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BIRD RECORDS FROM GHANA IN 1967 AND 1968/69

Part 2. Northern Ghana.

by

R.W.W. Sutton.

Tumu is a large village in flat, monotonous, fairly open savanna, with, in the rainy season, plenty of grass and bushes and a fair number of trees, mostly fairly small. There was virtually no rain between October and March.

A few miles from the village was an extremely shallow valley. This was well wooded, though the watercourse dried up in the dry season, and is referred to on several occasions in the notes. On the edge of the village itself, there was a reservoir, with plenty of rank vegetation, especially at the head of it. This reservoir or dam is frequently referred to in these notes. Unless stated otherwise, all notes in this section come from Tumu. There are, so far as I know, no previous records at all of any prolonged sojourn in this area. Reference is made in some places to an Oxford University Expedition which visited the Mole Game Reserve in July-September 1968.

Little Grebe Podiceps ruficollis: Seen on the reservoir (maximum 3) in the rainy season from 20/5 onwards.

Long-tailed Shag Phalacrocorax africanus: A maximum of 7 present on the reservoir throughout the period.

Grey Heron Ardea cinerea: Single birds occasionally present at the reservoir through the period.

Black-headed Heron Ardea melanocephala: Two records of individuals on the reservoir on 7/5 and 13/5.

Purple Heron Ardea purpurea: Odd records of individuals by the reservoir between November and May.

Great White Heron Egretta alba: 1 by the reservoir, 19/5.

Little Egret Egretta garzetta: 1 by the reservoir, 10/11.

Cattle Egret Ardeola ibis: First seen 27/11. Thereafter recorded in large numbers, especially in the College compound, until mid-May.

Squacco Heron Ardeola ralloides: Ca. 20 apparently roosted in small trees at the head of the reservoir, 14/2. Not otherwise recorded.

Night Heron Nycticorax nycticorax: 1 adult by the reservoir, 23/2. 1 at Kulnaba, Navrongo, Upper Region (69 miles east of Tumu), 28/6.

White-backed Night Heron Nycticorax leuconotus: 1 adult at Kulnaba, Navrongo, in trees by the edge of a lake. I was told that this bird

or a similar one had been there for up to a month beforehand. According to Bannerman, this species has only been recorded before in Ghana on the Volta River at Yeji. It is thought to be mostly a forest species: it seems to be most unusual to find this species so far north of the forest.

Little Bittern Ixobrychus minutus: Singles recorded by the reservoir on two occasions, both in February, 9/2, and 19/2.

Dwarf Bittern Ixobrychus sturmi: Singles recorded by the reservoir, 20/10 and 15/1.

Hammerkop Scopus umbretta: From 21/9, odd birds were seen sitting quietly by the side of pools, streams, etc., or soaring overhead.

Woolly-necked Stork Ciconia episcopus: 2 seen at Nyanga, Mole Game Reserve, 70 miles W.N.W. of Tamale, Northern Region, 19/12. Recorded from Tumu 11/5 (2 feeding in a grassy and wooded valley) and 2/6 (soaring overhead).

Abdim's Stork Ciconia abdimii: All records in May. Ca. 50 drifting high overhead, 16/5: 41 passed over, 19/5: 2 found feeding in an open area on the edge of the village, 20/5. Did not reappear.

Wood Ibis Ibis ibis: Ca. 20 flying over the reservoir, 25/11.

Hadada Bostrychia hagedash: 1+ heard 4 miles from Tumu, 4/3.

White-faced Duck Dendrocygna viduata: Recorded from the reservoir, 10/11, 14/2, 24/6. (Maximum 12).

Pygmy Goose Nettapus auritus: Recorded from the reservoir, 10/11 and on several occasions in May and June: (Maximum 6).

Spur-winged Goose Plectropterus gambensis: 2 on the reservoir, 16/1. 2 at Kulnaba, Navrongo, 28/6.

Ruppell's Vulture Gyps ruppellii: 2 recorded from the Mole Game Reserve, 11/1: however, having subsequently seen this species commonly in Mali, I am not absolutely positive of the identification.

White-backed Vulture Gyps bengalensis: At least 7 recorded from Tumu between September and June (I think this figure is misleadingly low). Many seen on Mole Game Reserve in December and January: it appeared to be the commonest vulture there.

White-headed Vulture Trigonoceps occipitalis: 1 over the compound, 8/12, and 1 on 19/5. 1 over Mole Game Reserve, 19/12.

Hooded Vulture Neophron monachus: Predictably ubiquitous near human dwellings.

Peregrine Falco peregrinus: Recorded on the College compound, 13/11 and occasionally thereafter: fond of chasing chickens in the village.

Red-necked Kestrel Falco chiquera: 1 at Jirapa (60 miles west of Tumu), 31/10, chasing swallows.

Kestrel Falco tinnunculus: 1 female over a burnt area, 24/11; another in trees on the edge of the village, 1/12.

Fox Kestrel Falco alopex: 1 recorded 25/11. 2 recorded 27/11: 1 recorded 14/1. All records are from areas where grass was being or had been burnt.

Grey Kestrel Falco ardosiacus: Individuals and pairs observed throughout the period especially near the College compound.

Swallow-tailed Kite Elanus rocourii: A dry season visitor: seen overhead on many occasions between 27/1 and 15/5.

