

## NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF KAKAMEGA FOREST

By

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Thanks to its remoteness from Nairobi, Kakamega Forest has seldom been regularly visited by ornithologists, so although the following notes are based only on sight records, they add considerably to what is known about the species of birds to be found there. As is well known, the Kakamega Forest is, in its botanical composition, different from any of the other Kenya forests, being in fact an outlier of Uganda and West African types. It contains some valuable timber trees which are being exploited and as a result there are large parts of the forest where the majority of the trees which formed the canopy have been felled. In these areas, thanks to the high rainfall, a dense secondary growth twenty to forty feet high has quickly formed. The Forest Department is carrying out a programme of "enrichment" of the cut-over areas and of some untouched areas which contain few valuable trees. For this purpose small clearings are made so that useful timber trees can be introduced in the natural habitat. Such small clearings are attractive to some species for feeding. Another feature of the forest is the occurrence of scattered grass glades, fringed with scrub, some having a fire-climax cover of scattered trees.

As no collecting was done there are inevitably lacunae among the birds of the difficult groups such as especially the Bulbuls, Warblers and Swifts.

The nomenclature used in the systematic list follows Mackworth-Praed and Grant - Birds of Eastern and North Eastern Africa (London 1952 and 1955). The numbers given to the species in that work are added for convenience. Mr. J.G. Williams, Curator of the Department of Ornithology at the Coryndon Museum, has kindly checked the manuscript and is responsible for the notes marked J.G.W.

147. Crowned Hawk-eagle, Stephanoaetus coronatus (Linnaeus)  
An inaccessible nest was occupied in late June and early July 1959 but the birds were disturbed by logging.
157. Banded Harrier-eagle, Circaetus cinerascens Müller  
One, 28th. August, 1959.
189. Forest Francolin, Francolinus lathamii (Hartlaub)  
It was probably this species which was very common but equally shy. (The common forest Francolin is 204 The Scaly Francolin, F. squamatus (Cassin): collected. J.G.W.)
217. The Crested Guinea-Fowl, Guttera edouardi (Hartlaub)  
Is not uncommon. J.G.W.
380. Olive Pidgeon, Columba arquatrix Timminck  
Always abundant.
383. Bronze-naped Pigeon, Turturoena delagorqueti (Delagorgue)  
Common.
394. Tambourine Dove, Tympanistria tympanistria (Timminck and Knip)  
Very common.

Birds of Kakamega Forest

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398. Lemon Dove, Aplopelia larvata (Temminck and Knip)  
Common in cut-over forest and drier parts of the primary forest.
406. Red-chested Cuckoo, Cuculus solitarius Stephens  
Seen only once on the edge of a glade.
416. Emerald Cuckoo, Chrysococcyx cupreus (Shaw)  
Common, though less so than in the surrounding cultivated country.
418. Klaas' Cuckoo, Chrysococcyx klaas (Stephens)  
Common in surrounding cultivated country but not seen in the forest.
424. Yellow-bill, Centhmocares aereus (Vieillot)  
Common.
432. Hartlaub's Turaco, Tauraco hartlaubi (Fischer & Reichenow)  
A party seen once on 28th. August, 1959.
437. Great Blue Turaco, Corytheola cristata (Vieillot)  
Common, emerging from the forest to feed in the high trees along rivers. The writer is not familiar with this species in Uganda but birds seen in Kakamega forest showed a noticeable green tinge on the neck, the feature by which Mearns separates a sub-species C.c. yalensis which is not accepted by Van Someren (Novitates Zoologicae, XXIX, No. 1, (1922)).
442. Grey Parrot, Psittacus erithacus Linn.  
Uncommon.
494. Blue-headed Bee-eater, Mellitophagus mulleri (Cassin)  
Commonly seen feeding in small open places, such as where a large tree had fallen, in the heavy forest.
500. Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill, Bycanistes subcylindricus  
(Sclater)  
Common. Feed largely outside the forest, especially in the large trees along the rivers.
509. Crowned Hornbill, Tockus albiterminatus (Buttikorfer)  
Scarce, probably feeding mainly outside the forest. Feeding young at a nest near the edge on 17th. May, 1959.
522. White-headed Wood-hoopoe, Phoeniculus bollei (Hartlaub)  
Regularly seen in the high trees of primary forest.
570. Narina's Trogon, Apaloderma narina (Stephens)  
Common. Especially attracted to 'enrichment glades' for feeding. Apparently of the Congo race, A.n. brachyurum Chapin, or perhaps intermediate, having a green suffusion on the chest.
571. Bar-tailed Trogon, Heterotrogon vittatum (Shelley)  
Regularly seen, behaving much as the last species. A male seen at very close quarters appeared to have the top of the head of a blue-green colour and so was perhaps also of the Congo race, H. v. camerunensis Reichenow.

