totanus and Ringed Plover Charadrius hiaticula were more numerous than at this period in 1967 and Wood Sandpiper Tringa glareola appeared up to 30 strong in August (not observed in 1967). Only pairs of Green Sandpiper Tringa ochropus and up to nine Marsh Sandpipers Tringa stagnatilis were observed during the period. A curious feature was the absence of Common Sandpipers Actitis hypoleucos between 1st May and 14th July, as they were numerous and ubiquitous both before and after these dates.

Other points relating to birds previously recorded which are worthy of note are as follows:-

African Black Kite Milvus migrans: The first African Black Kite of the new season was seen on 20th September.

Painted Snipe Rostratula benghalensis: A male and female were first observed in the same drainage ditch on 28th May (1967, 12th July); four chicks were seen with the adult male on 30th June (1967, 30th July) and three of them were able to fly short distances by 15th July. No more than three were seen thereafter and the last positive sighting was of a fully grown bird on 2nd September (1967, 28th August).

Kittlitz's Sandplover Leucopoliis pecuarius: Appears to have stayed longer this year (not seen after mid-September, 1967) because of the longer standing rain-pools and was still plentiful in mid-October.

Temminck's Courser Cursorius temminckii: Was more plentiful and widespread this year, being seen from 23rd May to mid-October. The largest number seen was 21 on 29th June (seen only in June, 1967, largest number 4).

Grey Pratincole Galachrysis cinerea: Was first seen this year on 6th July (1967, 23rd July) and only about 100 were seen on the Island by mid-October.

Senegal Coucal Centropus senegalensis: Was present throughout, together with the Rufous-bellied variety, but on 26th August two C. senegalensis were observed beside Kuramo Waters which appeared to be intermediate, both having rather dirty looking off-white throats and breasts and one having distinct chestnut tinge on the throat.