Black-shouldered Kite Elanus caeruleus: 1 in a tree near the reservoir, 23/6 and 24/6.

Black Kite Milvus migrans: Mainly a dry season visitor. 18 passed overhead 26/9.

Bat Hawk Machaerhamphus gloinus: On 15/6, I was shown the remains of one at Navrongo that had been brought in moribund a couple of weeks beforehand. This seems to be at least 100 miles north of the most northerly record of this species in Ghana (from Tamale).

Tawny Eagle Aquila rapax: A dry season visitor to the bush fires in December and January: maximum of 3 at same time.

African Hawk Eagle Hieraetus spilogaster: Adults observed 10/11 (1), 27/11 (1), and 25/5 (2). Apparently only one previous record of this species from Ghana, from Gambaga (ca. 125 miles E.S.E. of Tumu). (Now recorded from Mole by Oxford group).

Martial Eagle Polemaetus bellicosus: Single observed overhead, 21/10, 24/11, 25/11, 9/5 and 1/6 (this last a juvenile). 1 adult sitting in a tree on Mole Game Reserve, 18/12.

Lizard Buzzard Kaupifalco monogrammicus: 1 adult seen 21/10, 18/1 and 9/2, on all occasions sitting in a tree.

Brown Harrier Eagle Circaetus cinereus: 1 adult sitting in a tree near the compound, 24/11. 1 at Konkori, Mole Game Reserve, 12/1.

Smaller-banded Harrier Eagle Circaetus cinerascens: 1 adult seen at close quarters on a telegraph pole near the College compound 23/9 and 24/9. 1 bird probably of this species in well-wooded bush, 4/6. 1 in a tree near Kulnaba, Navrongo, 28/6. It is possibly of significance that these records are from the rainy season only. There appears to be only one previous record of this species from Ghana. (from Yoji, ca. 250 miles S.E. of Tumu).

Grasshopper Buzzard Butastur rufipennis: Recorded on many occasions between 12/10 and 9/5. Especially numerous (maximum 12) near grass fires in November and December.

Bataleur Terathopius ecaudatus: The commonest eagle, recorded almost every day throughout the period.

River Eagle Haliaeetus vocifer: Recorded from trees near the dam below the motel on the Mole Game Reserve, 18-20/12 and 10-13/1.

Palm-nut Vulture Gypohierax angolensis: 1 at Nyanga on the Mole Game Reserve, 19/12.

Red-tailed Buzzard Buteo auguralis: 1 at Nyanga on the Mole Game Reserve, 19/12.

Shikra Accipiter badius: Seen frequently from 23/10 onwards.

Chanting Goshawk Melierax metabates: Pairs were fairly common in the area throughout the period.

Gabar Goshawk Melierax gabar: 1 juvenile 13/10; a pair of adults 30/11; 1 juvenile 28/1; 1 adult 9/2, 18/2 and 28/5. Many other probables. All records came from areas near the village itself. Gas (Nigerian Field 1954) is the only person to have recorded this species from Ghana before. However, Dr. Malcolm Edmunds of Legon University, Accra, informs me that he saw this species in his garden in 1968. The Oxford group thought they saw this species on Mole Game Reserve in August of the same year. I believe the species must occur unevenly in northern Ghana.

Pallid Harrier Circus macrourus: 1 by the reservoir 20/10. The only record.

Double-spurred Francolin Francoelinus bicalcaratus: Flocks observed on three occasions on the ground in a well-wooded valley.

Stone Partridge Ptilopachus petrosus: Despite the lack of rocks and crags in the area, this species was heard on many occasions in a well-wooded valley, and 2 were seen in another valley 11/5.

Grey-backed Helmet Guinea Fowl Numida meleagris: Very numerous, especially on the farms.

Black Crake Limnocorax flavirostris: First seen on the reservoir 15/1 and seen several times thereafter.

Lesser Gallinule Porphyrio alleni: First seen on the reservoir 15/1 and on several occasions thereafter.

Denham's Bustard Neotis denhami: Only 1 definitely identified at Tumu, 13/11. 1 by the motel on the Mole Game Reserve, 20/12. 1 seen newly-killed at Jirapa, 27/12.

Senegal Thiokknee Burhinus senegalensis: Commonly recorded from the reservoir after 10/11.

Jacana Actophilornis africanus: Abundant on the reservoir.

Painted Snipe Rostratula benghalensis: 2 at the reservoir 28/3 and 26/4.

Forbes' Plover Charadrius forbesi: A flock of 8 feeding on burnt ground 5/11. Thereafter seen on many occasions, seldom more than 3 together, till 15/5. It was to be found regularly on the edge of the reservoir till 15/5, on which date heavy rainfall filled the reservoir to cover the bare mud. 1 seen on burnt ground on the Mole Game Reserve; 18/12, and 3 there 11/1.

White-headed Plover Vanellus albiceps: 2 at Nyanga on the Mole Game Reserve, 20/12; 8 at Kulnaba, Navrongo, 28/6. Neither of these localities is near anything which can be described as a big river.

Senegal Wattled Plover Vanellus senegallus: Common in wet areas throughout the period. Up to 12 seen together on the edge of the reservoir in the dry season.

Black-headed Plover Vanellus tectus: 5 seen on the football pitch, 25/11. Up to 4 seen thereafter on several occasions in the same area in the dry season.

