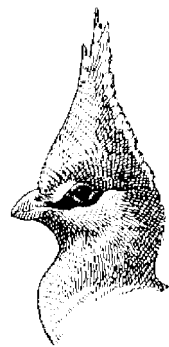


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**by Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire**

**2006**

**Tauraco Research Report No. 8**



**Tauraco Press,  
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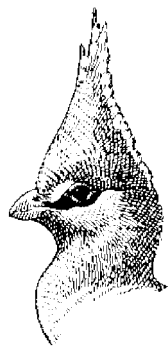


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## An annotated list and life history of the birds of Nyika National Park, Malawi-Zambia

by Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire

### INTRODUCTION

The Nyika Plateau is the largest montane complex in south-central Africa, with an area of some 1800 km<sup>2</sup> above the 1800 m contour – above which montane conditions prevail. The scenery is spectacular, with the upper plateau covered by *c.* 1000 km<sup>2</sup> of gently rolling *Loudetia-Andropogon* grassland, dotted about with small patches of low-canopy forest in hollows. Numerous impeded drainage channels support dambos. These high-altitude *Myrica-Hagenia* forest patches (at 2250-2450 m) are often no more than 1-2 ha in size, and cover about 2-3% of the central plateau. The highest patch of low scrubby forest is to be found at 2500 m, on the slope of the peak (Nganda Hill, a grassy hill at 2607 m). Only the wet eastern escarpment is extensively forested, with some 34 km<sup>2</sup> of tall *Ocotea-Ficalhoa* rain forest from 1700, mostly 1900-2350 m. An equally tall but drier type of rain forest (*Olea-Aningeria*) reappears on the gentle south-western escarpment (1950-2250 m), on both sides of the Zambia-Malawi border, but it is rather fragmented. Total forest cover in the park is *c.* 60 km<sup>2</sup>.

*Brachystegia* (miombo) woodland is the dominant vegetation type on the dry northern escarpment, and below the forest zone in the south-west; tall woodland ascends to at least 2050 m on the western side. Miombo is most extensive in the northern extension of the park (established in 1978) – an area of rugged terrain, broken hills and large faulted valleys.

The area above 2000 m has never been permanently inhabited by man; the high plateau was gazetted a national park in 1965, after the Forestry Department had established a few small plantations of exotic conifers and Eucalyptus in the 1950s, the main one being at Chelinda Camp. The present park covers 3134 km<sup>2</sup> in Malawi, in addition to a small section (80 km<sup>2</sup>) on the Zambian side. The Nyika is an important catchment area and contains the source of four large rivers which drain into Lake Malawi, including the North Rukuru, whereas on the Zambian side the Chire stream drains into the Luangwa River. The watershed that forms the international boundary provides the only access route to the Plateau. The main entry gate (at Thazima) is at 1600 m, in miombo, and the exit gate on the way to Nthalire (at Kaperekezi) is at 1500 m; the northern margins of the park (e.g. Uledi) approach 1000 m in altitude, whereas along the eastern escarpment the park's boundary fluctuates mostly between 1500-2000 m.

Famous for its outstanding beauty (well illustrated in Carter 1987), its large numbers of game (including Eland, Roan Antelope, Zebra and Reedbuck), the Nyika Plateau occupies a unique biogeographical position within the highlands of Tanzania-Malawi. Several species of orchids (la Croix *et al.* 1991) and butterflies (Dowsett-Lemaire *et al.* 2001) are endemic, and at least one amphibian (Critchlow 2001c). The Nyika highlands are also of considerable conservation importance for several montane bird species of restricted range, some of which are represented by endemic subspecies (see below). Over more than a century, and especially in the last 40 years, the Nyika has been much visited, by explorers, collectors, tourists, researchers; the present account aims at presenting a summary of the state of knowledge of its rich avifauna, listing all species recorded within the boundaries of the national park. Naturally more importance is given to the better-studied montane species of forest and forest edges for which the Nyika Plateau is such an important refugium.

### The history of exploration of the Nyika Plateau

The first major collection of birds was obtained by Alexander Whyte in June 1896 (Shelley & Sclater 1897): Whyte walked up the eastern escarpment from Livingstonia (then Khondowe) Mission and, after a short rest in Karonga, came back via the northern foothills (passing by Mpanda Mtn). He collected 57 species, of which a significant proportion were from the lower escarpments (e.g. *Phyllastrephus cerviniventris*, *Hypargos niveoguttatus*), with altitudes as low as 915-1220 m (3000 or 4000 feet) given for a few species. Specimens of note included the first *Lanius souzae* in Malawi, and the high montane *Nectarinia afra whytei* and *Serinus striolatus*. But it is in June 1895 that the very first specimen had been obtained on the Nyika, of no less than the endemic race of *Francolinus levaillantii*, by Richard Crawshay, named *crawshayi* by Olgilvie-Grant (1896). It seems very little was added around the turn of the century: *Streptopelia lugens* was collected by

Alfred Sharpe's staff in 1902 (Belcher 1930), and C.W. Benson (in Benson & Benson 1977) discovered in the British Museum two specimens of the erratic *Creatophora cinerea* dating from April 1903. There is no write-up of the species collected by the surveyor John McClounie (Head of Research at Zomba) on his visit in September 1902, but at least the type-specimens of the following races were obtained by him on the eastern Nyika (Shelley 1903): *Phyllastrephus flavostriatus alfredi*, *Cossypha anomala macclounii*, *Pseudoalcippe abyssinica stictigula* and *Nectarinia johnstoni salvadorii* (renamed *nyikensis*, as *salvadorii* was preoccupied). In his account of this journey, McClounie (1903) mentions only one unidentified night bird, evidently (from its song) *Caprimulgus poliocephalus*, which was formally identified on the Nyika much later, in 1937 (Benson 1940-41). Other montane species mentioned by Belcher (1930) which were discovered at about that time include *Apaloderma vittatum* (Mwenembwe, Nyamkhowa) and *Cisticola nigriloris* (Nyamkhowa); *Euplectes psammocromius* was first collected in September 1902 (Belcher 1930), thus the collector was probably McClounie.

One has to wait indeed until Benson's first visits in November 1937 and again in 1938 (in total about three weeks, including Nyamkhowa Mtn, the eastern escarpment and high plateau) to learn more about the typical high-altitude avifauna. Thus about 90 species are listed (Benson 1940-41): with few exceptions (e.g. *Buteo oreophilus*, *Schoutedenapus myoptilus* – discovered much later) the avifauna of the extensive forests of the eastern escarpment was by then basically identified, including the more discreet species such as *Alethe fuelleborni*, *Sheppardia sharpei*, *Illadopsis pyrrhoptera* and *Linurgus olivaceus*. Most of the characteristic species of high montane grassland and forest ecotones were also found, including *Accipiter rufiventris*, *Mirafra africana nyikae*, *Hirundo atrocaerulea*, *Chloropeta similis*, *Cisticola ayresii*, *C. nigriloris* (but see above), *Ploceus baglafaecht nyikae*. Just before Benson's own visits, in the mid-1930s, the Reverend W.P. Young (based at Livingstonia) collected a few birds on the eastern escarpment (especially at Nyamkhowa) and this is mentioned in Benson (1940-41). C.W. Benson apparently revisited the Nyika more briefly in September-November 1940, which is when he collected *Cisticola njombe* and described its song (first under *C. lais nyikae*, re-identified as *C. njombe* in Benson 1947-48); Benson (1942) includes another two species from that year.

After the war, the Bensons revisited the Nyika in mid-October 1947, obtaining breeding records for half a dozen species (Benson & Benson 1949). The herpetologist Arthur Loveridge then visited the forests of the eastern escarpment in October-November 1948, collecting specimens and breeding data with the help of Jali Makawa (Benson's collector); these breeding records were written up by Benson (1951), with some other details also given in Peters & Loveridge (1953); Loveridge produced the first record (a specimen) of *Tyto capensis*. The faunal significance of the Nyika Plateau in a regional context was discussed by Benson (1953).

There is then another major gap in the publications covering the Nyika, as very little additional information was obtained before 1-12 January 1964, when C.J. Vernon, accompanied by C.W. Benson and C.S. Holliday, explored the south-western escarpment, mainly within the small Zambian sector. The first was particularly interested in the breeding ecology of *Cisticola* (Vernon 1964) and *Chloropeta* species (Keith & Vernon 1966); other reports of note include the first record and specimen of *Sarothrura affinis* (Benson & Holliday 1964), and the discovery of *Malaconotus multicolor* in Chowo forest (Benson & Irwin 1967). C.J. Vernon kept notes on altitudinal distribution of species on the (Zambian) western escarpment, many of those being listed in Benson *et al.* (1970), but they are now largely superseded by more recent observations. G.S. Keith visited the Nyika in late December 1964 and was the first to report the much-overlooked *Schoutedenapus myoptilus*, from Chowo (in Keith & Vernon 1969). R.J. Dowsett (1969, 1970) collected on the Zambian side in November 1969 (including the first Zambian specimen of *Cryptospiza reichenovii*). The 1970s saw quite a regular stream of keen amateur ornithologists from Zambia, such as D.R. Aspinwall, S.G. Madge, T.O. Osborne, E.H. Penry, J.J. Tucker (who was the first to ring birds in Chowo and around the Zambian rest house in 1972). R.J. Dowsett revisited for several weeks in October 1973, December 1975-January 1976, November-December 1977 (then accompanied by the author), during which netting and ring-ing of birds was continued on the Zambian side. Papers updating the status of various migratory and resident species on both sides of the border appeared in the *Bulletin of the Zambian Ornithological Society* (Aspinwall 1971, Aspinwall *et al.* 1973, Dowsett *et al.* 1974).

The first annotated list of birds for the high Nyika Plateau (excluding woodland from the lower slopes) was presented by Dowsett (1969); an update was reprinted in 1978, most of the additions being migrants and waterbirds with the notable exception of *Buteo oreophilus*, discovered over the eastern escarpment in 1977 (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1979b). This was followed by another update (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1980) after our first year of residence on the Plateau.

In October 1979 R.J. Dowsett and the author came to live on the Nyika as independent research biologists (funded from Belgium) for two and a half years, leaving in March 1982. Our main research project aimed at investigating the territoriality, longevity, breeding productivity and movements (if any) of montane forest birds in the fragmented forests of the south-western escarpment, the forest-grassland mosaic on the Nyika providing an ideal situation for the study of the population dynamics of species isolated on the tops of mountains. RJD selected the Starred Robin *Pogonochla stellata* for a more detailed study (Dowsett 1982) and carried out intensive ringing and retrapping of all forest birds in Chowo and some Zovochipolo patches; birds were individually colour-ringed for easy monitoring. Over a thousand breeding records (back-dated to month) were thus obtained (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1984). With a small number of birds netted from 1972 (as mentioned above), 2030 forest birds of 33 species had been ringed by 1982 (Dowsett 1985); with non-forest species added the grand total was nearer 2450 birds. Translocation experiments of ringed birds just before breeding were carried out across 6 km to test the navigation ability of various species (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1986: only two species managed to return, *Pogonochla stellata* and some of the *Batis capensis*!). Various publications cover the territorial and breeding behaviour of forest species (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a, 1983b, 1983c, 1983d), their breeding productivity (Dowsett-Lemaire 1985a); the ecology and limited mobility of forest birds were discussed in the light of further research elsewhere in Malawi in 1982-84 (Dowsett-Lemaire 1989a). Our main findings showed that forest birds are essentially strongly territorial, long-lived, produce few young (they are single-brooded and refrain from breeding in some years of poor rainfall) and there is a large surplus of floaters waiting for their turn to get hold of a territory and breed; short distances of grassland are no barrier to dispersal but long-distance dispersal of resident species is a slow, irregular process for which some species have more ability than others. The study of forest and ecotone vegetation (Dowsett-Lemaire 1985b, see also Dowsett-Lemaire 1989c) led to investigations of the feeding requirements and resource partitioning of frugivorous birds (Dowsett-Lemaire 1988a) and of sunbirds (Dowsett-Lemaire 1989b).

We continued to pay short visits to the Nyika in 1982-1983 (including Nyamkhowa and Nkhonjera Hill), and on our very last one in October 1986 resighted a number of our old colour-ringed birds in the south-west, the longevity record being held by a 15-year old *Phyllastrephus flavostriatus* in Chowo (Dowsett & Leonard 2001). From February 1985 to March 1987 Mike Dyer was resident on the Nyika, being attached to National Parks as research and planning officer (funded by a Canadian NGO). His main subjects of research did not, however, include birds; Dyer (1992) published a short study on the territoriality of *Grus carunculatus*. Dyer (1988) presented an annotated list of the birds, basically a compilation of earlier lists, records by himself or located in the files held at Chelinda, in addition to woodland species from the lower escarpments. Dyer's report does not, however, include records of note nor any of the breeding records published in *Nyala* in the early 1980s. It omits a number of species or observations mentioned in earlier documents (e.g. Dowsett 1978), adds some of doubtful identity and "months" of breeding activity contain errors; some are taken from Benson & Benson (1977) and are not related to Nyika data.

David Critchlow (employed by National Parks in research and management) lived on the Nyika from October 1993 to September 1996, being based at Thazima for the first three months then at Chelinda. He published several notes on selected species (Critchlow & Haugaard 1996, Critchlow 2001a, 2001b); both M. Dyer and D.P. Critchlow made incidental observations on migrant or unusual species and contributed significantly to the Atlas scheme (see below). Many other people contributed information on migrants or other species, including several Game Wardens (notably J.M. Feely posted at Lundazi in Zambia in the early 1960s, others posted on the Nyika like A.P. Ziegler who discovered *Lybius minor* and *Estrilda perreini* at Thazima in 1981, and D.O. Elias in 1981-83). In about 1994 Bob Medland, a keen birder based in Lilongwe, prepared a bird tick-list for the national park, published by the Wildlife Society.

Various people contributed to the bird Atlas scheme, a project we started in 1980 in conjunction with an update on *The Birds of Malawi* of Benson & Benson (1977). We kept up-to-date lists of every map square (based on the 1:50,000 maps), which allowed for a more precise outline of distribution of birds within the national park.

### Scope and sources of the present list

The list includes all species (resident, migrant, vagrant) recorded within the boundaries of the national park. Sources include all published articles and notes, scattered observations that appeared in the local bird literature (*Vocifer* and *Nyala* in Malawi, the *Newsletter of the Zambian Ornithological Society* in Zambia), numer-



ous personal observations, records kept on file at Chelinda Camp, numerous verbal or written communications by various residents and regular visitors.

Until 1979 R.J. Dowsett entered all records onto a card system by species, giving dates, observers' names and a reference where applicable, but many were unpublished observations. We continued to do this while we were resident, but this ideal system could not be kept up after we left northern Malawi in 1983 and doubtless some unpublished observations of rare migrants went unnoticed.

Another major source of information is the bird mapping project. The Nyika Plateau consists of five main Atlas squares: 1033B4 and 1033D1-4. 1033D1-2 are very well covered; 1033D3-4 reasonably so; 1033B4 is largely taken up by woodland of the northern escarpment, and has been much less well documented: although we visited Nganda Hill (in the south of that square) we never entered the miombo belt. Most (unpublished) information for that square was provided by staff based at Chelinda, mainly D.O. Elias, M. Dyer and D.P. Critchlow; nevertheless a number of common, ubiquitous species remain unrecorded. Much the same goes for 1033B2, which is however more marginal but includes Mpanda Mtn and its foothills; some of the gaps were filled by R.J. Dowsett on a day trip in October 1986. Nyamkhowa Mtn is the one significant forest site within the Nyika that is outside the main squares, in 1034C1: it was visited by early explorers, especially Benson, and by ourselves in December 1982, and the composition of the forest avifauna is considered well known.

From the tick-list prepared by R.D. Medland in 1994, 11 species included then have been deleted as we found no satisfactory evidence for their presence within the park. Sixteen others have been added: some are recent records of erratic species (cf. Critchlow & Haugaard 1996 among others), and there are also a number of overlooked, older records. The accepted species total is now 430. In a number of cases the species status indicated by Medland (n.d.) is inaccurate: for example some of the rarer vagrants are mentioned as "common residents" when there are no more than one-three records (e.g. *Vanellus senegallus*, *Streptopelia senegalensis*); other extremely local or marginal species receive the same status ("common") as their ubiquitous congeners (e.g. *Pogoniulus bilineatus* vs *P. leucomystax*, *Andropadus virens* vs *A. nigriceps*) and this could confuse visitors who are unfamiliar with the avifauna of northern Malawi.

Unlike Dowsett (1978) and Dyer (1988) who gave months of records but no years nor observer's names, I present here the full details for the rarer species (dates and observers' names, locations, a reference where applicable); for commoner migrants the general status is summarized, with details given of extreme dates only (including the sources). For resident species and intra-African breeding migrants, a summary is given of their ecological requirements, altitudinal range, territory sizes, breeding seasons and other details of their life history, including longevity where known. The food plants of the more specialized frugivores and nectarivores are also mentioned, especially where they can explain the birds' localized distribution and/or seasonal movements; interested readers can find more information in the relevant publications.

### Some ecological considerations

**1. The distribution of forest species across the Plateau.** The distribution of forest birds on the high Nyika is not uniform: some species are confined to the moist eastern escarpment (*Buteo oreophilus*, *Pogoniulus bilineatus* (local), *Illadopsis pyrrhoptera*, *Andropadus milanjensis*, *Phylloscopus ruficapilla*, *Linurgus olivaceus*), others to the south-west (*Andropadus virens* (local), *Apalis cinerea*, *Terpsiphone viridis*, *Dryoscopus cubla*, *Malaconotus multicolor*, *Nectarinia verticalis*); many are absent from the low-canopy (10-15 m) patches on the top. The height of the canopy decreases with increasing altitude, from 25-30 m at 1950-2150 m, 20-25 m at 2150-2250 m, and 10-15 m at 2250-2450 m (Dowsett-Lemaire 1985b). There is a general impoverishment in floristic diversity, tree height and bird species diversity with increasing altitude (for further details see Dowsett-Lemaire 1989a).

The extensive rain forest of the eastern escarpment (Nyamkhowa, Mwenembwe, Kasaramba) is much wetter, richer in epiphytes, and with extensive Acanthaceae shrubbery which appears particularly suitable for *Illadopsis*; *Sheppardia sharpei* is more widespread there than in the south-west, where it is largely confined to Manyenjere forest, the most luxuriant patch in the area. The eastern forests, being on a steeper gradient, have a more open canopy, and many species common to both escarpments appear to occur at much lower densities (e.g. *Apaloderma vittatum*).

**2. The miombo avifauna.** The status of the bird species inhabiting the wooded slopes is less well known, except for the Thazima area and other parts of the south-western escarpment which have been much visited.

Our information from the northern scarp in particular is incomplete. However, the miombo woodlands of the Nyika are most extensive in the rain shadows and are certainly drier and less mossy than those on both Viphya Plateaux; it is probably not surprising that *Ploceus olivaceiceps* has never been reported, as the mossy woodland it favours is largely lacking. Other miombo endemics are very marginal as they are restricted to the lower levels: *Tockus pallidirostris* and *Tricholaema frontata* do not reach the altitude (1600 m) of Thazima; others (*Erythropygia barbata*, *Serinus mennelli*) are not found much higher than this; only a handful occur all the way to the upper limits of tall woodland at 2000-2050 m: *Monticola angolensis*, *Sylvietta ruficapilla*, *Cisticola woosnami*, *Anthreptes anchietae*, *Nectarinia manoensis*, *Parus griseiventris*, *P. rufiventris*. Other woodland species (not endemic to miombo) such as *Turdus libonyana*, *Erythropygia leucophrys*, *Eremomela scotops*, *Batis molitor* and *Emberiza cabanisi* occur marginally above the woodland limit, in wooded grassland to 2150 m.

**3. Open habitats (grassland, rocks and waterbodies).** The extensive Nyika grasslands are home to a number of montane species in the genera *Francolinus*, *Sarothrura*, *Caprimulgus*, *Coturnix*, *Psalidoprocne*, *Hirundo*, *Cisticola* and *Euplectes*, and a montane race of lark (*Mirafraga africana nyikae*). Small populations of *Grus carunculatus* and *Neotis denhami* breed; as mentioned below both are of conservation concern on an African scale. Occasionally large flocks of migratory storks fly over the Plateau, but rarely stop unless they are grounded by poor weather. Quite a variety of raptors inhabit the high plateau, including all four vultures, at least two of which are known to breed locally. Seasonally a few migratory raptors (*Aquila*, *Buteo*) pass over the south-western Nyika in large numbers, especially on their northward journey in February-March. Although one or two rocky domes are impressive (especially Fingira Rock), they are not of large size and are isolated in a sea of other habitats; the large rocky inselbergs and cliffs of south-central Malawi are not represented on the Nyika, and only the more common passerines, swifts and small raptors of rocky ridges and boulders are to be found.

With the small size and high altitude of artificial or natural pans, the numbers of waterbirds present on the Nyika at any one time are very low: few breed (*Tachybaptus*, *Fulica*, a couple of ducks) and most species are recorded on passage, with the highest number as mere vagrants. The Nyika Plateau having had high observer coverage over many years, it may not be surprising that some rare migrants or vagrants have not yet been recorded anywhere else in Malawi to this day, such as *Oxyura maccoa* and *Limicola falcinellus*.

### Biogeographical and conservation importance of the Nyika Plateau

Within the Afromontane archipelago-like region (White 1983), the highlands of northern Malawi are closely allied to those of Tanzania: within this region a striking latitudinal trend of species impoverishment is observed from north to south. Thus the following montane species reach their southern limits of range on the Nyika: *Streptopelia lugens*, *Chloropeta similis*, *Cisticola njombe*, *Apalis cinerea*, *Nectarinia johnstoni*, *Ploceus baglafecht*, *Euplectes psammocromius*. The *Ploceus* is represented by an endemic race (*nyikae*) and is indeed not present anywhere else in northern Malawi; *Nectarinia johnstoni* belongs to the race *nyikensis*, which is also probably endemic to the Nyika (although the species was observed once in the Mafingas). Another two species are represented by distinctive endemic races, far-isolated from other populations on the continent: the francolin *Francolinus levaillantii crawshayi* and the sunbird *Nectarinia afra whytei*; both are very common. *Illadopsis pyrrhoptera nysae* is endemic to the eastern Nyika and adjacent North Viphya Plateau, being isolated from populations to the north in western Tanzania by some 650 km. The distinctive race *nyikae* of *Mirafraga africana* is found nowhere else in Malawi but is shared with some highlands of southern Tanzania.

A few of the montane species occurring on the Nyika are of restricted range, i.e. limited to the highlands of northern Malawi and southern Tanzania: these are *Sheppardia sharpei*, *Cisticola nigriloris*, *C. njombe*, *Euplectes psammocromius* and the distinctive race *alfredi* of *Phyllastrephus flavostriatus*. *Cisticola njombe* and the *Euplectes* occur nowhere else in Malawi, but both are very common on the Nyika (as are most of the endemic races listed above). As if this were not enough to stress the special importance of the Nyika Plateau for the preservation of these local species, other, more widespread species breeding on the Nyika are also of conservation concern as they have lost much suitable habitat elsewhere on the continent: *Grus carunculatus* and *Hirundo atrocaerulea* are listed as "Vulnerable" by BirdLife International (2000, 2004). The Wattled Crane breeds in small numbers and is experiencing difficulties due to the poor fire-break management; the Blue Swallow, on the other hand, is more numerous, and with some 300 pairs (see species account),

the Nyika population is probably the most healthy in the African highlands. Other species of (lower) conservation concern on the Nyika include *Neotis denhami* (which breeds), the vulture *Torgos tracheliotus* (which is more common on the Nyika than anywhere else in Malawi) and several Palaearctic migrants: *Circus macrourus* is particularly common; *Crex crex* and *Gallinago media* winter in smaller numbers.

### Conservation issues

The park has no buffer zone and the agricultural use of surrounding areas is increasing, to the point that virtually no miombo woodland remains along the Bolero-Thazima road all the way to the entry gate. This means that there is no longer any woodland corridor between Vwaza Marsh W.R. to the south-west and the park. The northern extension area (dating from 1978) includes 2000 km<sup>2</sup> of miombo woodland that was formerly inhabited by several small communities. Their expulsion resulted in much resentment and there is political pressure on the National Parks to release land back to the people. A. Watson (*in litt.* 2002) recently saw some encroachment in the south, in the region of Fingira. Poaching pressure in the north has become so important that the small remaining population of Elephants (normally based in the northern extension) has been occasionally coming up to the top of the Plateau in the 1990s, something that was hardly ever observed in previous decades.

The cold, forested eastern escarpment was never inhabited but the lower edges of the forest continually suffer from bush fires and are slowly receding. In the dry season uncontrolled fires sweep up onto the plateau and cause serious damage to the small patches of forest scattered over the grasslands. From about 1953 (then under the management of the Forestry Department) and until the 1980s there was a strict "early burning" fire-break policy that protected most forests from the more virulent fires of the late dry season; thus by the 1980s there was significant forest regeneration in many areas. This system has broken down since, fires being started by poachers as well as Parks' staff all the time during the dry season (D.P. Critchlow pers. comm. 2002), thus undoing in a few years of neglect more than 30 years of active protection. In 2004-05, however, the situation improved somewhat, with an increase in assistance to the Department of National Parks from outside sources.

### SPECIES LIST

Names of observers, with initials as used in the list, are the following:

D.R. Aspinwall (*DRA*), J.D. Atkins (*JDA*), J. Auburn (*JA*), C. Badger (*CB*), G. Baker (*GB*), M. Bamford (*MB*), I. Bampton (*IB*), I. Barber (*IBa*), M. von Bechtolsheim (*MvB*), M. van Beirs (*MvBe*), C.W. Benson (*CWB*), S. Berg (*SB*), N. Borrow (*NB*), G. Brown (*GB*), W.F. Bruce-Miller (*WFB-M*), C. Bruessow (*CB*), Mrs G.R. Bullock (*GRB*), E.L. Button (*ELB*), C. Carter (*CC*), J. Chapman (*JC*), N. Cleere (*NC*), B. Coates (*BC*), J.F.R. Colebrook-Robjent (*JFRC-R*), R.A. Critchley (*RAC*), D.P. Critchlow (*DPC*), R. Cumming (*RC*), R.J. Dowsett (*RJD*), Mrs F. Dowsett-Lemaire (*FD-L*), M. Dyer (*MD*), D.O. Elias (*DOE*), Mrs E. Elias (*EE*), M.I. Evans (*MIE*), J.M. Feely (*JMF*), D. Foot (*DF*), H. Gibbs (*HG*), M. Gore (*MG*), A.H. Green (*AHG*), P. Gregory (*PG*), R. Groves (*RG*), J. Harvey (*JHa*), C. Haskard (*CHa*), J. Haugaard (*JH*), J. Hough (*JHo*), C. & L. Huxley (*CH & LH*), N. Johnston-Stewart (*NJ-S*), Mrs I. la Croix (*IlaC*), P.C. Lemon (*PCL*), P.M. Leonard (*PML*), S.G. Madge (*SGM*), M. Mallalieu (*MM*), G. Martin (*GM*), W. McClelland (*WMc*), R.D. Medland (*RDM*), P.C. Middleton (*PCM*), T.A. Mill (*TAM*), B. Mwapeyah (*BM*), T.O. Osborne (*TOO*), E. Paterson (*EP*), E.H. Penry (*EHP*), M. Petzold (*MP*), B. Pollard (*BP*), R. Casalis de Pury (*RCP*), G.P. Robinson (*GPR*), C. Saunders (*CS*), A.J. Scott (*AJS*), E. Spenner (*ES*), D. Stead (*DS*), P. Steyn (*PS*), R.J. Stjernstedt (*RJS*), P.B. Taylor (*PBT*), M. Trusler (*MT*), J.J. Tucker (*JJT*), M. Turner (*MTu*), C.J. Vernon (*CJV*), F. van Vuuren (*FV*), B. Walker (*BW*), A. Watson (*AW*), Dr von Weber (*vW*), P. Womfor (*PW*), R.C. Wood (*RCW*), N. van Zalinge (*NZ*), A.P. Ziegler (*APZ*), R.P. Zimmerman (*RPZ*).

#### Abbreviations of status:

**PM** = Palaearctic migrant; **AM** = intra-African migrant; **R** = resident (not excluding some local movements); **V** = vagrant or irregular visitor. **R/M** indicates a species that is normally resident in Malawi but shows regular seasonal movements on the Nyika.

**Figure 1.** Map of the Nyika Plateau, adapted from White *et al.* (2001).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

**R.** Occurs in small numbers on the dams around Chelinda, apparently since the early 1960s (*PCL* in Critchlow 1997a) when the three dams were built. Seems absent in some months (especially Jan.-Mar.), but in 1980-82 we had records overall for all months except Feb. Was proven to breed in 1996, when a pair with five small chicks was seen on 10 Feb. (Critchlow 1997a), suggesting egg-laying Jan.

Reed Cormorant *Phalacrocorax africanus*

**V.** No more than a rare visitor to dams: one individual visited Chelinda Dam 2 in Jul. 1987 (*MD*), and another Chelinda Dam 1 on 19 Aug. 2000 (*BM*). It was also reported from Chisanga Falls on 27 Aug. 1994 (*SB per DPC*).

African Darter *Anhinga rufa*

**V.** Exceptional vagrant: one at Lake Kaulime on 3 Jan. 1982 (*BW*).

White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*

**V.** One exceptional observation of an immature flying north over Zovochipolo (2200 m) with a large flock of Abdim's Storks on 2 Feb. 1981 (*RJD & FD-L*).

Common Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

**V.** Only three records on the plateau, all at Chelinda Dam: one seen 24 Oct. 1973 by *MT* (Dowsett *et al.* 1974); another in Oct. 1986 (Dyer 1988); three (including an immature) on 11 Mar. 1994 (*DPC*).

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

V. Small numbers occasionally seen in the vicinity of the dams or Lake Kaulime (*FD-L & RJD, DPC*), even once near the Zambian rest house (Apr. 1955: Dowsett 1969, 1970). Overall recorded at any time of year (months of Feb.-May, Sep., Nov.-Dec.); the largest number seen was 21 (28 Mar. 1986 at Dam 2, Dyer 1988).

Green-backed Heron *Butorides striata*

V. An exceptional record of a vagrant to Dam 1, 18 Nov. 1998 (*BP*). *DPC* saw the species in reeds near Thazima, on a tributary of the Luvini on 28 Dec. 1995, but this was outside the park.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

V. Rare visitor to waterbodies: one at Lake Kaulime 30 Oct. 1972 (Dowsett *et al.* 1974); one at Dam 1 on 20 Feb. 1980 (*FD-L & RJD*); two at Dam 1 on 1 Dec. 1995 (*DPC*) and one at Dam 3 on 14 Jul. 2000 (*DF*).

Yellow-billed Egret *Egretta intermedia*

V. Scarce visitor to waterbodies: one at Dam 3 in Feb. 1973 and one at Lake Kaulime on 27 Dec. 1973 (Dowsett *et al.* 1974). As many as three at Chelinda Dam on 8 Dec. 1991 (*NZ*), singles on 10 Nov. 1993 (*RDM*), 12 Feb. 1994 and 26 Nov.-5 Dec. 1995 (*DPC*).

Great White Egret *Egretta alba*

V. First one reported from Dam 2 in Feb. 1973 (Dowsett *et al.* 1974); one at Lake Kaulime 17 Jan. 1981 (*FD-L & RJD*); two at Chelinda 12 Apr. 1992 (*DF*); sightings of singles at all three dams on 1 Jan. 1994, 2 Feb. 1995 and 8-22 Dec. 1995 (*DPC*); one at Dam 3 on 14 Jul. 2000 (*DF*).

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

V. One exceptional record of a vagrant at Chelinda Dam, coming to roost on 25 Oct. 1992 (*RDM*).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

V. Two records of single vagrants at Chelinda Dam, 23 Sep. 1992 (*RDM*) and 7-12 Jul. 1993 (*CH & LH*).

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*

V/R. First reported in 1969, in grassland on the edge of Dam 1 (three birds in Mar., then one in Aug.: Dowsett *et al.* 1974). Singles have been noted quite often at the same locality in later years, mainly in the rains (*FD-L & RJD* in 1980-82, *MD* in 1985-86, *DPC* in 1993-1995). Presumably present but unreported in other years.

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*

V/R? Singles irregularly reported from Chelinda dams (Feb. 1969, 25 Feb.-2 Mar. 1972 by *RAC*), Chelinda (29 Oct-2 Nov. 1972 by *EHP*), Dam 3 and Lake Kaulime (Oct. 1973, *RJD*). One at horse stables (Chelinda) and Dam 1 in Aug.-Sep. 1995 (*DPC & DF*) and Jan. 1996 (*DF*). Could breed in the foothills.

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*

V. The first record is of a flock seen by *TOO* in May 1975 on the Zambian/Malawi border. Dyer (1987) noted six at Lake Kaulime on 30 Nov. 1985 and three at Dam 3 on 24 Oct. 1986; five visited Chelinda dams on 12 Apr. 1992 (*DF*); one flew over Chelinda on 21 Feb. 1995 (*DPC*) and seven flew over "Nganda camp" (in 1033B4) on 14 Apr. 1997 (*JH et al.*).

Openbill Stork *Anastomus lamelligerus*

AM. Critchlow (2001a) summarized the occurrence of groups flying over or roosting on the high Nyika from 1976 to 1996. In that time, flocks were noted on seven occasions, mainly in Mar. (2) and Apr. (4), once in Dec. The largest was 250 over Vipiri Rocks (1033D2) on 4 Apr. 1994 (*MD & DPC*), followed by 120 over Manyenjere on 18 Dec. 1976 (*DRA*). Since then small groups were seen at Chelinda on 14 Jul. 1997 (*DF*) and 17 Apr. 2000 (*RC*).

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

R? Only three records traced: one on the northern slopes (1033B4) on 4 Aug. 1981 (*EE*) and seen again in the area in the mid-1980s (Jun., *MD*), one at Thazima on 6 Aug. 1981 (*APZ*). The last was presumably a wan-

derer; there may be nesting habitat in the northern rocky woodland, but this has not been investigated.

Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii*

**AM.** Overall months of observation, of birds passing through, are Dec.-Mar. and marginally early Apr. Significant numbers fly over the Nyika in some years: in Dec. 1963 about 200 flew south on the 10th and 150 the next day (*JMF*); in Feb. 1981 northward passage was noted on at least three dates (2-25), with a maximum of 110 on the 2nd, and 90 on the 25th (*FD-L & RJD*). About 30 were grounded near Chelinda on 17 Feb. 1982 (*RJD*). An unusual 1500 birds (minimum) were flying south on 22 Dec. 1989 (*MB & RDM*), and 150-200 over Chelinda as late as 8 Jan. 2002 (*DPC*); also of note is a flock of well over 500 grounded in Zovochipolo on 24 Jan. 1994 (*DPC*). Further records since of northward passage, of 52 on 29 Feb. 1993 (*MP*), and up to 200 feeding near Chelinda on 11 Feb. 1995 with smaller groups seen later that month, then one roosting in Eucalyptus by Dam 1 on 6 Mar. and a late one near stables on 15 Apr. (*DPC & DF*).

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*

**V.** Exceptional vagrant, with one immature walking through grass near Dam 3 (Chelinda) on 22 Dec. 1995 (Critchlow & Haugaard 1996).

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

**PM.** Small numbers noted on passage most years (e.g. Oct.-Nov. and Feb.-Mar. during our period of residence). The earliest arrival date reported is 9 Oct. (1981, five birds, *FD-L & RJD*). The normal "last date" seems to be one bird on 15 Apr. (1995: *PW*). A few are occasionally reported in the off-season, probably over-summering, for example two on 15 May 1986 (*MD*), one on 6 Jun. 1992 (Anon.), one on 2 May 1994 (*DPC*) and three on 3 Jun. 1996 (*DF*). And of older records, two were reported in mid-May 1962 (*PCM*) and one in Jun. 1963 (Anon.). Very few seem to winter, e.g. 12 on 26 Jan. 1992. The largest number we saw was 19 birds (passing on 4 Mar. 1980), but *DPC* saw as many as 45 on 5 Feb. 1994 (over Chisanga Falls) and 140-150 over the plateau on 16 Mar. 1996.

