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is occasionally abundant there.

I am surprised at Broadbent's record of a Palm-nut Vulture Gypohierax angolensis. It is certainly a migratory bird at Sokoto having been seen only in September and October (i.e. at the end of the wet season), and I emphasise that it is regular in its arrival and presumably in its departure. Also, the Swallow-tailed Kite Elanus riocourii is a visitor to Sokoto, appearing from late November to early February. I did not see any at Waza.

Neither did I see any Turtle Doves Streptopelia turtur which were recorded in such numbers by Fry.

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SOKOTO PROVINCE

(4) Excluding the Sokoto Town area

by

P.J.Mundy & A.W.Cook

The Province is large, 36,500 sq.miles in area, and approximately rectangular in shape, placed between the northerly coordinates of 14° and 11° 30' and the easterly coordinates of 3° 30' and 7°. Hence it lies almost wholly within the Sudan savanna belt, although at its southernmost limit it merges into Northern Guinea savanna. Annual rainfall varies from 500mm (=20") in the north to about 1000mm (=40") in the south of the Province, producing a range from north to south of 7 to 5 months respectively with less than 25mm of rain each month (for details see Elgood, Sharland & Ward, 1966, Ibis 108:86-88). Sokoto town itself, for instance, received 650mm (=25") of rain in 1970 and 473mm (=18.6") in 1971 (figures by courtesy of the Met. Office, Sokoto).

It should not be thought however that the Province presents a uniformly arid appearance. There are several east-west rivers that, although drying up superficially in the long dry season, yet maintain a subterranean flow sufficient to support some lush vegetation. Moreover, there are several lakes in the far north, that at Wurno having been described twice before (Podler 1970, BNOS 7:59; Mundy & Cook 1971, BNOS 8:42). And there is the River Niger itself, along the S.W. boundary of the Province.

Generally, of course, most of the Province is covered with the typical Sudan savanna vegetation - i.e. several different kinds of shrubs and trees, quite widely spaced with very little development of undergrowth. Acacia spp. predominate, and around Sokoto the species A. albida is the commonest. A good proportion of the Province, with its characteristic dry acacia woodland has been formally enclosed

as Forest Reserves: this should mean no hunting and no livestock intrusion. Some of this does occur, but it can be said that these natural woodlands are little disturbed by man or his beasts. Consequently such places would make most interesting ecological study area; as yet we ourselves have paid very little attention to them.

The human population of Sokoto Province numbered nearly $4\frac{1}{2}$ million in 1963 (Official Census), producing an average density of 120 persons per sq.mile; but the population is undoubtedly concentrated along the rivers, and especially the River Sokoto in its long arc through the Province from S.E. (i.e. Chafe $12^{\circ}N$, $7^{\circ}E$) to S.W. (on the River Niger near Kaoje $11^{\circ}25'N$, $4^{\circ}15'E$). These figures indicate that the human impact on the avifauna in the "bush" must yet be quite small - but contrast this with the modern situation around Sokoto (Mundy & Cook in prep.), which, being the State Capital, now has a population approaching 200,000; that is about 4% of that of the Province.

In summary then, Sokoto Province is a vast and largely unexplored part of Nigeria, ornithologically speaking. We have identified 23 species in the Province, not found within the Sokoto town area (arbitrarily taken as that area circumscribed by a 25 mile radius from the town), but have already reported on 6 of these species occurring on Kotorkoshi inselberg, being the only place we have seen them (Mundy & Cook, 1971, BNOS 8:46). Inselbergs, incidentally, are a characteristic sight in the Province.

Hammerkop Scopus umbretta seen at Maru ($12^{\circ}15'N$, $6^{\circ}30'E$), where it nests by the side of the River Sokoto.

Rüppell's Griffon Gyps rüppellii known only from Kotorkoshi inselberg where it nests during the dry season. The "bush" areas to the east and west of the main Sokoto-Zaria road are known to contain elephant, pig and antelope and no doubt this vulture finds its food there, if not further afield. During March 1972 we scaled the rock and A.W.C. was lowered by rope down the front face to one of the nests. He obtained good colour photographs of the single chick, which was healthy and unafraid; it tried to keep itself in his shadow. Meanwhile the adult flew agitatedly to and fro, returning to the nest shortly after A.W.C. began the ascent.

We wish to thank Mr.S.Diamond of the Advanced Teachers' College, Sokoto, for helping us in that climb.

It is necessary to mention here that the Griffon has been reported nesting in Senegal in December, when 2 nests were found each holding one chick (Morel & Morel 1962, Alauda 30, the list at p.256). No other details were given. This observation is the first confirmed breeding record of the Griffon in West Africa; our own previous statement was in error (Mundy & Cook 1972, BNOS 9:9).