Common Sandpiper Tringa hypoleucos: 1 at the reservoir 9/2; 15 in the same place 26/4, and 3 there 7/5.

Green Sandpiper Tringa ochropus: 1 at Nyanga on the Mole Game Reserve, 19/12.

Wood Sandpiper Tringa glareola: Recorded frequently between 16/10 and 15/5 from marshy areas.

Redshank Tringa totanus: 1 at the reservoir 27/3.

Greenshank Tringa nebularia: 1 at the reservoir 19/10; 1 there 13/5.

Temminck's Courser Cursorius temminckii: 1 pair on the football pitch 24/11. 4 on a second playing field on the College compound, 25/11.

Pratincole Glareola pratincola: 1 at the reservoir 20/10. 1 there 26/4.

Four-banded Sandgrouse Pterocles quadricinctus: Ca. 30 seen flying in at dusk to drink from small pools, 5/11. From call-notes heard at night, the species was believed to be present at least until March. Numerous on the Mole Game Reserve in December and January, especially near the dam below the motel at dusk.

Speckled Dove Columba guinea: A pair was building a nest in a tree in the grounds of Jirapa hospital, 30/10.

Red-eyed Turtle Dove Streptopelia semitorquata: Recorded from 19/2 onwards in small numbers from the head of the reservoir.

Vinaceous Turtle Dove Streptopelia vinacea: Very many records throughout the period.

Senegal Dove Streptopelia senegalensis: Abundant at all times.

Namaqua Dove Oena capensis: A common dry season visitor. Most had left by May.

Black-billed Wood Dove Turtur abyssinicus: Several recorded in the period.

Yellow-billed Fruit Pigeon Treron waalia: Several records in all months.

Senegal Parrot Poicephalus senegalus: Many recorded from dry bush areas.

Long-tailed Parrakeet Psittacula krameri: 3 seen 6/10; 4 seen 11/5. Both records come from well-wooded areas.

Spotted Eagle Owl Bubo africanus: Seen on the roads at night, September to November.

Violet Plantain-eater Musophaga violacea: 1 in a well-wooded valley, 28/1.

Grey Plantain-eater Crinifer piscator: A few records of individuals, throughout the period, from dry bush.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo Cuculus canorus: 1 seen 22/9, another on 12/2. Both records come from near the edge of the village.

Great Spotted Cuckoo Clamator glandarius: 1 near the reservoir 14/12; 1 in the bush 10/5; 3 near the reservoir 15/5. 1 at Jirapa 31/10.

Pied Cuckoo Clamator jacobinus: 1 adult in bushes at the head of the reservoir 12/6. 1 adult near Kulnaba, Navrongo, 28/6. This is a rare species in Ghana. I know only of a record of the black-breasted phase and of the discovery of this species on the Mole Game Reserve in 1968 by the Oxford group.

Levaillant's Cuckoo Clamator levaillantii: 1 recorded from the compound 18/10; 3 recorded in the bush 11/5.

Didrie Chrysococcyx caprius: Many records from different areas throughout the period.

Senegal Coucal Centropus senegalensis: Many records in every month.

Freckled Nightjar Caprimulgus tristigma: 1 flushed from rocks on top of the Konkori Escarpment, Mole Game Reserve, 12/1. In Ghana, previously recorded only from the Gambaga and Nakpanduri area.

Standard-wing Nightjar Macrodipteryx longipennis on 15/5, the remains of one brought in 2 weeks before were shown to me at Navrongo.

Common Swift Apus apus: 1 on 22/9 was the only autumn record. In spring, recorded as follows: at Nandom (70 miles west of Tumu), on 21/4, a huge number passed overhead after a large storm. I estimated 900 passed over my head in $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours, and the passage was probably on a very broad front - many thousands must have been involved. Oddly, the passage was westerly at first, but later the movement seemed to be in a reverse direction. Ca. 10 on the reservoir at Tumu, 26/4; Ca. 200 there 7/5; Ca. 30 there 15/5; Ca. 200 there 25/5; singles there 26/5 and 27/5; 1 over the school compound 25/6. According to Bannerman the spring passage is mostly finished by the end of April, so these records, especially the June one, are very interesting. There were, in fact, Swifts in the area throughout most of May: the above records refer to unusual numbers, which always coincided with violent storms.

(Pallid Swift Apus pallidus: The presence of this species with Common Swifts was very strongly suspected. If confirmed, this would be a new bird to Ghana).

Willoughby Lowe's Mottled Swift Apus aequatorialis lowei: The presence of this species was suspected for some time in May at the reservoir. It was confirmed on 15/5 when 2+ were seen at very close range. The crescentic mottled markings on the underparts were clearly visible, and this appears to separate these birds from the Central and East African races. Up to 3 were seen together drinking from the reservoir: when with other swift species, its size made the species distinctive from a long distance. The species was last seen definitely on 25/5. Individuals were, on occasions seen flying over the College Compound, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the reservoir.

On 20/4, at Nandom, 70 miles west of Tumu, large numbers of apparently large brownish swifts were seen flying very close to the ground: they could well have been of this species, but regrettably I had no binoculars at the time. It is also worth adding that the Oxford group in 1968 recorded a large brown swift, unidentified, at Mole Game Reserve.