Saddlebill *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*

**V.** There are three old records of single vagrants: one was at Lake Kaulime on 14 Nov. 1959 (*AHG*); others were noted in Nov. 1956 and mid-May 1962 without details (Dowsett *et al.* 1974).

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumeniferus*

**V.** At least three old records (pre-1977), two considered "unproven" (Dowsett *et al.* 1974), and two birds seen about 1976 (Anon., *Nyala* 1977, 3(1): 101). More recently, four were by Dam 3 on 9-10 Jul. 1995 (Critchlow & Haugaard 1996); one at Chelinda on 25 Jun. 1996 (*DPC*); one at Lake Kaulime on 9 Sep. 2000 (*BM*); and a remarkable concentration of 28 at an Eland carcass on 19 May 2002 (*DF*). Since the absence of reports in the 1980s, the species seems now to be increasing in the region.

[Shoebill *Balaeniceps rex*. A species whose presence in Malawi overall remains unproven. A single-observer sight record of a lost bird by Dam 2 on 7 Feb. 1988 (Roseveare 1989), a location eminently unsuitable for a bird of large papyrus swamps; misidentification considered probable.]

Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

**V.** An exceptional vagrant to the Nyika: one at Lake Kaulime on 18 Aug. 1996 (*ES*).

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

**V.** Equally exceptional: one at Dam 3 on 30 Jun. 1967 (Talbot 1968).

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash*

**V.** Only a couple of records: one flying over (near Zambian rest house) 24 Nov. 1979 (*FD-L*) and one present in Apr. 1994 around Chelinda, up to Dam 2 (*DPC*).

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba*

**V.** An exceptional vagrant: one at Dam 1 on 24-25 Aug. 1980 (*JA*).

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

V. A vagrant thought to be this species turned up at Dam 1 on 5-6 Oct. 1965 (Dowsett *et al.* 1974).

Fulvous Tree Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*

V. Four birds turned up at Dam 3 on 30 Mar. 1973 (Dowsett *et al.* 1974).

[White-backed Duck *Thalassornis leuconotus*. Should not be included in the Nyika list: one mention for the Nyika in Nyala 1997 (20: 48) is apparently a typing error for the Kasitu floodplain near Rumphu.]

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis*

V. A single vagrant to Lake Kaulime in Aug. 1961 (Dowsett *et al.* 1974).

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*

AM. Singles or small groups visit the dams and Lake Kaulime on irregular occasions, at any time of year. In 1989, it apparently bred, as four half-grown young accompanied seven adults at Chelinda on 27 Dec. (CB). The largest group noted in the past was 12, at Lake Kaulime in Aug. 1958 (vW). Also a group of 10 on a pool by the North Rumphu (2050 m) in Jan. 1995 (DPC), and nine at Dam 3 in Apr. 1980 (APZ).

African Black Duck *Anas sparsa*

R. Recorded a few times on the North Rukuru river below the plateau and other streams on the high Nyika (e.g. Dembo stream, a pair Apr. 1980, RJD & FD-L, and North Rumphu in Jan. 1995, DPC). Singles or pairs wander rarely to the Chelinda dams or Lake Kaulime (several observers); also seen on the main stream at Thazima (Nov. 1981, FD-L & RJD) and near Katizi (Jun., MD). Female with three ducklings in the Wovwe valley (1400 m) in Nov. 1986 (MD).

Yellow-billed Duck *Anas undulata*

R. The only reasonably common duck on the high Nyika, with small numbers on the dams and Lake Kaulime at all seasons. It was already recorded from Lake Kaulime before 1940 (long before the creation of the dams, Benson 1940-41) and five were also seen there by the Bensons in 1947 (Benson & Benson 1949). During our period of residence the species was present in all months, but it may be absent for short periods. It was proven to breed in 1994, with five small ducklings (quarter size) accompanying a pair at Chelinda (Dam 2) on 15 Apr. (RDM), seen again later that month (DPC), and two juveniles on 5 Jun. were probably from the same brood (DPC). One large group of 19 on 19 Dec. 1995, same number on 2 Oct. 1996 and 22 counted around Chelinda on 26 Jul. 1996 (DPC).

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*

V. No more than a rare visitor: the first report was of two birds at Dam 1, 7 Feb. 1980 (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1980); a pair again at Chelinda on 9 Jan. 1983 (FD-L & RJD); one bird in Apr. 1986 (MD); one at Dams 2 and 3 in Jan.-Feb. 1996 (DPC).

Hottentot Teal *Anas hottentota*

V. A single record of this species (no numbers) wandering to Dam 3, 3 Jan. 1978 (DS).

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

PV. A single record of this species visiting a dam south of Chelinda (Dam 2 or 3) in Nov. 1983 (RCP).

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

PV. A scarce vagrant to Malawi, with a single record from Chelinda Dam, 19 Oct. 1977 (JC), without details of number or sex.

Southern Pochard *Netta erythrophthalma*

V. Two records of wanderers: 10 at Dam 3 on 24 Apr. 1985 (Dyer 1987), and a single female also at Dam 3 in Jan. 1996 (DPC).

Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa*

**V.** One bird in female plumage was at Dam 1 from 22 Dec. 1979 to early Apr. 1980 and was photographed (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1979a, 1980), the Nyika being the only site in Malawi where the species has ever been recorded. There is a possible sighting of one at Chelinda on 27 Sep. 1987, but without a supporting description.

[African Cuckoo Hawk *Aviceda cuculoides*. We have not traced a valid record of this species, listed by Medland (n.d.); it is probably based on one record mentioned in Dyer (1988, at 1700 m) but MD has no recollection of this observation. It has been recorded recently (2002) close to the western escarpment (Gamba, DPC) but should not for the moment be included in the park's list.]

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

**PV.** Scarce migrant, with singles flying north over Chowo Rocks on 12 Mar. 1980, 22 Mar. 1981 (RJD); singles on southward passage 23 Oct. and 22 Nov. 1990 (PS); one at Thazima 14 Nov. 1997 (MvB); two on 17 Nov. 1998 (NB et al.).

Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus*

**V.** No more than a scarce visitor: one was around the Zambian rest house in the last week of Oct. 1979, and the Zambia-Malawi border road on 11 Mar. 1980 (RJD), c. 2150 m.

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

**R.** Small numbers are resident on the high plateau grasslands, up to at least 2400 m. Much attracted to grass fires. A specimen obtained by Dowsett (1970) had eaten a *Rhabdomys pumilio*, a diurnal rodent.

Eurasian Black Kite *Milvus m. migrans*

**PM.** One of this race was noted by DRA flying north over the Manyanjere track on 27 Feb. 1979; we also recorded this race on northward passage over Chowo Rocks, with 16 flying north-west on 12 Mar. 1980, 14 flying north on three days from 20-25 Feb. 1981; also three at Chelinda 21 Feb. 1986 (MD); one 23 Dec. 1989 (RDM). [An earlier report of one around Lake Kaulime in Oct. 1976 remains unconfirmed.]

Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus migrans parasitus*

**AM.** In various habitats on the escarpments and high plateau. During our period of residence the species was seen regularly from late Jul.-Aug. to Feb., sometimes into Mar., and we suspected breeding in the area of Chowo (a pair hunting up to 2200 m, already back in mid-Jul. 1980). Occasionally seen over the high plateau up to at least 2400 m but probably not breeding that high. Intra-African migrant normally arriving in the second half of July or early Aug.: thus first one noted 19 Jul. 1975 (EHP); mid-Jul. 1980 (Chowo, RJD); 22 Jul. 1995 (DPC); 20 Jul. 2000 (DF) with an unusually early one on 2 Jul. 1999 (DF). A few on northward passage on 10 and 14 Mar. 1992 (Anon., the possibility of those being the Palaearctic race cannot be excluded) and 10 Mar. 1997 (JH). A single reported on 17 Jun. 1991 (Anon.) may have been wintering. Dowsett (1970) collected a bird that had eaten a *Rhabdomys pumilio*.

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*

**V.** There are at least a dozen records from the high plateau: first noted at Chelinda Dam on 25 Jul. and 16 Aug. 1978 (APZ), and we had several observations of singles visiting the dams during our period of residence (Sep. 1980, Aug., Oct., Dec. 1981, Feb. 1982) as well as in Jan. 1983. The one seen on 22 Aug. 1981 was flying (calling) over ZovoChipolo! Also several records by MD at the Chelinda dams (mid-1980s). Presumably still an occasional visitor in later years but unreported.

Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis*

**V.** An exceptional wanderer from the Lake-shore: one adult drifted over Chelinda (to the north-west) on 3 May 1980 (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1980). There is a later record, on 28 Apr. 1995, of a subadult circling over to the east of ZovoChipolo (HG & PW).

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*

**R.** Small numbers are resident on the high plateau, hunting up to at least 2400 m. A pair was breeding in a



patch of forest in Zovochipolo in 1980 at 2150 m: the nest was situated in a large *Polyscias fulva* and contained a large nestling in Nov. (with egg-laying back-dated to Jun.). The food regurgitated to the youngster seemed to be greatly in excess of requirements! Breeding took place in the same patch again in 1981. On 17 Nov. 1981 we found another nest in Manyenjere forest, also in a tall *Polyscias*, and the large young was ready to fly. Normally seen as singles or pairs. An unusual concentration of 12 birds was seen at a Zebra carcass in May 1985 (Dyer 1988).

#### White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*

**R.** The most numerous of the vultures on the Nyika, seen up to *c.* 2500 m alt. Feeds on carcasses of large mammals, including Common Duiker, Zebra, Eland. Seen in groups of up to 20 or 30 (*EHP & RJD* in the 1970s); on 19 Jul. 1994 *DPC* saw over 100 vultures on a Zebra carcass, the majority of which would have been this species. Not proven to breed on the Nyika, and presumably wanders to and from other game areas, such as Vwaza Marsh and the Luangwa Valley (Zambia).

#### Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotus*

**R.** Seen year-round in small numbers (throughout), normally one-three individuals, with as many as 14 gathered at a carcass in Apr. 1986 (*MG*), and 17 on a Zebra carcass in May 1985 (Dyer 1988).

#### White-headed Vulture *Trigonoceps occipitalis*

**R.** Widespread in small numbers, with a maximum of four together at a carcass (Apr. 1986, *MG*). A pair was often around a nest in the fork of a *Polyscias fulva* in Zovochipolo in 1980-81 (at 2200 m), and an immature was with an adult near the empty nest on 4 Nov. 1980 (*FD-L*). Also a pair at nest in Chipome valley in Nov. 1986 (Dyer 1988).

#### Black-breasted Snake Eagle *Circaetus pectoralis*

**R.** Widespread over woodland and grassland, with territorial pairs observed up to *c.* 2200 m (Zovochipolo); also visits the central plateau up to 2400 m (Chelinda, Kasaramba etc.). Attracted to bush fires and the early burning of grassland. Pair with immature near Chelinda in May (Dyer 1988).

#### Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus*

**R.** Recorded from miombo woodland on the dry, northern slopes, and also on the southern slopes, up to *c.* 1900 m (Fingira Rock area, *RJD & FD-L*); one vagrant visited Zovochipolo 23-29 Sep. 1981 at 2150 m (*RJD*) and there is an older record from the Zambian side at 2130 m (Aug. 1972, in *Aspinwall et al.* 1973).

#### Western Banded Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinerascens*

**V.** A species mostly of low-lying valleys, very marginal here, with a single record of a wanderer in riparian vegetation near Thazima, 1600-1650 m, 11 May 1985 (Dyer 1987).

#### Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*

**R.** Very widespread. A pair was occupying a nest in a patch in Zovochipolo (2200 m) in 1979-1981, often alarm-calling (and carrying sticks on some occasions) but apparently failed to produce any young. There is an earlier report of a pair nest-building in a forest patch (13 Oct. 1973) from the same area (*JFRC-R & TOO*).

#### Gymnogene *Polyboroides typus*

**R.** Uncommon on the lower slopes (e.g. Thazima, Chipome) and rare visitor to the high plateau, as near the Zambian rest house (a few records in the 1970s); one record from 1033D2 in Jun. 1994 (near Mpopoti turn-off, *DF & HG*, *c.* 2300 m) and over Zovochipolo (Jul. 2001, *DF*).

#### Eurasian Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

**PM.** Used to be lumped with African Marsh Harrier, and old records cannot be treated separately. May be scarcer than *C. ranivorus*. Uncommon migrant (late Nov.-Mar.) over open grassland and dambos, recorded by us at least once in three years (a male on 28 Jan. 1981). Also reported on 12 Mar. 1989, 22 and 25 Dec. 1989 (all males, *RDM*). More frequently noted in the 1990s and early 2000s, with a few in all months from late Nov. to Mar., but especially in Dec. Extreme dates appear to be 21 Nov. (1995, one male, *DPC*) and 14-15 Mar. (1997, near Nganda, *JH et al.*). Possibly a later date on 8 Apr. 1995 (*DPC*).

African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus*

**R?** Probably a scarce resident in large dambos on the central plateau, up to 2300-2400 m, including Chelinda dams, but absent at times (as in most of 1981 when we saw it near Chelinda only in Oct.-Nov.). Recorded nesting in late Feb. 1972 (occupied nest in rushes at the head of Dam 3) and Dec. 1974 (two pairs nest-building), both by *RAC*. In the mid-1990s, *DPC* saw this species less often than Eurasian, in the months of Nov. to Jan., and Apr-May.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*

**PM.** The most frequently seen harrier over the grasslands of the high Nyika, a regular migrant, wintering in small numbers from late Oct. to Mar. The earliest arrival date seems to be 12 Oct. (1973, one adult male, *RJD*) and the latest 25 Mar. (1997 near Nganda, *JH et al.*) – there is possibly an earlier arrival date (2 Oct. 1979) but details are lacking. A total of 15 birds, in three groups, was seen going to roost at dusk on 8 Dec. 1991 (*NZ*), and as many as 20 were counted heading north over a large area of the plateau on 2 Mar. 1985 (*MD*).

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

**PM.** Much scarcer than last, also on the high plateau. Our own few records were in Jan.-Mar., with a possible (female/immature) on 10-13 Nov. (1980). There is a predominance of Jan.-Mar. records in other years too, with the latest sighting on 5 Apr. (1985, *MD*); in addition one (no sex given) was apparently seen on 5 Nov. 1997 (*DF*); also one female on 24 Nov. 2002 (*WMc*), one male on 5 Dec. 1995 and 23 Dec. 1994 (*DPC*). On 29 Dec. 2001 a male attacked unsuccessfully a Red-winged Francolin (*DPC*).

Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates*

**R.** Uncommon resident in light woodland on the lower slopes of the west and south-west (*MD*), unrecorded from the north. Dyer (1987) located a pair at the altitude of *c.* 1800 m north of Thazima, and this is the highest for the country.

[Gabar Goshawk *Melierax gabar*. A bird of low-altitude *Acacia* or other dry country, not yet recorded from the park. We unhesitatingly reject one sighting from 2300 m near Nganda, in either Aug. or Sep. 1972 (Anon. 1973); given the altitude and time of year, Lizard Buzzard would have been more likely. There are no other claimed records.]

Black Goshawk *Accipiter melanoleucus*

**R.** Discreet species of evergreen forest and plantations, which may also hunt in the open; widespread (up to at least 2400 m in forest patches) and breeding up to at least 2200 m (in Chowo/Zovochipolo). *DRA* saw one bird apparently displaying over Manyenjere forest on 27 Feb. 1979; there was an occupied nest in Lusero forest in Oct. 1981, and in Chowo in Oct. 1986 (fork of *Polyscias*, *FD-L*). One immature was chasing a Giant Kingfisher at Dam 1 on 29 Sep. 1980; one attacked a Red-winged Francolin near Kaulime on 8 Aug. 1981 (*RJD* & *FD-L*).

Red-breasted Sparrowhawk *Accipiter rufiventris*

**R.** Widespread resident on the high plateau, usually hunting small birds in open country and often along roads. Mainly above 2100 m, and up to at least 2400 m. A small raptor's nest in a Zovochipolo patch on the international border probably belonged to this species (*RJD* & *FD-L*); a juvenile was collected in Nov. (Irwin *et al.* 1982) and more recently a female was accompanied by a begging juvenile on 25 Nov. 2002, in Zovochipolo (*WMc*). *RJD* collected an adult male (Aug. 1971) that was carrying a juvenile Red-winged Francolin and it was seen attacking Red-winged Francolin on other occasions; small passerines are probably the most frequent prey.

[Little Sparrowhawk *Accipiter minullus*. Another low-altitude raptor of (usually) riparian vegetation and thickets. Although included in Medland's list, we have failed to trace any valid records.]

African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro*

**R.** The commonest forest raptor on the Nyika, throughout the forested area up to at least 2400 m (Chelinda Hill). It is still (strangely) unrecorded from the Thazima area (1033D3). Easily located from its noisy aerial display (given often just after dawn, also in late afternoon), and at least three pairs occupied territories in

Zovochipolo in an area of 9 km<sup>2</sup> of forest-grassland mosaic (Dowsett-Lemaire 1989a); one of them produced three young (fledged) in Nov. 1980, the nest being in a *Polyscias*; nest-building was observed in the same patch (in a *Hagenia*) in early Sep. 1981. Aerial displays noted most months, at least from Jul. to early Mar.

#### Shikra *Accipiter badius*

**V.** Very few records of this hawk, at most a scarce visitor to the high plateau: one was seen near the Zambian border (c. 2150 m) on 3 and 10 Jul. 1980, coming to grass fires (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1980). *MD* saw one below Domwe at c. 2200 m, and there is also a record from Chelinda (Apr.) and the Juniper Forest (Sep.) (Dyer 1988).

#### Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*

**R/M.** Critchlow (2001a) summarized many records (1970s to 1990s) of birds wintering at Chelinda on the edge of Pine plantations; this appears to be an annual event taking place between late Apr.-May and Oct., and birds defend territories vocally. In addition to the Chelinda area, we recorded one in tree clumps in the vicinity of Lake Kaulime (2350 m) holding a territory in Sep. 1980, and another around some patches in Zovochipolo, and there is an older record from the Zambian rest house in Jul. 1975 (*EHP*). Also more recently noted in Zovochipolo (Jul. 2001, *DF*). In the summer months, probably occurs no higher than the Thazima area.

#### Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

**PM.** A common passage and wintering migrant from mid-Oct. to early Apr., with largest numbers noted on northward passage in late Feb.-Mar. Widespread on the high plateau in open country. The earliest arrival date is 3 Oct. (1980) and latest northward passage was recorded on 13 Apr. (1980, all *RJD* & *FD-L*). Towards the end of Feb. and in Mar. it is not unusual to see one to several dozen fly over, especially near the Chowo ridge: thus on 12 Mar. 1980 we counted at least 112 in 20 minutes over Chowo Rocks (and 31 the next day) and 30 on 25 Feb. 1981. On 14-22 Oct. 1975 there was also daily southward passage, with over 20 on the 19th (*GPR*).

#### Forest Buzzard *Buteo oreophilus*

**R.** First discovered on 4 Dec. 1977 on the eastern escarpment at Kasaramba (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1979b), and later (1980 *et seq.*) also observed at Mwenembwe. Seen displaying (calling, swooping and then disappearing inside forest) around the extensive forests of the eastern escarpment in the months of Feb. to Apr., Sep. and Dec. (all *RJD* & *FD-L*), and we suspect that the total number of pairs may not be more than six or seven. There have been a couple of sight records away from this area, near Chelinda and the Zambian border, but we are convinced (having spent over two years in the area) that the species is genuinely absent from the south-western escarpment. It is possible the odd bird might wander away from the eastern side in open country but the chances of confusion with Common Buzzard remain high.

#### Augur Buzzard *Buteo augur*

**R.** Common resident in open country on the high plateau; some birds are melanistic. The scarcity of large rocky hills is remedied by the species having adapted to tree-nesting: on 10 Oct. 1947 *CWB* collected a downy nestling from a nest in *Podocarpus* at c. 2150 m (Benson & Benson 1949); on 15 Oct. 1973 *RJD* & *TOO* observed a nest with pulli in a forest patch on the road to Kasaramba (c. 2440 m), and Anon. (1973) found a nest with two young in forest in Aug. 1972. Near Manyenjere however, a pair was holding territory by the rock face on top of the escarpment (*RJD* & *FD-L*, Dec. 1977).

#### Wahlberg's Eagle *Aquila wahlbergi*

**AM.** Widespread in miombo woodland on the lower slopes, up to at least 1700 or 1800 m; an occupied nest in the North Rukuru valley at 1400 m in Oct. (*MD*). Occurs around Thazima and higher in the Fingira Rock area, but the upper altitudinal limit of breeding pairs is uncertain. Seen on passage anywhere over the high plateau, up to 2400 m (e.g. Kasaramba, 9 Apr. 1981, *RJD* & *FD-L*), maximum 15 flying north 7 Apr. 1990 (*JA*).

#### Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*

**PM.** Uncommon as a wintering species, but more conspicuous on northward passage in Feb.-Mar. A few pass south in Oct., earliest probably 18 Oct. (1975, *GPR*) followed by 21 Oct. 1973 (*RJD*). Very few seen in the months of Nov.-Jan. (*RJD* & *FD-L*), but numbers build up from mid-Feb., Chowo Rocks being a good place

to watch the migration: thus up to *c.* 200 flying north on 23 Feb. 1981 (also “many” flying north on 27 Feb. 1979, with Steppe Eagle, *DRA*), 64 on 13 Mar. 1980, 55 on 22 Mar. 1981. Passage peters out in late Mar. or early Apr., with last date 3 Apr. 1981 (all *RJD* & *FD-L*).

[Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*. Included in Medland’s list, apparently based on Dyer (1988: singles at carcasses in Feb. and May), but there are few accepted records of this localized, low-altitude species in Malawi. The odd one could visit the Nyika from Vwaza Marsh, where its presence is well established, but it would be no more than a vagrant.]

#### Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*

**PM.** Much the same status as for Lesser Spotted, but in smaller numbers. Very few on southward passage, earliest possibly 15 Oct. 1979 (Anon.), otherwise 26 Oct. 1973 (*RJD*); uncommon in Nov.-Jan., with numbers increasing on northward passage. Thus 25 flying north over Chowo Rocks on 13 Mar. 1980, and daily until the end of the month; many on 23 Feb. 1981, at least eight on 22 Mar., last one on 3 Apr. (*RJD*). Two were also noted over the Nyika on 3 Apr. 1986 (*MD*).

#### Black Eagle *Aquila verreauxii*

**V.** Its breeding habitat is largely lacking on the Nyika and it is no more than a wanderer to the plateau, coming perhaps from the breeding site in Njakwa Gorge (Rumphi): there is one Atlas record from the Nganda square (early 1980s) and it was seen again there in 1997 (Overton 1998); a pair was flying over the eastern escarpment once in Nov. 1983 (*RCP*); one was seen in 1033D2, flying north into 1033B4, on 8 Apr. 1995 (*DPC* & *HG*). Dyer (1988) gives another couple of records from the Nyika files, for Jan. (Nkhonjera) and Sep. (Mpanda).

#### African Hawk Eagle *Hieraaetus spilogaster*

**V.** Very marginal for the area, with one record of three birds (including an immature) at Thazima, 1600 m, 20 Nov. 1994 (*DPC*). An old record of a pair over Kasaramba (12 Jan. 1973, *BC* in Benson & Benson 1977) is now considered doubtful, as may have been confused with Ayres’s Hawk Eagle. *MD* saw a pair between Kaperekezi and Nthalire, outside the park, but it might occasionally visit the border there.

#### Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

**PM.** Uncommon passage and wintering migrant; in our period of residence we saw it rarely in Nov.-Feb., with a few more passing in Mar. (daily maximum of seven flying over Chowo Rocks on 13 Mar. 1980), and last one on 2 Apr. 1981 (*RJD*). There is one earlier arrival date, two birds on 26 Oct. 1973 (*RJD*). [An Anon. report of three in mid-Oct. 1976 remains unconfirmed].

#### Ayres’s Hawk Eagle *Hieraaetus ayresii*

**R.** Discreet forest eagle, without a noisy display and thus easily under-recorded. We saw this species at Mwenembwe, over extensive forest (Sep. 1980) and a specimen was collected at Nyamkhowa (Oct., Benson 1940-41), where we saw it again in Dec. 1982. We did not find it in Chowo forest, but a pair was seen there “displaying” in Aug. 1972 (Aspinwall *et al.* 1973) and one in Sep. 1974 (*CC*); there is also one observation lower down (Zambian side) by *EHP* on 22 Jul. 1975. A pair probably of this species over Zovochipolo on 4 Feb. 1980 (*FD-L*); a pair over Manyenjere on 28 Jul. 2004 and single over Zovochipolo 29 Jul. 2004 (*WMC*).

#### Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis*

**R.** Present on the northern slopes and resident on the south-western scarp, up to Zovochipolo, but also seen near Chelinda, near Lake Kaulime and the Juniper Forest, thus up to *c.* 2300 m. Perches on forest edges, hunting in the open. A nest was found by *CWB* on the north-western escarpment (probably near Chisanga Falls) on 8 Oct. 1947, containing C/1 and N/1 (Benson & Benson 1949); a pair calling frequently in a section of Zovochipolo in 1980-81 was suspected to breed locally; an immature was seen there in Oct. 1981 (*FD-L*). Dyer (1988) mentions an occupied nest in Zovochipolo in Aug., without details.

#### Crowned Eagle *Stephanoaetus coronatus*

**R.** Widespread resident in forest on both the south-western and eastern escarpments; also at Nkhonjera Hill and seen hunting throughout, up to Nganda Hill. Four pairs (and nests) were located in the south-west (in *c.*

45 km<sup>2</sup>) in 1980-82, with inter-nest distances of about 4 km. Three of those were in emergent *Aningeria adolfi-friedericii* (Chowo, Zovochipolo, Kasyaula area) and one in a very tall *Chrysophyllum gorungosanum* (Manyenjere). Prey brought to the Zovochipolo nestling included Dassie *Heterohyrax brucei*, *Cephalophus* duikers, and the adult was seen hunting (but missing) Blue Monkey *Cercopithecus albogularis*. The chick had reached the size of a big chicken in early Nov. 1980, fledged in late Jan., and was still fed a year later in the summer of 1981-82. The pairs nesting in Chowo and Manyenjere were often seen flying off a long way over the wooded escarpments into Zambia (all *FD-L* & *RJD*).

#### Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus*

**R.** Resident, with huge territories, only one pair present in the south-west (and beyond) where four pairs of Crowned Eagle. A nest with a large chick was found by *IB* in Aug. 1982 near the Juniper Forest. In the mid-1980s there were two active nest sites: one still at the Junipers and another on the western escarpment below Chisanga Falls (where *MD* saw a full-grown young in Nov.), at a distance of at least 32 km. *MD* once disturbed a bird hovering over a couple of crouching Denham's Bustards. It has been seen eating a large snake (Mar. 1997, *JH et al.*).

#### Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

**PV.** A few records of single wanderers visiting the Chelinda dams, including one "over-summering" (11 Jun. 1974, *TOO* in Dowsett *et al.* 1974); others being on 31 Mar. or 1 Apr. 1961 (*CHa*) and 22 Apr. 2000 (*DF*).

#### Secretary Bird *Sagittarius serpentarius*

**V.** This is an irregular visitor in the dry season to montane grassland, recorded usually as singles, once as a "pair" (Jun.-Nov. 1973, Roseveare in Benson & Benson 1977); in Oct. 1973, however, *RJD* saw only one or two singles, not associating as a pair. Often seen around Lake Kaulime, or in grassland near Chelinda. Our only record in nearly three years of residence was by the road (near the Kaulime turn-off) in Sep. 1980. *MP* saw one on 15 Oct. 1979; later records are one on 19 Jul. 1987, two on 6 Sep. 1987 (*IlaC*), one on 7 Nov. 1987 (*RDM*); one in mid-Jun. 1993 (*FV*), Aug.-Nov. 1994 (*HG et al.*) and Jul. 1995 (*SB et al.*). Thus all months combined are Jun. to Nov.

#### Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

**PM.** Observed on passage in very small numbers, by us mostly Dec. and Mar. in our three years of residence (from one to six birds at any time), also early Jan. 1982, and it was seen once in Feb. by *DPC* (12 Feb. 1994). Extreme dates are 3 Nov. (1996, *MvB*) – otherwise no records before early Dec. – and 9 Apr. (1986, *MD*). More recently, over 50 birds passed over on 1-4 Apr. 2002, with a maximum of 30 drifting past on 3 Apr. (*CS*). Dyer (1988) mentions having seen about 30 at Jalawe in Apr. but did not note the exact date (*MD in litt.*).

#### Rock Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

**V?** Rarely seen, the local race (*rupicolus*) is apparently no more than a vagrant. Our few sightings are from Dec. 1975 (Manyenjere, *RJD*), Nov. 1980 (near Junipers) and Mar. 1981 (near Nganda), while the Palaearctic race was definitely identified passing through on 12 Feb. and 26 Mar. 1980 (Chelinda-Chitipa road junction). Singles seen near Nganda by Anon. (1973) in Jul.-Aug. would be the local race. Also one mention for 2 Oct. 1994 (*HG*), race not determined. Noted in the months of Feb., Apr., Jul.-Aug. and Nov. by *DPC* in the mid-1990s.

#### Dickinson's Kestrel *Falco dickinsoni*

**V.** A wanderer visiting grass fires near the Zambian rest house 30 Jun.-4 Jul. 1980 (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1980) is the only record.

#### Western Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*

**PV.** Of very irregular appearance on the plateau: over 100 birds seen by *JMF* over the high plateau on 20 Jan. 1963, and three males on 10 Dec. 1963 (in Benson & Irwin 1967). Then no records until 18 Mar. 1996, when *DF* reported over 100 birds over Thazima. These large numbers are unusual, and the possibility that they included *F. amurensis* cannot be ruled out.

Eastern Red-footed Falcon *Falco amurensis*

**PM.** More regular than last, on both passages, but far from common. Months of records overall are Nov.-Dec., Mar.-Apr. but they are not apparently seen every year. Two males were noted by *TOO* on 16 Nov. 1974 (Dowsett *et al.* 1974); and apparently “large flocks” in Apr. 1976 (*TAM*). We saw some in Dec. 1979 and Mar. 1980, but none in the following two summers. Three small groups were noted 7-10 Apr. 1990 (*JA*). Some were reported again (*DF*) on 14 Nov. 1995 and *DPC* saw *c.* 12 (in groups of up to four) on 27 Nov. 1995; further reports are 18 Mar. 1996, 27 Mar. 1997 (*JH et al.*), and 3-4 Apr. 2002 (*CS*). The only large groups we saw were nine and 50 birds over the Zambian rest house on 13 Dec. 1979. Dyer (1988) mentions a group of over 100, but without a date.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

**PM.** The only common falcon on the Nyika, wintering at all levels (up to the high central plateau); singles or in small flocks of a dozen or so, not occurring in large flocks unlike the Red-footed Falcons. Common from mid- or late Nov.-Dec. (depending on start of main rains) to Mar., extreme dates being 7 Nov. (1980, *FD-L*) and 11 Apr. (1996, *DF*). We have not traced any Oct. record, and one observation on 18 Sep. (1995) appears abnormal and should be left unconfirmed.

[African Hobby *Falco cuvierii*. A possible record of one near Dembo bridge on 21 Feb. 1995 (*DF*); identification of this species is difficult and we prefer to leave this as unconfirmed.]

[Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*. Two birds, thought “probably” to be this species, were seen over the Malawi Nyika on 21 Nov. 1983 (*RCP*); in the absence of convincing details, this record of a species difficult to identify cannot be accepted.]

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*

**R.** Uncommon or local resident, with singles or pairs occasionally seen hunting over the high plateau and attracted to grass fires; there was an occupied nest on Fingira Rock on 4 Sep. 1981, with young soon to leave (*DOE*).

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

**R/PV.** One pale-breasted bird flying north at Chelinda on 20 Apr. 1985 (*MD*) may have been of Palaearctic origin. Otherwise the African race *minor* is a rare and local resident (likely to wander), with a nesting record from the northern escarpment, at Jalawe Rock: a pair with immature in Aug. 2000 (*BM & DF*).

Coqui Francolin *Francolinus coqui*

**R.** Sparse francolin of miombo woodland, recorded from the western escarpment near and above Kaperekezi (*DPC, MD*), above Thazima (*RJD*), on the way to Nkhonjera Hill (*FD-L & RJD*) and near Fingira (*MD*), up to 1800-1900 m overall.

Shelley's Francolin *Francolinus shelleyi*

**R.** Present in rocky miombo on the south-western escarpment up to *c.* 2000 m, as near Mwanda Mtn (Zambia) at *c.* 1950 m (*EHP, RJD*); also observed near Thazima, Mbuzinandi and Fingira Rock (*FD-L & RJD*), with one record from the northern woodland (1033B4) in 1997. Although a specimen was collected on the high plateau (apparently as high as 2400 m) once in the past (Benson 1940-41), it was never observed again at that altitude and we assume it was merely a wanderer. In our three years of residence, I have only one observation (of a bird singing, Feb. 1981) on Chowo Rocks, 2200 m, where it was not resident. Its absence from the high plateau may be explained by the scarcity of rocky hills, and also, perhaps, competition with Red-winged Francolin.

Red-winged Francolin *Francolinus levaillantii*

**R.** The endemic race *crawshayi* is a very common resident in montane grassland on the high plateau, mainly 2100-2600 m (marginally down to the lower limit of grassland at 1950 m), but occurs lower on Nyamkhowa Mtn (1750-1800 m, *FD-L & RJD*). Egg-laying is spread out in the summer months (Oct.-Apr.), with largest broods observed of six and eight small chicks; whereas a full clutch (ready to hatch) contained 5 eggs (Benson & Benson 1949). This species was the first ever collected on the Nyika, in Jun. 1895 (Ogilvie-Grant 1896).

Hildebrandt's Francolin *Francolinus hildebrandti*

**R.** Not uncommon resident in bracken-briar at forest edges and particularly on rocky hills (e.g. Chowo Rocks), up to about 2300 m altitude, throughout the plateau. One breeding record (egg-laying Jun.) from the Zambian side.

Red-necked Francolin *Francolinus afer*

**R.** Occurs in small numbers in rank grass and scrub in valleys up to 2000-2100 m (south-western slopes on both sides of the border, Mbuzinandi), also present on the northern slopes. Occasionally wanders to higher altitudes, as around the Zambian rest house (*FD-L*), and *DPC* saw it once as high as 2200 m (on the Dembo road).

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

**R.** Common to very common resident in montane grassland throughout the plateau, up to Nganda Hill, and including lush grassland in the Kasoma-Kasyaula area, thus mainly 2000-2600 m. One record of a very small chick seen on 17 Mar. (1996, *DPC*) can be back-dated to a Feb. clutch; we also flushed two small young on 1 May 1980 (road to Junipers). Singing noted throughout the rains (at least Nov. to Mar.). A "breeding season" of Oct.-Feb. mentioned by Dyer (1988) is based on Benson & Benson (1977) and not just on Nyika data.

Harlequin Quail *Coturnix delegorguei*

**V.** An uncommon migrant, with singles recorded by us on the high plateau on 7 Apr. 1981 (road to Nganda) and 17 Mar. 1982 (near Kasaramba), up to c. 2400 m; there is one Apr. record from the Nganda square (*MD*) and it was also recently seen on the road to Kasaramba on 29 May 2002 (*WMc*).

Blue Quail *Coturnix chinensis*

**V.** No more than a vagrant: one male flushed by the road on the way to Fingira (2070 m) on 20 Nov. 1986 (Dyer 1987) and one seen near Zungwara 15 Dec. 2002 (*AW*, the altitude would have been no more than 2100 m).

Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*

**R.** In woodland on the southern and northern slopes, the upper limit being about 1850 m (north of Thazima, and near the turn-off to the old Mbuzinandi road, *FD-L*, *RJD*, *DPC*, *MD*). Family group with 3/4 grown chicks near old gate on 20 Apr. 1981.

Kurrichane Buttonquail *Turnix sylvaticus*

**R.** Flushed twice in lush *Themeda* grassland at 2050 m (near Kasyaula), once in a Zovochipolo valley at 2150 m as well as on the edge of Manyenjere (*FD-L*, *RJD*). Also recorded from the Fingira area (*MD*). Probably a scarce resident.