Bateleur Terathopius ecaudatus seen only once in the far west of the

Province near Kangiwa ($12^{\circ}35'N.$, $3^{\circ}50'E.$). Bannerman reported it as common (vol. 1, Birds of Tropical W. Africa).

Brown Harrier Eagle Circus cinereus seen at least twice: once about 30 miles to the south of Sokoto in the Forest Reserve, and a second time near Kangiwa.

White-headed Plover Vanellus albiceps seen at Maru and occasionally at the many pools along the road towards Sokoto. Usually solitary. This approximate latitude of $12\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}N.$ seems to be the northernmost limit of its range; Dobbs saw it only twice in Sokoto during 9 years (Nigerian Field 1959, vol. 24, p. III).

Red-eyed Turtle Dove Streptopelia semitorquata: the furthest north that we have positively identified this species is at Lake Natu ($12^{\circ}40'N.$, $5^{\circ}55'E.$). We have never seen it around Sokoto, though often specifically checking for it. The habitat at Lake Natu is farmland with some patches of woodland, but otherwise open country (see Grimes 1971, BNOS 8:61). Bannerman (Birds of Tropical West Africa, vols. 2 and 8) and Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1970, Birds of West Central and Western Africa) disagree considerably over this bird's northern limit, drawing it much further south and north of Sokoto respectively. Dobbs (op.cit.) never saw it in Sokoto.

Long-tailed Parakeet Psittacula krameri resident at Maru where it no doubt breeds; also seen regularly at Lake Natu, but no further north than that. Hopson saw this bird at Malamfatori, latitude $13^{\circ}33'N.$ (1965, BNOS 1, (4):7).

Blue-naped Mousebird Colius macrourus sometimes seen at Maru and then often feeding in desert date trees, Balanites segyptiaca.

Rufous-crowned Roller Coccyzus naevia seen throughout the Province but always around Talata Kafara ($12^{\circ}30'N.$, $6^{\circ}05'E.$) and Argungu ($12^{\circ}40'N.$, $4^{\circ}35'E.$), and the nearest to Sokoto being 30 miles to the S.E. (latitude $12^{\circ}40'N.$). We have not seen it to the north of Sokoto, and again Dobbs (op.cit. p. 116) only saw it 3 times during 9 years in Sokoto.

Broad-billed Roller Myristomus glaucurus seen only once at Maru (cf. Serle 1943, Ibis 85:414).

Guinea Wood Hoopoe Phoeniculus purpureus occasionally seen in the Forest Reserves to the south of Sokoto in which town, unlike Dobbs (op.cit. p. 116), we have not seen it.

Giant Kingfisher Ceryle maxima seen once on the River Sokoto at Gusau ($12^{\circ}05'N.$, $6^{\circ}50'E.$), and once at Maru.

Red-throated Bee-eater Merops bullocki resident at Bungudu gorge (halfway between Gusau and Maru) on the River Sokoto, and Lake Natu, but not seen further north.

Red-rumped Swallow Hirundo daurica resident at Bungudu where it seems to nest; our notes agree exactly with Bannerman's (vol. 5, 252).

Sooty Ant-chat Myrmecocichla nigra seen only once, 30 miles S.E. of Sokoto (approximately 12° 40' N., 5° 05' E.), a male in woodland. As this seems to be its furthest extent westwards, the observation needs confirmation. (Mackworth-Praed & Grant, 1955, The Birds of E. & N.E. Africa, 284.)

Long-crested Helmet Shrike P. rionops plumata seen several times at Maru in small flocks.

Lavender Firefinch Estrilda caerulescens resident at Maru near the river where it congregates into small flocks.

Black-faced Firefinch Estrilda larvata seen only once, with a group of Lavender Firefinch at Maru.

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THE RED-EYED DOVE *Streptopelia semitorquata*

IN SIERRA LEONE

Grimes (1971, BNOS 8:31/32) asks for information on the distribution of the Red-eyed Dove. In Sierra Leone it is ubiquitous outside the forest. In the grass woodlands of the northern part of the country it vies with Streptopelia vinacea for the status of commonest dove; in the huge areas of farm bush which cover most of southern Sierra Leone it shares the position with Turtur afer; in the mangrove belt along the coast it is certainly the most common species, as also in the sandy coastal savanna and lake/river system of the extreme south. From the closed forest, however, it is virtually absent. I have never recorded it in the Peninsula forest at Freetown though it occurs sparingly in forest edge conditions. At Kasewe, 70 miles east of the Peninsula, it occurs regularly in the secondary planted forest which is broken up by clearings, but not in the remaining closed forest. In the