This subspecies is, so far as I know, only known from Sierra Leone, where Lowe collected the only known skin, since when there have been no records at all.

White-rumped Swift Apus caffer: 1 over the reservoir, 19/2; Ca. 5 there 9/5; 2 there 11/6.

Little African Swift Apus affinis: Enormous numbers bred in the town. Up to 1000 regularly visited the reservoir.

Palm Swift Cypsiurus parvus: 3 near the compound 3/2; 2 over the reservoir, 15/5.

Ghana Spine-tailed Swift Chaetura ussheri: Ca. 30 drinking from the reservoir, 23/2; they were quite silent while drinking except that their wings were clapped quite loudly. 2 on the reservoir 26/4; 3 there 15/5.

A pair was seen near a baobab near Kulnaba, Navrongo, 28/6. The baobab was entered. Inside was a small saucer-like nest attached to the inside of the hollow trunk about 12 feet above the ground. 2 virtually-fledged young were clinging to the inside of the trunk a few inches from the nest, and could be picked off by hand. I believe that this species has not been found nesting in West Africa recently.

It will be seen that, with at least six species of swifts recorded at the reservoir in May, the numbers and movements were most impressive.

Abyssinian Roller Coracias abyssinica: Many records from 21/10 onwards till May, by when most had left.

Rufous-crowned Roller Coracias naevia: 1 on 10/11; 1 on 23/11; 1 on 30/11: these records all came from near the compound. Ca. 10 seen near Kulnaba, Navrongo, 28/6.

Broad-billed Roller Eurystomus glaucurus: 1 on 5/10; 1 seen 18/6: both recorded from near the reservoir.

Hoopoe Upupa epops senegalensis: 1 in dry bush 19/2. 6 seen on the Mole Game Reserve, 10-13/12.

Guinea Wood Hoopoe Phoeniculus purpureus: 2 in the dry bush, 5/10; 3 in the bush, 28/1.

Lesser Wood Hoopoe Phoeniculus aterrimus: 1 seen 5/10; 2 seen 6/10; another 8/12. All these records are from dry bush.

Pied Kingfisher Ceryle rudis: A pair lived on the reservoir throughout the period.

Giant Kingfisher Ceryle maxima: 1 on the dam below the motel on the Mole Game Reserve, 17/12; 1 at Kulnaba, Navrongo, 28/6.

Malachite Kingfisher Alcedo cristata: A pair lived on the reservoir throughout the period.

Senegal Kingfisher Halcyon senegalensis: Recorded in September and October from a small grove of trees near the College Compound.

Grey-headed Kingfisher Halcyon leucocephala: 1 at the reservoir 28/3; 2 there 26/4.

Striped Kingfisher Halcyon chelicuti: A few records from the area, mainly between September and December.

European Bee-eater Merops apiaster: Ca. 20 over the College Compound 29/9; 2 over the Compound 14/5. This species has only been recorded from Ghana on two occasions before, both times by Gass (Nigerian Field 1954).

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater Merops persicus: 6 at the reservoir 10/11; 10 there 20/11 and 21/11; 4 there 15/1; 10 there 12/2. 2 there 19/5.

Carmine Bee-eater Merops nubicus: 3 in the College Compound 13/5; the only records.

White-throated Bee-eater Merops albicollis: 15 in the bush 11/10; Ca. 50 over the Compound 24/10; Ca. 20 in a well-wooded valley, 28/1.

Least Bee-eater Merops pusillus: Up to 6 recorded regularly from the edge of the reservoir between October and May.

Red-throated Bee-eater Merops bullocki: Ca. 15 in a grove of trees near the College Compound, 6/10; 6 there 11/10; Ca. 20 there 13/10.

Swallow-tailed Bee-eater Merops hirundineus: First recorded 30/11 near the College compound (2); 5 seen 8/12; 1 seen 28/1; another 9/2; 1 on 10/5; 1 on 8/6; 1 on 23/6. A wide variety of habitats was involved, from dry bush to well-wooded valleys. One near Nyanga on the Mole Game Reserve, 19/12.

It does not seem, from these records, that this species does migrate south at the end of the rains as Bannerman suggested.

Grey Hornbill Tokus nanutus: First recorded 13/10. Common thereafter. Many appeared to be moving south in October and November.

Red-beaked Hornbill Tokus erythrorhynchos: 1 in a well-wooded valley, 4/2. 3+ near Kulnaba, Navrongo, 28/6.

Ground Hornbill Bucorvus abyssinicus: 3 seen on the Mole Game Reserve, 18-20/12. 4 seen there 10-13/12. 2 in or near some large baobabs near Kulnaba, Navrongo, 28/6. Not present at Tumu.

Bearded Barbet Lybius dubius: A few pairs and individuals present throughout the period, most frequently in the better-wooded areas.

West African Barbet Lybius vieilloti: Many records throughout the period, mostly from areas near the village.

Yellow-fronted Tinker Bird Pogoniulus chrysoconus: Abundant in every month.

Black-throated Honey-guide Indicator indicator: 1 juvenile recorded 20/9. 1 male recorded 20/5. Recorded from the Mole Game Reserve 11/12 (near motel) and 11/1 (2 males on the Konkori Escarpment). All records from well-wooded areas.

Fine-spotted Woodpecker Campythera punctuligora: 1 near the edge of the reservoir, 21/11.