[Hottentot Buttonquail *Turnix hottentottus*. This is mentioned under "Nyika" in *Nyala* 1996 (19: 60) without any details so should not be included in the Nyika list.]

Red-chested Flufftail *Sarothrura rufa*

**R.** Found locally in moist herbage along permanent streams up to about 2000 m, as on the Chire below Chowo and near Fingira; one singing then calling ("ku-wa, ku-wa, ku-wah") in a Zovochipolo valley at 2150 m (Jan. 1982, all *FD-L* & *RJD*). Also on the Kaswerera stream at Thazima (*FD-L* & *RJD*) and small valley west of Lusero (*DRA*).

Red-tailed Flufftail *Sarothrura affinis*

**R.** Not reported from the Nyika before the 1960s, with the first specimen collected in Jan. 1964, on the Zambian side (Benson & Holliday 1964). Common in montane grassland and bracken from 1900 up to at least 2450 m, occasionally heard inside forest (Chowo, and forest patch near Zambian rest house, in Dec. 1980 and Jan. 1981) but not far from edge. In Nov.-Jun. nearly always in grassland. Apparently moving into dambos in the dry season: the characteristic cackle was heard from dambos in Zovochipolo in Aug.-Oct. (all *FD-L* & *RJD*). Starts singing in late November (earliest dates between 20 Nov. 1980 and 1 Dec. 1981) and continues until Mar., especially in cloudy conditions and also at night. Appears resident as there are records for all

months except Jul.

Corn Crake *Crex crex*

**PM.** Winters in small numbers in rank grass and bracken; we recorded the species six times in 1979-82, and there are a few earlier and later records, with extreme dates 5 Dec. (1982, near Dembo Bridge, *FD-L & RJD*) and 1 Apr. (1994, same locality, *DPC*). Most records are in Dec. (at least five) which suggests that some birds may be passing through, then three in Jan., one in Feb. and one in Apr. Locations include Kasoma, Manyenjere ridge, Zovochipolo, Fingira and Dembo Bridge, over an altitudinal range of 1900-2250 m.

African Crake *Creccopsis egregia*

**V.** Only one record traced: one flushed from rank grass near the road (between Lusero and old gate) on 20 Jan. 1982 at *c.* 1900 m (*FD-L & RJD*).

Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata*

**R.** Singles or pairs are normally present on the dams near Chelinda, but the species's presence goes back to long before the creation of the dams, since a specimen was collected at Lake Kaulime in 1940 (Benson 1942), and it has occasionally been seen there again (e.g. Oct. 1973, *RJD*). Has bred at Chelinda on several occasions, in 1967 (Talbot 1968), 1975 (*TAM*), at least twice in 1980 (*RJD & FD-L*) and more recently in 2001 (*DPC*) and 2005 (*GB*). Numbers seem to fluctuate somewhat: although we saw it continuously during our period of residence, Critchlow (2001a) has shown periods of absence of a few months from Chelinda in later years. Numbers noted include over 12 birds at Chelinda in Nov. 1969, 13 on Dam 3 in Oct. 1973 (plus one at Kaulime, *RJD*) and 17 on the dams on 4 Jan. 2002 (*DPC*).

Wattled Crane *Grus carunculatus*

**R.** About a dozen pairs are resident on the high plateau (Dyer 1992), from about 2000 m, visiting the Zambian side but breeding only on the Malawi side, particularly in dambos. Egg-laying is fairly protracted but takes place mainly in the dry season (May to Dec.); in recent years it is feared that the total break-down in the fire protection policy is threatening nest sites throughout the dry season and most pairs can no longer breed (*DPC* pers. comm. in 2002). The situation may improve with the re-establishment of a policy of early burning. The largest number of cranes seen together is often six or seven, as near Lake Kaulime or Chelinda; Dyer (1992) mentions small influxes of "migrants", particularly during the rains, as with a group of 14 birds always seen together between Feb. and Apr. 1986. In a 1969 park's report *RPZ (per MD)* counted a total of 49 birds.

Southern Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum*

**V.** No more than old records of wanderers, including two seen with Wattled Cranes in early Nov. 1959 by *GRB*, and there are two other records without details (Dowsett *et al.* 1974).

Black-bellied Bustard *Eupodotis melanogaster*

**R.** Resident in very small numbers on the escarpments, regularly encountered in montane grassland in the south-west (Manyenjere to Zovochipolo) from 2000-2200 m (*FD-L & RJD*). There are a couple of records of wanderers to the high plateau: a female near Chelinda on 27 Sep. 1987 (*IlaC*), one near Nganda turn-off on 17 Feb. 1994 at 2450 m (*DPC*). There are as yet no records from miombo in the Thazima or other areas.

Denham's Bustard *Neotis denhami*

**R.** Resident in montane grassland, in small numbers. There are eight dated breeding records (all *C/2*) published by Wilson (1972), for the months of Aug., Oct., Nov. (3), Dec., Jan. and Mar. The birds are very attracted to recently burnt grassland to pick up insects and reptiles, readily moving from one burnt patch to another. Occasional gatherings have been noted, of up to 15-24, as follows: 15 in Apr. 1986 at Jalawe (*MD*), 24 in Jul. 1992 (*DF* in Critchlow 2001b), 15 on 13 Jun. 1997 (*DF*), 20 at Chosi on 21 Jun. 2000 (*BM*). Other reports of large numbers (e.g. 21 on 17-19 Apr. 1992, *RDM*) refer to overall totals, not the size of groups (Critchlow 2001b).

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

**V.** A rare visitor, with a few records from the Chelinda dams: two at Dam 3 in Jul. 1983 (Dyer 1988), an immature at Dam 1 on 7 Dec. 1995 (*DPC*), also seen by *SB (per DPC)* at least once at the dams.



Spotted Dikkop *Burhinus capensis*

**R.** Apparently a scarce resident, and breeding. There are a number of records scattered over the high plateau, from the Zambian rest house (no more than a wanderer there, Nov. 1969, *RJD*) and border road (c. 2000 m) to the vicinity of Nganda Hill (as high as 2450 m, Talbot 1968); in the early 1980s it was most often seen on a gravel extrusion near Dam 3, where a pair (present in Dec.) produced three young in two successive years (family of five in Feb. 1980, Mar. 1981) and fewer in 1982 (family of three in Feb., all *FD-L* & *RJD*). Overall, records cover all months except Sep.-Oct., and the altitudinal range 2000-2450 m.

Bronze-winged Courser *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus*

**V.** A vagrant turned up on the unusual date of 10 Jan. 1982, near Chelinda (2350 m, *RJD* & *FD-L*), and a pair near the Zambian border at the more usual date of 27 May 2002 (*WMc*). Otherwise recorded at lower levels, in miombo above Thazima, 29 Jan. 1980 (at least one) and 30 May 1980 (at least three, *RJD*).

Temminck's Courser *Cursorius temminckii*

**R.** Small numbers appear to breed in montane grassland on the high plateau, both sides of the border, up to c. 2400 m: we have traced at least six breeding records of pairs with dependent young, some of which could be back-dated to egg-laying in Sep. (one), Oct. (one) and Nov. (two) (*PS*, *FD-L* & *RJD*). Family groups of three or four birds have also been seen, and as many as 12 on 23 Dec. 1995 south of Chelinda (*DPC*). The species has been noted at all seasons, but not yet reported in the months of Mar. and May-Jun.

Common Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*

**V.** Unusual vagrant: the first record was very odd, as a party of 17 were grounded on the road and ploughed fire-break in the morning of 18 Dec. 1975 in Zovochipolo at c. 2200 m, in misty weather (*RJD*). There was a later record of a bird at Chelinda, Dec. 1981 (*DOE*), and in Nov. 1985 (Dyer 1988); Dyer (1988) also mentions one near Chosi (Jan.).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

**PV.** Few records of southward passage: one bird turned up at Lake Kaulime on 9 Oct. 1947 (Benson & Benson 1949: 158); possibly another record in mid-Oct. 1976, no details (Nyika files); one (immature) at Lake Kaulime again on 7 Nov. 1980 (*RJD*).

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris*

**V.** Exceptional visitor: one adult resided at Lake Kaulime from 12-25 Oct. 1973 (Dowsett *et al.* 1974). Apparently another record, of one near Dam 2 in Dec. (no year given: Dyer 1988).

Caspian Plover *Charadrius asiaticus*

**PM.** Rare migrant on southward passage: one on 16 Oct. and two on 23 Oct. 1986 at 2100 m on stony ground along the Zambian border road towards Kaperekezi; three were noted in grassland on the high plateau (c. 2300 m) on 13 Sep. 1986 and one on 16 Dec. 1986 (Dyer 1987). There was possibly an earlier record, of one on 8 Jan. 1978 (*WFB-M*), not included in Dowsett's (1978) list because of the late date.

Senegal Wattled Plover *Vanellus senegallus*

**V.** Few records of wanderers on the high plateau: 14 Jan. 1981 (single on border road, 2200 m, *FD-L* & *RJD*); a pair near Chelinda (2350 m) on 3 May 1985 and single at Chowo on 11 Jun. 1986 (Dyer 1987). Certainly not a "common resident" as in Medland (n.d.).

Ethiopian Snipe *Gallinago nigripennis*

**R.** Uncommon resident of dambos (2200-2300 m) on the high plateau: *APZ* (in Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1980) noted display flights about Sep. to Jan. around Chelinda; similar observations by *MD* on the Chelinda and Dembo streams. Also seen in May (*RJD*), a road kill in Jun. (*MD*) and one observation in Mar. (1996, *DPC*).

Great Snipe *Gallinago media*

**PM.** Very small numbers winter in the high-altitude dambos (around Chelinda): a few noted in Dec. 1981-Jan. 1982 and Dec. 1982 (*FD-L*). One was seen at the late date of 30 Mar. 1986 (*MD*) near Chelinda.

[Curlew *Numenius arquata*. Listed by Medland (n.d.) without an identified source, so the record should be disregarded for the time being, given also the possibility of confusion with Whimbrel *N. phaeopus*; both are equally rare in Malawi.]

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

**PV.** A rare Palaearctic migrant: one at Lake Kaulime on 15 Oct. 1973 (Dowsett *et al.* 1974) [an unconfirmed record in mid-Oct. 1976 (one at Lake Kaulime and Dam 3, Nyika files)]; one at Chelinda in Sep. 1980 (*RJD*, day not noted); one at Dam 3 on 20 Sep. 2000 (*DF*).

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

**PM.** Uncommon or irregular visitor to pools and dams: two in early Aug. 1969 at Dam 3, one in Dec. 1971 at Dam 1 (Dowsett *et al.* 1974), two at Lake Kaulime on 20 Jul. 1975, one at a small pool near Chosi on 21 Jul. (*EHP*), one at Dam 3 on 5 Mar. 1981 (*RJD* & *FD-L*), one at Dam 2 on 24 Oct. 2001 (*IBa*).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

**PM.** Winters annually, in small numbers around Chelinda. Although there was only one record before we lived on the Nyika (one at a puddle near Chelinda Dam, 23 Feb. 1979, *DRA*), we saw the species at the dams on regular occasions (Feb. 1980, Nov. 1980 to Mar. 1981, late Aug. 1981 to Mar. 1982) and *MD* also noted the species in the mid-1980s, at least from Nov. to Feb. Extreme dates appear to be 31 Aug. (1981) and 9 Mar. (1981, *RJD* & *FD-L*), with an exceptional early bird on 27 Jul. 2004 (*WMc*). Below Chelinda, several were noted at roadside pools at 1900 m on 21 and 26 Feb. 1989 (*RDM*). No doubt regular at Chelinda in later years, e.g. reported in Jan. and Nov. 1993 (*RDM et al.*) and Feb.-Mar. 1996 (*DPC*).

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

**PM.** Annual on southward passage, in small numbers (ones and twos) at Lake Kaulime and Chelinda dams, from Aug. to Dec. (many observations Sep.-Dec., including pers. obs. during our period of residence). Seems uncommon later, as we have only one Jan. record (5 Jan. 1982 at Dam 3), traced another for Feb. (two on 23 Feb. 1979 at Chelinda, *DRA*), and it was mentioned once on northward passage by *MD* (5 Apr. 1985). Thus extreme dates appear to be 5 Aug. (1969, Dowsett *et al.* 1974) and 5 Apr. as above.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

**PM.** Annual in small numbers (usually as singles) at the dams and Lake Kaulime mainly on southward passage, from Aug. to Nov. or Dec. Earliest dates are 21 Jul. 1975 (*EHP* at Dams 1 and 2) and 22 Jul. 1995 (*DPC*, on Chelinda stream). Far fewer records on spring passage, one on 23 Feb. 1979 (*DRA*), two on 14 Apr. 1980, noted Apr. 1981 (*RJD* & *FD-L*). *DPC* noted one-two on 16 Mar. and 4 Apr. 1994, and as many as 13 on 19 Apr. 1994 (at Dam 3).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

**PV.** A single record, on southward passage: two at Lake Kaulime on 11 Sep. 1986 (Dyer 1987).

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

**PM.** Small numbers recorded annually on southward passage, at Lake Kaulime and Chelinda dams, from late Aug. to Oct. or Nov.; we have not traced observations of spring passage (when much less common in Malawi overall). Earliest date is last week of Aug. (1972, in Aspinwall *et al.* 1973). Largest number reported is nine birds at Lake Kaulime (*RJD*, Oct. 1973).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

**PV.** Much rarer than Little Stint, as only irregular records documenting southward passage: up to two birds 13-22 Oct. 1973 (Dowsett *et al.* 1974) and four on 6 Oct. 1976 (*RJD*), all at Lake Kaulime. Reported (no numbers) at Chisanga Falls on 27 Aug. 1994 (*SB per DPC*), in unsuitable habitat and perhaps misidentified.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*

**PV.** Exceptional vagrant: one was well seen next to Little Stint and Curlew Sandpiper at Lake Kaulime on 14 Oct. 1973 (Dowsett 1974). This remains the only record for Malawi.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

**PV.** Only three records: one bird seen by *CWB* (in Ms) at Lake Kaulime on 25 Sep. 1956 – this was omitted from Benson & Benson 1977 – a female at Dam 1 on 15 Oct. 1973 (Dowsett *et al.* 1974), and one at Lake Kaulime on 10 Nov. 1981 (*RJD*).

Grey-headed Gull *Larus cirrocephalus*

**V.** A rare vagrant: one bird in almost full breeding dress visited Dam 2 on 18 Dec. 1975 (*RJD* in Benson & Benson 1977: 252); there is also an undocumented record from late Jan. 1974 (*RG*, Nyika files).

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

**PV.** A rare visitor: five birds turned up at Chelinda Dam on 1 Nov. 1972 (Dowsett *et al.* 1974); one on 9 Nov. 1981 (*RJD*), one in breeding dress at the same dam on 5 Apr. 1992 (*GM*) and one on 3 Nov. 1994 (*JH*); also one at Dam 3 on 9 Nov. 1995 (*DPC*).

Rameron Pigeon *Columba arquatrix*

**AM.** Seasonally common in the forests of both escarpments and also on the high plateau (wherever there are *Afrocrania* trees, up to *c.* 2300-2400 m), most numerous in the months of Aug.-Nov., with over 90% of the population leaving in Dec. Its specialized diet was studied in some detail (Dowsett-Lemaire 1988a): numbers of breeding pairs were higher in 1980 and 1982 when *Olea capensis* fruited synchronously, whereas in 1981 numbers of territorial pairs were fewer and more directly proportional to the number of *Afrocrania* (now *Cornus*) *volkensii* fruiting annually in forest patches; highest breeding densities known are one-three pairs/3 ha in Zovochipolo (Dowsett-Lemaire 1989a). Other important fruit trees include *Myrica*, *Podocarpus*, *Polyscias*, *Croton* and *Neoboutonia* (fibrous capsules of the last two eaten whole). Large numbers return normally in Aug., with (in some years) some flocks in Jun. (when *Chionanthus* (*Linociera*) *battiscombei* is fruiting, as in Jun. 1980 and 1983). Egg-laying takes place from Sep. to Dec.; some pairs breed in Pines (as near the Zambian rest house). There are in addition large numbers of non-breeding birds during the breeding season, which roost communally, as in Chowo forest and Chelinda Pine plantations.

Cinnamon Dove *Aplopelia larvata*

**R.** Fairly common resident, breeding in forest patches with a permanent stream (but occasionally visiting dry patches), up to at least 2300 m, with territories of 2-4 ha in Zovochipolo and Kasoma (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a, 1989a). Takes a variety of seeds on the ground (species listed in Dowsett-Lemaire 1988a), and some small invertebrates; once seen patiently plucking the tiny seeds of *Ficus thonningii* fruit on the ground, carefully avoiding flesh! (*FD-L*). A dozen breeding records from Chowo and Zovochipolo, with egg-laying Sep.-Dec. (*RJD* & *FD-L*).

Pink-breasted Turtle Dove *Streptopelia lugens*

**R.** Uncommon resident of forest-grassland ecotone, although widespread from the Zambian side (including Mwanda Mtn) to the central plateau, Juniper Forest, Nyamkhowa Mtn; at 1950-2400 m on the main plateau. It occurs lower on Nyamkhowa: it was seen there by *RCW* (in Benson 1942) on the slopes from 1400 m and higher, and collected by Sharpe's staff (Belcher 1930) in May and Sep. 1902 at *c.* 1300 m above Livingstonia. Normally seen as singles or pairs, feeding in the open and taking shelter inside forest or Pine plantation. An unusual concentration of at least 30 birds in Dec. 1977 in a small valley just below Chowo Rocks (*FD-L*). There may be some local movements, as we have not traced records for the months of Feb.-Apr., and the low-altitude records near Livingstonia may be of wanderers.

Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

**V.** Almost absent from the Nyika, even from the dry woodlands on the slopes; there is only one record, of a vagrant north of Zungwara, *c.* 2100 m, Nov. 1986 (*MD*).

Cape Turtle Dove *Streptopelia capicola*

**R/V.** Confined to the lower slopes in woodland (e.g. Kaperekezi, Thazima, Jalawe-Chipome) up to 1600-1650 m, common below about 1400 m in the north (*MD*), but only a scarce vagrant on the high plateau: one on the road to Chelinda Hill, 2325 m, 19 Feb. 1982 (*FD-L* & *RJD*); at Chelinda itself, one on 23 Apr. 1986 at 2300 m (Dyer 1987); and one on the border road on 19 Nov. 1993 (*DPC*).

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*

**R.** Confined to the lower slopes in woodland and riparian vegetation, up to 1600-1700 m, and never recorded on the high plateau, not even as a wanderer.

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos*

**R.** Recorded from miombo on the lower south-western slopes (e.g. Kaperekezi, Thazima) and the northern escarpment, upper altitudinal limit probably around 1600-1650 m.

Blue-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur afer*

**R.** Apparently uncommon on the Nyika: recorded from the northern foothills in the Uledi area (*FD-L* & *RJD*) and at least once at Thazima (*JH*); *CJV* (in Ms) saw one pair at c. 1700 m in Jan. 1964, probably on the Zambian side; and *RJD* noted it at Mbuzinandi (Mar. 1981) at 1980 m in riparian *Acacia*, which is high for the species.

Tambourine Dove *Turtur tympanistris*

**R.** Locally common in forest on the south-western slopes (up to 2200 m in Zovochipolo where rare, but much more common at lower levels, with 20 pairs estimated in the 40 ha of Kasyaula forest at about 2000 m: Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a), and on Nyamkhowa Mtn (Benson 1940-41, *RJD* & *FD-L*). We never recorded it elsewhere on the eastern escarpment, but presumably it could occur near the bottom, at altitudes similar to Nyamkhowa. Fairly common also in Kasoma, Manyenjere and Chowo, with three breeding records Aug. (1)-Sep. (2) (all from Chowo, *RJD*); only one pair owned a territory in Zovochipolo (8 ha-patch), but birds wandered to other patches occasionally. Little is known about its diet, was seen taking seeds of *Polyscias* and *Neoboutonia* (also eaten by Cinnamon Dove, Dowsett-Lemaire 1988a). (*N.B.* The account of this species in Dowsett-Lemaire 1989a disappeared accidentally during printing). As for many other species, the breeding season given by Dyer (1988) is taken from Benson & Benson (1977) for other parts of the country and does not apply to the Nyika situation.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis*

**V.** Absent from the wooded slopes, and the only record in existence is that of a vagrant to the Nganda square (1033B4) turning up on 25 Dec. 1994 at 2350 m (Critchlow & Haugaard 1996).

African Green Pigeon *Treron calvus*

**R/M.** Widespread on the lower wooded slopes, including riparian; small flocks visit montane forest (mainly 2000-2200 m, Manyenjere to Zovochipolo, Juniper Forest) annually in the rains, mainly Jan.-Mar. Seen all three summers 1980-82; extreme dates 25 Dec. (1989, *CB*) and 1 Apr. (1980, *FD-L*). Unlike Rameron Pigeon, very fond of sweet fruit such as *Syzygium guineense* ssp. *afromontanum*, *S. cordatum*, *Cussonia*, *Jasminum*, *Rapanea* and figs (Dowsett-Lemaire 1988a).

Brown-necked (Cape) Parrot *Poicephalus robustus*

**R/M.** Occurs locally in miombo woodland (several records from the Thazima area, including *DPC*'s for the period Oct.-Jan.), but more regularly encountered on the plateau in the rains. When resident on the high Nyika (1979-82) we saw small flocks visit montane forest annually, up to 2150 m (both sides of the Zambian border), from late Nov.-Dec. (21 Nov. 1979, 23 Nov. 1980, 15 Dec. 1981) to Jan. (1980, 1981), once as late as 20 Feb. (1982); we also noticed them on shorter visits in Dec. 1973 (*RJD*, flock of 25 in Chowo), Dec. 1977 (up to 20, Chowo and Manyenjere) and Jan. 1983 (Kasoma, Chowo); later recorded by *MD* (flying over Chelinda) 4 Dec. 1985, and by *DF* late Jan.-Feb. 1995. On 24 Nov. 1980, pair seen with immature to which the female was regurgitating seeds of *Parinari excelsa* (in Manyenjere). *Aningeria* seeds were apparently taken in Dec. 1979 (Zovochipolo) when trees of this species fruited massively, but in the following two summers *Aningeria* did not fruit and Parrots fed exclusively on the seeds of *Parinari excelsa* in the Chowo, Manyenjere, Kasoma and Kasyaula area, peeling the flesh off and extracting the two seeds from the hard stone (fruits handled by Parrots were examined underneath the trees and found empty of their seeds with the hard stone intact) – see also Dowsett-Lemaire 2004.

Meyer's Parrot *Poicephalus meyeri*

**R.** A bird of low-altitude woodland, marginal on the Nyika as recorded (in the park) only from the northern

foothills, near Uledi (*RJD & FD-L*), and a few times near Thazima (*FD-L & RJD*; *DPC* saw it only outside the park).

Schalow's Turaco *Tauraco schalowi*

**R.** Common resident in miombo woodland and riparian forest lower down as well as in montane forest on the plateau, up to 2250 m (Zovochipolo) and *c.* 2300 m (Kasaramba). I estimated densities of 40 pairs in 160 ha of forest patches in Zovochipolo (Dowsett-Lemaire 1989a); the species has a wide diet of fleshy fruit, observations on most of the 58 species listed for Malawi in Dowsett-Lemaire (1988a) coming from the Nyika. The few breeding records that could be back-dated showed egg-laying taking place in Sep. (Zovochipolo), Oct. and Nov. (one each, Chowo) – *FD-L & RJD*.

Purple-crested Turaco *Tauraco porphyreolophus*

**R.** Local, in lower-altitude woodland and riparian forest, on the western escarpment (Kaperekezi area and below) and in the northern foothills (Uledi area); upper altitudinal limit probably close to 1500 m, not known from Thazima, which is higher.

[Grey Lourie *Corythaixoides concolor*. Not yet confirmed for the park, as recorded only from near Uledi in 1033B1, well outside the park, *RJD & FD-L* in Oct. 1986.]

Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius*

**V.** Only one record for the Nyika: a migrant in open miombo woodland below Jalawe Rock, *c.* 1500 m, 22 Sep. 1986 (*MD*).

Jacobin Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus*

**AM.** No more than migrants passing through the area in very small numbers: we recorded the species six times, from Feb.-Apr. Other records, by *DRA*, *WFB-M*, *DPC*, *GM*, *JH*, added to ours, give the following monthly occurrences: Jan. (1x), Feb. (3x), Mar. (4x), Apr. (5x) and May (1x, this being 2 May 1971 near Zambian rest house, Aspinwall 1971). Thus it seems Jacobin Cuckoos visit the Nyika mainly when leaving the country. There is also a Nov. record (6 Nov. 1976, *PBT*). Can turn up in any open habitat such as rank grass and bracken-briar, up to the altitude of 2200-2300 m. One bird was mobbed by a Black-eyed Bulbul at Kalambwe (south of Chosi), 18 Feb. 1982 (*RJD*).

Striped Crested Cuckoo *Clamator levaillantii*

**V.** A rare migrant on the plateau, apparently much more irregular than the last species. We never saw any; two singles have been reported by *PG* on 23-24 Apr. 1981 (Juniper Forest and near Zambian border, 2150 m) and one by *DPC* on 1 Jan. 2002 west of Lake Kaulime, an odd date. Also noted on the Kaswerera stream near Thazima (Nov. 1993, *DPC*), it could perhaps breed at that lower altitude.

Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius*

**AM.** Not uncommon on the plateau, at the edge of forest patches and bracken-briar up to *c.* 2250 m, in the summer rains, and also recorded from the Thazima area. Present generally from Oct.-Jan. when calling (*FD-L & RJD*), with an early record on 9 Sep. 1998 (*DF*, no locality). There is one breeding record, of a chick fed by Cape Robin in Zovochipolo in Dec. 1981 (egg-laying Oct.) (*FD-L*).

Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus*

**AM.** Completely absent from the high plateau, and recorded only from miombo on the lower slopes, in the Chipome valley (1400 m) in Nov. 1986 (*MD*) and at Thazima on 12 Nov. 1993 (*RDM*).

Eurasian Grey Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

**PM.** Old records cannot be utilized as observers were not sure of the form (European or African). Recorded mainly on northward passage (Feb.-Mar.). We saw a few large Eurasian Cuckoos on the high Nyika on 14 Nov. 1979, several from 5 Feb.-29 Mar. 1980, one on 20 Mar. 1981 (this last on Chelinda Hill at 2400 m), several from 16 Jan. to Mar. 1982; in forest-grassland mosaic. *MD* noted one "last" one at Chelinda on 18 Apr. 1985 and 25 Mar. 1986; also four on 29 Feb. 1994 (Anon., no locality), one in Chipome valley on 24 Feb. 1996 (*DPC*).

African Grey Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis*

**AM.** Identified with certainty (calling birds) only from Thazima, 3-4 Nov. 1981 (*FD-L & RJD*), in miombo woodland. It should be expected to occur in the northern dry woodlands but has never been reported as far as we know.

Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus*

**AM.** Only recorded (locally) from miombo woodland and riparian in the northern foothills (North Rukuru, *RJD*) and on the western and south-western slopes, Kaperekezi and Thazima, 1500-1600 m (*MD, RDM*).

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas*

**R/M.** Widespread on the lower slopes and especially at forest edges and riparian scrub on the plateau, up to about 2200 m (Zovochipolo, Mbuzinandi, Fingira, etc.). We recorded it monthly from Sep. (earliest date 30 Aug. 1981) to Mar. in our period of residence, so it presumably leaves the high altitudes in winter. There are two breeding records: a large young fed by a pair of Churring Cisticolas in bracken below Chowo forest (Chire valley) in mid-Feb. 1982 (*FD-L*), back-dated to Dec. laying; one fed by Pallid Flycatcher at Thazima on 17 Feb. 1995 (*DF*).

Didric Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius*

**V/AM.** Attracted to weaver colonies, thus a bird of lower altitude of only exceptional occurrence on the high Nyika. A male was seen in the vicinity of some weavers' nests (probably Bertram's) at 2000 m in riparian *Acacia* near Fingira Rock, 20 Feb. 1981 (*RJD*); there is one later record, on the Dembo stream at nearly 2200 m on 14 Feb. 1995 (*DPC & DF*). Otherwise recorded only from the northern foothills in the Uledi area (*FD-L & RJD*, Oct.).

African Black Coucal *Centropus grillii*

**V.** An exceptional vagrant, recorded once in bracken-briar on the edge of Dam 1 on 28 Feb. 1973 by *RAC* (Dowsett *et al.* 1974).

Senegal Coucal *Centropus senegalensis*

**R?** A few records from bracken-briar of this localized species, possibly a scarce resident: first recorded in Zovochipolo on 20 Nov. 1979 at 2200 m, then near Fingira on 3 Mar. 1981 at *c.* 1900 m (*FD-L & RJD*), and subsequently from the Chipome valley on 23 Aug. 1994 (*DPC*); also several times around Thazima (*DPC*).

White-browed Coucal *Centropus superciliosus*

**R.** Widespread and locally common in rank (riparian) herbage and scrub, or forest edges; on the lower slopes as well as on the high plateau, up to *c.* 2250 m in some valleys on the central plateau (Chelinda stream etc.).

Grass Owl *Tyto capensis*

**R.** A scarce resident of rank growth (bracken-briar) on the high plateau. Typically singles or pairs flushed from dense scrub on the edge of forest. It was collected on the eastern escarpment by Loveridge in Nov. 1948 (Peters & Loveridge 1953), and is also known from the Zambian side (rest house area), Zovochipolo (*FD-L*) and the central plateau (near Chelinda, Dyer 1987, near Dam 3, *WMc*), up to *c.* 2380 m. (Not yet recorded from the Nganda square).

African Scops Owl *Otus senegalensis*

**R.** Heard in miombo near Thazima in Nov. 1981 (*FD-L & RJD*), which is high for the species (1600 m); in addition a road casualty was picked up at Thazima gate (Dyer 1988). Should be expected to occur in the dry woodlands of the northern escarpments, but there are as yet no records.

White-faced Owl *Otus leucotis*

**V.** Very marginal with a wanderer seen once near Thazima gate (*NB et al.*, Nov. 1998), an unusually high altitude for the species (1600 m).

[Cape Eagle Owl *Bubo capensis*. There are no reliable reports from the Nyika: one old record (1976, Chelinda Pines) was withdrawn by the observer, and two, "probably" this species, flew off at Chelinda bridge (below

Chelinda Hill) on 4 Sep. 1991 (*JA*). This owl depends on large, rocky inselbergs or extensive rock faces, a habitat largely missing from the Nyika.]

Spotted Eagle Owl *Bubo africanus*

**R.** The commonest owl on the Nyika, can be encountered anywhere in light woodland, open country, near rocks and on roads, up to at least 2400 m; young recently fledged can be very vulnerable. Has been known to nest on the ground, in between rocks in the shade of a tree clump (Zovochipolo, pers. obs. of an occupied nest in Sep.) and on a small rock ledge 1.6 m above the ground on the North Rukuru river (Metcalf & Gibbs 1996); in the latter instance there were three nestlings in Sep. (egg-laying Jul.). Ten pellets from the vicinity of this nest contained remains of insects and of a rodent, *Otomys angoniensis* (Critchlow 1997b).

Giant Eagle Owl *Bubo lacteus*

**R.** We recorded this bird calling at Thazima in Nov. 1981 and *DPC* in Mar. 1994; there is one observation from the northern slopes (*MD*, in 1033B4). Dyer (1987) reported seeing one in a small patch of forest at nearly 2400 m, but later (*in litt.*) added that the record required confirmation.

Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii*

**R.** Widespread and fairly common, in miombo with riparian (e.g. Thazima) as well as in evergreen forest, up to at least 2400 m; also heard at Nyamkhowa. Probably no more than three pairs in Zovochipolo, of which one bred in a patch of 10 ha (where a nature trail was later established), producing two young late Nov. 1981 (egg-laying Sep.). One pair also bred in the forest patch (4.5 ha) on Chelinda Hill, with two young in late Jan. 1982 (egg-laying Nov.) – all *FD-L* & *RJD*.

Marsh Owl *Asio capensis*

**R.** Local inhabitant of high-altitude dambos: it was first reported on the Nyika by *RG* in Jan. 1974 near Chelinda bridge, “noted” by *TOO* (May 1975), then by *JHo* near Chelinda (Dec. 1981), and by *DPC* upstream of Dam 1, south of Chelinda and 7 km north of Chelinda at 2380 m (respectively Mar., Apr. 1994, Nov. 1995). Also a few observations on the high plateau by *MD* (Dyer 1988).

Eurasian Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

**PM.** One specimen of the nominate race was collected in Jan. 1964 at *c.* 2130 m (Malawi) (Benson & Irwin 1967); a male was well seen by the Chire near the Zambian rest house on 31 Dec. 1975 (*RJD*); we saw it twice in Nov. 1981 (Zovochipolo and Zambian border) and also Feb. 1982 (Chowo). Reported in Nov. 1993 (*RDM*), while the earliest date is 24 Oct. (1992) when one was seen on the Chelinda road by *NC*, apparently of the race *unwini* – however, the bird was not examined in the hand but only through car lights, so racial identification under such circumstances appears doubtful. Also on 14 Nov. 1994 near Chelinda (*DPC*). Overall is probably annual on passage, and the Dec.-Jan. dates indicate some may winter in some years.

Fiery-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus pectoralis*

**R.** Recorded from the escarpments (north and south-west) up to *c.* 1600 m at Thazima (*FD-L* & *RJD*) and unlikely to occur much higher than this, in miombo and riparian.

Mountain Nightjar *Caprimulgus poliocephalus*

**R.** Common resident on the high Nyika, above 1900 m, also at Nyamkhowa (heard at *c.* 2000 m in Oct.: Benson 1940-41). It was first collected in Nov. 1937 (female and juvenile: Benson 1940-41); egg-laying takes place in Sep.-Oct. (from four clutches of C/2 found in Oct. and Nov. 1947 (Benson & Benson 1949) and N/2 in Oct. 1973 (*JFRC-R*)); two fledglings (not full grown) were flushed on 9 Nov. 1980 (*FD-L*). Hunts over montane grassland and at forest edges, and may rest on roads; takes shelter by day in dense bracken-briar and at forest edges. We regularly heard the full song from mid- or late Feb. to early Nov. (with a decrease in vocal activity in the colder months of Jun.-Jul.), once in late Nov. (27 Nov. 1979, but otherwise not heard since 5 Nov.) and once (very briefly) in Dec. 1977; similarly *DPC* heard it once in late Dec. Thus generally silent for about three months (Nov.-Jan.) immediately after breeding.

Freckled Rock Nightjar *Caprimulgus tristigma*

**R.** Recorded from a rocky hill near Thazima (*DPC*), and locally on the high plateau (some years) at about

2200 m on Chowo Rocks, with an observation on the Chelinda road (*RJD*). It was already noted at Chowo Rocks by *CWB* in Sep. 1956 and Jan. 1964, and the only breeding record on the Nyika is indeed a C/2 collected there on 26 Sep. 1956 (Benson & Pitman 1959). During our period of residence a bird was singing there from 27 Dec. 1979 to at least Mar. 1980.

Pennant-winged Nightjar *Macrodipteryx vexillarius*

**AM.** Present on the wooded escarpments (north and south-west) where likely breeds (indeed a nest with egg in the North Rukuru valley at 1450 m in Oct. (Dyer 1988)). Common at Thazima Oct.-Jan., with males losing their pennants mid-Jan. (*DPC*). On the high Nyika only on passage, in all months from Sep. to Mar. (including our own observations Oct.-Mar.), with a female collected once as high as about 2450 m in Oct. (Benson 1942).

Scarce Swift *Schoutedenapus myoptilus*

**AM.** Seasonally common over montane forest (Sep. or Oct. to Mar.), particularly on the Zambian side, and over the extensive forests of the eastern escarpment including Nyamkhowa. As elsewhere in Malawi (Dowsett-Lemaire 1989a) hunts mainly over the forest canopy of the larger patches (such as Manyenjere and Chowo, Kasaramba-Mwenembwe) but may visit smaller patches (Junipers, Zovochipolo) – *FD-L* & *RJD*. The nesting habitat of this species has not yet been identified conclusively anywhere in Africa, but with the scarcity of small cliffs in the area, it most likely breeds in holes in trees, as suggested by the discovery of a live young bird on the floor of Chowo forest in late Dec. (Scott 1979). Mates in the air, and this was seen frequently from the last week of Oct. to early Dec. (*RJD* & *FD-L*, especially around Chowo). There is an unusual observation of two drinking in Lake Kaulime with other swifts on 15 Oct. 1973 (*RJD*).