586. Grey-throated Barbet, Gymnobucco bonapartei Hartlaub  
One flock seen. Its habit of perching at the top of high trees may make it seem less common than it is.
590. Yellow-spotted Barbet, Buccannodon duchaillui (Cassin)  
Common, especially in secondary forest.
597. Golden-rumped Tinker-bird, Pogoniulus bilineatus (Sundevall)  
Common, mainly in secondary forest, but also found feeding even in the undergrowth of heavy primary forest.
604. Yellow-billed Barbet, Trachylaemus purpuratus (Verreaux)  
Common.
610. Least Honey-Guide, Indicator exilis (Cassin)  
One small honey guide, almost certainly of this species hawking insects on 11th. October, 1959. (The Thick-billed Honey-Guide Indicator conirostris (Cassin) 609, and 608 Lesser Honey-Guide I. minor Stephens have been collected. J.G.W.)
623. Cardinal Woodpecker, Dendropicos fuscescens (Vieillot)  
In thin woodland round glades etc.
632. Yellow-crested Woodpecker, Mesopicos xantholophus (Hargitt)  
One pair seen in cut-over forest, October, 1959.
649. Sabine's Spinetail, Chaetura sabini Grey  
Several usually to be seen in an area centering on a point about one mile east of Rondo Sawmill. (Vide J.E.Afr.Nat.Hist.Soc. Vol. XXIII No. 7, 1960). Subsequently to the writer's discovering these birds in the Kakamega Forest Mr. B. Monroe from the Louisiana University Natural History Museum shot specimens, of which some are in the Coryndon Museum collection. He told the writer that he had found the species in other parts of the forest also but in 1959 they were never seen except at the locality mentioned above.
660. Flappet-Lark, Mirafra rufocinnamomea (Salvadori)  
In the grassy glades it was common. Nest with young hatching 4th. April, 1959.
740. Abyssinian Hill-babbler, Pseudoalcippe abyssinicus. (Ruppell)  
Only one seen in the higher eastern part of the forest at 5600 ft.
746. Bristle-bill, Bleda syndactyla Swainson  
Not common. Feeding often in mixed bird "waves" which included flycatchers and wattle-eyes. (Commonly taken in mist nets. J.G.W.)
770. Joyful Greenbul, Chlorocichla laetissima (Sharpe)  
On the edges of clearings in secondary forest rather than in primary forest.
776. Yellow-whiskered Greenbul, Stelgidocichla latirostris (Strickland)  
Common.
811. Shrike-flycatcher, Megabyas flammulatus Verreaux  
Common in October but not seen at any other time.

Birds of Kakamega Forest

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813. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Hyliota flavigaster Swainson  
Noted from primary and secondary forest as well as from a grass glade with scattered small trees.
822. Wattle-eye, Platysteira cyanea (Muller)  
Not as common as the next two species, though found commonly in clumps of trees outside the forest, as for example in Kakamega boma.
824. Chestnut Wattle-eye, Dyaphorophya castanea (Fraser)  
Common. Sometimes feeding in mixed bird parties.
825. Jameson's Wattle-eye, Dyaphorophya jamesoni Sharpe  
The commonest wattle-eye in some parts of the dense forest.
826. Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye, Dyaphorophya concreta (Hartlaub)  
Common in places. Like the other species of wattle-eye it seemed to prefer areas where comparatively small trees of open habit were scattered not too densely.
827. Blue Flycatcher, Erranornis longicauda (Swainson)  
Very common on the edge of the forest glades but never within the forest.
831. Dusky Crested Flycatcher, Trochocercus nigromitratus (Reichenow)  
Common. Seen feeding in mixed bird parties including wattle-eyes.
832. Paradise Flycatcher, Tchitrea viridis (Muller)  
In thickets in glades, but not in the forest proper.
841. Olive Thrush, Turdus olivaceus (Linnaeus)  
Not common.
889. Blue-shouldered Robin-chat, Cossypha cyanocampter (Bonaparte)  
Not common.
898. Equatorial Akalat, Sheppardia aequatorialis (Jackson)  
Common in the densest parts of the forest.
901. Fire-crested Alethe, Alethe castanea (Cassin)  
One only seen in a rather dry part of the forest in May, 1959.
965. Uganda Woodland Warbler, Seicercus budongoensis (Seth-Smith)  
Seen once feeding in an 'enrichment glade'.
969. Fan-tailed Warbler, Schoenicola brevirostris (Sundevall)  
Appeared in numbers in a glade having rank vegetation during July, 1959.
972. Buff-throated Apalis, Apalis rufogularis (Fraser)  
Common.
973. Grey Apalis, Apalis cinerea (Sharpe)  
Not seen in the forest proper but in an isolated forest patch in cultivated country three miles to the west.
976. Black-backed Apalis, Apalis nigrescens (Jackson)  
Seen twice only, in July 1959.