Little White-spotted Woodpecker Dendropicus obsolotus: 1 male 29/11; 2 seen 8/12. These records are from fairly well-wooded areas. 1 on the Mole Game Reserve. 18/12.

Grey Woodpecker Mesopicus goertae: The commonest woodpecker in the area. Found breeding in a tree on the edge of the village, 30/11.

Buckley's Bush Lark Mirafra rufocinnamomea: Mainly recorded during the rains when their display flights made them conspicuous. One record in the dry season of 2 on 15/1.

Rufous-rumped Bush Lark Mirafra nigricans: 1 on a burnt area, 10/11.

Nigerian Sun Lark Galerida modesta: A common species recorded in every month, especially on football pitches.

Chestnut-backed Finch Lark Eremopterix leucotis: 1 trapped in the library, 10/10; Ca. 50 in a burnt area, 12/10; Ca. 30 in another burnt area, 30/10. Thereafter recorded very commonly throughout the dry season until May.

Yellow Wagtail Motacilla-flava: 1 at the head of the reservoir, 10/11; 3 there 26/4. I cannot say for sure which subspecies was involved.

Plain-backed Pipit Anthus leucophrys: Recorded from the Compound in every month.

Tree Pipit Anthus trivialis: 1 recorded 19/10.

Brown Babbler Turdoides plebejus: 2 in dry bush, 6/10; 1 in the bush, 12/2; 6 in a well-wooded valley, 10/5.

Blackcap Babbler Turdoides reinwardii: 2 in thickets by a river near Nyanga on the Mole Game Reserve, 19/12.

Garden Bulbul Pycnonotus barbatus: Abundant in the area in every month.

Spotted Flycatcher Muscicapa striata: 1 recorded 12/10; another 7/12.

Pied Flycatcher Muscicapa hypoleuca: 1 caught in a net 23/9; 1 seen 24/9; 1 netted 26/9; 1 seen 6/10; 1 seen 13/10. All records came from a grove of trees near the College Compound. These are the only records from Tumu, and I had the impression that they must have been on passage and have wintered further south. Thus when I visited the Mole Game Reserve, I recorded 3 by the motel in December and 2 there in January. The dates of the Tumu records are earlier than the dates given by Bannerman.

Grey Tit Babbler Parisoma plumbeum: 1 in trees in a well-wooded valley, 4/2. Its most noticeable habit was the constant fanning at a vertical angle of the tail.

Pale Flycatcher Bradornis pallidus: Many records in every month. Especially fond of burnt areas in the dry season.

Black Flycatcher Melaenornis edolioides: Pairs located in trees on the edge of the College Compound and in the well-wooded valley. Recorded from these areas in every month. A pair was seen near the dam below the motel on the Mole Game Reserve in January.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher Hyliota flavigaster: 1 in trees by a dry watercourse in the bush, 9/6. 1 on the Mole Game Reserve (near motel), 11/1.

Senegal Puffback Flycatcher Batis senegalensis: Many records from the area throughout the period.

Blue Fairy Flycatcher Trochocercus longicauda: 1 at Nyanga on the Mole Game Reserve, 20/12.

Paradise Flycatcher Tersiphone viridis: 1 pair seen in trees below the reservoir, 7/5; pairs seen there and in trees on the edge of the Compound in May and June. Apparently only present in the rains.

Kurrichane Thrush Turdus pelios: A secretive species. A few records from near the village throughout the period.

Wheatear Oenanthe oenanthe: 1 on open ground near the village, 14/1; seen there until 19/2.

Red-tailed Chat Cercomela familiaris: 2 on top of the Konkori Scarp, Mole Game Reserve, 12/1.

White-fronted Black Chat Myrmecocichla albifrons: 4 seen on the edge of a farm in dry bush, 10/5; 4 in the same place, 20/5. (1 was seen carrying food, and breeding could well have taken place).

White-crowned Cliff Chat Myrmecocichla cinnamomeiventris: 3 (1 male, 2 females) seen on top of the Konkori Scarp, Mole Game Reserve, 12/1. This species was first recorded from Ghana in 1964 at Nakpanduri. Konkori is about 150 miles W.S.W. of Nakpanduri. The species is not known west of Ghana.

Whinchat Saxicola rubetra: Recorded near the village 24/9 and 12/10, and commonly thereafter till 7/5.

Snowy-crowned Robin Chat Cossypha niveicapilla: 1 male in bushes by the edge of the reservoir 22/6 and 23/6.

Redstart Phoenicurus phoenicurus: 1 recorded near the College Compound, 13/10; 1 male in a garden near the reservoir, 9/12; Ca. 5 (some males) in the well-wooded valley, 28/1; 1 male there 12/2; 1 male in the bush, 22/2.

Whitethroat Sylvia communis: 2 near the College Compound, 30/11; 2 in the bush, 22/2.

Garden Warbler Sylvia borin: 1 netted near the College Compound, 24/9; 2 by the motel, Mole Game Reserve, 11/1. It seems from Bannerman that the September record is unusually early: the species, he states, does not arrive till November.

Blackcap Sylvia atricapilla: 1 female near the College Compound, 30/11.

Olivaceous Warbler Hippolais pallida: First recorded 10/11; thereafter heard and seen regularly in mango trees in the middle of the village. Last recorded in February.