The species starts arriving in Sep. (earliest date 1 Sep. 1981, calling over Zovochipolo, otherwise 13 Sep. 1980, with six birds at Chowo) but does not “settle” before late Oct. (as before that time usually passes through at great speed), after which can be seen daily over regular sites such as Chowo until Feb. or Mar. Last departures are in early Apr. (as observed both in 1980 and 1981) with latest on 12 Apr. 1980 (all *FD-L* & *RJD*).

A good tape-recording of this noisy bird was published by Gibbon (1991), from Chowo.

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus*

**R/V.** Recorded from the northern foothills (1033B2 and B4) and a couple of times over the high Nyika, as single vagrants in Sep.-Oct. 1981 in the Chelinda area, including one drinking at Dam 1 (*RJD* & *FD-L*).

Alpine Swift *Apus melba*

**AM.** Uncommon migrant over the high Nyika with some seen on both passages; there are at least 10 records, usually of ones or twos (but several in Oct. 1994), the majority are in the late dry season, mainly Sep.-Oct., extreme dates being 23 Aug. (1981, *RJD*) and 25 Oct. (1992, *DF*). Only a couple of April records: 23 Apr. 1982 (*NJ-S*) and 20 Apr. 1992 (*RDM*).

Mottled Swift *Apus aequatorialis*

**R?** Uncommon species, most often seen around Manyenjere, and it was found breeding on the small cliff on the Manyenjere ridge in Nov. 1974 (two nests with N/1, female and nestling collected by *TOO*, Dowsett *et al.* 1974). May wander or hunt elsewhere over the plateau, as when two were found drinking (with two Alpine Swifts and two Scarce Swifts) in Lake Kaulime on 15 Oct. 1973 (*TOO* & *RJD*). It is not clear whether it is resident, as outside the period Sep.-Jan. (several records, mainly our own) we have found only two definite records, of one seen by *DPC* in Feb. 1995 (over the plateau) and one mistnetted near Nganda on 7 Apr. 1997 (*JH et al.*); we had a possible at Manyenjere in Feb. 1980.

Eurasian Swift *Apus apus*

**PM.** Widespread and seasonally numerous over the whole Nyika, with thousands attracted to storms. Earliest dates are 3 Sep. (1980) and 5 Sep. (1981) but they do not arrive in large numbers until the rains break (usually Nov.), and remain common until early Mar., leaving before the end of the month (*RJD* & *FD-L*).

African Black Swift *Apus barbatus*

**R?** May be confused with European Swift unless calling. We have a few records of small numbers in the



months of Feb., May, Aug.-Nov. in 1980-81 mostly over the south-west. In Oct. 1973 several were seen at Lake Kaulime and also displaying high over the Chire valley (Dowsett *et al.* 1974); it is likely the species breeds in the area, suitable spots being the Manyenjere rocky ridge and Jalawe Rock, but that remains to be proven.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*

**V/R?** Very uncommon in the area, with a few records of wanderers over the high plateau, Oct. 1973 (from Chowo to Kaulime and Chelinda, Dowsett *et al.* 1974), then in the months of Jan.-Feb., Sep.-Oct. 1980, Jan. and Sep. 1981, near Chowo, Manyenjere ridge, Zambian rest house and Zovochipolo (RJD & FD-L).

African White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer*

**AM.** We saw this species regularly over the high plateau from 30 Aug. to Apr. in our years of residence, and a number of older records show the extreme dates to be 21 Aug. (1972, Aspinwall *et al.* 1973) and 16 May (1975, TOO). Two specimens were collected in Nov. 1969 from a group of eight roosting under the eaves of the Zambian rest house (Dowsett 1970), and it had been collected long before on the Malawi side by Benson (1940-41).

Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus*

**R.** Common, gregarious resident in bracken-briar and at forest edges on the escarpments and lower plateau, up to *c.* 2200 m (Zovochipolo); normally absent from the Chelinda area, but a group of eight were noted by DPC on the edge of Dam 2 on 9 Mar. 1996 (*c.* 2280 m). There are at least three breeding records, one C/3 Dec. (CJV, Zambian side) and two broods (one N/3) back-dated to Sep. and Oct. laying (Zambian rest house, FD-L & RJD).

Narina's Trogon *Apaloderma narina*

**R.** Appears very local, as recorded only from riparian forest on the North Rukuru river near Kaperekezi gate (below 1500 m, MD) and on the Chire stream at *c.* 1500 m (Nov. 1974, TOO in Dowsett *et al.* 1974).

Bar-tailed Trogon *Apaloderma vittatum*

**R.** Common resident in tall-canopy forest in the south-west up to about 2220 m altitude (Zovochipolo), rarer on the eastern escarpment, up to approximately 2200 m (Kasaramba-Mwenembwe), and noted also at Nyamkhowa (Benson 1940-41, FD-L & RJD). The highest densities observed are in Chowo, with a minimum of 12 pairs in 25 ha; in Zovochipolo all patches above 2.3 ha in size are occupied, and successful breeding was observed two years running in a patch of 3 ha (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). Occasionally wanders to patches away from breeding areas, including the Juniper Forest. There are eight dated breeding records (laying Oct. 6x, Nov. 2x) most from Chowo, two from Zovochipolo. Two of nine adults ringed in Chowo were retrapped locally after one and three years (Dowsett 1985).

Half-collared Kingfisher *Alcedo semitorquata*

**R.** Recorded from the North Rukuru in the northern foothills (1033B1-2) and other streams in 1033B4; also from streams near Thazima (FD-L & RJD), up to about 1600 m. Medland (n.d.) mentions Chelinda dams, but we have traced no records this high.

Malachite Kingfisher *Alcedo cristata*

**R/V.** Very marginal on the Nyika, as recorded only from the northern foothills (North Rukuru near Uledi), and as a vagrant to Chelinda, with one on the stream at the head of Dam 1 on 11 Nov. 1980 (MB). DF apparently saw it once at Dam 2, probably in 1996 or 1997.

Pygmy Kingfisher *Ceyx pictus*

**AM.** Recorded from the northern foothills and south-western slopes, up to *c.* 2000 m above Chisanga Falls (19 Dec. 1981, FD-L); the date of this record suggests that the species might occasionally breed as high as this. Otherwise one bird on passage in Zovochipolo, Nov. (Dyer 1988), probably at least 2100 m.

Brown-hooded Kingfisher *Halcyon albiventris*

**R.** Resident in riparian vegetation on the northern and south-western escarpments, up to Thazima (FD-L & RJD).

Chestnut-bellied Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala*

**AM/V.** Seasonally in woodland on the northern and south-western escarpments; no more than a scarce migrant at high altitude: one in open *Protea* grassland on 5 Jan. 1964 at 1800 m (*CJV*); one in Zovochipolo on 14 Apr. 1980 (*FD-L*); and one on the Dembo stream on 30 Sep. 1985 (Dyer 1987), so up to *c.* 2250 m.

Senegal (Woodland) Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis*

**AM/V.** A species of low-altitude, dry woodland, known from the northern foothills (near Uledi) and normally present Oct.-Mar.; there are a couple of records of vagrants on the high plateau: one "long dead" by 3 May 1982 (*AJS*) and one at Dam 2 near Chelinda on 23 Mar. 1996 (*DF*).

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima*

**R/V.** It is normally recorded from the North Rukuru and other streams on the northern and western slopes (including rarely Chisanga Falls), and from Thazima, with occasional wanderers to the Chelinda dams. The first record there was a female at Dam 1 in Oct. 1973 (Dowsett *et al.* 1974); one was mentioned in *Nyala* 1977 (3(1): 101) without a date; we saw it only once in nearly three years (Sep. 1980). More recently three were on the North Rumphu river (east of Nganda) in Jan. 1995, and also two-three on the Chelinda stream in Jul. 1995 (*DPC*). One-two birds visited Dam 1 and 2 from Dec. 1995-Mar. 1996 (*DPC et al.*) and one was reported at Dam 2 on 4 Jan. 2002 (*DPC*).

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*

**R/V.** Recorded marginally from the northern foothills (North Rukuru near Uledi, *FD-L & RJD*), and an exceptional wanderer to Chelinda Dam: one on 21 Sep. 1978 (*APZ* in Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1980).

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus*

**R.** Widespread in grassy clearings in woodland and on the edge of riparian on the escarpments, coming up to the plateau (moist herbage near streams, open wooded grassland) below the altitude of 2000 m: thus present in the Lusero area, in the Chire valley below Chowo, near Fingira etc. In 1979-80, a pair bred near the Zambian rest house at 2150 m, feeding at nest on 10 Dec. (*FD-L*). There is only one record higher than this, of a pair wandering to Chelinda, 10 Oct. 1989 (*NJ-S*).

Swallow-tailed Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus*

**AM.** Recorded from dry woodland in the northern foothills; also rarely at Thazima: a pair on 21 Sep. 1992, interacting with Little Bee-eater (*RDM*), so perhaps territorial. Also noted by *DOE* on the "southern Nyika" (no altitude) on 19 Nov. 1981.

White-fronted Bee-eater *Merops bullockoides*

**V.** A species of low-altitude sandy rivers, subject to wandering in the off-season. There are two records from the southern slopes at an unusual altitude (1700-1800 m): we saw a couple near Nkhonjera Hill in Jun. 1983, and *MD* saw a dozen on the Katizi stream in Jun. 1985.

Madagascar Bee-eater *Merops superciliosus*

**AM.** A migrant with a double passage, flying over the high plateau in small flocks (up to at least 2400 m), most noticeable on southward migration (around Sep.), less so on northward migration (Apr.-May). We recorded this species on a few occasions from 23 Apr.-9 May 1980 as well as from 15 Apr. 1981 (we were absent in May); more common in Sep. 1980 and 1981 (first date of 8 Sep. 1980 and 1 Sep. 1981), with fewer into Oct. of both years. In 1985, *MD* noted passage over Chelinda on 19 May. Certainly annual, although not reported since.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus*

**PM.** Difficult to tell apart from Madagascar Bee-eater unless one has an exercised ear. A migrant preferring floodplains and valleys, likely much scarcer than its sibling over the Nyika. One record of several flying over on 27 Apr. 1980, and a small flock flying south on 5 Oct. 1980 (Zovochipolo, *FD-L*); also heard by *MD* over Chelinda on 17 Apr. 1985, as late as 4 May 1986, and near Fingira on 25 Nov. 1985.

Eurasian Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

**PM.** The commonest bee-eater over the Nyika, most numerous on passage (mid-Sep. to Oct., Mar. to mid-Apr.), with smaller numbers Nov.-Feb. Extreme dates when we were resident were 10 Sep. (1980) and 11 Sep. (1981), 15 Apr. (1980) and 14 Apr. (1981). More extreme dates noted: 21 Apr. 1985 (*MD*) and an exceptionally early 26 Aug. 1997 (*DF*). Noted feasting on bees from Chelinda bee-hives in the Regional Game Warden's garden in Mar. (*MTu* in *Nyala* 1978, 4: 41).

Southern Carmine Bee-eater *Merops nubicoides*

**V.** An exceptional wanderer, with a single record over the Nyika: at least one (calling) over Zovochipolo on 4 Apr. 1981, c. 2200 m (*FD-L*).

Eurasian Roller *Coracias garrulus*

**PM.** An irregular migrant recorded mainly on northward passage (late Feb.-early Apr.). First reported at Dam 3 on 27 Dec. 1975 (*RJD & TAM*), which is also the only record on southward passage; it was unusually common in Apr. 1976, mentioned by several observers, including *JHa* who saw about 20 feeding around Eucalyptus trees at Chelinda from 4-7 Apr. Certainly not as conspicuous during our period of residence, as we saw one at Chelinda 17-23 Feb. and one at Chelinda Hill (2400 m) on 8 Apr. 1981. Critchlow (1995) has omitted observations from 1976-1981 but reports some later ones, especially by *MD* who saw some in Mar. 1985, Mar.-Apr. 1986 (latest on the 23rd). There are a few later records, all of northward-bound birds, late Feb. to 11 Apr. (this last in 1996, *DPC*).

Lilac-breasted Roller *Coracias caudatus*

**R/V.** Recorded from the northern foothills in the Uledi area (*RJD & FD-L*, Oct. 1986); otherwise no more than a rare vagrant to the high plateau in the off-season, with three acceptable records: one at Lake Kaulime, 9-10 Jan. 1973 (*BC* in Dowsett *et al.* 1974), one on the Zambian side (c. 1950 m) on 30 Jan. 1994 (*DPC*) and one near Chelinda on 9 Jul. 1994 (*GB*, in Critchlow 1995). Some lists mention other observations (Feb.-Mar. 1975) but as the observer added that this was a "regular visitor" in small numbers, there was probably confusion with Eurasian Roller.

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*

**AM.** Recorded from the northern foothills (near and east of Uledi, *RJD & FD-L*) where it could be breeding, and from the Thazima area. On the high plateau, only an uncommon migrant seen mainly on southward passage, with at least eight records (in Critchlow 1995, in addition to ours on 15 Oct. 1981, Zovochipolo), extreme dates 29 Sep.-14 Nov. Only three Mar. records: one on 8 Mar. 1996 (*DPC*), four on 11 Mar. 1997 (*JH et al.*), one on 24 Mar. 1994 (*DF*).

Red-billed Wood Hoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus*

**R.** A bird of miombo woodland, observed on the northern escarpment, on the Zambian side of Kaperekezi (*DPC*), at Thazima (*FD-L & RJD*) near the upper altitudinal limit of its range, also with an immature in Jan. (1994, *DPC*), and once near Ulera at 1700 m (*MD*).

Scimitarbill *Phoeniculus cyanomelas*

**R.** Recorded from the northern woodlands and near Thazima, with an exceptional observation of a wanderer seen crossing a valley in Zovochipolo (c. 2150 m) on 12 Sep. 1981 (*FD-L*).

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

**R.** Recorded from the northern woodlands, and near Kaperekezi and Thazima (*DPC*). Subject to much wandering and rarely turns up on the high plateau. One well seen in Zovochipolo (3 Jan. 1981, 2200 m) was definitely the race *africana* (*RJD & FD-L*). Other dated records are 15 Dec. 1974 (*RAC* in Benson & Benson 1977) at about 2400 m (near Domwe), and one on 25 Dec. 1995 at 2300 m (*DF*). *DPC* has also seen it once or twice in the mid-1990s, between Kaulime and Kaperekezi, also one on 6-8 Jan. 2002 along the same road.

Crowned Hornbill *Tockus alboterminatus*

**R.** In dense miombo and forest, resident in small numbers on the escarpments and on the plateau up to at least 2200 m, also known from Nyamkhowa (Benson 1940-41, *FD-L & RJD*). There are several breeding records

from the forests of the south-west (Manyenjere, Chowo, twice in Zovochipolo) with egg-laying back-dated to Aug. (1) and Sep. (3) – all *FD-L*. Food brought to a Zovochipolo nest included large insects and arboreal chameleons *Chamaeleo goetzei*; the home range covered by the feeding bird was at least 4.5 km<sup>2</sup> (with over 50 ha of forest); there are at least two pairs in Chowo, and densities are higher at lower altitudes (Kasyaula area) (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). The comment by *JH* (in *Vocifer* of Jul. 1997: 2), that the altitude of 2150 m (where seen in Apr. 1997 north of Nganda) is unusual for this species, does not appear justified.

Pale-billed Hornbill *Tockus pallidirostris*

**R.** A bird of low-altitude, dry miombo woodland, recorded only from the northern foothills in 1033B4 (Chipome valley, Atlas record). The upper altitudinal limit is around 1400 m elsewhere in Malawi, but has not been documented for the Nyika.

African Grey Hornbill *Tockus nasutus*

**R.** Only recorded (as far as we know) from the northern foothills, as near Uledi (*FD-L* & *RJD*) and Chipome (*MD*).

Trumpeter Hornbill *Bycanistes bucinator*

**R/M.** Recorded from riparian on the North Rukuru near Uledi, and at Thazima; small numbers are present seasonally in the larger forests of the south-western escarpment (mainly Kasyaula, Kasoma, Manyenjere and Chowo, rarely visiting Zovochipolo) mostly from Sep.-Mar. (*FD-L* & *RJD*), the earliest date being the last week of Aug. (1972, Aspinwall *et al.* 1973), followed by 2 Sep. (1981 at Kasoma, *FD-L*), and latest 2 Apr. (1981 in Zovochipolo, *FD-L*). We suspect that they leave in the winter months as fruit production (including figs) is poor at that time. It was also present at Nyamkhowa (Dec. 1982). Occurs in pairs or small parties and likely breeds.

Silvery-cheeked Hornbill *Bycanistes brevis*

**V.** Only a vagrant to the Nyika, possibly originating from the large breeding population in the Misukus (Dowsett-Lemaire 1989a). The first record was one at Chelinda on 16 Oct. 1973 (Dowsett *et al.* 1974); then one-two in Manyenjere on 18 Dec. 1976 (*DRA*), a male flying from Chowo to Zovochipolo on 13 Nov. 1979 (*RJD*), one in Chowo on 9 Apr. 1980 and a noisy pair in Manyenjere on 5-8 Sep. 1981 (both *JA*), and one in Manyenjere on 7 Nov. 1988 (*RJS*).

Southern Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus leadbeateri* (syn. *B. cafer*)

**R.** Resident in small numbers in montane grassland on the plateau, regularly up to 2200 or even 2250 m (from Manyenjere to Zovochipolo, *FD-L* & *RJD*). There is one observation of a bird at *c.* 2400 m at Kasaramba in May 1974 (M. Rosevear *per* *CWB*, omitted in Benson & Benson 1977), and it has also been seen north of Nganda at 2100 m (*JH et al.*). Known too from the escarpments, near Thazima and in the north-east (Ruwile stream, *per* *DPC*). Pair with fledged young near Thazima in Feb. (Dyer 1988).

Whyte's Barbet *Stactolaema whytii*

**R.** Scarce resident of riparian forest and adjacent miombo woodland, recorded only from Thazima, where seen interacting with Black-backed Barbet (Sep. 1992, *RDM*); seen again by *DPC* in Dec. 1993-Jan. 1994.

Moustached Green Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus leucomystax*

**R.** Common resident in montane rain forest on all escarpments (up to 2300 m on the eastern side, 2250 m in the south-west), also at Nyamkhowa (down to 1720 m) and the Juniper Forest. Even though it takes a lot of insects, it is above all a highly specialized consumer of mistletoe berries (Dowsett-Lemaire 1988a) and its distribution depends on abundant fruit supply, thus it is absent from the high central plateau (above 2250 m, where there are no mistletoes). In Zovochipolo, pairs have moved to breed in some small patches from Oct.-Dec. where only *Englerina* berries (ripening Sep.-Dec.) are to be found (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). Densities in fragmented forest in Zovochipolo are of one-two pairs/ha; they are less in larger forests. The entrance of occupied nest holes is decorated with the sticky white seeds of *Englerina*, which eventually fall off as they cannot survive on dead wood. Nest holes are invariably dug out of dead wood, and the nestlings are easy to find from their piping calls, this resulting in 81 dated breeding records, egg-laying taking place from Sep.-Nov., rarely Dec. (*FD-L*). It appears to be mainly single-brooded, but some pairs (laying Dec.) probably raise

a second brood (Dowsett-Lemaire 1985a).

Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus*

**R.** Common in miombo woodland on the escarpments, coming up to the upper limit of tall woodland on the western side, at about 2050 m.

Golden-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus*

**R.** First collected at Nyamkhowa in 1938 (Benson 1940-41) and we noted several there in Dec. 1982 (1720-2000 m), thus overlapping with *P. leucomystax* but apparently outnumbered. We also heard it (just the one) in Mwenembwe forest, below 2000 m, in Jun. 1983.

Miombo Pied Barbet *Tricholaema frontata*

**R.** Very marginal in the Nyika woodlands as it does not ascend as high as Thazima; noted in the vicinity of Kaperekezi (MD), c. 1500 m, but not yet reported from the northern escarpment.

Black-collared Barbet *Lybius torquatus*

**R.** Recorded from the northern foothills (including the North Rukuru), and Thazima, ascending marginally higher to riparian vegetation on the old Mbuzinandi road at c. 1800 m (MD).

Black-backed Barbet *Lybius minor*

**R.** Uncommon and discreet resident of riparian forest and adjacent miombo; first reported from the foothills in 1981, at Thazima (APZ), and in the Chipome valley and slopes of Mpanda in the north (DOE). There have been several subsequent observations from both areas, including a pair feeding at a nest (in a *Ficus natalensis*) 31 Aug.-1 Sep. 1994 in the north-east (1033B4 at 1150 m, DPC), and a pair interacting and driving off a Whyte's Barbet at Thazima (Sep. 1992, RDM).

Crested Barbet *Trachyphonus vaillantii*.

**R.** A species of dry woodland at low altitudes, not yet reported from the northern escarpments where it would seem likely to occur. It barely reaches Thazima, as it was seen twice in 1993 on or near the park's boundary (DPC).

Green-backed Honeyguide *Prodotiscus zambesiae*

**R.** There are a few records from miombo woodland just above Thazima (PML saw a pair copulating 29 Sep. 1995, NB reported it in Nov. 1998, also seen by MD once), at the altitude of 1600-1700 m. It is also recorded from the western escarpment, in miombo above Kaperekezi (Aug. 1986, MD).

Scaly-throated Honeyguide *Indicator variegatus*

**R.** Uncommon and discreet resident of montane rain forest in the south-west (up to 2250 m in Zovochipolo) and on the central plateau (up to 2300 m); also recorded from the northern escarpment. Although I never found a song-post anywhere the species definitely breeds, parasitizing the Olive Woodpecker (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983b). In 1981 in Zovochipolo three neighbouring territories of Woodpeckers were all parasitized; two nests produced a fledgling, in the third, the nestling was abandoned about half way. The Honeyguide was seen visiting this particular nest during incubation; the young Woodpeckers never hatched (long past the normal date) but the young Honeyguide hatched 18 days after a prolonged visit by the adult, the egg-shell being carried out by the male Woodpecker. It is likely the same female Honeyguide was involved in all three territories (laying in Aug. and Sep.). The voice of nestling Honeyguide is a low, husky "chess-chess-chess", very different from the high piping of the young Woodpeckers. The most common call of adult Honeyguide heard year-round is a soft whistle, repeated a few times, reminiscent of Scimitarbill whistles.

Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator*

**R/V.** Recorded from woodland on the northern and south-western escarpments (Thazima), and very rarely wanders to the high plateau (up to about 2200 m). Thus one immature seen above the Zambian rest house on 19 Dec. 1975 (RJD), and one female in Zovochipolo on 15 Oct. 1981 (FD-L); one immature was netted north of Nganda in Mar. 1997 (JH et al.).

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*

**R?** Although Medland (n.d.) writes “common woodland” it was reported only once from the northern escarpment (Jalawe valley, Aug. 1994) and once from Thazima (Dec. 1993, both *DPC*). One was netted north of Nganda (at c. 2200 m) at forest edges in Mar. 1997 (*JH et al.*); there are at least seven earlier observations of wanderers on the high plateau in the months of Jan.-Mar., May and Nov. (near Chowo and Zambian rest house, in Zovochipolo). Parasitizes mainly barbets and unlikely to breed this high.

Eastern Least Honeyguide *Indicator meliphilus*

**R.** Discreet species of montane rain forest, flycatching in canopy or at edges. There are a few reports from Chowo, c. 2100 m (Jul. and Dec. 1975, Dec. 1977, Feb. and Dec. 1979: *DRA, RJD, FD-L*) and we saw it once in riparian in the Lusero area (Jan. 1981).

Bennett's Woodpecker *Campethera bennettii*

**R.** Marginal for the Nyika: has definitely been recorded from Thazima (*FD-L & RJD*) and lower down in the extreme north-east (lower Wovwe, *MD*), but could be more widespread on the northern escarpment.

Golden-tailed Woodpecker *Campethera abingoni*

**R.** Common on the escarpments (northern foothills and in the Thazima region). In addition, the odd pair occurs higher up in forest patches in the south-west, up to 2200 m. It was seen in Manyenjere (Jan. 1976, *RJD*); a typical nest hole (oval) was found near the Chire stream below Chowo and in 1981 a pair bred in a small forest in Zovochipolo on the Zambian border, producing two young (eggs laid in Sep.) – *FD-L*.

Little Spotted Woodpecker *Campethera cailliautii*

**R.** Uncommon species of riparian forest and adjacent miombo, reported from the northern foothills, along the North Rukuru (*RJD & FD-L*), and netted in riparian at 1150 m in 1033B4 (1997, *JH et al.*).

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens*

**R.** Commonest woodpecker in miombo woodland below 1800 m (northern and south-western escarpments), uncommon above that, but locally to 2100 m (above Chisanga Falls, *FD-L*).

Bearded Woodpecker *Thripias namaquus*

**R.** Widespread in miombo on the escarpments, up to about 1800 m (near Ulera on the southern slopes, *FD-L & RJD*).

Olive Woodpecker *Mesopicos griseocephalus*

**R.** Common in montane forest, including the small patches on the high plateau, up to 2450 m. Especially common in small patches with many soft-barked trees (e.g. *Hagenia, Maesa, Myrica, Nuxia, Polyscias*). Thus in Zovochipolo 22 pairs are known to breed in 100 ha of forest patches, an average of 4.5 ha/pair, whereas I located only three pairs in the 90 ha of Chowo forest (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). Its breeding behaviour was studied in detail in 1980 and 1981 (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983c): this resulted in 32 dated breeding records (laying Jul. to Sep.). Breeding success was very high, the only source of failure identified being the parasitism by Scaly-throated Honeyguide. More often than not, only one fledgling left the nest (n = 16, against nine cases of two young), following its father; when two young fledged, the second eventually (and reluctantly at first) followed (and was fed by) the female, as the male could not feed both young. Fledglings leave the nest after 26 days, are then fed for one month and still attended by their parents for at least another two months, when they learn to practise their special feeding techniques. One of three birds ringed was retrapped locally after five years (Dowsett 1985).

African Broadbill *Smithornis capensis*

**R.** There are a few observations in rain forest in the south-west (Manyenjere and Chowo), but it appears very rare in Chowo where probably just a wanderer, up to 2150 m (e.g. Jul. 1975, *DRA*, and a male collected on the edge in Nov. 1969 (Dowsett 1970); also noted once by *MD* in 1986 (Dyer 1987)). A pair alarm-calling with great agitation in Manyenjere on 13 Jan. 1983 (*FD-L*) suggests breeding activity. It is also known from riparian forest on the western escarpment, at Thazima (Dyer 1987) and on the North Rukuru on the northern boundary (*FD-L*).

African Pitta *Pitta angolensis*

**V.** A species breeding in deciduous thicket at low altitude (as near the Lake-shore); only a rare migrant through the area, with a male collected in forest at *c.* 1830 m on Mwanda Mtn by *ELB*, Zambian Nyika, on 27 Nov. 1950 (Benson *et al.* 1970).

Rufous-naped Lark *Mirafra africana*

**R.** Common resident of montane grassland up to the peak, this race (*nyikae*) being confined to the Nyika and some of the southern highlands of Tanzania. There are at least four dated breeding records, two C/2 and two C/3, laid in Nov. (3) or late Oct.-Nov. (1). Also occupied nests in Jan.-Feb. 1987 near Chelinda (*MD*). Occasionally forms small flocks on burnt grassland.

Flappet Lark *Mirafra rufocinnamomea*

**R.** In wooded grassland on the northern escarpments, up to *c.* 1400 m (*MD*), and apparently not recorded from as high as Thazima.

Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea*

**AM.** Uncommon visitor in small numbers, normally in the dry season. However, the first observations were on 2-12 Jan. 1964, when it was seen (and collected) in grassland on both sides of the border (Benson *et al.* 1970). Later records are all in the dry season, usually as small flocks in burnt grassland (from Manyanjere and Kasoma to the central plateau as near Kaulime), mostly from May to Oct., extreme dates 19 Apr. 1982 (*PG*), then 5 May (1985, *MD*) to 25 Oct. (1973, *RJD*). Adults seen with young near Chelinda in Oct.-Nov. (Dyer 1988), but the last date of presence was not noted.

Black Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne pristoptera*

**AM/R.** Not uncommon at edges of forest and woodland on the escarpments, up to 1800-1900 m (Lusero, Fingira, Chisanga Falls etc.), with a few occasionally to 2050 m; at higher altitudes it is essentially a seasonal migrant over montane grassland, appearing in some numbers in Apr.-May (often flying north) and Aug.-Sep., with fewer in Oct. (and only once in Jan. near Chelinda) – *FD-L* & *RJD* in our years of residence. There is also a report of about 30 in a flock with Angola Swallow in Jul., at 2300 m (Benson 1940-41).

White-headed Saw-wing *Pristoptera albiceps*

**AM.** Replaces the Black Saw-wing at higher altitudes, although there is much overlap, as it is recorded from at least Thazima. Seasonally common in small numbers on the edge of forest and scrub on the plateau, especially around 1800-2200 m. Normally arrives in late Sep. and departs in Apr.: our first dates were 17 Sep. (1981) and 28 Sep. (1980); in Apr. 1980 flocks were passing through until the last day, but we saw none in May. *TOO* noted some in early May 1975, and *DPC* last saw the species on 3 May (1996). Breeds in earth banks, with a couple of dated records from the Zambian side (N/2 in one case) indicating laying in Nov. and Dec. (*JFRC-R*, Dec. 1985); nest holes also occupied in early Jan. (1978, *WFB-M*) and apparently in Feb.-Mar. near Chisanga Falls (Dyer 1988).

Eurasian Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

**PM.** Uncommon passage migrant, but probably annual, with singles seen usually near water, dated records being 23 Sep. (1992, Anon., which is the earliest date in Malawi), Oct. (including mid-Oct. 1973 at Lake Kaulime, *RJD*), 6 Nov. (1981, over Zovochipolo, *RJD*), then Mar.-Apr. (latest 10 Apr. 1986 at Chelinda, *MD*).

African Sand Martin *Riparia paludicola*

**V.** Apparently just the one record, of a vagrant at Dam 2, 14 Sep. 1981 (*RJD* & *FD-L*).

Banded Martin *Riparia cincta*

**AM.** In small numbers seasonally over montane grassland, mainly from late Oct.-Mar. (*RJD* & *FD-L*). Extreme dates are 12 Oct. (Benson & Benson 1949) and 18 Apr. (1992 at Nganda, *RDM*). Nest-building was recorded on 22 Dec. (*DPC*, 1995), in Jan. (Benson 1952), and egg-laying twice in Dec. (from pair feeding nestlings near Chelinda, Jan. 1981, *FD-L* & *RJD*, and C/4 at Chelinda, Dec. 1989, *JDA*). Dyer (1988) saw some nests in road-cut on the way to Dam 3; they were occupied in Jan.-Mar. and later abandoned (*MD in litt.*). Largest group seen early in the season of just over 20 birds, 10 Nov. 1980 in Zovochipolo (*FD-L*) and

about 200 on 17 Mar. 1996 (DPC).

Grey-rumped Swallow *Pseudhirundo griseopyga*

**AM.** Seasonally common over montane grassland, especially in the months of late Apr.-May to Nov. when they leave; the odd one stays in the rains (Dec.-Jan.) and we saw six early birds on 28 Mar. 1980. Breeds in rodent holes in the ground: two occupied holes noted in Aug. 1972 (Aspinwall *et al.* 1973) and we had four breeding records, back-dated to laying in Aug. (2 in 1981) and Sep. (2 in 1980), on both sides of the border, near Zambian rest house and in Zovochipolo (up to 2200 m). Dyer (1988) also noted some entering nest holes near Chelinda in Aug.-Sep.

Mosque Swallow *Hirundo senegalensis*

**R.** Small numbers seen year-round on the southern escarpments and the high plateau up to 2200 m, occasionally higher (2300 m); *CJV* saw a family party living in a hollow branch of a large tree (Jan. 1964, *c.* 2000 m) and *RDM* noted several pairs collecting mud on border road before Chowo (*c.* 2100 m) on 12 Nov. 1993. On 2 Dec. 1981 a pair was looking into a crack in an *Olinia* tree on the Chire stream below the Zambian rest house (*FD-L*).

Lesser Striped Swallow *Hirundo abyssinica*

**R.** Uncommon, but seen overall in all months, often in ones and twos with mixed flocks of swallows and swifts, over the high plateau up to at least 2400 m and over the escarpments. There is as yet no evidence that it breeds at high altitude on the plateau, but it was observed nesting at Chisanga Falls in Dec. 1994 (*DPC*).

Greater Striped Swallow *Hirundo cucullata*

**V.** Exceptional migrant (the Nyika being far to the east of its normal route), with one bird well seen on 27 Dec. 1975 flying west over the border road (*c.* 2000 m), and another (or same?) over grassland near Manyenjere, 2100 m, on 30 Dec. (*RJD* in Benson & Benson 1977: 254).

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*

**R.** Occurs year-round in small numbers over the high plateau and upper slopes, especially near rocky hills but has adapted to breeding on buildings (Zambian rest house and Chelinda). *CJV* observed a fresh nest (empty) on a rock in Jan. 1964 (Zambian side) and we saw a pair building a nest on Chowo Rocks on 26 Feb. 1981. Nests on the veranda of the Zambian rest house were noted from the mid-1970s, e.g. pair at half-finished nest Jul. 1975 (*EHP*), pair roosting in nest under eaves Nov. 1976 (*PBT*), nest-building inside tin huts in Dec. 1976 (*DRA*) and on veranda Dec. 1977 (*FD-L* & *RJD*); occupied nest Feb. 1979 (*DRA*). In 1979-80, a pair bred in one of the staff houses, raising a first brood in Dec. (from eggs Nov.); on 6 Feb. it was busy feeding a second brood with the help or interference of the first brood (of three juveniles)! Some of the juveniles were seen visiting the nest and even spending some time inside (presumably brooding). But on one occasion the three young, perched just above the nest, begged and one of them got food from an adult who then flew away without entering the nest. It was later recorded nesting at Chelinda Camp (feeding nestlings 22 Dec. 1989, *RDM*).

African Rock Martin *Hirundo fuligula*

**R.** A few pairs found around the larger rocky hills of the plateau (e.g. Fingira Rock, Chowo Rocks, Manyenjere ridge, Domwe, Jalawe) up to at least 2350 m, and also on the northern escarpments.

Blue Swallow *Hirundo atrocaerulea*

**AM.** Seasonally common over montane grassland on the high plateau, mainly above 2100 m, between mid-Sep. and Apr. Normally arrives in late Aug., our first date being 21 Aug. (1981), *DPC*'s earliest being 20 Aug. (1996) and the overall earliest is 17 Aug. (2000, *EP*); our latest date was 30 Apr. (1980), but there is an exceptional observation of a late straggler on 13 May 1975 (*TOO*). Has been found breeding mainly under overhangs of banks (as along streams and roads, first clutch of C/3 collected by Loveridge in Nov. 1948: Benson 1951), also on buildings at Chelinda (since 1976, *TAM*). Of 35 active and old nests located by Holroyd & Quinn (n.d.), 28 (80%) were on eroded faces of stream-banks, five were in holes underground, including one in a Warthog burrow, and the remaining two were attached to the underside of a wooden bridge and under the eaves of a small boathouse. Egg-laying takes place in Nov. (4), Dec. (3) and Jan. (2). Known clutch-size: C/3 (3) and N/3 (1).



In Nov. 1987 Holroyd & Quinn (n.d.) found 22 active nests and another six territorial pairs in 71 km<sup>2</sup> (from north of Chelinda, downstream to Chelinda bridge). Given the amount of suitable habitat above the altitude of 2100 m it is estimated that at least 300 pairs are present on the Nyika.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*

**R.** Very marginal for the Nyika list, as recorded essentially along the North Rukuru in the extreme north (near Uledi, c. 1000 m, *RJD*, *FD-L* and *MD*).