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977. Black-collared Apalis, Apalis pulchra (Sharpe)  
Common.
1007. Brown-crowned Eremomela, Eremomela badiceps Fraser  
Common in small flocks.
1011. Grey-backed Camaroptera, Camaroptera brevicaudata (Cretschmar)  
Common in bush areas surrounding the forest but remarkable  
for its absence from the forest proper. This is in contrast  
with its inhabiting of forests east of the Rift Valley.
1048. White-chinned Prinia, Prinia leucopogon (Cabanis)  
Common in undergrowth in more open parts of the forest.
1049. Banded Prinia, Prinia bairdii (Cassin)  
Common in undergrowth in small clearings.
1053. Black-faced Rufous Warbler, Bathmocercus rufus (Reichenow)  
Common in the undergrowth of the primary forest but showing  
no noticeable preference for marshy places as indicated by  
Mackworth-Praed and Grant. Occasionally feeding on the  
ground.
1082. Petit's Cuckoo-shrike, Campephaga petiti Oustalet  
Common in some places in glades with scattered trees, and  
also on the edge of the high forest.
1083. Red-shouldered Cuckoo-shrike, Campephaga phoenicia (Latham)  
Not seen in the forest proper but watched building in an  
isolated forest patch a few miles to the west, 4th. to 6th.  
June 1959.
1084. Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike, Campephaga quiscalina Finsch  
Not seen in the forest but noted in dense bush in Kakamega  
township and probably also occurs in the forest.
1086. Grey Cuckoo-shrike, Coracina caesia (Lichtenstein)  
Seen only once, and being an easily seen species, is probably  
therefore scarce.
1087. Velvet-mantled Drongo, Dicrurus modestus Hartlaub
1089. Square-tailed Drongo, Dicrurus ludwigi (Smith)  
Both these species were present but it was frequently diffi-  
cult to distinguish them. The former appeared to be the  
commoner.
1110. Mackinnon's Shrike, Lanius mackinnoni Sharpe  
Characteristic of the bushy grassland and areas outside the  
forest but one pair seen regularly, and probably nesting, in  
an area of secondary forest which was cut by a narrow road.
1127. Ludher's Bush-shrike, Laniarius ludheri Reichenow  
Common.
1132. Pink-footed Puffback, Dryoscopus angolensis Hartlaub  
Common in secondary forest.

Birds of Kakamega Forest

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1134. Brown-headed Bush-shrike, *Tchagra australis* (Smith)  
Not in the forest proper but noted in an open pine plantation.
1141. Grey-green Bush-shrike, *Chlorophoneus bocagei* (Reichenow)  
Common in the bush or glades but not in the heavy forest.
1157. Dusky Tit, *Parus funereus* (Verreaux)  
Common. Nesting 31st. May, 1959.
1167. Black-headed Oriole, *Oriolus larvatus* Lichtenstein  
Common.
1185. Sharpe's Starling, *Pholia sharpei* (Jackson)  
Large flock, of which the majority were young birds, on 4th.  
October 1959.
1209. Stuhlmann's Starling, *Stilbopsar stuhlmanni* Reichenow  
Common.
1266. Green-headed Sunbird, *Cyanomitra verticalis* (Latham)  
Common on the edge of the forest.
1271. Collared Sunbird, *Anthreptes collaris* (Vieillot)  
Common; characteristic of the forest edges. Building 25th.  
October, 1959.
1272. Grey-throated Sunbird, *Anthreptes tephrolaema* (Jardine & Fraser)  
Uncommon.
1335. Dark-backed Weaver, *Symplectes bicolor* (Vieillot)  
Common, occurring in deep primary forest. Seen once  
associating with Black-billed Weavers (q.v.). Building 4th.  
October, 1959.
1344. Vieillot's Black Weaver, *Melanopteryx nigerrimus* (Vieillot)  
A nesting colony at the forest station in *Acrocarpus* and  
other exotic trees was occupied in June and July, 1959. The  
species was not an inhabitant of the indigenous forest.
1346. Black-billed Weaver, *Heterophantes melanogaster* (Shelley)  
Common in secondary growth. See Dark-backed Weaver above.
1356. Red-headed Malimbe, *Malimbus rubricollis* (Swainson)  
Common.
1374. Marsh Widow-bird, *Coliuspasser hartlaubi* (Bocage)  
In marshy parts of glades.
1376. Red-naped Widow-bird, *Coliuspasser laticauda* (Lichtenstein)  
Several in a large glade on 13th. June, 1959.
1380. Black-and-white Mannikin, *Spermestes poensis* (Fraser)  
On forest edge.
1386. Grey-headed Negro-rinch, *Nigrita canicapilla* (Strickland)  
Inhabiting very dense undergrowth in cut-over forest and  
very hard to observe.
1391. Red-headed Blue-bill, *Spermophaga ruficapilla* (Shelley)  
Probable. Very retiring in undergrowth. (Common; often  
collected in mist nets) J.G.W.

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