Sedge Warbler Acrocephalus schoenobaenus: 1 in bushes and weed at the head of the reservoir, 9/2; 1 there 23/2; at least 1 there 28/3 and again on 26/4. This species has apparently only been rarely recorded from West Africa, and not from Ghana at all before. The identification was very carefully checked.

Nuthatch Warbler Sylvietta brachyura: First recorded 13/11; thereafter recorded on several occasions especially in mimosa trees, usually singly or in pairs.

Green-backed Eremomela Eremomela pusilla: Very many records in every month.

Grey-backed Camaroptera Camaroptera brachyura: Recorded on a few occasions between September and June.

Pantail warbler Cisticola juncidis: The presence of this species had been suspected for some time in June. Ca. 3 individuals finally identified 25/6 in an area of tussocky grass and scattered small trees.

Singing Bush Warbler Cisticola cantans: 1 skulking in bushes near the College Compound, 25/6.

Rufous Grass Warbler Cisticola galactotes: Finally identified on 23/6, this species was common in June and July in the reeds and weeds at the head of the reservoir.

Shortwing Grass Warbler Cisticola brachyptera: Finally identified on 25/6, this species was fairly common in dry bush areas in June and July, usually being seen singing at the top of a tree. The three-note song on a descending scale was most distinctive.

Moustached Scrub Warbler Sphenocacus mentalis: 1 in an area with thick undergrowth, 3/12; 1 in weeds and grass by a stream in the well-wooded valley, 4/2.

Red-winged Warbler Prinia erythroptera: Recorded from areas with thick bushes in every month.

West African Prinia Prinia subflava: Abundant in every month.

European Swallow Hirundo r. rustica: Confused with the Gambian Swallow, but was identified on various dates at the reservoir between 24/9 (Ca. 50) and 7/5 (3).

Gambian Swallow Hirundo r. lucida: Abundant resident in the village.

Pied-winged Swallow Hirundo leucosoma: Between 10/11 and 7/5 there were several records of this species, either by trees on the edge of an open area near the College Compound or on the reservoir. Maximum of 3 seen together.

Wire-tailed Swallow Hirundo smithii: 1 seen by a bridge above the reservoir, 19/10; a pair seen there subsequently on a few occasions afterwards. 1 seen by a bridge in the well-wooded valley, 4/2.

Red-rumped Swallow Hirundo daurica: A common species by the reservoir in every month.

Mosque Swallow Hirundo senegalensis: A common species in every month near the village,

Lesser Striped Swallow Hirundo abyssinica: A rainy-season visitor, first recorded in the College compound 5/5, and seen frequently in May-July, breeding in many buildings.

Sand Martin Riparia riparia: Autumn and spring migrant: 1 on the reservoir 20/10; on the same day, Ca. 10 were seen hawking over open ground in the evening: 1+ at the reservoir 23/2; 2 there 26/4; seen there on several occasions in May, notably 6 on 13/5 and 2 on 21/5. This species does not seem to have been recorded from Ghana before, and seems rare in most of West Africa. The identification was carefully checked in view of possible confusion with the Banded Martin.

House Martin Delichon urbica: Recorded throughout the period as follows: Ca. 20 on the reservoir, 19/10; 2 there 20/10; Ca. 6 in morning of 10/11, Ca. 100 in evening of the same day 200+ there 13/11; Ca. 100 there 30/11; 750+ there 9/12; 5+ there 26/1; Ca. 50 there 9/2; 3 there 23/2; Ca. 10 there 26/4; 2 there 21/5.

On 20/12, 750+ were seen drinking from the dam below the motel on the Mole Game Reserve. The impression gained from these records was of considerable numbers arriving in October and building up till December, after which numbers were considerably lower. It is surprising that there is, I believe, only one previous record of this species in Ghana, one seen by me at Nakpanduri in 1964.

Red-shouldered Cuckoo Shrike Campophaga phoenicea: Odd pairs recorded from thickly-wooded areas throughout the period.

White-breasted Cuckoo Shrike Coracina pectoralis: Several seen near the motel on the Mole Game Reserve, 19-20/12.

Glossy-backed Drongo Dicrurus adsimilis: Many records in every month.

Long-crested Helmet Shrike Prionops plumata: 8 seen in thick bush, 10/5; evidently an uncommon species near Tumu.

Emin's Red-backed Shrike Lanius gubernator: 1 male seen 26/9; another 12/10; another 20/10; and thereafter occasional records of single males until 10/5. All birds were seen perching on top of small trees in dry and fairly open bush. 1 male seen near Konkord on the Mole Game Reserve, 12/1. This is, according to Bannerman, a generally rare species.

Woodchat Lanius senator: First recorded 30/10. Seen frequently thereafter till 15/5, mostly in dry, fairly open areas.

Long-tailed Shrike Corvinolla corvina: 6 seen on farmland 28/1, and in the well-wooded valley on the same way: 4 there 4/2. Not a common bird in the area. 3 seen at Jirapa, 31/10.