[Pearl-breasted Swallow *Hirundo dimidiata*. Unconfirmed, brief observations of a few (flying north) on 25 May 1980 near the Chitipa/Chelinda road junction and of one between Kasoma and Chowo on 23 Sep. 1980 (*FD-L*).]

White-throated Swallow *Hirundo albigularis*

**V.** Exceptional migrant: three flying east over the road near Chowo on 31 Oct. and two flying south over Chowo Rocks on 3 Nov. 1979 (*RJD* & *FD-L*); then two in early Dec. 1983 (*CC*).

Eurasian (Barn) Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

**PM.** Common wintering species over the plateau and escarpments, often in their hundreds, at least from Sep.-Apr.; the earliest arrival dates are 17 Aug. (1996, *DPC* and *MD*) and 19 Aug. (1981, *FD-L*) and latest departure dates 3 May (1980, *RJD* & *FD-L*) and 4 May (1985, *MD*).

Angola Swallow *Hirundo angolensis*

**AM.** Restricted to the high plateau (1033D1-2, 1033B4), where small numbers occur mainly from May-Jan. at 2000-2300 m. Seems to leave the area for a few months upon completing breeding, sometimes as early as late Dec. (in 1979, *RJD* & *FD-L*), but there is one observation in Mar. (13 Mar. 1996) of several pairs around the Zambian rest house (*DPC*). Has been recorded breeding at the Zambian rest house since 1962 (*JMF*, family with three juveniles roosting at nest Dec.), again during the next rains (*CJV*, N/3 left the nest on 12 Jan. 1964), in 1969 (two nests with young in Nov., Dowsett 1970) and in late Nov. 2002 five pairs were present, with three nests located (*WMc*). Dated records of egg-laying are Oct. (1), Nov. (2), and Dec. (1), with two broods of N/3. On the Malawi side a nest was built on the bridge support on the North Rukuru stream with C/3 laid in Nov. or early Dec. 1987 (*PS*); a pair was building a nest in the abandoned hangar on Chelinda airstrip on 26 Nov. 2002 (*WMc*).

Eurasian House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

**PM.** Winters in smaller numbers than Eurasian Swallow, but occasional influxes of hundreds in the months of late Oct.-Jan. and Mar.-Apr. Uncommon before late Sep., earliest traced on 11 Sep. (1981, *RJD*); northward passage often quite heavy, until late Apr., last definite ones noted on 3 May (1980, *RJD* & *FD-L*). [Reports from Aug. appear doubtful, perhaps due to confusion with Grey-rumped Swallow.]

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

**PM.** Scarce migrant stopping briefly on both passages, usually as singles near water (Lake Kaulime, Dam 3), in short grass or on roads. Recorded in Nov.-Dec. and Mar.-Apr., extreme dates 13 Nov. (1995, plateau, *DPC*) to 4 Dec. (1977, Dam 3, *RJD* & *FD-L*), and mid-Mar. to 25 Apr. (1980 at Dam 3, a female, *RJD* & *FD-L*). One male we saw in Mar. belonged to the race *lutea*.

Long-tailed Wagtail *Motacilla clara*

**R.** A few pairs inhabit the North Rukuru river on the western escarpment from Zungwara and Chisanga Falls to Uledi (*RJD* & *FD-L*). Also recorded from Chipome and Wovwe valleys (*DOE*, *DPC*), on the Kaswerera stream at Thazima (*DPC*) and as a rare wanderer to Chelinda dams, e.g. from 26 Dec. 2001-5 Jan. 2002 (*DPC*), with an older report on 3 Dec. 1975 (*TAM*).

We found this species breeding at Zungwara Falls, 2000-2050 m (two pairs present on 30 Nov. 1980, one with large N/2 (eggs Oct.)), and at Chisanga Falls in Dec. 1981 (dependent fledgling from eggs Oct.).

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*

**R.** Very local on the high plateau, but often seen at Chelinda where commensal, around camp and the dams

where appears resident. Was proven to breed there in 1989 (*RDM*, N/3 in Dec., eggs Nov.) and again in 1994 (copulating 28 Aug., feeding at nest Oct., *DPC*). Only an occasional visitor to the Zambian rest house. Otherwise known from Thazima, Kaperekezi gate (N/1 Apr. 1994, *DPC*), and the northern escarpments (e.g. North Rukuru).

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

**R.** Very common in montane grassland (to the peak), with at least 11 breeding records (7xC/3, N/3) with egg-laying Oct. (2), Nov. (7) and Dec. (2).

Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis*

**R.** Discreet species of miombo woodland and large boulders on the high plateau; most frequently seen on Chowo Rocks (around 2200 m, at all seasons), where we eventually found it breeding (Oct. 1986, carrying food to nest). Other localities on the high plateau include Zungwara Falls (large rocks and scrub), Fingira Rock (miombo), the top of Manyenjere ridge (wooded *Protea* grassland with rocks, 2090 m) – all *FD-L* & *RJD*. On the escarpments it has been recorded from the Thazima area (*RDM*) and the western scarp (near Gamba, *FD-L* & *RJD*) and is probably more widespread. At Manyenjere and Fingira there is a continuum between the miombo woodland and the open montane rocky habitat.

Buffy Pipit *Anthus vaalensis*

**AM.** A dry-season visitor to short montane grassland, not proven to breed as high as the Nyika. Is attracted to recently burnt grassland and has been recorded from the Zambian side (including Manyenjere and Kasoma) as well as the central plateau, east to Kasaramba. Arrival dates appear to be 1 May (1980, *RJD* & *FD-L*) followed by 6 May (1985, *MD*) and the species is regularly seen (in very small numbers) until the end of Sep. [An Apr. record is considered unconfirmed.]

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

**PM.** Not uncommon species wintering in miombo woodland and higher up in open *Protea* montane grassland, edges of forest patches and Pine plantations, scrub among rocks. Seen regularly from late Nov. to early Apr., our earliest arrival date (in three years) was 12 Nov. (1979), but there is one earlier observation, two at Chelinda on 25 Oct. (1992, *RDM*), and the latest departure date mentioned seems to be 23 Apr. (1982, *NJ-S*).

[Striped Pipit *Anthus lineiventris*. Listed by Medland (n.d.) but not considered as confirmed for the Nyika (pers. obs. and *contra* Dyer 1988).]

Black Cuckoo-shrike *Campephaga flava*

**AM.** Widespread on the escarpments, and into the lower montane forests (e.g. patches in the Lusero and Kasoma area) up to 2050 m. In variable numbers on the high plateau, where an influx of birds arrives in the dry season and some may stay to breed in the rains: thus not recorded around Chowo/Zovochipolo in the summer of 1979-80, but present from May 1980 (with many records in Zovochipolo Sep.-Oct.), and pair feeding a fledgling on the upper edge of Chowo forest at 2150-2200 m in Mar. 1981 (*FD-L*). Fairly common in the dry season of 1981 (up to 2250 m) and fewer throughout the rains 1981-82, but pair present again on the upper edge of Chowo and at Kasoma. Elsewhere on the high plateau also noted at Chelinda in May and the Juniper Forest in Sep. (Dyer 1988).

White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina pectoralis*

**R.** Confined to the escarpments in miombo woodland, on the northern side (Chipome valley), and the south-western slopes (Thazima and the Kaperekezi area). Does not reach the upper levels of woodland, but has been recorded up to 1700 m or a bit higher above Kaperekezi (*MD*).

Eastern Mountain Greenbul *Andropadus nigriceps*

**R.** Very common in montane rain forest and low-canopy montane forest, throughout the plateau up to 2450 m; also at Nyamkhowa (down to 1720-1750 m). Inhabits all levels of the forest, as well as montane shrubland 2-4 m high. Has a wide diet of insects and fleshy fruit (over 60 species recorded: Dowsett-Lemaire 1988a). Densities in fragmented forest are of two-three pairs/ha; in Zovochipolo a pair can breed in a patch as small as 0.12-0.16 ha, but with some scrub attached (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). Nearly 70 dated breeding

records (including 10 C/2), laying occurring in Aug. (8), Sep. (25), Oct. (30) and Nov. (6). Thirty-five territorial birds ringed in Chowo and Zovochipolo were retrapped up to seven years later (Dowsett 1985). Essentially resident, but some birds wander, witness the capture of two birds netted on the northern slopes (1033B4) at 1150 m in early Apr. 1997 (*JH et al.*).

Stripe-cheeked Greenbul *Andropadus milanjensis*

**R.** Confined to the more humid forests of the eastern escarpment, including Nyamkhowa, and from Mwenembwe to Vitumbi, up to about 2250 m (*FD-L & RJD*). Less common than Mountain Greenbul (with which it coexists) and it is likely both species compete; their fruit diet is broadly similar (Dowsett-Lemaire 1988a). There are a couple of breeding records from the eastern Nyika, with egg-laying Sep. (N/2 in Oct., Benson & Benson 1949) and Oct. (dependent fledgling Dec., Benson 1940-41). Netted in riparian forest low down in Apr. 1997 in 1033B4 (1150 m, *JH et al.*) but whether this represents altitudinal movement is not clear, as this bulbul occurs at lower altitudes than its congener, as on the escarpment of the South Viphya (all the way down to 1100 m).

Little Greenbul *Andropadus virens*

**R.** A bird of evergreen forest at lower altitudes elsewhere in the north of Malawi, barely present on the south-western escarpment, in Manyenjere forest at 2000-2050 m (where 8-10 pairs were located along two streams, Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a), and in riparian on the North Rukuru (below Chisanga Falls), 1500 m (*MD*). It was not found on the colder, wetter eastern escarpment, not even as low as 1720-1800 m in riparian (Nyamkhowa), but was recorded lower down (1400 m) from riparian forest in the north (1033B4) in 1997 (Overton 1998). Not reported from Thazima either.

Yellow-bellied Bulbul *Chlorocichla flaviventris*

**R.** A bird of low-altitude thicket or forest, very marginal for the Nyika list as only recorded from the North Rukuru near Uledi (1033B1-2, *c.* 1000 m, *FD-L & RJD* 1986).

Terrestrial Bulbul *Phyllastrephus terrestris*

**R.** Another species of low or medium altitudes, observed in riparian forest on the North Rukuru (1033B2, *RJD*) east of Uledi, and also in riparian near Thazima (*JH*). The normal altitudinal limit of range of the species in Malawi is 1750 m, so it was surprising to find a couple at the edge of a patch of forest at Nkhonjera at 2050 m on 11 Jun. 1983 (Dowsett-Lemaire 1989a), presumably off-season wanderers.

Grey-olive Bulbul *Phyllastrephus cerviniventris*

**R.** In riparian forest at lower altitudes, as on the North Rukuru (Uledi area, *FD-L & RJD*, and below Chisanga Falls, *MD*), on the Chipome stream (*DPC*), and at Thazima (*DPC*). *ELB* collected a specimen on Mwanda Mtn in Zambia in 1950 (Meyer de Schauensee 1951), altitude not specified (but that would probably be below 1800 m).

Yellow-streaked Bulbul *Phyllastrephus flavostriatus*

**R.** Common in montane rain forest on both escarpments, including the larger patches in Zovochipolo (7.5 ha and above), up to 2300 m below Kasaramba, and down to 1720-1750 m at Nyamkhowa. Unlike *Andropadus* species, completely insectivorous (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a, 1989a). Probes bark of trunks, large branches and lianes, being particularly attracted to epiphytic vegetation; some territories are no more than 2-3 ha. There are 11 breeding records, with egg-laying in Sep. (1), Oct. (2), Nov. (5), Dec. (2) and Jan. (1), including some C/1 (incomplete?) and C/2. Eleven of 22 territorial birds ringed in Chowo have been controlled in following seasons (Dowsett 1985); the oldest is a male first ringed as an adult in Aug. 1972 by *JJT* and last re-identified by *RJD* in Oct. 1986 (thanks to its individual colour-ring combination of yellow-yellow), thus at least 15 years old. Subject to local wandering away from breeding patches, including to the Juniper Forest.

Black-eyed Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*

**R.** Common at edges of woodland and forest, and in bracken-briar, almost throughout, up to at least 2350 m. There are at least two breeding records, from both sides of the border, with egg-laying Oct. and Nov.

Miombo Rock Thrush *Monticola angolensis*

**R.** In miombo woodland on all the escarpments, to the upper limit of tall woodland, at *c.* 2050 m (above Chisanga Falls, *FD-L & RJD*). Adults feeding fledged young in Nov. near Chisanga (Dyer 1988).

Olive Thrush *Turdus olivaceus*

**R.** Occurs in all forest types from 1800 to 2450 m, east to Nyamkhowa, but in small numbers. In Zovochipolo does not seem to occupy all available habitat, although some pairs breed in small patches (less than 1 ha: Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a); at least one pair around small Pine plantation at the Zambian rest house. More local still in the larger forests of the escarpments. There are 28 breeding records (some C/2 and N/2), most coming from Zovochipolo (*FD-L & RJD*): egg-laying has been back-dated to Sep. (3), Oct. (12), Nov. (10) and Dec. (3). It is possible some of the Dec. laying are second broods: Benson (1940-41) collected on 25 Dec. a female with yolking eggs who was attending a spotted juvenile. Seven of 15 ringed adults have been retrapped locally in following seasons, up to five years later (Dowsett 1985).

Kurrichane Thrush *Turdus libonyana*

**R.** In miombo woodland on all the escarpments, up to the upper limit of tall woodland, at *c.* 2050 m above Chisanga Falls (*FD-L & RJD*).

Groundscraper Thrush *Psophocichla litsitsirupa*

**R.** A pair foraging under the low canopy of *Uapaca*-dominated miombo, about 10 km into the park from Thazima gate, 27 Nov. 2002 (*WMc*).

Orange Thrush *Zoothera gurneyi*

**R.** Uncommon or discreet thrush of montane rain forest on both escarpments; in the south-west it is recorded from Kasyaula (rare), Manyenjere (widespread) and Chowo where it is clearly more common than Olive Thrush (12 to 15 singing males: Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a); on a few occasions a bird sang briefly in one or other Zovochipolo patch (19 Dec. 1979, 3 Jan. 1981, 29 Oct. and 21 Dec. 1981). On the eastern side, widespread in small numbers from Nyamkhowa (1720-2000 m) and Mwenembwe to Vitumbi, up to the top (2350 m). We have two breeding records from Chowo, based on females with active brood patch (egg-laying in Nov. and Dec.). Four of seven birds ringed in Chowo were retrapped the following year (Dowsett 1985).

White-chested Alethe *Alethe fuelleborni*

**R.** Widespread in forest on the escarpments, more local on the central plateau (up to 2400 m), and its distribution is restricted by the presence of active ant swarms; breeds down to 1720 m at Nyamkhowa. In Zovochipolo breeding was observed (in patches even as small as 0.5 ha) only when a colony of ants moved in; two pairs bred in neighbouring patches of 1 ha each depending on a single ant nest, and the pair in the forest without ants kept crossing the grassland gap to feed on the same ant party. Although they eat small ants occasionally, Alethes feed mainly on other arthropods flushed by the ants. Overall densities in the larger forests are of two pairs/10 ha – Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a, 1987a, 1989a. We obtained nearly 40 breeding records in our period of residence, with egg-laying in Oct. (2), Nov. (20), Dec. (13) and Jan. (4). Twenty-two of 25 adults ringed in the south-west were retrapped locally in subsequent seasons, up to seven years later (Dowsett 1985). Mainly resident, but it is likely that some females move out in the dry, winter months.

Starred Robin *Pogonocichla stellata*

**R/M.** The commonest forest robin, throughout up to the upper limit of montane forest at 2450 m. Breeds in patches as small as 0.2 ha in Zovochipolo, and often two pairs breed in patches of 1 ha (but in years with poor rainfall only one of the two pairs may attempt breeding) (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a, 1985a). In the 25-ha section of Chowo under study, 36 to 40 pairs were present (an average territory size of 0.6-0.7 ha). More than 200 breeding records were obtained (mainly C/2 and N/2, some C/3), with egg-laying taking place mainly from Oct.-Dec. (clearly single-brooded). All adult males and some of the immature ones are sedentary whereas females depart after breeding (moving to lower altitudes), usually returning to the same territory in the following season; 137 of 166 territorial adults were controlled up to eight years later (Dowsett 1985), and one male 11 years later, having been ringed as a full adult it was at least 13 years old (Dowsett & Leonard 2001). All four territorial adults translocated from a forest patch near Chelinda to Zovochipolo (6 km away) in Sep. 1980 and Sep. 1981 returned to their territories, one male by the next day (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1986).

Sharpe's Akalat *Sheppardia sharpei*

**R.** A local robin of the more humid forest types, thus almost confined to Manyanjere in the south-west (very rare in Chowo) and the eastern escarpment, from 1720 m (Nyamkhowa) to 2300 m. In Manyanjere a population of 25-30 pairs inhabits the dense understorey near streams, hunting close to the ground (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). Like Starred and Olive-flanked Robins they attend ant swarms whenever ants cross their territory. In Chowo an unmated male (ringed) held a territory for at least three seasons (1979-82) and single birds had been reported in previous years, with a female collected in May 1975 (*TOO*); one bird was seen by *TOO* in Kasoma in May 1974. There are 11 breeding records (nine from Manyanjere, one from Kasaramba, one from Nyamkhowa), with egg-laying in Oct. (5), Nov. (5) and Dec. (1).

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*

**PM.** One was heard singing in riparian bush on the Kaswerera stream near Thazima on 26 Dec. 1995, at c. 1550 m (Critchlow & Haugeard 1996). This is at the upper altitudinal limit for this species in Malawi.

Olive-flanked Robin *Cossypha anomala*

**R.** Common and widespread in the understorey of montane rain forest on the escarpments and in low-canopy forest on the high plateau, up to 2450 m (at the upper limit of forest); down to 1720 m at Nyamkhowa. Some territories (in prime habitat, with much thicket) can be as small as 0.25 ha; overall densities in Zovochipolo are of one pair/ha (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). There are 50 breeding records (several C/2), with egg-laying in Oct. (1), Nov. (24), Dec. (21) and Jan. (4); clearly single-brooded (Dowsett-Lemaire 1985a). Twenty-six of 43 territorial adults ringed in the south-west were controlled locally for up to nine years after first capture (Dowsett 1985).

Cape Robin *Cossypha caffra*

**R.** A common species of secondary growth, bracken-briar and forest edges up to 2500 m (patch of scrubby forest on slope of Nganda Hill). In very small patches in Zovochipolo (0.20-0.25 ha) it can be seen right inside forest, but the larger the forest the more it confines itself to edges. Birds venturing too far inside forest (e.g. to drink) can be chased right back to the edge by Olive-flanked Robins (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). There are 50 breeding records (C/1 to C/3), with egg-laying in Oct. (5), Nov. (17), Dec. (25), Jan. (3). Eight ringed birds were retrapped locally in the south-west, up to six years after first capture (Dowsett 1985).

Heuglin's Robin *Cossypha heuglini*

**R.** A species of riparian thicket and forest found on all the escarpments, up to 2000-2050 m on the western escarpment (just west of Zambian rest house, above Chisanga Falls) and 2050 m in the south (on Nkhonjera Hill) – all *FD-L* & *RJD*.

Red-capped Robin *Cossypha natalensis*

**R/AM?** Marginal for the Nyika list, as observed in riparian forest on the North Rukuru near Uledi (both 1033B1-2, *RJD* & *FD-L* Oct. 1986), and also in a thicket of *Combretum/Oxytenanthera* bamboo a little higher the same day (in 1033B2, *RJD*).

Central Bearded Scrub Robin *Erythropygia barbata*

**R.** Recorded from miombo woodland on the lower escarpments, in the north, west and south-west (up to Thazima area), probably not much above 1650 m. Female carrying food (to nest probably) on 18 Oct. (1986, near Uledi, *FD-L*).

[Rufous Bush Chat *Erythropygia galactotes*. This very rare Palearctic migrant was mentioned in *Bull. Afr. Bird Club* 1997 (4: 144) as having been seen in miombo woodland on the Nyika, but the observer could not provide a description and had not noticed the ubiquitous White-browed Scrub Robin. The record is considered invalid.]

White-browed Scrub Robin *Erythropygia leucophrys*

**R.** In the understorey of open miombo woodland with fairly rank ground cover; quite common on all the escarpments, up to the upper limit of woodland at 2050 m above Chisanga Falls, and near Fingira (*FD-L* & *RJD*).

Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*

**R.** Common resident in montane grassland with some scrub, in bracken-briar, often at roadsides, up to 2450 m. There are 15 breeding records, with egg-laying in Sep. (1), Oct. (7), Nov. (5), Dec. (2); clutch-sizes of C/3 and C/4.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

**PM.** A few records of this scarce Palaearctic migrant on the high plateau (both sides of the border), mainly in the months of Nov.-Feb., with an exceptionally early observation of one on 24 Sep. 1992 (by *RDM*). In the 1970s some were probably wintering (several observations from 10 Nov.-22 Feb., including one by Dam 3 on 11 Jan. 1973, *BC*), but we had only one observation in 1979-82 (21 Nov. 1979 at Chowo Rocks). In recent years, apart from the unusual Sep. observation, one was reported on 25 Nov. 2002 (*WMc*, Zambian side), and another on 10 Apr. 1995 on the Dembo stream (*DF*): this is only one of two Apr. records for the country, which the species normally leaves in Feb.

Northern (Eurasian) Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

**PM.** A regular migrant (in very small numbers) on southward passage in montane areas, recorded mainly Oct.-Dec. Extreme dates known are 7 Oct. (1976, *RJD*) and early Jan. 1978 (*WFB-M*). Dyer (1988) mentions "Sept." without a date but this would be abnormally early.

Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata*

**AM.** A migrant of irregular appearance in short montane grassland (Jun.-Dec., Mar.), which probably breeds very locally. One adult was on burnt ground near Chowo Rocks on 24 Jun. 1980 (*RJD*); *DPC* saw one on 7 Jun. and 19 Jul. 1994 south of Chosi; there are at least three records for Aug.: one on 22 Aug. 1972 (*Aspinwall et al.* 1973), 28 Aug. 1980 (an adult at 2400 m, *MIE*), 22 Aug. 1985 (adult near Dam 2, Dyer 1987); it was reported to us in Sep. 1981 (*DOE?*); a juvenile was seen on the border road (2050 m) on 21 Oct. 1973 (*RJD*); we saw an immature near Chelinda from 21 Nov.-21 Dec. 1979. More unusual is the observation of one immature (between Chelinda and Zovochipolo) on 20 Mar. 1980 (*FD-L & RJD*), suggesting possible "wintering".

Familiar Chat *Cercomela familiaris*

**R.** In open miombo woodland with some rocks, found widespread on the escarpments, up to *c.* 2000 m above Chisanga Falls, and at Fingira Rock (*FD-L & RJD*).

Arnot's Chat *Myrmecocichla arnoti*

**R.** Of local occurrence in miombo woodland, known from the south-western escarpment near Thazima (*FD-L & RJD*) and Kaperekezi (*NJ-S*).

Mocking Chat *Myrmecocichla cinnamomeiventris*

**R.** Associated with large boulders, most regularly encountered on Chowo Rocks (several pairs present), and found in similar habitat on the northern and south-western escarpments, e.g. Jalawe, Fingira Rock. Found up to the altitude of *c.* 2350 m in the Chosi area (*FD-L & RJD*).

Broad-tailed Warbler *Schoenicola platyurus*

**R.** A skulking but locally not uncommon warbler of rank, lush grassland from 1900-2150 m on the south-western escarpment, up to the Zambian rest house. Rarer above that, but observed near Chelinda and on the eastern escarpment at Kasaramba at 2300 m – all *FD-L & RJD*. More conspicuous in the rains when calling, but appears resident, as there are records for May (1975, *TOO*; 1994 near Fingira, *DPC*), Jul. (1975, *DRA*) and Aug. (border road, *DPC*), and we saw the species monthly from Sep.-Apr. There is even an old specimen taken in June (Shelley & Sclater 1897). We had two breeding records based on feeding behaviour, with egg-laying back-dated to Jan. and Feb., in the vicinity of Kasoma.

Little Rush Warbler *Bradypterus baboecala*

**V.** An exceptional bird on the Nyika, with two records: a pair held a temporary territory on the Chelinda stream in Dec. 1985-Jan. 1986 at *c.* 2270 m (Dyer 1987); a bird in song near Katizi (1680 m), in Dec. 1985 (*MD*).

*Cinnamon Bracken Warbler* *Bradypterus cinnamomeus*

**R.** Common at forest edges and in bracken-briar throughout from 1900-2500 m (scrubby forest on slope of Nganda Hill), descending lower (about 1750 m) on Nyamkhowa Mtn (*FD-L & RJD*). Penetrates some small forest patches above 2150 m, mostly in herbaceous undergrowth not occupied by *B. lopezi*; on two occasions a pair moved into a small forest patch in Zovochipolo as soon as it was deserted by Evergreen Forest Warbler, and in one case both species were observed countersinging (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). Some breeding territories can be as small as 0.1 ha. There are 18 breeding records (four C/2), with egg-laying in Oct. (1), Nov. (4), Dec. (10) and Jan. (3). Four ringed birds were retrapped locally after one and two years (Dowsett 1985). There is also a strange Aug. egg-laying record in Benson & Benson (1977): this is based on a juvenile collected on the eastern escarpment on 9 Sep. 1940, apparently recently fledged (*CWB in litt.*).

*Evergreen Forest Warbler* *Bradypterus lopezi*

**R.** Fairly common in dense shrubby understorey of montane forest on the escarpments and the high plateau up to 2450 m. Pairs can breed in patches as small as 0.9 ha (with dense Acanthaceae shrubbery on a stream), and densities in larger forest patches in Zovochipolo vary from one to four pairs in 4 ha, depending on the availability of thick undergrowth (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). We obtained 12 breeding records in Chowo and Zovochipolo (one C/2), with egg-laying in Nov. (2), Dec. (7) and Jan. (3). Five of 16 ringed adults were retrapped locally in following years, the oldest after six years (Dowsett 1985).

*Sedge Warbler* *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

**PM.** An uncommon wintering species on the high plateau, observed usually as singles with most records in Dec.-Jan. (several reports 1973-1982, 1986-87, 1989) in wet herbage near Dam 1, Dam 2, Dam 3 and once as high as 2350 m (5 Dec. 1982, *RJD*). At least one wintering around Dam 1 from Dec. 1986-Apr. 1987 and there is a "last" date of 19 Apr. 1985 at Chelinda (*MD*). Also one observation on the western escarpment (Chisanga Falls) on 10 Apr. 1996 (*DPC*).

*African Yellow Warbler* *Chloropeta natalensis*

**R.** Common in bracken-briar and secondary growth along streams, including on the lower edges of forest patches with a stream; up to at least 2300 m (including eastern escarpment), overlapping (locally) with Yellow Mountain Warbler: where both species coexist in extensive bracken, African is usually in a riparian situation. Vernon (in Keith & Vernon 1966) found the two *Chloropeta* breeding within 50 m of each other (Jan. 1964). There are at least three breeding records (one C/2), with egg-laying in Nov. and Jan. (2).

*Mountain Yellow Warbler* *Chloropeta similis*

**R.** From 1920 m (Lusero area) to 2450 m on the main plateau, locally common but not recorded from Nyamkhowa. Is not found inside tall montane rain forest where it occupies (locally) the edges and rank clearings, but is throughout patches of low-canopy montane forest, and thus more widely distributed on the high plateau than on the escarpments. In low scrubby forest densities are of one-two pairs/ha; it also occupies montane shrubland 1-4 m high where it may overlap with African Yellow Warbler. Breeds in 44 out of 80 patches in Zovochipolo, some as small as 0.25 ha, but its distribution is rather patchy and it does not seem to occupy all available habitat. There are 15 breeding records (two C/2), with egg-laying in Dec. (3), Jan. (6), Feb. (4) and Mar. (2). The breeding season given in Dyer (1988: Oct.-Feb.) is a mis-reading of Benson & Benson (1977), and there are definitely no records for Oct.-Nov. Seven of 27 ringed adults were controlled locally after one or two years (Dowsett 1985). A male translocated from a patch near Chelinda to an unoccupied forest in Zovochipolo (1.8 ha) settled there (Sep. 1980), paired and was still vigorously defending its territory two years later (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a, Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1986).

*Green-capped Eremomela* *Eremomela scotops*

**R.** Widespread in miombo woodland on the northern and south-western escarpments, up to 1900-2000 m near the upper limit of tall woodland (Mbuzinandi, near Fingira Rock (*FD-L & RJD*), above Chisanga Falls, *DPC*).

*Yellow-bellied Eremomela* *Eremomela icteropygialis*

**R.** More local than last, on the lower escarpments in the north, and once in a mixed party just south of the old gate on the south-western slopes, 1800-1900 m (*FD-L & RJD* Nov. 1981). Also observed lower down on the Zambian side by *CJV*.

Red-capped Crombec *Sylvietta ruficapilla*

**R.** Widespread in miombo woodland on the escarpments, in the north (e.g. Chipome valley) and south-west, up to the upper limit of tall woodland at 2000-2050 m (above Chisanga Falls and near Fingira, *FD-L* & *RJD*).

Long-billed Crombec *Sylvietta rufescens*

**R/V.** Very marginal for the Nyika list, as recorded mainly from the northern border of the park near Uledi (North Rukuru, *FD-L* & *RJD* Oct. 1986); a bird of low-altitude thicket or riparian growth, with an exceptional observation of a vagrant near Lusero at 1900 m (in *Acacia abyssinica*) by *DRA* in Apr. 1971 (*Aspinwall* 1971). One observation from miombo on the old Mbuzinandi road at 1800 m (*Dyer* 1988) is considered as unlikely and indeed unconfirmed (*MD in litt.*).

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

**PM.** Widespread species of woodland, wooded grassland, tree clumps or scrub in montane grassland and forest edges, up to c. 2400 m. Most common from Oct. or Nov. to Mar, with extreme dates apparently 27 Sep. (1980) and 14 Apr. (1981, *FD-L* & *RJD*); starts singing on northward passage in early Feb., more by late Feb. or early Mar. Also a few singing in Nov.

Yellow-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus ruficapilla*

**R.** Confined to the wetter forests of the eastern escarpment, from Nyamkhowa and Mwenembwe to Vitumbi, 1750-2350 m, in small numbers, not uncommon at Kasaramba and Nyamkhowa.

Yellow-bellied Hyliota *Hyliota flavigaster*

**R.** Widespread but uncommon in miombo woodland on the lower escarpments (north and south-west), coming almost to the upper limit of tall woodland, at 1980 m at Mbuzinandi (Feb. 1981, *RJD* & *FD-L*).

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

**PM.** Seasonally common in forest patches and shrubland, up to at least 2300 m, mainly on southward passage from early Oct.-Dec. (when also in full song); for instance we ringed 17 birds near the Zambian rest house in a few days (30 Nov. to early Dec. 1977). Our earliest date was 2 Oct. (1980) and we have not traced an earlier one. In some years seems to leave by end of Dec. or Jan., in other years small numbers stay until Mar. (1981, exact date not noted). The scarcity of Garden Warblers in Jan.-Mar. may be related to the decrease in the amount of fleshy fruit available (the peak being in Sep.-Nov.: *Dowsett-Lemaire* 1985b); on the other hand, birds may be more discreet then as they are normally moulting at that time. Seen to eat a variety of small fruits, including *Aphloia*, *Clausena*, *Maesa*, *Myrica*, *Polyscias*, *Psychotria*, *Rhus longipes*, *Urera* (*Dowsett-Lemaire* 1988a).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

**PM.** Winters annually in small numbers on the high plateau, in forest patches (often in the canopy eating fruit) and shrubland, up to at least 2400 m (Chelinda Hill). Not uncommon in some years, especially Nov.-Dec. (thus 11 ringed on the Zambian border in those two months in 1981), but numbers drop sharply in Jan.-Feb., and there are only two Mar. records on the plateau. Our earliest arrival date was 9 Nov. (1980), and latest bird was seen on 21 Feb. (1980, the only bird of that month); in the 1990s, some were seen later than this: 24 Feb. 1994 (*DPC*), 26 Feb. 1996 (*DF*), 5 Mar. 1994 (*DF* & *DPC*), and *JH et al.* reported one near Nganda on 15 Mar. 1997. Seems to be largely frugivorous, eating small fleshy fruit of *Aphloia*, *Maesa*, *Myrica*, *Polyscias* (frequently) and *Urera* (*FD-L*). Very rarely heard singing (Dec.).

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

**PM.** Uncommon migrant, possibly not annual. As elsewhere in Malawi seems particularly scarce on southward passage, with only two Nov. records (27 Nov. 1979, near Chowo, *RJD*, and 27 Nov. 2002, *WMc*). There are a handful of Dec. records, including one collected above Nchenachena (*Benson* 1940-41), a few seen in the south-west (*RJD et al.*) and at Thazima (*DPC*), and only one Jan. record (6 Jan. 1976, one ringed near Zambian rest house, *RJD*). Otherwise not observed again before late Mar.-Apr., with 11 records traced, extreme dates 30 Mar. (1996, *DF* & *DPC*) and 27 Apr. (1985 at Chelinda, *MD*).



*Brown Parisoma Sylvia lugens*

**R.** Discreet species confined to small groves of *Acacia abyssinica* on the southern and south-western escarpments, in 1033D2 (Mbuzinandi at 1980 m), 1033D4 (region of Fingira) and especially 1033D1, from just above the old gate to the Lusero area (1900-1950 m). Does not seem to reach the small groves of *Acacia* present on the upper edge of Kasoma at 2050-2070 m. All of the confirmed locations are on the Malawi side; it has apparently been seen also on the Zambian side by *TOO* (1975), but this may be due to confusion over the position of the border in relation to the road.

*Ayres's Cisticola Cisticola ayresii*

**R.** Common in short montane grassland (dominated by *Loudetia simplex*) of the high plateau, from about 2000 m to 2600 m (Nganda Hill). There are five breeding records (two C/3), with egg-laying in Nov.-Feb.

*Croaking Cisticola Cisticola natalensis*

**R.** A local species of lush *Themeda* grassland found on the south-western escarpment up to 2050-2100 m as on the track to Manyenjere, in the Chire valley, the Kasyaula-Kasoma area (all 1033D1), and slightly lower down on the way to Ulera (1033D4) – *FD-L & RJD*.

*Wailing Cisticola Cisticola lais*

**R.** Common species of montane grassland with some bracken, with a preference for rocky areas; it occurs next to Churring Cisticola in many places (below 2220 m) but prefers overall shorter grassland and the vicinity of rocks (*FD-L, RJD* and Vernon 1964). Widespread up to at least 2250 m, more local above that, as on the eastern escarpment at 2350 m (Kasaramba) and on Chelinda Hill (2400 m) – *FD-L & RJD*. There are 14 breeding records (one C/2, six C/3), with egg-laying in Nov. (3), Dec. (10) and Jan. (1).

*Churring Cisticola Cisticola njombe*

**R.** Common in rank grass with some bracken as along roadsides, near forest edges and in valleys, from 1950 to 2450 m. Overlaps with Wailing Cisticola near forest edges and in bracken patches but is much more common than its congener on the high plateau (2250-2450 m). There are 22 breeding records (two C/2, six C/3, two C/4), with egg-laying in Nov. (4), Dec. (10), Jan. (4) and Feb. (4). A pair was feeding a young Klaas's Cuckoo in the Chire valley below Chowo in Feb. 1982 (*FD-L*).

*Short-winged Cisticola Cisticola brachypterus*

**R.** Localized, as it inhabits rank grass with scattered bushes or trees on the southern and south-western escarpments, including the Fingira-Ulera region, and the border road up to 2050 m (near Kasoma, *FD-L*). There is one breeding record, egg-laying Dec., from about 1800 m (*CJV*).

*Neddicky Cisticola Cisticola fulvicapilla*

**R.** Common in miombo woodland on the lower escarpments (e.g. Chipome valley in the north, Thazima in the south-west), up to about 1650 m. Curiously unreported from the Kaperekezi area (1033D1) although seen near Gamba (1033B3).

*Rock Cisticola Cisticola aberrans*

**R.** In miombo woodland in the vicinity of rocks (widespread on the northern escarpment), and occurring regularly up to the upper limit of tall woodland, to 2000-2050 m (above Chisanga Falls, and at Fingira Rock). Not recorded with certainty above the tree limit, and certainly absent from the much-visited Chowo Rocks (2150-2220 m).

*Trilling Cisticola Cisticola woosnami*

**R.** Common in miombo woodland on all the escarpments, up to the upper limit of woodland (as near the old gate above Thazima, and above Chisanga Falls at c. 2050 m, at Mbuzinandi at 1980 m, near Fingira Rock, etc.).

*Red-faced Cisticola Cisticola erythroptus*

**R.** In long grass in riparian situations, confined to the lower escarpments (as on the North Rukuru in 1033B1-2) and up to about 1600 m or a little higher in the south-west (Thazima, *FD-L & RJD*). A very common

species at low altitudes, rather marginal for the Nyika. [A mention of this species occurring as high as 2100 m at Zungwara (Dyer 1988) is unlikely to be correct.]

Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans*

**R.** Common in rank growth below 2200 m: grass with bracken, shrubland as near forest edges, and especially any rank vegetation along streams. More local above 2200 m, up to 2350 m on the eastern escarpment, and down to the Thazima area (we had both Red-faced and Singing on the main stream). (Not yet reported from the Nganda/Chipome square where expected to be common).

Black-lored Cisticola *Cisticola nigriloris*

**R.** Common and noisy, gregarious species of bracken-briar (as along forest edges, in moist depressions and valleys) throughout the high plateau, up to 2500 m (scrubby forest on slope of Nganda Hill); it has been recorded as low as 1400 m above Nchenachena (Benson 1940-41) and is common down to 1720 m at Nyamkhowa (*FD-L & RJD*). Its breeding behaviour and nests were studied by Vernon (1964), who noted parties of up to nine birds; with a few later observations there are altogether 12 dated records (two C/2, three C/3, two C/4), with egg-laying in Nov. (6), Dec. (3) and Jan. (3).

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava*

**R.** In rank grass with shrubs on the escarpments and the lower plateau lip, up to 2150 m (two pairs in a small valley just below Chowo Rocks, *FD-L*), coming up the Chire valley on the Zambian side (below 2100 m). In 1033D2 present only in the lower-altitude corner of the square (Mbuzinandi). A very common species at lower altitudes.

Red-winged Warbler *Heliolais erythropterus*

**R.** A local species of rank grass in miombo woodland, recorded from Thazima (*FD-L & RJD*), the Ulozga valley (in 1033B4) and near Kaperekezi, including the Mwavumwe stream (*DPC*); thus up to 1600-1650 m.

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida*

**R.** In riparian forest at lower altitudes in the northern foothills (up to Chipome valley), where can be common (as on the North Rukuru), and also recorded at Thazima, which is close to the upper altitudinal limit for the species in Malawi (1650 m).

Bar-throated Apalis *Apalis thoracica*

**R.** Very common species of montane (rain) forest and tall shrubland (3-4 m), throughout up to 2450 m. Particularly numerous in fragmented forest with much edge; forest patches as small as 0.12-0.15 ha are occupied by one pair, densities in larger forests depend on the relative importance of the edge (one pair/0.6 ha in round patches, one pair/0.4 ha in narrow patches with more edges). In low-canopy montane forest on the high plateau it is the only *Apalis* species and it occupies all levels from undergrowth to canopy; in taller-canopy forest (from Zovochipolo down) it leaves the canopy to Chestnut-headed Apalis and apparently the two species are somewhat in competition as there is a great deal of counter-singing (well over 100 observations!) and occasional chasing (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). Forty-seven of 50 breeding records were obtained during our period of study (eight C/2, one C/3), with egg-laying in Sep. (1), Oct. (18), Nov. (19), Dec. (6), Jan. (4) and Feb. (1). Members of a pair keep in touch through a vocal duet all year round, and 30 of 58 ringed adults were controlled locally over successive seasons (Dowsett 1985), some up to 1986 (*FD-L*) thus up to seven years after first capture. Some unmated males may wander a few km into the edge of Pine plantations (Chelinda). None of the six territorial adults and five floaters translocated from near Chelinda to Zovochipolo found its way back, but all territorial birds were replaced locally within one day, suggesting there was a large population of floaters (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1986).

Grey Apalis *Apalis cinerea*

**R.** Mostly in the canopy of tall, montane rain forest in the south and south-west, up to Chowo (where uncommon, one to three pairs present depending on the year). More common at altitudes of 1950-2050 m in the Manyenjere, Kasoma and Kasyaula area, with about three pairs/10 ha (as in Kasoma patches). Competes directly with Chestnut-headed Apalis at that level, and patches of 1-2 ha in the area are occupied by one or the other species, but not both. Near Kasyaula, two neighbouring patches of 0.9 and 1.2 ha separated by 40

m of grassland had each one pair – one of each species – with much counter-singing and chasing taking place between neighbours! Still lower, at 1925 m, a pair of Grey Apalis occupied alone a patch of 0.5 ha (all from Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). Also found in a patch of tall forest at 2000 m on the way to Fingira (1033D4), which is at the southern limit of range for the species in Malawi, and we did not find it on Nkhonjera Hill. Otherwise “noticed” by *CWB* in small patches between Mpanda and Kawozya Mts (Benson & Benson 1949); the altitude indicated was 5000 feet (1500 m) but was possibly nearer 1800 m.

#### Chestnut-headed Apalis *Apalis chapini*

**R.** A common species of canopy in montane rain forest, also coming down the edges where exposed to the sun, and there in competition with Bar-throated Apalis. The smallest patch occupied in Zovochipolo is 0.5 ha and all patches of tall, closed canopy above 0.75 ha are occupied; densities in larger patches are about three pairs/10 ha (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). For competition with Grey Apalis, see above. Not found in low-canopy forest on the high plateau, thus not above 2250 m in the south-west, and observed up to about 2300 m on the eastern escarpment; common at Nyamkhowa, down to 1750-1800 m (*FD-L*). Members of a pair keep in touch vocally through a vocal duet as in other apalises, and they appear resident. We obtained four breeding records (Zovochipolo and Chowo) in addition to an old one, with egg-laying in Oct. (1), Nov. (2) and Jan. (2).

#### Bleating Bush Warbler *Camaroptera brachyura*

**R.** Normally common in low rank growth in woodland, thicket and riparian vegetation at low and medium altitudes: on the Nyika known only from the northern foothills (North Rukuru), Thazima and Ulera. Elsewhere in northern Malawi it does penetrate the understorey of montane rain forest where Evergreen Forest Warbler is absent (e.g. Mafinga and Jembya), but this was never observed on the Nyika.

#### Miombo Barred Warbler *Camaroptera undosa*

**R.** Not uncommon in miombo woodland on the escarpments, north and south-west. Does not come up all the way but reaches the altitude of about 1800 m on the southern slopes (above Thazima, near Ulera and on the old Mbuzinandi road, *FD-L*, *RJD* and *MD*).

#### Pallid Flycatcher *Bradornis pallidus*

**R.** Local, in miombo woodland on the escarpments, in the north, west and south-west, up to 1600-1650 m at Thazima. [A record from north of Nganda at 1800 m (in Benson & Benson 1977) is considered unproven as common local flycatchers are missing from the authors' list (Anon. 1973).]

#### Slaty Flycatcher *Melaenornis chocolatinus*

**R.** Fairly common in montane grassland with scattered bushes or trees, dense bracken-briar and at forest edges, up to 2220-2250 m. Occasionally penetrates a short distance into small forest patches to attend ant swarms (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). On the eastern escarpment recorded down to at least 1670 m (above Livingstonia, a breeding record, Benson & Benson 1949). There are 27 breeding records (one C/2, one N/2), with egg-laying in Sep. (2), Oct. (10), Nov. (7) and Dec. (8).

#### Southern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis pammelaina*

**R.** Local in light woodland on the escarpments, in the north, west (near Kaperekezi, *MD*) and Thazima (*JH*), up to about 1600 m.

#### Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis*

**PM.** Not many records (Nov.-Mar.), but probably winters in small numbers in miombo woodland, with more observations in the 1990s than 1980s: thus noted in the Chipome valley, at Chisanga Falls, near Fingira and several times around Thazima (Nov.-Jan.), also once at Chelinda (in Pines, 2300 m, on passage), with extreme dates 5 Nov. (2002, Chelinda, *MvBe*) and 21 Mar. 1997 (Chipome, *JH et al.*).

#### Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

**PM.** More often recorded than last (Oct.-Mar.), mainly from miombo woodland (to the upper limits) or the Lusero area, but occasionally higher (Chelinda). Extreme dates appear to be 7 Oct. (1976, *RJD*) and 27 Mar. (1985, *MD*). [A June record (1974) is considered unlikely.]

Dusky Flycatcher *Muscicapa adusta*

**R/M.** In upland miombo woodland, edge of riparian forest (e.g. Chisanga and Zungwara Falls) and at the edges and in large clearings of tall montane rain forest, up to 2200 m, including the lower levels of the eastern escarpment (as at Nyamkhowa and bottom of Kasaramba). In Zovochipolo it is recorded in 29 of 80 patches (2 ha and above), but densities are low, with no more than one pair in forests of up to 12 ha, as the habitat appears rather patchy (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). At least some birds appear to leave the high plateau in winter, as it is hard to find in the months of May-Aug. (thus not recorded in May-Jun. 1980, and few in Jul.-Aug. 1980 and 1981, *RJD & FD-L*). There are 12 breeding records (two N/2), with egg-laying in Sep. (1), Oct. (3), Nov. (7) and Dec. (1). One bird (wanderer?) seen in Eucalyptus once near Chelinda (Nov., Dyer 1987).

Ashy Flycatcher *Muscicapa caerulescens*

**R.** In the canopy and at edges of riparian forest and woodland at lower altitudes, recorded from the northern and south-western escarpments, up to about 1600 m (Thazima, *RDM*). [Dyer (1988) records this species from the Juniper Forest at 2100 m, which is in error.]

Böhm's Flycatcher *Muscicapa boehmi*

**R.** A miombo endemic that appears very scarce on the Nyika: located once on the old Mbuzinandi-Katizi road at about 1800 m (*IlaC*) and near Thazima (*DPC, MD*). We saw it on the western escarpment between Nthalire and Gamba (the northern limit of its range in Malawi), so could be expected in the Kaperekezi area too.

Lead-coloured Flycatcher *Myioparus plumbeus*

**R.** This species is rather local and seems to have been recorded only from the northern escarpment (1033B4) and at Kaperekezi (*DPC*), *c.* 1500 m, normally found on the edge of riparian. [One report (1975) from the Chire stream near Chowo does not appear acceptable.]

Cape Batis *Batis capensis*

**R.** Common in understorey and at edges of montane (rain) forest, throughout on the escarpments and high plateau to 2450 m. In Zovochipolo some patches as small as 0.25-0.30 ha are occupied by a breeding pair; in larger forests densities are of one pair/ha on average (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). Adult females beg from their mates and are fed throughout the incubation period; this is one of several methods of dating breeding. We obtained at least 175 breeding records (some C/2 and N/2), with egg-laying in Sep. (32), Oct. (51), Nov. (41), Dec. (42), Jan. (6) and Feb. (3). Single-brooded, from observations of colour-ringed pairs (Dowsett-Lemaire 1985a). Forty-five of 63 ringed adults were checked locally in following seasons, up to 10 years after first capture (Dowsett 1985, Dowsett & Leonard 2001); the oldest was ringed as an adult male, so was more than 11 years old when controlled. Members of a pair stay in touch vocally; the case history of an adult female demonstrates however the pre-eminence of site tenacity over mate fidelity. The female and her mate (both colour-ringed) were in the same patch near the Zambian rest house during visits in 1975 and 1977. In Oct. 1979 the territory was found empty, but the female had moved into another patch (350 m distant) and was paired with a new mate. In early Nov. a subadult male appeared in the first (deserted) patch, upon which (no later than early Dec.) the old female left her new mate and returned to the Zambian side to pair with him; she then successfully raised two young.

A few birds may wander into Pine plantations (Chelinda); they are usually unmated. Three (two males, one female) of seven territorial adults translocated from near Chelinda to Zovochipolo (Sep. 1980-1981) returned to their territories within a few weeks; on the other hand, an adult female and a first-year female skulked in the release patch (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1986).

Chinspot Batis *Batis molitor*

**R.** Common in any woodland or wooded grassland on the escarpments and onto the plateau lip, including *Protea-Faurea* wooded grassland in the Chire valley and near Chowo Rocks, up to 2150 m (*FD-L*). One fledgling fed by female near Chire stream on 22 Nov. 1981 (egg-laying Oct.); adults feeding at nest in Nov. in miombo (Dyer 1988).

Black-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira peltata*

**R.** Very marginal for the Nyika list, as found on the Chire stream at 1520 m (*TOO* in Dowsett *et al.* 1974), more or less on the park's boundary. Could be expected to occur in riparian forest in the north, especially on

the North Rukuru.

White-tailed Blue Flycatcher *Elminia albicauda*

**R.** Mainly on the edge of riparian forest (including *Acacia abyssinica* on the edges of the high plateau) and in adjacent miombo woodland. Regularly seen up to about 2000 m (Chisanga Falls, Lusero area, Fingira), with a wanderer on the edge of forest at 2150 m near the Zambian rest house (Feb. 1980, *FD-L*) and another on the edge of Pines below Dam 3 at 2220 m (May 1986, Dyer 1987). We obtained one breeding record (Nov.) from the old gate area.

White-tailed Crested Flycatcher *Elminia albonotata*

**R.** Common in understorey of montane (rain) forest on the escarpments and high plateau, up to 2450 m. Requires slightly larger territories than Cape Batis, the smallest patches occupied in Zovochipolo measuring 0.33 and 0.45 ha (and all tall patches above 0.5 ha are used). In larger forests, densities are about two pairs/3 ha (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). Courtship feeding takes place only on the day of mating, males do not feed the female after laying (unlike batises). There are at least 54 breeding records (one C/2, one N/2, but we never saw more than one fledgling), with egg-laying in Sep. (3), Oct. (13), Nov. (20), Dec. (16) and Jan. (2). As for several other species, a significant proportion of established pairs refrained from breeding in years with poor rainfall; single-brooded (Dowsett-Lemaire 1985a). Twenty of 38 ringed adults were controlled locally in following seasons, two up to 6-7 years later (Dowsett 1985). Of two territorial males translocated from near Chelinda to Zovochipolo, one settled close to the release patch and paired, the other disappeared. None of those two emptied territories were re-occupied up to nearly three years later, this species showing perhaps the least mobility of all tested (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1986).

African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis*

**AM.** Widespread on the escarpments, especially in riparian, up to 2000 m; comes up locally into montane rain forest in the south-west, at Kasyaula, Manyenjere and Chowo (late Sep.-Mar.). Unlikely to breed any higher than Chowo (up to six pairs present, two summers out of three under study, Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). Also encountered on passage occasionally in Zovochipolo (Oct.-Dec.) and (rarely) at Chelinda late Sep.-Nov. The earliest arrival date is 26 Sep. 1980 (several in Kasyaula, *FD-L*).

Mountain Illadopsis *Illadopsis pyrrhoptera*

**R.** Confined to the wetter forests of the eastern escarpment, including Nyamkhowa. Favours dense understorey with much Acanthaceae shrubbery, from 1720 m (Nyamkhowa) to 2300 m (Mwenembwe) – *FD-L* & *RJD*. Two pairs were collected in Nyamkhowa in the late 1930s (Benson 1940-41), including one with two juveniles who had just left the nest on 13 Oct. (egg-laying Sep.). Found in pairs or small parties.

African (Abyssinian) Hill Babbler *Pseudoalcippe abyssinica*

**R.** Not uncommon locally in montane rain forest on both the eastern and south-western escarpments, favouring understorey with walls of lianes (under broken canopy). Densities in Chowo are of five-six pairs in 25 ha, and in Kasyaula of at least four-five pairs in 10 ha. In Zovochipolo the smallest patch occupied by a pair was only 1.5 ha, but densities are overall low, up to two pairs in patches of 7.5 and 12 ha (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). Appears very local on the high plateau, as we found it in only one 6-ha patch (at 2400 m). There are seven breeding records from the south-west (*RJD* & *FD-L*), one from Kasaramba (Benson 1951, one C/2), one from the north-east (*DOE*), with egg-laying in Oct. (5) and Nov. (4). Five of eight birds ringed in Chowo were retrapped up to seven years after first capture (Dowsett 1985). Unlike the Illadopsis, found only in pairs.

Arrow-marked Babbler *Turdoides jardineii*

**R.** In patches of thickets and rank grass, especially riparian growth, on the escarpments and lower plateau. Regularly found up to 2000-2050 m on the south-western escarpment (in a small valley west of the Zambian rest house, Malawi side of the border, *FD-L*); also apparently on the northern slopes below Nganda (Anon. 1973). A bit lower elsewhere, as at Chisanga Falls, near the old gate and near Nkhonjera.

White-winged Black Tit *Parus leucomelas*

**R.** Typically at the ecotone of riparian forest and woodland (on the escarpments), and at higher altitudes in wooded grassland, small tree clumps and scrub most often along streams. Regularly encountered in the south-

west to 2200 m (Zovochipolo, *FD-L*), and there is a breeding record from near the Zambian rest house (Oct.). Dyer (1988) saw one carrying food in Mar., but this was perhaps not related to breeding.

Miombo Grey Tit *Parus griseiventris*

**R.** Widespread in miombo woodland on the northern and south-western escarpments, up to the upper limit of tall woodland, at *c.* 1900 m (near the old gate) to 2000-2050 m (Chisanga Falls, Fingira).

Rufous-bellied Tit *Parus rufiventris*

**R.** Widespread in miombo woodland on the northern and south-western escarpments, coming up nearly as high as Miombo Grey Tit, up to 1900-2000 m (Fingira Rock, *FD-L* & *RJD*, and Kawozya Hill, *DPC*). Nest-building observed in Nov. in the Chipome valley (Dyer 1988).

Grey Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus caroli*

**R.** In miombo woodland on the northern and south-western escarpments, coming up to about 1800 m on the southern slopes (above Thazima and near Ulera, *FD-L* & *RJD*), and once as high as 1920 m in *Acacia abyssinica* (Dyer 1987, a family party of four in Jun. 1985).

Spotted Creeper *Salpornis spilonotus*

**R.** In miombo woodland on the northern and south-western escarpments, not coming up to the top, but a few have been seen on occasion in riparian *Acacia abyssinica*, as near the old gate at 1900 m (*FD-L* & *RJD*, Nov. 1981; again in Nov. 2002, *MvBe*), in the Mbululuji valley east of the old gate and south of Fingira (both *DPC*, May 1994).

Red-and-blue Sunbird *Anthreptes anchietae*

**R.** Widespread in miombo woodland and riparian vegetation on the northern and south-western escarpments, coming up to 2050 m above Chisanga Falls, 2025 m on the Manyenjere ridge; seen feeding on the flowers of *Syzygium cordatum* and *Protea* spp. (*angolensis*, *gaguedi* and *petiolaris*), also *Crossopterix febrifugum* – *FD-L*.

Violet-backed Sunbird *Anthreptes longuemarei*

**R.** In miombo woodland on the northern and south-western escarpments, coming up to 1800-1900 m on the southern slopes (near Fingira Rock and Ulera, *FD-L* & *RJD* Feb.-Mar.), feeding on various *Protea* spp.

Collared Sunbird *Anthreptes collaris*

**R.** In riparian forest in the northern foothills and on the south-western slopes (e.g. Thazima), penetrating feebly into montane rain forest in the south-west: *RJD* saw it very rarely in the canopy in Chowo (Oct. 1973, Dec. 1977, Dec. 1981) and *FD-L* found some in riparian forest near Kasyaula, including a female with juvenile on 5 Oct. 1981 (alt. about 1950 m). Female feeding juvenile near Uledi, 18 Oct. 1986 (*FD-L*).

Olive Sunbird *Nectarinia olivacea*

**R.** In riparian forest in the northern foothills (as on the North Rukuru), on the Chire river at 1500 m (*TOO*) and marginally into lower-altitude montane rain forest, up to 2150 m. Never more than a rare wanderer in Chowo (one netted in Aug. and another in Oct. 1980, *RJD*) and Zovochipolo (seen by *DPC*, never by us) but the odd pair breeds in Manyenjere. One observed in full song there in Feb. 1980 and a juvenile was being fed on 27 Dec. 1981 (*FD-L*), thus egg-laying Nov. Also observed at Nkhonjera Hill and Kasoma in Jun. 1983 (*FD-L*). Unlikely on the high eastern escarpment, and definitely recorded only from the lower section, as at Nyamkhowa where uncommon (below 2000 m, Dec. 1982). [Some reports from the high plateau seem unlikely to be this species.]

Green-headed Sunbird *Nectarinia verticalis*

**R.** Recorded in forest within a rather limited altitudinal range, from the Thazima area (*IlaC*, *DPC*) and the southern slopes (Nkhonjera Hill, Ulera-Fingira, *FD-L* & *RJD*) to the south-western escarpment (Lusero and Kasyaula to Manyenjere, Chisanga Falls, Chowo and Zovochipolo), up to 2200 m. Was observed feeding at 15 species of flowers (listed in Dowsett-Lemaire 1989b) but insects are probably more important. Has held territories in at least 11 patches in Zovochipolo (0.5-10 ha: Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a), with breeding occurring in the rains, Dec. (1), Jan. (1), Feb. (2) and Apr. (1). Three of nine ringed birds were retrapped locally two

years later (Dowsett 1985).

Black Sunbird *Nectarinia amethystina*

**R.** Common in miombo woodland on all the escarpments, to the upper limit of tall woodland at Chisanga Falls (2050 m); also observed a few times in riparian *Acacia abyssinica* from the old gate to the Lusero area (e.g. on *Erythrina* and *Syzygium*, Aspinwall *et al.* 1973). Once a wanderer to Chowo Rocks at 2200 m (31 Dec. 1981, a female chased by the local Red-tufted Malachite). Seen feeding also on the flowers of *Crossopterix*, *Uapaca*, *Protea gaguedi*, *P. petiolaris*... (FD-L).

Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Nectarinia senegalensis*

**R.** A species of open woodland and riparian vegetation at low altitude, so far recorded only from the northern foothills (North Rukuru valley) and lower escarpment. Not normally found above 1400 m.

Yellow-bellied Sunbird *Nectarinia venusta*

**R.** Widespread on the escarpments, on the edge of riparian forest (at lower altitudes) and in bracken-briar on the lower levels of the high plateau, mainly below 2150 m. Fairly common up to 2000 m (old gate, Fingira, Ulera, Mbuzinandi, etc.). At the upper altitudinal limits we saw a few birds most months in the Chire valley up to the Zambian rest house, and more rarely in Zovochipolo and up to Chowo Rocks (2200 m), feeding on *Leonotis*, *Kotschya* etc. Seems to compete with the numerous Greater Double-collared Sunbird (which has been seen chasing it) and this may be why numbers are limited at montane levels. SGM (in Aspinwall *et al.* 1973) found a nest with N/1 about to leave on 25 Aug. at 2130 m (from egg late Jul.).

White-bellied Sunbird *Nectarinia talatala*

**R.** A bird of low-altitude, dry woodland, very marginal for the Nyika list as known only from the northern foothills (North Rukuru near Uledi, 1033B1-2, c. 1000 m, FD-L & RJD).

Greater Double-collared Sunbird *Nectarinia afra*

**R.** The endemic race *whytei* is very common in montane shrubland and regenerating growth at forest edges, occasionally wandering into open grassland to feed on certain flowers, the altitudinal range being 1900-2500 m. Is mainly a nectar thief (piercing the base of corolla tubes or probing open cups without touching pollen) except in the case of *Englerina inaequilatera*, which is pollinated by both this species and Eastern Double-collared Sunbird; 29 food plants have been identified (Dowsett-Lemaire 1989b). There are 21 breeding records (three C/1), with egg-laying in Feb. (6), Mar. (1), Apr. (7), May (1), Jun. (3), Jul. (1) and Aug. (2). Breeding territories are very small (0.1-0.5 ha). Individually colour-ringed pairs were shown to be double- or triple-brooded according to local plants available and length of flowering season. Both insects and nectar seem important in determining breeding: for instance on Chowo Rocks breeding starts in Apr. with the flowering of *Kotschya recurvifolia* (attracting many insects) (Dowsett-Lemaire 1989b). The species was mentioned as being "single-brooded" in Dowsett-Lemaire (1988b) but this was through an editorial error.

Several ringed birds were controlled locally over a number of years, up to seven years after first capture (a male first ringed as an adult in Jan. 1976 thus more than eight years old when resighted in Jan. 1983, FD-L in Dowsett & Leonard 2001); this particular individual occupied a territory with the same female near the Zambian rest house over several years, and in Nov. 1980 (before the start of the breeding season) was seen chasing her around as if she were a "new" mate.

Miombo Double-collared Sunbird *Nectarinia manoensis*

**R.** Widespread in miombo woodland on the northern and south-western escarpments, coming up to the upper limit of woodland (at 1980 m at Mbuzinandi, near 2000 m Fingira, around 2050 m near Manyenjere and above Chisanga Falls, FD-L & RJD).

Eastern Double-collared Sunbird *Nectarinia mediocris*

**R.** Very common in montane (rain) forest on the escarpments and throughout the high plateau, from 1900-2450 m, lower down at Nyamkhowa (1750 m). At all levels of the forest but more often in the canopy and at edges (where may compete with Greater Double-collared, over which it is dominant). Breeding territories measure 0.2-0.5 ha in Zovochipolo; known to prospect at least 25 food plants for nectar, and like its small congener, is mainly a nectar thief (Dowsett-Lemaire 1989b). The seasonal abundance of canopy insects is

likely the more important factor determining breeding: there are 32 breeding records (one N/1), with egg-laying in Apr. (1), May (1), Jun. (7), Jul. (7), Aug. (10), Sep. (5) and Oct. (1). Twenty-five of 88 territorial birds ringed were controlled locally in later years, up to five years after first capture (Dowsett 1985).

#### Yellow-tufted Malachite Sunbird *Nectarinia famosa*

**R.** Widespread in small numbers in montane grassland (1900-2500 m) with scattered shrubs or small trees (especially *Protea* spp.); very aggressive, as even outside the breeding season it defends temporary territories around clumps of flowers (e.g. *Aloe mzimbana* in June on Chowo Rocks). Sixteen food plants have been identified, all probed frontally (Dowsett-Lemaire 1989b). Near Fingira it was found breeding next to Scarlet-tufted Malachite in *Protea petiolaris* (on Chowo Rocks it is normally excluded from *Protea* bush by its congener but comes back in Feb. as soon as breeding of *N. johnstoni* is over), and in Zovochipolo in *Leonotis*. Dated breeding records are Jan. (1), Feb. (1) and Aug. (1). Subject to local wandering on the plateau in search of flowers.

#### Scarlet-tufted Malachite Sunbird *Nectarinia johnstoni*

**R.** Not as widespread on the high plateau as its congener, but nevertheless found in many localities (mainly 1950-2450 m, down to c. 1800 m at Nyamkhowa), including the top of Mpanda Mtn among rocks (MD in Jul. 1985), at the top and bottom of the eastern escarpment (in *Protea madiensis*, *P. wentzeliana*), in rocky grassland near Fingira (*Protea petiolaris*), *P. madiensis* grassland near the Zambian rest house and *P. welwitschii* at Manyenjere, and especially on Chowo Rocks (*P. welwitschii*, *P. petiolaris*) where a few pairs breed each year. Very specialized ecology, feeding primarily on *Protea*, also *Tecomaria* and *Leonotis* after breeding. One unusual record of a bird feeding on a red *Disa* orchid (not identified at the time, but possibly *D. robusta*) at Chelinda on 30 Dec. 1979.

Two breeding territories on Chowo Rocks measured 0.5 and 1 ha; three nests were situated in large bushes of *Erica* (ex-*Philippia*) *benguelensis* (Dowsett-Lemaire 1988b, 1989b). Males start defending territories on the Rocks for a few hours daily in Jun.-Aug., but feed elsewhere; they keep chasing Yellow-tufted Malachite Sunbirds and by the time breeding starts, their congeners have left the area. Egg-laying (one C/1, one C/2, two J/1, one J/2) on Chowo Rocks was recorded in Dec. (3) and Jan. (2) at the peak of *Protea* flowering and Jan. (1) near Fingira; also (eastern escarpment) in Oct. (3), with one C/2 and two N/2 (Benson 1951, Peters & Loveridge 1953).

#### Bronze Sunbird *Nectarinia kilimensis*

**R.** Widespread in montane grassland, shrubland and at forest edges (mainly 1700-2350 m). Visits a variety of flowers (including *Syzygium* in the forest canopy), but on the Nyika depends on abundant flowering of *Tecomaria* and especially of *Leonotis* spp. for breeding and seems much less attracted to *Protea* flowers than the two large Malachite Sunbirds (Dowsett-Lemaire 1989b). Breeding takes place mainly in Feb.-Mar. (six egg-laying records), when most nectar is taken from *Leonotis mollissima* in rank valleys, and Jul. (one record, probably more) when another *Leonotis* (*decadonta*) is flowering. There is also an egg-laying record in Dec. (Zambian side, food not documented).

#### Yellow White-eye *Zosterops senegalensis*

**R.** In miombo woodland (often in riparian situations) on the lower escarpments and very common in forest and secondary growth throughout the high plateau, to 2450 m. From ringing data in Zovochipolo this appears to be the most numerous forest passerine, with for instance 26 breeding adults mist-netted in three patches totalling 2.9 ha (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). Not strongly territorial when breeding and forming large flocks (up to 50 birds) in the off-season; is both insectivorous and frugivorous, with 16 fruit species identified in its diet (Dowsett-Lemaire 1988a). There are 91 breeding records (eight C/2, five C/3, also N/2 and N/3), with egg-laying in Sep. (8), Oct. (50), Nov. (25) and Dec. (8). Of 266 adults ringed, 29 were controlled in subsequent years, up to seven years later (Dowsett 1985).

#### Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

**PM.** Uncommon passage migrant, with only a handful of records (of singles) on southward passage in Oct.-Nov., from the southern slopes (above Thazima) to Chowo, Zovochipolo (one seen feeding in *Polyscias fulva*, FD-L) and Lake Kaulime. Extreme dates are 15 Oct. (1986, FD-L, close to the earliest arrival date in Malawi of 14 Oct.) and 25 Nov. (1969, RJD).



African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus*

**R.** Present in miombo woodland and riparian forest on the lower slopes, occasionally wandering into forest on the high plateau, especially in the months of Oct.-Nov.: we had several observations of singles in Nov. 1979, Oct. 1980, Oct. 1981 and Nov. 1981 (mostly Zovochipolo), also a pair calling on the lower edge of Chowo at 2100 m on 23 Oct. 1973 (*RJD*) and one in song in Manyenjere forest on 22 Nov. 1981 (*FD-L*). Not yet known to breed as high as this. Also one on passage in exotic "Wattles" (*Acacia*) near Chelinda (Dam 1) on 11-22 Apr. 1980, near 2300 m.

Eastern Black-headed Oriole *Oriolus larvatus*

**R/M.** A common species of miombo woodland on the escarpments, below 1700 or 1800 m. Above that, several individuals move each year to forest patches on the high plateau, advertising territories (without any sign of breeding) from mid-Apr. to early or mid-Oct. (Dowsett-Lemaire 1989a). This was observed in both 1980 and 1981 over quite a large area, including small patches near Kasyaula, on the edge of Chowo, in Zovochipolo and the Juniper Forest. We had further observations of this during our shorter visit in Jun. 1983 (including again one singing in the Juniper Forest).

Sousa's Shrike *Lanius souzae*

**R.** A scarce resident of miombo woodland, with recent records only so far from the southern slopes, as near Ulera Hut, and above Thazima (*RJD* & *FD-L*) up to about 1800 m. We also saw it west of Kaperekezi (outside the park) on the Nthalire road. The first specimens for Malawi (a pair) were collected by A. Whyte in June 1896, on the northern escarpment (from the altitude given this would have been in 1033B4).

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

**PM.** Fairly common on northward passage over the high plateau (up to at least 2400 m), but scarce on southward passage. We had only one such record (two on 24 Nov. 1980, Lake Kaulime), *DPC* saw one on 8 Oct. 1993 at Thazima, and *DRA* noted one on 19 Dec. 1976. Much more noticeable on northward passage, from late Mar. to mid- or late Apr., with many records (latest 23 Apr. 1986 at Chelinda, *MD*).

Red-tailed Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*

**PV.** Very rare vagrant this far south: a male specimen was collected by W.P. Young near Livingstonia, presumably on or above the eastern escarpment, in the mid-1930s (exact date unknown: Benson & Benson 1949). One bird in full male dress was well seen on 4 Dec. 1977 between Kaulime and Chelinda at 2350 m (*RJD* & *FD-L*). There have been a couple of reports of birds in female plumage since (17 Apr. 1992, 26 Nov. 1995), but as the colour of the undertail was not checked, it is impossible to eliminate the possibility of pale-plumaged Red-backed Shrike (cf. Zimmerman *et al.* 1996).

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*

**PM.** This species migrates in a loop and crosses Malawi essentially on northward passage: noted regularly over the high Nyika then (up to at least 2400 m), in smaller numbers than Red-backed, from late Mar. to mid-Apr., rarely later (latest date 21 Apr. 1990, *MM*). One immature on 11 Nov. 1993 (*RDM*) is at a more unusual date, one of the very few Malawi records of southward passage.

Fiscal Shrike *Lanius collaris*

**R.** Common resident in open grassland with scattered bushes or trees (as in *Protea* grassland), and in bracken-briar, up to at least 2400 m. There are 10 breeding records (one N/4), with egg-laying in Oct. (4), Nov. (5) and Dec. (1).

Brubru *Nilaus afer*

**R.** Widespread in miombo woodland on the northern and south-western escarpments, up to the upper limit of tall woodland above Chisanga Falls (2050 m, *FD-L*). Also occasionally in *Acacia abyssinica* (near the old gate, c. 1900 m) whence there is a breeding record with pair feeding a fledgling 22 Nov. 1986 (*MD*), thus from egg-laying Sep. or Oct.

Southern Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla*

**R.** Very common in the canopy of miombo woodland and riparian forest on the escarpments, and coming up

into montane rain forest in small numbers in the south-west up to 2200 m. It is not uncommon around 2000 m (both sides of the border), becomes rare in Chowo (one or two pairs) and barely gets into Zovochipolo, where two patches of 8.5 and 12 ha were occupied by a pair (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). Proven to breed in Chowo, with a dependent fledgling observed 28 Sep. 1981, and a juvenile also heard in Kasoma on 23 Sep. 1980 (FD-L). Subject to local wandering, e.g. visiting the Juniper Forest in Nov. 1980.

Marsh Tchagra *Tchagra minutus*

**R.** Skulking but not uncommon species in tall rank grass and bracken-briar, between 1800 and 2150 m, on the southern (Ulera, Fingira, 1033D4) and south-western escarpments (both sides of the border, 1033D1). Pairs with young observed up to 2150 m (just below Chowo Rocks) and two dated breeding records, with egg-laying in Dec. (CWB had a N/1 in Jan. 1964 on the Zambian side) and Jan. (feeding juvenile 11 Mar. 1981, Chowo clearing, FD-L).

Brown-headed Tchagra *Tchagra australis*

**R.** A bird of rank riparian growth and dense grass or scrub on the northern and south-western escarpments, coming up marginally into montane shrubland, the upper limit being about 2000 m near Chisanga Falls and Nkhonjera area. Also recorded from the eastern escarpment in secondary growth at Nyamkhowa (?1800 m) – FD-L.

Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus*

**R.** Widespread on the escarpments, and more generally distributed than last at higher altitudes, up to 2200 m at least, in bracken-briar, *Protea* grassland, etc. (including Chowo Rocks, Zovochipolo, eastern escarpment at Nyamkhowa and above Nchenachena). One female netted at the Zambian rest house was brooding Dec. (RJD).

Tropical Boubou *Laniarius aethiopicus*

**R.** Common in any type of thicket or low scrub on the lower escarpments, at high altitudes not uncommon to 2200 m (e.g. Chowo Rocks) and locally higher, to 2300 m, often in riparian situations but also in scrub among rocks, approaching Black Boubou locally at forest edges – FD-L & RJD.