- Barbary Shrike Laniarius barbarus: Heard in a bush near the reservoir, 13/11, and seen and heard there a few times thereafter.
- Gambian Puff-back Shrike Dryoscopus gambensis: 2 pairs resided in well-wooded areas near the College compound throughout the period.
- Brubru Nilaus afer: Single birds seen in dry bush areas occasionally, in every month.
- Black-crowned Tchagra Tchagra senegala: Very many records in every month.
- African Golden Oriole Oriolus auratus: Seen singly or in pairs on many occasions throughout the period.
- White-shouldered Black Tit Parus niger: Seen singly or in pairs in every month, mostly in areas of dry bush with plenty of trees.
- West African Penduline Tit Remiz parvulus: Recorded in small parties on many occasions from well-wooded areas in every month.
- Pied Crow Corvus albus: Present throughout the period in small numbers.
- Black Magpie Ptilostomus afer: Ca. 10 at Bugubelle, 20 miles south of Tumu: One pair was nesting in a thorn tree. Not present at Tumu itself.
- Amethyst Starling Cinnyricinclus leucogaster: First recorded 28/3, when large numbers were seen flying overhead in a westerly direction; Ca. 25 were found perching in trees near the reservoir with Purple Glossy Starlings. The species was thereafter seen till 7/5, but may have been overlooked, as the birds were somewhat wild and secretive.
- Swainson's Glossy Starling Lamprotornis chloropterus: Ca. 10 found with Purple Glossy Starlings in trees below the motel on the Mole Game Reserve, 18-20/12.
- Purple Glossy Starling Lamprotornis purpureus: A common bird, recorded in every month, with a maximum of 200 in a flock, 30/10 - such flocks were formed in the dry season. Especially fond of trees near the reservoir.
- Long-tailed Glossy Starling Lamprotornis caudatus: 2 seen at Bugubelle, 20 miles south of Tumu, 2/6. 1 at Kulnaba, Navrongo, 28/6. Also seen in Tamale near the West Hospital in May and June. Fond of thorn trees not found at Tumu itself.
- Yellow White-eye Zosterops senegalensis: Recorded frequently from well-wooded areas in every month.
- Beautiful Long-tailed Sunbird Nectarinia pulchella: First recorded when 2 males seen in trees and bushes by the reservoir, 26/4; seen subsequently in the same area May - July.
- Pygmy Long-tailed Sunbird Anthreptes platura: First recorded 11/10 when a pair was seen in trees in a dry bush area; males seen commonly after that till April when they began to lose their breeding plumage.

Copper Sunbird Nectarinia cuprea: Not observed until June, when it became common among bushes near the reservoir, e.g. 10 on 23/6.

Splendid Sunbird Nectarinia coccinigaster: 1 male seen 20/10 near the town, and another seen 16/1.

Scarlet-breasted Sunbird Nectarinia senegalensis: The commonest sunbird, recorded from trees in every month. A maximum of 20 in one flowering tree, 28/1.

Nile Spotted Creeper Salpornis spilonota: 1 on a small tree, 29/9; 1 in a mimosa tree, 20/11; 1 in the same place, 26/11 and 27/11. 1 in a grove of trees near the College compound, 29/11. On the Molo Game Reserve, 1 recorded near the motel, 20/12; a total of 3 (2 near the motel, 1 near Konkori), seen 10-13/1. All records therefore come at the end of the rains and the beginning of the dry season. Bannorman describes this as a rare species, but this does not seem to be the case in northern Ghana at least.

Yellow-fronted Canary Serinus mozambicus: Very many records in every month.

White-rumped Serin Serinus leucopygius: Recorded in all months between September and July. Attracted to pools of water in the dry season, and heard singing in trees from January onwards. Much less numerous than the Yellow-fronted Canary.

Cabanis' Bunting Emberiza cabanisi: 1 adult flushed from long grass and small trees near the College Compound, 16/10; 2 found in the same locality, 19/2.

Nigerian Little Bunting Emberiza forbesi: Many records from well-wooded or fairly thick savanna, September - November, but few records after that.

Rock Bunting Emberiza tahapisi: Very many records from the area in every month. Particularly fond of burnt areas.

Grey-headed Sparrow Passer griseus: Very many records from inhabited areas throughout the period.

Bush Sparrow Petronia dentata: Apparently the commonest bird near Tumu. An abundant breeder, recorded in every month. The yellow spot on the throat is not in the least noticeable.

Buffalo Weaver Bubalornis albirostris: Ca. 20 breeding in massive nests in trees in the middle of Lawra (70 miles West of Tumu), 31/10. Birds appeared to be feeding in the Post Office garden. The species was not present in December, but was seen in the same place 24/3. This species is not, it seems, previously recorded from Ghana, though being a bird of the semi-arid belt, the occurrence is not all that unexpected.

Sparrow Weaver Ploceopasser superciliosus: 1 on top of a large bush near the village, 19/10; 2 more in dry bush, 8/12; thereafter recorded on a few occasions till the end of the period.

Slender-billed Weaver Ploceus luteolus: First recorded 13/10, when 1 male was seen in grass and bushes near the College compound. A nest with 2 eggs was found suspended over a stream, 19/10, and thereafter the species was recorded on many occasions through to 20/5, especially near wet areas.

Vitelline Masked Weaver Ploceus velatus: Found breeding in September near the College compound, and believed present, though not in large numbers, throughout the period.

Village Weaver Ploceus cucullatus: Very many records from the village and wet areas in every month.