Fülleborn's Black Boubou *Laniarius fuelleborni*

**R.** Common in dense understorey of montane rain forest on the escarpments and at all levels of low-canopy montane forest on the high plateau (favouring thickets and walls of lianes), including tall (3-4 m) montane shrubland, from 1750 m (Nyamkhowa) to 2500 m (scrubby forest on slopes of Nganda Hill). On 31 Oct. 1991 it was also found in a small patch just above Livingstonia at only 1350 m (NJ-S & RDM); possibly breeds this low, as found even lower on the eastern escarpment of the South Viphya (FD-L & RJD). The smallest forest patches occupied in Zovochipolo (with suitable thickets and a ring of regeneration scrub) are 0.6 and 1 ha but as the habitat is rather patchy, overall densities in larger forests are around one pair/4 ha (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). There are seven breeding records, with egg-laying in Oct. (1), Nov. (1), Dec. (3) and Jan. (2). Four of 10 ringed birds were controlled locally in following seasons, one up to seven years later (Dowsett 1985).

Orange-breasted Bush Shrike *Malaconotus sulfureopectus*

**R.** Mostly in riparian forest or woodland on the lower slopes of the northern escarpment; we found it locally in riparian *Acacia abyssinica* on the south-western slopes, once near Lusero (Jan. 1981) at 1900 m and also near Fingira (Feb. 1981) at 1900-1950 m, perhaps no more than wanderers this high.

Many-coloured Bush Shrike *Malaconotus multicolor*

**R.** Partial to the canopy and mid-stratum of tall montane rain forest in the south-west (1900-2200 m), throughout from the Lusero area and Manyenjere to Zovochipolo. Pairs occupy several patches of 6.5 to 8.5 ha in size, and two pairs were found in a 12-ha patch in Zovochipolo (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a). There are mainly two colour morphs in the area, with either a rich yellow belly, or pinkish-fawn (including one of each in a pair in Chowo); in addition a male with a red belly was collected in Chowo in 1964 (Benson & Irwin 1967). No dated breeding records, but immatures noted several times in Mar.-Apr. Absent from the eastern escarpment and most other forested areas of northern Malawi (except Wilindi in the Misukus).

Grey-headed Bush Shrike *Malaconotus blanchoti*

**R.** An uncommon species of woodland and riparian vegetation, recorded from the northern foothills (Uledi area, 1033B1-2), and also from miombo woodland near Ulera, c. 1800 m (Mar. 1981, *FD-L* & *RJD*); more widespread around Thazima (*DPC*). An exceptional wanderer to the lower edge of Chowo forest (2100 m), calling on 23 Aug. 1981 (*FD-L*).

White Helmet Shrike *Prionops plumatus*

**R.** Widespread in miombo woodland on the lower escarpments (north and south-west) up to 1500-1600 m; a group seen at c. 1850 m above Thazima on 26 Aug. 1972 (*JJT* in *Aspinwall et al.* 1973) is at an unusual altitude for this species, which may wander in the off-season.

Red-billed Helmet Shrike *Prionops retzii*

**R.** Widespread in woodland and riparian forest on the northern escarpment (with a breeding record, C/3, from the north-east on 8 Sep. 1994, *DPC*), more local in the south-west, up to 1500 or 1600 m (Kaperekezi area, not uncommon at Thazima, *DPC*). There are a couple of high-altitude observations of a group wandering in the off-season to c. 1800 m below Jalawe Rock (Apr. 1985) and (Jul.) below Mpanda Mtn (*MD*).

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis*

**R.** Widespread in miombo woodland on the northern and south-western escarpments up to 1800 or 1900 m (near Fingira Rock, Feb. 1981). In the off-season some individuals come up to the high plateau and establish temporary territories at the edge of Pine plantations, more rarely forest patches: thus one-two around Chelinda from 29 Apr. to late Jun. 1980, Apr. 1981, and Aug. 1981 near Lake Kaulime (*FD-L* & *RJD*).

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*

**R.** A commensal species, recorded within the park mostly at Chelinda and at the Zambian rest house. It was first reported at both sites in Nov. 1969 (Dowsett 1970); we saw it monthly during our period of residence except in Feb.-Mar. 1981. Critchlow (2001a) adds that he has seen the species nest-building at Chelinda in Jul.-Aug., with periodic absences also in the late rains. It appears rarer at Thazima (a pair once in Nov. 1993, *DPC*). It may have become irregular at the disused Zambian rest house in the 1990s (*DPC*), but was always present there in the 1970s-early 1980s when the place was occupied.

White-necked Raven *Corvus albicollis*

**R.** More widely distributed than its congener (also on the escarpments), as associated with rocky hills or small boulders for breeding and foraging widely over the whole plateau. Two egg-laying records for Sep.: a nest with five small pulli was found on 13 Oct. 1973 by *JFRC-R* & *TOO*, in a boulder crack on the Malawi side of the border road (towards Kaperekezi); a large young was fed on a rock on a ridge in Zovochipolo in early Nov. 1980. Two young were seen on the same rock in Nov. 1981 (*FD-L*). A family of four occasionally foraged around Chelinda Camp, with one of the two young becoming very tame, tapping on the windows of our chalet and being hand-fed. This youngster spent considerable time arguing with its image in the driving mirror of our car, and looking behind it to identify the "intruder". Critchlow (2001a) reports the species occasionally using the back of a large mammal as a perch (Eland and Horse). Some attending a Zebra carcass with many vultures teased the Hooded Vultures by pulling their tail feathers, and by distracting them in this way managed to sneak ahead to grab morsels (*MD*).

Waller's Red-winged Starling *Onychognathus walleri*

**R.** Widespread in tall montane rain forest on both eastern and south-western escarpments, from 1750 m (Nyamkhowa) to 2220 m (Zovochipolo). It does not come up all the way to Kasaramba (at least not in the breeding season). Its breeding distribution is clearly limited by the availability of suitable nest sites (in tree holes): 12 pairs bred in 160 ha of forest patches (Zovochipolo and part of Chowo) in 1980 when feeding conditions were good (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983d); even then these birds were greatly outnumbered by non-breeding birds and the habitat appeared more than saturated (Dowsett-Lemaire 1985a). The diet includes a variety of fruits (Dowsett-Lemaire 1988a), but insects are more important and tree chameleons *Chamaeleo goetzei* are also brought to the young. A nest hole can be in use for many years: thus one occupied in Chowo in 1980-81 was still in use in Oct. 1986 (*FD-L*). There are 30 breeding records (N/1 to N/3), with egg-laying in late Aug. (2), Sep. (12), Oct. (13) and Nov. (3); normally single-brooded, with one pair laying again, but the brood

was later abandoned (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983d). Subject to local wandering, visiting forest patches on the Nyika up to 10 km from a breeding area; flocks in the non-breeding season can be very large, e.g. 40 and 60 birds in Zovochipolo in Jan. 1981.

African Red-winged Starling *Onychognathus morio*

**R.** A few pairs at rocky hills on the escarpments and high plateau, wandering for food about anywhere, including the edge of forest where may take some fruit. Known nest sites on the high Nyika include the small cliff on the Manyenjere ridge, rocks near Chelinda bridge, and Zungwara Falls. This last (a wet rock face) was occupied in Nov. 1981 and had in the previous season been used by a pair of Slender-billed Starlings! (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983d). Those three breeding records were dated Oct. (1) and Nov. (2).

Slender-billed (Chestnut-winged) Starling *Onychognathus tenuirostris*

**R.** A more specialized species than last, breeding on rock faces somewhat protected by waterfalls; it is confined to the high plateau, mainly from 2000-2400 m. Feeds in montane grassland and occasionally in forest trees (where takes fruit and insects). Known nest sites (where breeding was proven) include a waterfall on the Chire stream below the Zambian rest house, Chisanga Falls (with at least two pairs) and Zungwara Falls (also at least two pairs) – *FD-L & RJD*. A pair was also seen regularly at a waterfall near the Juniper Forest (*FD-L*) and it was noted on the North Rumphu waterfalls (*DPC*). There are eight dated breeding records, with egg-laying in Sep. (1), Oct. (1), Nov. (2) and Dec. (4). At Chisanga Falls one brood of three large nestlings was seen coming out onto a ledge to get fed, getting absolutely drenched in the process (Dec. 1981). May wander in large flocks in the off-season, e.g. at least 100 birds on the Kasaramba road, feeding on the ground on 1 May 1980, about 80 on Chelinda Hill on 6 Feb. 1981; the largest flock observed on the Zambian border (Chitipa road junction) was 30, on 29 Jul. 1980.

Lesser Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chloropterus*

**R.** A local species of miombo woodland on the lower escarpments, recorded in 1033B4 (Jalawe valley, *DPC*), near Thazima (*FD-L & RJD*) and a little higher on the southern slopes on the way to Nkhonjera Hill (at least 1700 m, *RJD*). The observation of an immature at Chelinda by *HG* (*per DPC*) in Jan. 1995 must be considered as exceptional.

Amethyst Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*

**AM.** Seasonally common (mostly Sep. to Dec. or Jan.) in miombo woodland and in patches of montane rain forest on the south-western escarpment up to c. 2250 m, wandering rarely to 2300 m (near Chelinda). Quite a few pairs bred in forest in 1980 (c. 30 pairs in Zovochipolo), but none in 1981 (a poor fruiting season), although some flocks were present (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a, 1989a). Food is collected in forest as well as outside, by flycatching from low bushes and hopping on the ground. Dated records of egg-laying on the plateau are Oct. (4) and Nov. (2); and Sep. (2) in the northern foothills (feeding large nestlings 18 Oct. 1986, *RJD*). Uses smaller holes than Waller's Starling, including old nests of Olive Woodpecker: I once saw a female start building a nest in a hole the very day that the young Woodpecker had left it! But, as is usual, the Woodpecker family came back in the evening to roost, and chased the Starlings, who had to wait for several days until the Woodpeckers stopped roosting in it (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a); breeding was then successful. A flock of over 200 birds on 14 Oct. 1973 in a small patch on the Zambian side (*RJD*) seems early for post-breeding dispersal, perhaps in a year with poor breeding prospects.

Wattled Starling *Creatophora cinerea*

**V.** Quite an erratic species in Malawi, with one old record from the high Nyika: two specimens were collected in Apr. 1903 at Nyamkhowa (2040 m, at the peak) and at Mwenembwe (2300 m) – Benson & Benson 1977. The collector would have been native staff employed by A. Sharpe. There is a more recent observation from the western escarpment (near the turn-off to Chisanga Falls) of a single bird in Dec. 1986 (*MD*).

Yellow-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus africanus*

**R?** Never recorded in the 1970s and 1980s despite good observer coverage, three oxpecker sp. were first seen on the high plateau in Sep. 1993 and Nov. 1994 and positively identified as this species in Nov. 1995 in the area between Chelinda and Chosi (*HG* in Critchlow & Haugaard 1996). Host species are Eland, Roan Antelope (Critchlow & Haugaard 1996, *DF* in 2000) and Zebra (*DF*, 2000). Other months recorded are Dec.

(1995, 2001), and Aug.-Sep. (2000, with up to five birds, *DF*).

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus*

**R.** Known marginally from the Thazima office area, at least since 1993 (*DPC*). Mainly commensal.

Yellow-throated Petronia *Petronia superciliaris*

**R.** Widespread in miombo woodland on the northern and south-western escarpments, up to about 1800 m (south-west, *FD-L & RJD*), and twice in *Acacia abyssinica* near the old gate at 1900 m (30 Apr. 1971, in Aspinwall 1971; 30 May 2002, *WMc*).

Chestnut-mantled Sparrow-weaver *Plocepasser rufoscapulatus*

**V.** Very marginal for the Nyika list, its inclusion being based on a vagrant seen on 26 Oct. 1991 at Thazima gate (*MM*). This is not a high-altitude species, and as the woodland between Thazima and Vwaza Marsh W.R. (where it is common) has been destroyed extensively, the species is unlikely to turn up again.

Baglafaecht Weaver *Ploceus baglafaecht*

**R.** The endemic race *nyikae* is widespread in montane grassland with clumps of trees or shrubs, riparian growth and generally forest margins, from 1900 to 2450 m, but not recorded from Nyamkhowa. Has nested in Pines at the edge of plantations (Chelinda, *FD-L & RJD*), in *Hagenia* and *Syzygium* on the Zambian side, in *Hagenia* at Chelinda; dated breeding records (one C/2) are Oct. (2), Nov. (1), Dec. (3), Jan. (1, several more nest-building early Jan.) and Feb. (1). An insectivorous species, usually in pairs or small family parties. One taking nectar from *Leonotis mollissima* (15 Feb. 1982), piercing the corolla tube but nevertheless getting pollen on its forehead (*FD-L*).

Bertram's Weaver *Ploceus bertrandi*

**R.** Mainly at forest margins, bracken-briar with scattered trees, riparian *Acacia abyssinica*, and often alongside Baglafaecht but does not ascend above c. 2200 m, thus absent from the higher sections of the plateau. Overall 1600-2200 m (Thazima-Zovochipolo). One dated breeding record (Dec.) from N/1 collected in Jan. at 1920 m by *CJV* (Benson & Holliday 1964), the large round nest being in the top of a *Lippia* bush at 2.5 m. Nesting also noted in Apr.-May 1971 (contents unknown, Aspinwall 1971), and Nov.-Dec. 1977 near Zambian rest house (*FD-L*). One female ringed at Zambian rest house in Dec. 1975 was retrapped in Dec. 1977 (*RJD*). Mainly insectivorous and in pairs, like Baglafaecht. (Not recorded from the Nyamkhowa-Livingstonia square but should be expected to occur).

Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis*

**R.** Widespread in riparian growth on the escarpments and up to 2150-2200 m on the plateau (Zovochipolo and near Chowo Rocks). Not uncommon in bracken-briar and tree clumps, particularly along streams, alongside Bertram's and Baglafaecht Weavers, and similarly unsocial (in pairs and family parties). One breeding record (Dec.) with C/2 (a nestling plus infertile egg) at 1900 m on the Zambian side (Benson *et al.* 1970); also seen nest-building on 25 Aug. at 2130 m (Aspinwall *et al.* 1973), and "at a nest" in Oct. at Kaperekezi (Dyer 1988). (No record from 1033B4, presumably through an oversight).

Large Golden Weaver *Ploceus xanthops*

**R.** In very small numbers on the southern and south-western slopes (from the old gate to Kasoma, Mbuzinandi and Fingira area, overall up to 2050 m, *FD-L & RJD*), not yet recorded from the northern escarpment. In bracken-briar and at forest edges, often in riparian situations (including *Acacia abyssinica*). Also noted "in bushes, near Chowo" in Jul. 1975 (*EHP*). Was found nesting in the Chire valley by *CJV* below 1800 m in Jan. 1964.

[Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius*. This low-altitude species was recorded by Dyer (1988) for the Mbuzinandi area at 2000 m, in error for *P. bertrandi*, and indeed dropped by Medland (n.d.).]

[African Masked Weaver *Ploceus velatus*. A bird of low-altitude dry woodland; there are no confirmed records of this species within the park, and it should be deleted from Medland's (n.d.) list (confusion with Bertram's?). *DPC* saw it, however, near Nthalire to the west, which is high for the species.]

[Spotted-backed Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus*. Seen near Uledi in Oct. 1986 (FD-L & RJD), outside the park.]

Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes melanotis*

**R.** Noted in dry miombo woodland on the northern slopes (slopes of Mpanda Mtn), Oct. 1986 (RJD), and near Uledi (MD). Also seen outside the park on the western escarpment (near Gamba) and near Thazima by DPC. All observations below 1550 m.

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*

**V.** A species of low-altitude dry savannas, only an exceptional wanderer to the Nyika: one bird was seen by JH at the bottom of Dam 1 (Chelinda, 2250 m) on 2 Nov. 1994 (Critchlow & Haugaard 1996), and a small flock was on Zambian side of Kaperekezi on 12 Jul. 1994 (DPC).

Black-winged Bishop *Euplectes hordeaceus*

**R.** Very marginal for the Nyika list, as it is a localized species of rank grass on the northern escarpment, seen on the park's boundary near Uledi (1033B1, FD-L & RJD, MD).

Yellow-rumped Bishop *Euplectes capensis*

**R.** In rank grass in woodland clearings on the northern (common in Chipome valley) and south-western escarpments, probably not much above 1700 m (above Thazima). A couple of wanderers to the Lusero area at 1950 m: one seen there by DRA (Aug., Aspinwall *et al.* 1973) and by us on 20 Oct. 1981; also one near old gate (1900 m) noted by DPC in Nov. 1995. In Sep. 1956 a specimen was collected at *c.* 1800 m on the Zambian side (Benson & Irwin 1967).

White-winged Whydah *Euplectes albonotatus*

**R.** A species of rank grass in dry, open woodland, very marginal for the Nyika list as recorded only from the boundary on the North Rukuru below the western escarpment (MD).

Red-collared Whydah *Euplectes ardens*

**R.** In rank, moist grass on the northern and south-western escarpments, coming up to the plateau in some numbers up to 2150-2200 m (as in Zovochipolo, common in most valleys and in full display there Jan.-Mar., first few end of Dec.). Subject to local wandering and occasionally reported higher: a flock of at least 50 birds at 2300 m near Chelinda on 26 Dec. 2001 (DPC). One breeding record from Chipome valley (C/3, Feb. 1996, DPC *et al.*).

Mountain Marsh Whydah *Euplectes psammocromius*

**R.** The species was first collected in Sep. 1902 (Belcher 1930), probably by J. McClounie. Common in moist herbage along streams and dambos on the high plateau, mainly from 2000 or 2100 to 2400 m. Polygamous as are other *Euplectes* and in flocks of up to 40-50 in the dry season. Moults into breeding dress mainly in late Sep. and early Oct. and retains it until Feb.-Mar.: one male coming into dress at Kaulime on 5 Sep. 1980, with tail more than half-grown (FD-L), was certainly early. The last date with a bird in full breeding dress was noted as the 5th Apr. (1996) by DPC. There are seven dated breeding records, in Oct. (2) and Nov. (5), with three C/2 known (Benson 1940-41, 1951), and also an occupied nest in early Jan. 1964 on the Zambian side (CJV).

Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba*

**R.** Local at low altitudes, in thickets: recorded from the north-eastern foothills on the slopes of Mpanda Mtn (1033B2, Oct. 1986, RJD) and close to but outside the park on the Ruwile stream (DPC). In the south-west comes close to Thazima (which is near the upper altitudinal limit for the species), with a pair seen on a hill *c.* 4 km outside the park (DPC).

Orange-winged Pytilia *Pytilia afra*

**R.** Local in rank grass and small thickets in miombo woodland: in the northern foothills (North Rukuru and foothills of Mpanda Mtn, FD-L & RJD, Oct. 1986) and the Kaswerera stream at Thazima (DPC). In addition, there is an unexpected observation of a vagrant (male) at Lake Kaulime on 19 Jun. 1994 (DPC & HG), an abnormal altitude and habitat.

Red-faced Crimsonwing *Cryptospiza reichenovii*

**R.** Discreet but widespread species in the understorey of montane rain forest on both escarpments, up to 2300 m (Mwenembwe) and 2220 m (Zovochipolo); also recorded at Nyamkhowa (1750 m) and Nkhonjera (*FD-L* & *RJD*). In Zovochipolo breeding pairs were found in 18 patches with streams (the smallest 0.8 ha); they feed both on insects and grass seeds (especially *Streblochaete longiarista*, also *Panicum* and *Setaria*) as well as seeds of Acanthaceae (*Hypoestes*) and other families (*Hagenia*, *Urera*, *Acalypha*) – Dowsett-Lemaire 1983a, 1988a. There are three dated breeding records, Jun. (1), Jul. (1) and Sep. (1). Four of 37 ringed adults were retrapped locally after one to three years; subject to local wandering, a bird ringed in Chowo being retrapped in Zovochipolo 3 km away (Dowsett 1985).

Red-throated Twinspot *Hypargos niveoguttatus*

**R.** Uncommon or discreet species of riparian thicket, recorded only from the northern escarpment (1033B2 and B4, *MD*).

Green Twinspot *Mandingoa nitidula*

**V/R.** Mainly reported from the Zambian side (up to 2150 m), with so few records that it is presumably only a wanderer from lower altitude: in Chowo one was netted near the ground on 24 Nov. 1969 (Dowsett 1970), and at least one seen on 27 Aug. 1972 (Aspinwall *et al.* 1973), also one reported for 24 Aug. 1983 (*JA*), and *RJD* saw one in the canopy in Manyenjere on 24 Nov. 1980. In addition, one was netted in riparian forest at 1150 m in 1033B4 (Apr. 1997, Overton 1998).

Blue-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta rubricata*

**R.** Widespread in rank growth, bracken-briar and at forest edges over a wide altitudinal range, from the wooded escarpments to the high plateau, up to 2500 m (scrubby forest on the slopes of Nganda Hill, *FD-L*). One was seen eating flying termites from the canopy of a forest patch in Zovochipolo on 8 Jan. 1981!

Black-tailed Grey Waxbill *Estrilda perreini*

**R.** A discreet bird of dense riparian forest, discovered at Thazima in 1981 (*APZ*), with several subsequent observations. Also found in Oct. 1985 in riparian near Kaperekezi (*MD*) and in the Chisimuka valley (above the old gate) in Apr. 1994, *c.* 1900 m – where seen again, as in 2002 (*WMc*).

Swee Waxbill *Estrilda melanotis*

**R.** Common in bracken-briar and dense herbaceous growth at forest edges and along streams, scrub on rocks, penetrating occasionally inside forest to drink (e.g. Chowo), up to 2450-2500 m; seen eating seeds or small fruit of the liane *Urera hypselodendron* (Nov.). Usually in small flocks, occasionally much larger (50 or so) in the off-season. Some nest-building has been seen in Dec., and we have a breeding record for Jan.: a nest with C/3 situated 2 m up in a Pine tree at the Zambian rest house (*FD-L*). Recorded quite low down on the escarpments, to *c.* 600 m (just outside the park) on the Ruwile stream in the north-east (*DPC* on 3 Sep. 1994).

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild*

**R.** Small parties or flocks commonly encountered in open montane grassland and dambos on the plateau, up to 2400-2500 m. Already noted as high as 2400 m by Benson (1942).

Blue Waxbill *Uraeginthus angolensis*

**R.** In small thickets or scrubby understorey of open woodland: recorded from the northern foothills and south-western escarpment (up to Thazima), rarely wandering to the high plateau: thus a couple seen at the Zambian rest house in Apr.-May 1971 (Aspinwall 1971) and possibly one more record after that (1976).

Zebra (Orange) Waxbill *Amandava subflava*

**R/V?** Normally in moist grassland and dambos: one record of small flocks on the Chipome river at 1370 m (Dyer 1987) is all we could trace.

Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullata*

**R.** In any grassland on the lower slopes (north and south-west), as in clearings in woodland. Only a vagrant to the high plateau, with small flocks (10-15) observed for the first time near Chelinda at 2300 m from 26

Dec. 2001-9 Jan. 2002 (*DPC*); otherwise only one other record on the Malawi side, at Zungwara (27 Nov. 1995, *DPC* & *MD*) and a couple on the Zambian side, in bracken on the Manyenjere ridge (18 Dec. 1976, *DRA*, and 12 birds on 17 Nov. 1981, *RJD*). Nest-building at Kaperekezi on 21 Apr. 1994 (*DPC*).

#### Red-backed Mannikin *Spermestes bicolor*

**R.** Normally in rich woodland and the edge of riparian, known from the northern and south-western escarpments, up to Thazima, only irregular above that: noted at *c.* 1800 m (above Thazima) by *JJT* 26 Aug. 1972 (Aspinwall *et al.* 1973), one calling in Pines at Chelinda on 9 May 1980, *c.* 2300 m (*FD-L*). Nest-building observed at Kaperekezi in Oct. (Dyer 1988).

#### Variable Indigobird *Vidua funerea*

**R.** The only indigobird on the plateau, but uncommon, confined to altitudes below 1900 or 2000 m, in rank grass and bushes. At least two males in breeding dress noted on the border road in Apr.-May 1971 at *c.* 2000 m (Aspinwall 1971), and similarly noted by *TOO* in May 1975; we saw this species on the southern slopes (near Fingira) in Mar. 1981 (a female) at *c.* 1950 m and on the road to Thazima in Apr. (a male), while *DPC* reported it from the old Mbuzinandi road in 1033D1 on 16 May 1994. There are also anonymous Atlas records from 1033D2 (presumably Mbuzinandi area), so probably nowhere above 2000 m, even though its host the Blue-billed Firefinch occurs to the highest patches of scrub (at 2500 m). Also known from the Chipome valley.

#### Pin-tailed Widow *Vidua macroura*

**R?** A species of open, rank grassland, largely absent from the wooded escarpments, and local on the high plateau, at the upper altitudinal limit of its range. Of irregular appearance around the Zambian rest house (e.g. one male in song Feb.-Mar. 1980 and a female in Mar., pers. obs.; a male and two females in Feb. 1979, *DRA*) or Zovochipolo (one male in Jan. 1981), the border road in Apr. (*DPC*) and usually one-two males holding a territory near Chelinda Camp, from Dec.-Mar. (*FD-L* & *RJD*) or even until May (*MD*).

[Long-tailed and Broad-tailed Paradise Widows *Vidua paradisaea*, *V. obtusa*. Listed by Medland (n.d.) but not yet confirmed to occur within the park; they have both been seen near Uledi outside the boundaries, *RJD* & *FD-L*, *MD*.]

#### Cape Canary *Serinus canicollis*

**R.** Usually common on the high plateau, in grassland, bracken-briar, at forest edges, occasionally in the forest canopy (where seen eating seeds of *Hagenia abyssinica*, *FD-L*), up to 2450 m; also recorded at Nyamkhowa (1750-2000 m). In small to large flocks, with seasonal wandering and fluctuations in numbers. In our period of residence seen in all months but occasionally noted as locally absent for a couple of weeks (as on Zambian border in late Dec. 1979-Jan. 1980). There are nine breeding records (five C/4, see Benson 1940-41 and 1951), with egg-laying in Sep. (1), Oct. (2) and Nov. (6); from the eastern escarpment and the Zambian rest house.

#### African Citril *Serinus citrinelloides*

**R.** Locally not uncommon at forest edges and secondary growth, often along streams, on the escarpments and plateau, up to 2300 m. Often in pairs and overall discreet, most usually picked up from its quiet, detached 3-note whistles (heard from Aug. to Apr. or May). Seen eating seeds of *Cussonia spicata* and *Hagenia* (*FD-L*). Two breeding records for Oct. (Zambian rest house and Zovochipolo, *RJD* and *FD-L*). Appears scarcer in May-Jul. but whether this is due to altitudinal movements or simply the lack of singing activity at that time is not clear.

#### Yellow-eyed Canary *Serinus mozambicus*

**R.** Not a bird of high altitudes, recorded only from the lower wooded slopes (north and west), normally up to Thazima (*DPC*) and completely absent from the high plateau. One exceptional record of three at *c.* 1900 m in *Acacia abyssinica* above the old gate, 30 May 2002 (*WMc*).

#### Bully Canary *Serinus sulphuratus*

**R.** Not uncommon in secondary growth, at forest edges and in wooded grassland on the high plateau (and



escarpments), up to 2400 m (Chelinda Hill). There are two breeding records (egg-laying Sep.), from the Zambian rest house and Chowo (*RJD & FD-L*).

Black-eared Seedeater *Serinus mennelli*

**R.** A miombo endemic, although qualified as “common” by Medland (n.d.), appears very local: found on the lower escarpments in the south-west in the Thazima region, c. 1600 m (*FD-L & RJD*), and curiously still unreported from the north.

Stripe-breasted Seedeater *Serinus reichardi*

**R.** More widespread than last, in miombo woodland in 1033B4 (Jalawe, Chipome, *MD*), with several records in the south-west, including a specimen collected on the western scarp on 9 Nov. 1937 at c. 1950 m (Benson 1940-41). Otherwise seen above Thazima up to at least 1800 m (*RJD & FD-L*) and similarly near Chisanga Falls (*MD*).

Streaky Seedeater *Serinus striolatus*

**R.** A discreet species of forest edges, montane shrubland and locally in dense understorey of riparian forest on the plateau and higher escarpments (east and south-west), mainly from 1900-2400 m, also recorded at Nyamkhowa (Benson 1940-41). In pairs or small family parties, not known to flock. There are six breeding records (one C/3: Benson & Benson 1949), with egg-laying in Sep. (1), Oct. (3), Nov. (1) and Dec. (1), most from the Zambian side.

Oriole Finch *Linurgus olivaceus*

**R.** Very uncommon species confined to the wetter forests of the eastern escarpment, collected at Nyamkhowa in Oct. 1938 (Benson 1940-41) and one seen in Dec. 1982 (*RJD*); it is also known from the bottom of Kasaramba forest (collected by Benson (1940-41) in Dec., and by Loveridge in Nov. 1948 (Peters & Loveridge 1953)). We saw a couple of birds on the edge of two different forest patches on Nkhonjera Hill in Jun. 1983; a female was netted in forest east of Nganda (1033B4) on 11 Apr. 1997 (*JH et al.*). The overall altitudinal range is 1800-2200 m.

Cinnamon-breasted Rock Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi*

**AM.** It is not known to breed anywhere on the high plateau (e.g. completely absent from Chowo Rocks) and clearly all the few records there are of birds on passage, often seen along roads. Most observations are of “spring” passage (when the species arrives to breed in the country) in the months of Apr.-Jul., extreme dates 27 Mar. (1985, *MD*) and 25 Jul. (1994, *DPC*); there are few observations in Dec. to early Jan., extremes being three on 1 Dec. 1994 in Zovochipolo (*DPC*) and one on 11 Jan. 1996 (Zambian side, *DPC*). At lower altitudes one observation in the Jalawe valley (1033B4) in Aug. 1994 (*DPC*) could refer to a locally breeding bird. *DPC* also noted the species near Fingira Rock in May 1994. On passage overall up to 2450 m (Dowsett *et al.* 1974).

Golden-breasted Bunting *Emberiza flaviventris*

**R.** Widespread in miombo woodland on the lower slopes (north and south-west), approaching the upper limit of woodland near Chisanga Falls, Fingira Rock and also found singing in open *Protea/Faurea* montane grassland (Chire valley below Chowo), overall up to 2000 m – *FD-L*.

Cabanis's Bunting *Emberiza cabanisi*

**R.** Widespread in miombo woodland on the lower slopes (north and south-west) up to the upper limits of tall woodland, as near Chisanga Falls, Mbuzinandi (1980 m), near Fingira, but also comes up into *Protea/Faurea* wooded grassland, with two pairs established just below Chowo Rocks at 2150 m (*FD-L*).

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I am very grateful to many colleagues who have provided unpublished records; they cannot all be listed here but David Critchlow was particularly helpful, not only with his own observations but also in collating a number of Atlas records in the early 1990s. For comments on an advanced draft of the paper I owe special thanks to D.P. Critchlow, R.J. Dowsett and M. Dyer.

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**Appendix. Gazetteer of localities** (map square and coordinates, altitude in metres) with size of some forests; country is Malawi, unless otherwise stated:

1. *Within Nyika National Park:*

Locality	Square	Coordinates	Alt. (m)
Chelinda or Chilinda (Camp and Dam 1):	1033D2	10°35'S, 33°48'E	2270-2300
Chelinda Dam 2:	1033D2	10°35'S, 33°48'E	2270
Chelinda Dam 3:	1033D2	10°36'S, 33°48'E	2260
Chelinda bridge:	1033D2	10°40'S, 33°51'E	2220
Chelinda Hill:	1033D2	10°40'S, 33°52'E	2400
Chelinda stream:	1033D2	from Chelinda to Chelinda bridge	
Chelinda/Chitipa road junction:	1033D1	10°35'S, 33°42'E	2220
Chipome valley/stream:	1033B4	10°19'S, 33°47'-33°49'E	1400
Chisanga Falls (North Rukuru):	1033D1	10°32'S, 33°41'E	1600-1800
Chisimuka valley:	1033D1	10°43'S, 33°37'E	1700-1800
Chire stream (Zambia):	1033D1		c. 2100 to 1500
Chosi Rock:	1033D2	10°37'S, 33°46'E	2380
Chowo forest (Zambia, 90 ha):	1033D1	10°35'S, 33°41'E	2090-2200
Chowo Rocks (Zambia/Malawi):	1033D1	10°35'S, 33°42'E	2150-2220
Dembo bridge:	1033D2	10°34'S, 33°54'E	2300
Dembo stream:	1033D2		2300 to 1800
Domwe point:	1033B3	10°25'S, 33°44'E	2340
Fingira Rock:	1033D4	10°47'S, 33°46'E	2000-2050
Jalawe Rock:	1033B4	10°21'S, 33°47'E	c. 2100-2200
Jalawe valley:	1033B4	10°20'S, 33°47'E	c. 1500
Juniper Forest (9 ha):	1033D2	10°45'S, 33°53'E	2130-2220
Kalambwe:	1033D2	10°40'S, 33°45'E	2240
Kaperekezi (gate):	1033D1	10°32'S, 33°39'E	1500

Locality	Square	Coordinates	Alt. (m)
Kasaramba point:	1033D2	10°44'S, 33°58'E	2350
Kasoma forest (Zambia):	1033D1	10°37'S, 33°40'E	1980-2050
Kaswerera stream, see Thazima			
Kasyaula forest (40 ha):	1033D1	10°37'S, 33°41'E	1980-2050
Katizi (= Mbululuji stream):	1033D1	10°44'S, 33°43'E	1680
Kawozya Mtn:	1033B4	10°16'S, 33°50'E	2200
Lake Kaulime:	1033D2	10°34'S, 33°45'E	2350
Lusero (Luselo) forest:	1033D1	10°40'S, 33°38'E	1950
Luvini river, see Thazima			
Manyenjere forest (Zambia, 75 ha):	1033D1	10°35'S, 33°39'E	1970-2070
Mbululuji valley, see Katizi			
Mbuzinandi:	1033D2	10°44'S, 33°47'E	1980
“Mbuzinandi road”: from old gate (1033D1) to Mbuzinandi (1033D2)			
Mpanda Mtn:	1033B2	10°12'S, 33°48'E	2017
Mpopoti turn-off:	1033D2	10°31'S, 33°52'E	2350
Mwanda Mtn (Zambia):	1033D1	10°42'S, 33°34'E	2150
Mwenembwe (Mwenembe) forest (1350 ha):	1033D2	10°42'S, 33°59'E	2000-2350
Nganda Hill:	1033B4	10°27'S, 33°52'E	2606
Nkhonjera (Nkhonjela) Hill:	1033D4	10°54'S, 33°48'E	2200
North Rukuru River: from 1033B4 (source west of Nganda) through 1033B3, 1033D1, north to 1033B1-2			2350 to <i>c.</i> 1000
North Rumpi (Rumpi) stream:	1033B4/1033D2/1034C1		2400 to 1400
Nyamkhowa (Nyankhowa) Mtn:	1034C1	10°34'S, 34°04'E	1700-2050
Old gate:	1033D1	10°43'S, 33°39'E	1930
Ruwile stream:	1034A3	10°20'S, 34°02'E	700
Thazima (Tazima):	1033D3	10°50'S, 33°35'E	1600
Uledi:	1033B1/B2	10°10'S, 33°45'E	1000
Ulera:	1033D4	10°50'S, 33°48'E	1800
Ulozga valley:	1033B4	Tributary of the Chipome, not located precisely	
Vipiri Rock:	1033D2	10°40'S, 33°48'E	2300
Vitumbi forest (Vitumbi-Kasaramba block, 1300 ha):	1033D4	10°50'S, 33°56'E	2000
Wovwe valley:	1034A3	10°27'S, 34°01'-34°04'E	1500 to 1000
Zambian rest house:	1033D1	10°34'S, 33°42'E	2150
Zovochipolo: 1033D1 (area of forest patches between Zambian rest house and border road to Kaulime ridge)			2150-2250
Zungwara Falls (North Rukuru):	1033D1	10°31'S, 33°43'E	2000-2050

## 2. Localities outside Nyika N.P.:

Locality	Square	Coordinates	Alt. (m)
Gamba:	1033B3	10°28'S, 33°39'E	1500
Karonga:	0933D4	9°56'S, 33°56'E	474
Livingstonia:	1034C1	10°36'S, 34°06'E	1200
Nchenachena:	1034C3	10°45'S, 34°02'E	1200
Njakwa Gorge (Rumpi):	1133B2	11°02'S, 33°54'E	1100
Nthalire:	1033B3	10°21'S, 33°38'E	1300
Mwavumwe stream (Zambia):	1033D1	10°32'S, 33°37'E	1400

## Notes supplementary to The Birds of Malawi (2006)

by Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire

### INTRODUCTION

This article adds further details and sources of records (often unpublished) to “The Birds of Malawi” (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2006). Many observations come from the natural history notes presented in the local periodicals *Nyala* and *Vocifer*; some have been obtained directly from the observers; yet others come from the standard literature, but are given here in order to unclutter the presentation of the species accounts in the book. In the case of some rejected species, the reader will find here a more detailed account of the reasons for rejection than could be presented in the book.