Red-winged Anaplectes Malimbus rubriceps: 1 female in a tree in the College compound, 29/9; 1 pair seen in a grove of trees near the compound, 27/11, 30/11 and 3/12. On the last date, one bird was seen carrying straw. 1 female near the motel on the Mole Game Reserve, 18/12.

Fire-crowned Bishop Euplectes hordaceus: Frequently seen in September and October in long grass and bushes especially near the reservoir.

Orange Bishop Euplectes orix: Very many records in September, October, June and July, especially from near the reservoir.

Napoleon Bishop Euplectes afra: Very many records in September, October, June and July from grass and weeds on the edge of the reservoir. Both this and the preceding species were in non-breeding plumage in the other months.

Yellow-mantled Whydah Euplectes macrourus: Many records September - January, June and July from many different habitats, but especially long grass.

Bronze Mannikin Lonchura cucullata: Very many records from the area in every month.

Warbling Silverbill Euodice cantans: The presence of this species was suspected from September in dry open ground with scattered bushes and trees. It was confirmed on 16/10 when 5 were identified; 3 were seen in the same area 21/10. 1 was seen in the same area 26/11; 1+ were recorded near the edge of the reservoir 26/1, and 6 were seen at the original site, 3/2. As this species can be easily overlooked, I think this species was in fact present at the end of the rains and throughout the dry season in small numbers. All records came from near the College or village. I can find only one previous record of this species from Ghana, from Gambaga.

Cut-throat Weaver Amadina fasciata: 1 male was caught in a net in a small garden near the College compound, 23/1. Bannerman records this species from Ghana in his 1953 work only, but gives no locality: it is evidently uncommon or rare in Ghana.

Quail Finch Ortygospiza atricollis: Recorded throughout the period in small numbers, especially from areas of tussocky grass and/or areas near water. Often caught in mist nets in the dry season. 10 was the largest number seen together.

Red-winged Pytilia Pytilia phoenicoptera: 1 feeding on the ground with Cordonbleus on a laterite road that ran through a grove of trees, 29/11; 1 in the same area, 3/12; 2 in a small garden near the College compound, 3/2.

Senegal Fire Finch Lagonosticta senegala: Many records from the area in every month: much attracted to pools of water in the dry season.

Lavender Fire Finch Estrilda caerulescens: 5 seen in long, dead grass in the well-wooded valley, 28/1; 6 there 4/2.

Black-faced Fire Finch Estrilda larvata: Several records from various areas in every month. Maximum of 11 in the well-wooded valley, 12/2.

Waxbill Estrilda astrild: Apparently scarce: the only record is of 3 from the well-wooded valley, 12/2.

Black-rumped Waxbill Estrilda troglodytes: Several records from both open and well-wooded areas in every month. Flocks of up to 20 recorded in September.

Orange-cheeked Waxbill Estrilda melpoda: Many records in every month from both open and well-wooded areas: much attracted to pools of water in the dry season.

Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu Estrilda bengala: Very many records in every month in all habitats: one of the commonest species.

Combassou Hypochera camerunensis: The nomenclature is probably wildly inaccurate. The Oxford Expedition on the Mole Game Reserve identified three 'species' of Combassou, two apparently new to Ghana. This to me implies that they are more likely to be colour variations than true species. Birds which corresponded unmistakably with the above-named species were seen at Tumu in breeding plumage in small numbers till December, being fond of open areas with a few scattered trees. Some were seen at very close range at pools of water in excellent light. This was one of the Combassous new to Ghana found by the Oxford Expedition.

Pin-tailed Whydah Vidua macroura: Males in breeding plumage were recorded commonly from September to November and in June and July.

Paradise Whydah Steganura orientalis: Single males recorded frequently from September to December. 1 male seen 14/1 without a tail was the last bird in breeding plumage to be seen. 1 male seen on the Mole Game Reserve, 19/12.

Cuckoo Weaver Anomalospiza imberbis: On 22/6 and 23/6, two birds were seen perching and feeding on top of a small bush growing in long grass in a wet area at the head of the reservoir. They had yellow heads and underparts, a brownish back faintly streaked and brownish wings. They were about $4\frac{1}{2}$ " - 5" long, about the size of a Napoleon Bishop or large cisticola (galactotes). The bill appeared brownish. One of the two sat on top of the bush for some time and uttered a brief jangly song, which to me was reminiscent of a Corn Bunting, but with none of the 'swizzle' associated with typical weavers. The flight was direct and weaver-like. This identification is based on a process of elimination, which is dangerous in West Africa: do any readers have any knowledge of this species which could assist? If confirmed, this would be the first record for Ghana of a species that is rare in West Africa.

REMARKS

I hardly recommend Tumu as an ornithological centre, as basically it is simply a typical part of flat and monotonous savanna. However a fair variety of species was recorded: the effect of the little reservoir will have been obvious - it was a real magnet for such birds that there were, and I refer in particular to the tremendous numbers of hirundines and swifts in certain months. As was to be expected, certain species rarely or never recorded in Ghana before were found, in some cases quite commonly. If anybody ever gets to exploring this part of northern Ghana again, I feel the Navrongo (east of Tumu) or Lawra (west) areas may be of interest.

My thanks go once again to all the staff of the Mole Game Reserve.

REFERENCES

Bannerman, D.A. (1953): Birds of West & Equatorial Africa. London; Oliver & Boyd.

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