A gazetteer of localities can be found in Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (2006). Names of observers are abbreviated as indicated below. Other standard abbreviations used are: N.P. (National Park), W.R. (Wildlife Reserve), F.R. (Forest Reserve), N.S. (Nature Sanctuary).

*JRA* (J.R. Alder), *TA* (T. Ashworth), *JDA* (J.D. Atkins), *SLA* (S.L. Atkins), *JA* (J. Auburn), *CBa* (C. Badger), *GB* (G. Baker), *MB* (M. Bamford), *PBn* & *JBn* (P. & J. Bannister), *KB* (K. Barnes), *MvBe* (M. van Beirs), *CWB* (C.W. Benson), *VB* (V. Blackwood), *PB* & *TB* (P. & T. Blignaut), *BB* (B. Bolnick), *NB* (N. Borrow), *RB* (R. Brayshaw), *SC* (S. Cameron), *AfWC* (African Waterfowl Census), *JC* (J. Chapman), *RC* (R. Chimwala), *DCh* (D. Chipino), *HC* (H. Chittenden), *K* & *MC* (K. & M. Claydon), *NC* (N. Cleere), *IC* (Mrs I. Cornelius), *C* & *SC* (C. & S. Coster), *DPC* (D.P. Critchlow), *JCr* (J. Crossley), *RCr* (R. Cruse), *ID* (I. Davidson), *DD* (D. Day), *K-DD* (K.-D. Dijkstra), *MGD* (M.G. Douglas), *RJD* (R.J. Dowsett), *FD-L* (Mrs F. Dowsett-Lemaire), *MD* (M. Dyer), *MPE* (M.P. Eddleston), *AE* (A. Elliot), *MIE* (M.I. Evans), *TF* & *SF* (T. & S. Ferrar), *LDCF* (L.D.C. Fishpool), *DF* (D. Foot), *JG* (J. Gilmore), *DFG* (D.F. Godwin), *MG* (M. Gore), *HG* (Mrs H. Gray), *RG* & *MG* (R. & M. Gray), *TAH* (T.A. Halliday), *JAH* & *DBH* (J.A. & Dale B. Hanmer), *JH* (J. Haugaard), *JBH* & *PEH* (J.B. & P.E. Heigham), *HH* (H. Hendriks), *GH* (G. Hildebrandt), *CHi* (C. Hill), *JHo* (J. Hough), *NDH* (N.D. Hunter), *CH* & *LH* (C. & L. Huxley), *K* & *MJ* (K. & M. Jewitt), *L* & *KJ-H* (L. & K. Johnston-Harris), *NJ-S* (N. Johnston-Stewart), *SJ* (S. Jones), *RJ* (R. Joqué), *FK* (F. Karcher), *RK* (R. Kelland), *RK-W* (R. Kellow-Webb), *JWK* (J.W. Killick), *LL* (L. Labuschagne), *ElaC*, *IlaC* & *TlaC* (E., I. & T. la Croix), *SL* (S. Lane), *AL* (A. Laycock), *JL* (J. Lee), *PML* (P.M. Leonard), *HL* (H. Lomosse), *KLo* (K. Longden), *KL* (K. Lorenz), *FL* (F. Luhanga), *DWKM* (D.W.K. Macpherson), *MM* (M. Mallalieu), *NM* (N. Mann), *FM* (F. Marks), *GM* (G. Martin), *WMc* (W. McClelland), *RDM* & *CM* (R.D. & C. Medland), *WM* (W. Mgoola), *DM* (D. Molesworth), *HM* (H. Msiska), *PM* (P. Murray), *RN* (R. Nyirenda), *TOO* (T.O. Osborne), *EP* (E. Paterson), *RBP* (R.B. Payne), *MP* (M. Petzold), *BP* (B. Pollard), *SP* (S. Porter), *M* & *TR* (M. & T. Roberts), *LR* (L. Roy), *MRO* (M. Royle), *PR* (P. Ryan), *JR* & *BAR* (J. & B.A. Ryder), *CAWS* (Central African Wilderness Safaris), *SS* (S. Said), *DSa* (D. Sargeant), *CS* (C. Saunders), *VS* (V. Scholaert), *TS* (T. Scholfield), *AJS* (A. Scott), *CSp* (C. Spottiswoode), *WSt* (W. Stark), *DS* (D. Stead), *WS* (W. Stephens), *PS* (P. Steyn), *PT* (P. Taylor), *RT* (R. Teuten), *PTh* (P. Theobald or Theobald, both spellings used in *Vocifer*), *AT* (A. Thompson), *ATh* (A. Thorneycroft), *JU* (J. Ulyett), *BW* (B. Walker), *AW* (A. Watson), *PW* (P. Watson), *JWh* (J. Whitelock), *MCBW* (M.C.B. Williams), *SW* (S. Wilde), *JGMW* (J.G.M. Wilson), *JHW* (J.H. Wilson), *JW* & *WW* (J. & W. Wilson), *NZ* (N. van Zalinge), *KvZ* (K. van Zegeren), *APZ* (A.P. Ziegler).

### SPECIES LIST

#### White-breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

The size of some Cormorant colonies on islands in Lake Malawi was given in an unpublished report by K.L.I. Campbell for the year 1979-80 as 2-2500 birds on Mumbo, 4800 on Boadzulu and 1860 on Namalenje (*per JGMW*); in 2000-2001 there were no nests at all on Mumbo (and a maximum of 496 birds counted), only 33 nests on Boadzulu (max. 1197 birds present) and 125 on Namalenje (max. 982 birds present) – K. Kuribayashi unpublished, *per JGMW*. The large Mbenje colony of the 1920s was also deserted by the time *JGMW* visited the island (1978).

A few hundred nests occupied in Liwonde N.P. 10-12 Aug. 1989 contained from two-four chicks (*FD-L* & *RJD*).

African Darter *Anhinga rufa*

*AE* reported 21 nests from Matope Marsh 23 Jul. 1987, containing young of all sizes.

White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*

Recent records of interest include 200 over Lake Chilwa, Jul. 1996 (*JGMW*); very few records on the Lake-shore (e.g. 15 off Boadzulu Resort (near Mangochi) in Jul.-Aug. 1992, *JG*).

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens*

A possible nesting attempt at Sucoma fish ponds in Aug. 1982 was seen by *DBH*, with some birds apparently carrying nest-building material upriver. A few nests were seen in Baobabs at James's Landing (Elephant Marsh) in Apr. 2002, one at least containing a chick (*TF* & *SF*). In Nsanje, most of the nesting trees were destroyed by Renamo rebels in 1990 (*TA in litt.*).

Common Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

The sound record from Liwonde N.P. is apparently from several individuals ("birds" heard booming, *JDA*), but another sound report from Makanjila (Nov. 1989) was later withdrawn by the observer.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

Recent records of the Palaearctic race include an adult female (dying), picked up at Lilongwe (*RDM*), 11 Feb. 1994, and one (reported, not clear on what evidence) at Nchalo 20 Dec. 1986 (*DBH*), which is the earliest date of arrival so far. One seen at Luwawa Dam (South Viphya, race unspecified) 31 Mar. 1992 (*GM*) is, at 1600 m, at the highest altitude known for the species.

Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii*

In 1993 reported as regular at puddles in Liwonde N.P. after the first rains in Nov. (*LL*). In the rains of 2001-02 it was seen regularly at seasonal ponds in Lengwe N.P. from Dec.-Apr. (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002).

One seen at Nchalo 29 Sep. 1984 (*DBH*) may be an early arrival.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

The largest concentrations reported are from Mpatsanjoka (109 emerging from roost, Nov. 1993) by *RDM* and Lake Chilwa (Chinguma), with 200 counted Dec. 2000 by *JGMW*. Numbers counted in the Shire Valley include at least 70 at Sucoma fish farm Dec. 1999 (*AfWC*) and 60 in Jan. 2000 (*C* & *SC*), also 93 flying to roost at Matope Marsh Jan. 2000 (*AfWC*).

White-backed Night Heron *Gorsachius leuconotus*

Definitely known to breed at Lilongwe N.S. (one pair on a nest 15 Feb. 1996 (*CAWS*), 8 Mar. 1997 (*JH*) and 29 Mar. 1998 (*JH*)); and in Liwonde N.P. (first recorded 26 Dec. 1990 (*RN*), with three chicks in a nest over a seasonal stream; a nest with N/2 24 Nov. 1991 (*NZ*); N/2 leaving nest by 19 Sep. 1993 (*RN*); a nest with N/2 Sep. 1995 (*SW*) at Mvuu Camp; nest occupied again at Mvuu Camp Feb. 1996 (*CAWS*); occupied nest at old Makanga Camp 11 Mar. 1999 (*RC* & *RB*).

The most southerly confirmed record is Kapichira Falls (Middle Shire) where seen Sep. 1997 (*JGMW*), but there is an undocumented Atlas record from 1635C1, presumably in the Chiromo area, where there is very little riparian forest left now. A solitary species, thus the report of a group of eight at Lake Kazuni (Mar.) is not accepted; the species has never been identified at Lake Kazuni, where dense riparian habitat is lacking.

Madagascar Squacco Heron *Ardeola idae*

After the discovery of the species in 1984, it was next observed at:

- Lifu Rice Scheme, Senga Bay in 1988 (two photographed 28 Aug., *RDM*);
- Lilongwe sewage ponds in 1989 (9 Sep.-13 Oct., one photographed, *RDM*) as well as in subsequent years (one mid-Jun. to 11 Nov. 1990, joined by another 8 Sep. to 23 Oct., this one beginning to moult into breeding dress in last two weeks of its stay (*RDM*, *MM*); one from 21 Jul. to 7 Oct. 1991 (*RDM*); one from 19 Apr. to 3 Oct. 1992, joined by another 3-4 Sep. (*RDM*, *JR*); one early Jun. to end Sep. 1993 (*RDM*, *JR*);
- Lengwe, one seen and photographed at Main Hide 6-8 Aug. 1992 (*C* & *LH*), one from 4 Aug. to 14 Oct.

1996 (*JH et al.*), two birds at Main Hide 16 Jul. 1997 (*HH*), one on 17 Aug. 1997 (*MB*), one 12 Aug. 2001 (*MB*); also one at Njati Pan 7-8 Oct. 2000 (*JGMW*);  
- one by a drying streambed in miombo in Namizimu, 27 Sep. 1993 (*RDM, CH*);  
- first recorded at Liwonde N.P. 28 Jul. 1996 (*RN*, without details), but again 3 Jun. 2001 (*SC*) and 15 Jul. 2001 (*KL*);  
- one at Nantipwili Dam (Blantyre) from 21 Sep. to 2 Nov. 1996 (*DPC, MD, JH et al.*), again from 1 Aug. to 12 Sep. 1998 (*JG*);  
- one photographed 18 Apr. 2002 in Elephant Marsh (James's Landing) by *TF & SF* (who showed us the photo) provides the earliest record for the country.  
There is also a possible record of one at Kawalazi Estate (dam), 12 Oct. 1992 (*NJ-S*), without description details.

#### Common Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

At high altitude, no more than three records of vagrants to the Chelinda dams (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006). The largest concentration reported is of up to 80 birds seen at Kuti Dambo, 16 Jan. 1993, in loose groups of up to 10 (*RDM*).

#### Rufous-bellied Heron *Ardeola rufiventris*

In 1986 was said to be common in the Salima area, but had become scarce by the early 1990s (*RDM*).

#### Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

The first breeding evidence in Malawi was obtained by *FD-L & RJD* at Ndenga on 2 Dec. 2000, where a large *Cordyla* in the middle of the village supported at least 15 nests (completed but apparently still empty); *JGMW* observed a few birds nest-building at Dedza on 13 Dec. (in *Eucalyptus*) and a few occupied nests at Linthipe in a large *Acacia albida* on 13 Dec. 2000. We checked this last tree on 12 Jan. 2002 and counted at least 20 occupied nests, with one-two large chicks per nest. All three colonies were in association with *Ardea melanocephala*.

#### Green-backed Heron *Butorides striata*

Three nests were found along 100 m of river-bank at Liwonde N.P., containing C/2 (1) and C/3 (2), laid in Jan.-Feb., with incubation period estimated at *c.* 20 days (*RN*).

#### Black Egret *Egretta ardesiaca*

Local concentrations on shores of Lake Chilwa often of *c.* 100 birds (e.g. northern shores, Nov. 1986, *JDA*; Kachulu, Dec. 2000, *RJD et al.*; Kachulu, Jan. 1994, *JGMW*), with a maximum of 232 counted at Kachulu Jan. 2001 (*JGMW*).

#### Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Largest concentrations of 58 birds, noted at Sucoma fish ponds Jul. 1999 and Jul. 2000, dropping to 27 in Jan. 2001 (*C & SC*).

#### Great White Egret *Egretta alba*

Largest concentrations noted at roost at Sucoma fish ponds, of 53 in Jul. 1999, 46 in Jul. 2000 and 41 in Jan. 2001 (*C & SC*); also *c.* 40 and 50 respectively at Lifu and Mpatsanjoka Jan. 1994 (*RDM*).

#### Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Breeds in association with *Ardea melanocephala*, in exotic trees (*Eucalyptus* at Limbe and Kachulu, *RJD, FD-L et al.*; introduced *Acacia* trees on Bunda Farm, *RDM*).

#### Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*

A number of colonies reported for the year 1993, some situated in native trees (*Acacia albida* at Linthipe), but most in exotics, especially *Eucalyptus* (Thyolo town; Domasi; 45 nests at Dedza, many with large nestlings 23 Sep.), also *Cedrella* (65 nests in five trees, Mchinji, many with nestlings 1 Sep.), introduced *Acacia* and *Cedrella* (76 nests at Lumbadzi, many with large nestlings, 14 Oct.), introduced *Acacia* (304 nests at Bunda Farm, many with large nestlings 2 Oct.) – *RDM et al.* Also a well-known colony in *Eucalyptus* at



Kachulu (Lake Chilwa), with 95 occupied nests there in Jan. 1994 (*JGMW*), and 341 birds present in Jan. 1995 (Wilson & van Zegeren 1998). At Sucoma a colony of 80 birds in native *Cordyla* and *Sterculia* in Jan. 2001 (*C & SC*). Also a colony at Ndenga in a large *Cordyla* in Dec. 2000 (*FD-L & RJD*).

In Nsanje in the 1950s colonies were established in *Borassus* palms and *Sterculia appendiculata* (Long 1960). See also under Cattle Egret above.

#### Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath*

Largest known concentration of 12 birds reported from Chinguma (eastern shore of Lake Chilwa) by *JGMW* 20 Dec. 2000.

#### Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*

Some wander to the high mountains, including Lichenya on Mount Mulanje (2 Jan. 2000, *JH*) and several times to dams on the Nyika Plateau, up to Lake Kaulime at 2350 m (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006).

#### Openbill Stork *Anastomus lamelligerus*

Movements over mountains include 58 birds flying north at *c.* 1800 m on the western edge of Mount Mulanje 25 Dec. 1986 (*RDM, JWK*); see also Dowsett-Lemaire (2006) for the Nyika.

#### Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

Nest sites documented since Benson & Benson (1977) include:

- Nkhoma Mtn (apparently feeding young 3 Aug. 1980, *MIE*, also occupied nest 1991-1993, *PB & TB*);
- Bunda Mtn (pair at nest, Jul. 1990, *C & LH*);
- Nkhangane Hill, Mwabvi (one bird on nest 9 Aug. 1997, *KvZ*), a hill where a pair was already reported in 1975 (Davies 1976), and still nesting there in 2001 (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002).

The site at Chongoni F.R. used in 1976 (documented in Ryder & Ryder 1977) was still in use in 1986 (nest-building 1 Jun., *RDM*) and in 1987 (two downy chicks 19 Jul., *JR*). The site in Kasungu N.P. used in 1976 (Ryder & Ryder 1977) was also still in use in 1997 (pair at nest in mid-Jun., Anon.).

Suspected to breed at Mamine Hill in the north-west corner of Majete W.R., with a pair perched on hill Apr. 2002 (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002).

A post-breeding concentration at Lifupa (Kasungu N.P.) "reached 18" on 26 Sep. 1987 (*MD, RDM, JR*).

#### Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii*

In years with fairly good observer coverage, first dates were: 2 Dec. 1986, 25 Nov. 1987, 9 Dec. 1988, 2 Dec. 1989, 14 Nov. 1990, 29 Nov. 1991, 29 Nov. 1992, 16 Oct. (two birds, Bunda Dam, *RDM*), otherwise from 24 Nov. 1993. Last dates were, respectively, late Feb. then 26 Apr. 1986 (report of a single at Nkhata Bay 11 May 1986, Anon., may be a sick bird), 28 Feb. 1987, late Feb. 1988, late Feb. 1989, ? 1990 (one (sick?) bird at Monkey Bay 3 Jun., *NZ*), mid-Feb. 1991, 26 Mar. 1992, 29 Feb. 1993. In 2001-02 in the Lower Shire Valley (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002), the species was seen on passage only, 17 Nov. (16 birds) and 25 Mar. (few).

The species winters most regularly in central Malawi (especially Chongoni-Linthipe dambos); largest numbers are *c.* 1500 feeding in dambo near Dedza 30 Dec. 1990 (*RDM*), and about the same number on southward passage over the Nyika 22 Dec. 1989 (*MB, RDM*); well over 500 grounded by low cloud on the high Nyika on 24 Jan. 1994 (*DPC*) are also worth noting.

#### Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*

In northern Malawi regular only in the South Rukuru Valley and adjacent Vwaza Marsh (several recent records, see also Benson 1942 and McShane & McShane-Caluzi 1988). The most northerly record (Lake Chiwondo, *MB*) is probably of a wanderer.

More widespread in southern Malawi, especially in the Shire Valley; all records of concentrations in Liwonde N.P. in 1996-97 are by *RN*.

#### White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

In recent decades, probable extreme dates of arrival and departure are 9 Oct. (1981, Nyika, five flying south, *FD-L & RJD*) and 20 Apr. (1990, Bvumbwe, "flock" flying over; 1994 near Rumphi). One flying over Mount

Mulanje 24 Dec. 1986 at c. 3000 m (Anon.) is an altitudinal record for the country.

It seems that the largest wintering concentration was observed in the Lifupa Dambo of Kasungu N.P. for a number of years, with c. 600 birds seen there on 25 Dec. 1975 (Ryder 1993); also over 100 in the "Lifupa area" mid-Dec. 1981 (NDH), "and this area has produced large numbers in previous years too". After 1981, however, the size of local flocks has rarely exceeded c. 50: over 100 Chileka Dambo Jan. 1982 (TAH), about 50 near Thondwe Farm (Zomba) 28 Nov. 1987 (PM), from 86 to 165 Thuchila Jan. 1988, over 50 in Liwonde N.P. late Dec. 1990, c. 50 roosting near Golomoti Jan. and 100+ north of Lilongwe Dec. 1991, 50 at Nkope 8 Feb. 1992, c. 150 over the Nyika on 16 Mar. 1996, 138 between Mtakataka and Monkey Bay 28 Feb. 1999, over 60 in Lengwe (eastern grassland) Jan. 2002.

Hanmer (1989c) gives details of a bird ringed as a nestling in West Germany (on 29 Jun. 1963) recovered injured near Lilongwe on 30 Jun. 1972; it was transferred to the Blantyre zoo where it was killed by a domestic dog on 8 Jul. 1983, aged 20 years.

#### Saddlebill *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*

In recent years, breeding has been suspected in Liwonde N.P.: adult with immature at Mvuu, 4 Aug. 1993 (NM); immature 18 Apr. 1999 (JH). Wanderers may turn up on the Lake-shore (Chilumba Point, 1981, PW), and the highlands (Zomba Mtn, a pair c. 1965, in Sweeney 1965; Nyika, at least three records: Dowsett-Lemaire 2006).

An unusual concentration of c. 30 at Nchalo 27 Sep. 1985 (JAH).

#### Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumeniferus*

Breeding colonies: the current status of the species in the Nsanje area needs investigating as most of the large nesting trees (also used by *Pelecanus rufescens*) were cut down by Renamo rebels in 1990 (TA in litt.). A few recent breeding records elsewhere in the Lower Shire: eight nesting at Ngabu 16 Jul. 1997 (JGMW), one nest (with chick) in Lengwe N.P. Oct. 1997 (KvZ & JH), four at nests in a Baobab at Sorgin 21 Jun. 1998 (AfWC).

Sizeable concentrations continue to be reported from the Shire Valley, including "large numbers" in Liwonde N.P. late Dec. 1990 (RN et al.), max. 35 at Nkope Feb.-Mar. 1992 (NZ), 76 in Liwonde N.P. Jan. 1993 (RN) and c. 40 along the Mangochi to Monkey Bay road 16 Mar. (LH), more than 80 in a field at Sucoma 29 May 1994 (MB); over 100 in Lengwe N.P. Jan. 2002 (RJD, FD-L).

#### Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

At Sucoma fish ponds, a maximum of 149 counted flying in to roost 10 Jul. 1999, as opposed to 40 in Jan. 1998, then 86 in Jul. 2000 and 49 in Jan. 2001 (C & SC). A roost of at least 80 birds in *Acacia albida* near Golomoti, 20 Mar. 1988 (RDM), is also worth reporting, in addition to published records of large flocks for Lake Chilwa and Ndindi Marsh.

#### Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Unpublished records of concentrations include: 100 flying upriver (Upper Shire) Sep. 1987 ("hundreds must roost in reedbeds in this part of the river"), over 200 at roost at Kachulu (Lake Chilwa), Oct. 1987 (RDM); 339 flying in to roost Liwonde N.P. Sep. 1992 (RDM); 146 Lake Chilwa 24 Jul. 1993 (KvZ); 1270 at Kachulu 19 Jan. 1997 (JGMW); also 956 Dec. 2000 at Chinguma (eastern shore of Lake Chilwa, JGMW) and at least a few hundred Kachulu Dec. 2000 (RJD et al.).

#### Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash*

Local concentrations include: 40 along the Shire in Liwonde N.P. 1 Oct. 1992 (RDM), c. 50 flying in to roost near Lake Malombe 24 Apr. 1993, which may represent about the resident population of Liwonde N.P. (RDM). Numbers at Lake Kazuni fluctuate from, e.g. 20 in Aug. 1993 (JR), 44 in Jul. 1995 (DF, but only one in Dec. 1995) to 59 in Aug. 1999 (Anon., but none in Jul.).

Only one recent breeding record: an occupied nest at Chirombo Bay 27 Dec. 1992, on a rocky islet (BW).

#### African Spoonbill *Platalea alba*

In addition to published records (Lake Chilwa), local concentrations of up to 24 (Lifupa, Mar. 1986, LR) and 27 (Nchalo, May 1986, VB) have been reported.

*Greater Flamingo Phoenicopterus roseus*

A flock of 43 of this species, resting by Lake Chiwondo with 130 *P. minor*, on 2 Aug. 1997, was disturbed by people (JGMW). This species or the next bred at Lake Chilwa in the mid-1980s (per JGMW).

*Lesser Flamingo Phoeniconaias minor*

Largest number reported which is definitely of this species is 130 resting by Lake Chiwondo on 2 Aug. 1997 (JGMW), in association with *P. roseus*; six immatures also seen in a mixed flock with 27 *P. roseus* at Mangochi Dec. 1987 (RDM). This or the previous species bred at Lake Chilwa in the mid-1980s (per JGMW).

*White-faced Tree Duck Dendrocygna viduata*

In addition to published records, large flocks have been reported from Salima wetlands, of c. 900 at Kuti in Aug. (1992), down to c. 200 Jan. and up to 714 Aug. 1993 (RDM); also several hundred Aug. 1995 in Liwonde N.P.

*White-backed Duck Thalassornis leuconotus*

Concentrations of up to 300-550 birds have been observed at Kuti ponds in Jul.-Aug. 1991-92 by RDM. Active courtship was seen there in a group of 41 on 4 Mar. 1989 (RDM); still reported breeding at a Blantyre dam in 1989 (cf. Benson & Benson 1977), with five young ones and four adults on 13 Aug. (MB).

*Egyptian Goose Alopochen aegyptiaca*

The largest groups have been observed in Vwaza Marsh, with 277 counted on 9 Jul. 1999 (118 at Lake Kazuni and 159 at Zwaro Pool, HM & WM), 63 and 161 respectively on 4 Aug. (DF). Also 120 at Lake Kazuni in Sep. 1992 (RDM), 189 in Aug. 1993 (JR).

*Spur-winged Goose Plectropterus gambensis*

Concentrations of over 100 birds have been noted as follows: 250+ at Lake Kazuni on 1 Oct. 1979 (Ryder 1993); 135 at Kuti 8 Aug. 1992 (RDM) and 100+ in a nearby dambo 23 Aug. (JR); 166 at Lifupa Dam 31 Oct. 1994 (JH); 483 at Chinguma (Lake Chilwa), 20 Dec. 2000 (JGMW).

*Knob-billed Duck Sarkidiornis melanotos*

Most common in the Shire Valley in the rains, but an unusual flock of c. 100 in Liwonde N.P. on 3 Aug. 1996 (RN).

*Pygmy Goose Nettapus auritus*

A female wandering to Mlunguzi Dam (Zomba Mtn), 16 Jan. 1977 (DM), at 1400 m is at the upper altitudinal limit for the species. Counts at Kuti Pond over three years vary from: c. 60 in Jan. 1991 to 30 in Jul., 12 in Jan. 1992 to 110 in Aug., 20 in Jan. 1993 to 73 in Aug. and c. 100 (with juveniles) in Nov., then 50 in Jan. 1994 (RDM).

*African Black Duck Anas sparsa*

Still noted as resident at some of Blantyre dams in the 1990s, such as Hynde and Nantipwili (in 1994, Anon.). On Mount Mulanje noted as high as 2040 m at pools and streams (NDH et al., 1980).

*Yellow-billed Duck Anas undulata*

Very rare in the Shire Valley, with very few records in 1634B2 & B4, 1635A3 over the years, usually of singles or two-three birds with other species, on the banks of the Shire (DBH).

Readily breeds at artificial ponds such as Bunda Dam (e.g. Mar. 1978, JC) and Lilongwe sewage ponds (Jan. 1988, Apr. 1993, RDM). Seen at the new Mpira Dam (near Ntcheu) in Feb. 1988, only two months after the dam was flooded (RK-W).

Numbers may fluctuate seasonally, as observed at Lilongwe sewage ponds over the years: in 1988-1994, maxima of 30-40 in Oct., up to 54 in Aug. (1993), with lower numbers in the rains (RDM). Similarly at Bunda Dam, "large numbers" present Aug.-Sep. 1981 (MGD), in 1994 up to 40 in Jun. (RDM).

*Pintail Anas acuta*

After the first observation of the species in Malawi (in 1980), a flock of c. 40 was seen at the same locality

(Mpatsanjoka) on 21 Feb. 1982 (*MCBW*). Then two males at northern end of Lake Chilwa 9 Jan. 1992 (*JGMW*), a female at Bunda Dam 28 Dec. 1992 and later at Lilongwe sewage ponds 1-3 Jan. 1993 (*RDM, JR*).

#### Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*

In the years 1989-1994, numbers recorded at Lilongwe sewage ponds showed a peak of 200-270 in the rains (Oct.-Mar.), and a low normally in May-Jun. (*RDM*).

#### Hottentot Teal *Anas hottentota*

Small groups visit Lilongwe sewage ponds in some years, e.g. 84 in Feb. 1992 (66 in Mar.), 61 in Mar. 1993, up to 107 Feb.-Mar. 1994, very few or none in the dry season (*RDM*).

#### Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Extreme dates of presence have been somewhat extended since Benson & Benson (1977), being 1 Nov. (Liwonde N.P. in 1992, *RN*) and 27 Mar. (Kasinthula in 1983, *WS*); an interesting report of 15-20 in eclipse plumage at Kasinthula late Jan. 1981, starting to moult into breeding dress in mid-Feb., still present on 21 Mar. (17 birds) and 22 Mar. (14: eight males and six females), by *JHo & WS*.

#### African Cuckoo Hawk *Aviceda cuculoides*

Reliable upper altitudinal limits for the species are around 1450-1500 m: Ntchisi Mtn at c. 1440 m (Benson 1940-41), and Gamba (near Nthalire) at 1500 m (*DPC*). Few recent breeding records, of "young juveniles" 27 Mar. 1993 at Ngara (Lake-shore) (*RDM, NJ-S*) and at Kamuzu Academy 12 Apr. onwards (*JA*); a dependent juvenile fed early Jun. 1994, Kamuzu Academy (*JA*).

#### Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*

Extreme dates are: 2 Oct. 1994 (Dzalanyama, *RDM*), followed by 20 Oct. 1984 (Nkhata Bay, *ID*), and 30 Apr. 1984 (Zomba Mtn, *JDA*). One seen 31 Aug. 1986 (Nkhudzi Bay, *JDA & NJ-S*) may have been over-summering.

#### Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus*

There are recent records from throughout the Shire Valley (from Liwonde N.P. to the Chiromo area), except for the Nsanje area (Long 1967), poorly prospected in recent decades; it was already recorded from Chiromo by Percival (1902).

In addition to published records on feeding behaviour, one was seen hunting (unsuccessfully) *Apus caffer* at Kawalazi, Oct. 1992 (*NJ-S*).

The one clutch indicated for Sep. in Benson & Benson (1977) is instead mentioned under Nov. in Benson (1953) and is indeed based on a Nov. clutch collected at Zomba by Roberts (1924).

In Blantyre (St Michael's Mission) the same Eucalyptus tree was used for nesting from 1989-94 until the tree was felled (*MB, PTh*).

#### Eurasian Black Kite *Milvus m. migrans*

Seriously under-recorded in Malawi: probably regular over the Nyika (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006); up to 30 wintering in the Lilongwe area Dec. 1988-Feb. 1989 (*RDM*, from 9th Dec.); also noted at Chileka (*TAH*, Jan.) and southern shore of Lake Chilwa (*RDM*, Dec.). A flock of 22 flying south over Lilongwe on 17 Nov. 1991 (*RDM*) was not identified racially but is more likely (from date and number) *migrans*.

A record of 82 soaring over Lilongwe 17 Dec. 1995 appears doubtful, as well as that of a pair "resident" from Jul.-Dec. 1996 in Blantyre.

#### Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus migrans parasitus*

Three recent aseasonal records as follows: singles at Nchalo 14 Jun. 1984 (*MRO*), in Liwonde N.P. 30 Jun. 1985 (*JDA*), and Nyika 17 Jun. 1991 (Anon.).

We noticed a sharp population decrease of this species between our visits of 1989 and 2000-02, with (for instance), only one bird seen from the road (Lilongwe to Zomba) 24 Oct. 2001, and still only one seen from the road (Blantyre to Lilongwe) 11 Jan. 2002. Very few in the Shire reserves in 2001-02 (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002).

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*

A frequent visitor to high-altitude mountains, stopping by dams on the Nyika (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006), Mlunguzi Dam and trout ponds on Zomba Mtn (Garcia 1976 and later records), or just flying over (Nyika, Dedza, Mulanje Mts).

Notes on feeding behaviour include: one taking lung-fish *Protopterus annectens* in a Lengwe water-hole (Oct. 1985, *LR*), *c.* eight on ground feeding on termites in Liwonde N.P. (Dec. 1990, *SL*), several raiding poultry (Jun. 1990, *NZ*), an adult taking a *Lamprotornis mevesii* (Sep. 1992, *LL*) and another feeding on an Impala carcass, in Liwonde N.P. (Oct. 1992, *RN*), an adult taking a juvenile *Hirundo smithii* (Sep.) and *Actophilornis africanus* (Oct. 1993, *LL*) in Liwonde N.P.

Campbell (1979, in *Nyala* 1981, 7: 49) saw aggregations of 20 or more individuals around fishing vessels on Lake Malawi or scavenging from *Phalacrocorax carbo*, and a group of 33 on land; on 9 Jan. 1993 *RN* counted 24 individuals along the Shire within Liwonde N.P.

Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis*

There are recent reports from all along the Lake-shore, from Nkhotakota north to the Songwe R. (*RDM*), as well as from the Shire Highlands. Noted breeding at Blantyre (Nantipwili) in 1996 (*JG*), and still breeding at Zomba in 2001 (*JGMW*). In addition to Nyirenda's (1997) observations on feeding habits, there is a report of one eating snails near Zomba Jan.-Feb. 1984 (*PM*).

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*

Has bred in forest on Chipata Mtn (occupied nest May 1993, *JA*) and Nyika (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006). Up to a dozen seen in the vicinity of Rumphu slaughter-house in the 1980s (*FD-L*, *RJD*), with good numbers still reported in the north in 1993 (six near Kaporo, four at Lake Chiwondo, eight at Lifupa, *RDM*, *NJ-S*). But it has become very scarce in the Shire Valley, with few recent reports in Lengwe, e.g. in 1995 (one Oct., *JH*) and 2002 (four in Dec., *AW*).

(African) White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*

An exceptional gathering of 69 individuals feeding on a Hippopotamus carcass in Vwaza Marsh, Jan. 1993 (*JR*). Numbers in Lengwe N.P. are normally in the low twenties, with exceptionally 38 counted on 1 Nov. 2003 (*RCr*). In Liwonde N.P. considered common in the 1970s and 1980s (roost of 30 birds noted Oct. 1988, and also recorded breeding, *RN*), but has become scarce in the 1990s (*JH in litt.*) for no obvious reasons. One pair nested in Lengwe N.P. in the dry season of 2004, in a Baobab (*PT*).

Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotus*

The only breeding record in Malawi is from Kasungu N.P., lower Lingadzi Valley, with N/1 Aug. 1980 (*MIE et al.*). Much rarer in the small game reserves of the south: first reported from Liwonde N.P. in 1987 (two birds, *SL*) and Lengwe N.P. in 1979 (*JBH et al.*) with few records since, also a single observation in Mwabvi W.R. in 1975 (E.F.J. Garcia *in litt.*) and Dzalanyama F.R. in 1981 (*MIE in litt.*).

White-headed Vulture *Trionoceps occipitalis*

Breeds in a wide range of habitats, from *Acacia* savanna in Lengwe N.P. in the Lower Shire (nest situated in a Baobab, Aug. 1989, *JDA*) to montane forest/grassland mosaic on the Nyika Plateau (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006).

Western Banded Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinerascens*

Scarce on the central plateau, and few records in the Lilongwe-Dzalanyama area Jun.-Sep. (*RDM*) suggest it is merely a winter visitor there.

Gymnogene *Polyboroides typus*

Sometimes nests commensally, as in palm trees in Mangochi (Sep. 1992, *WSI*).

Eurasian Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Only one record from the Lower Shire Valley, Kasinthula (9 Mar. 1996, *JH*). Extreme dates of arrival and departure are 10 Oct. 1993 (two near Nathenje, *JR*; otherwise 15 Oct. 1989, a male at Chintheche, *PS*) and 1 Apr. 1991 (Lilongwe, *MM*).

African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus*

An interesting record of a group of 10 leaving roost in a dambo near Mchinji, 27 Feb. 1993 (MM).

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*

Extreme dates of arrival and departure are 8 Oct. 1948 (male, Viphya, Benson & Benson 1977) and 5 Apr. 1986 (single, Kasungu N.P., JDA).

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Extreme dates of arrival and departure are 18 Oct. 1942 (male, Mangochi, Benson & Benson 1977) and 5 Apr. 1985 (Nyika, MD).

Black Goshawk *Accipiter melanoleucus*

Readily nests in *Eucalyptus* plantations (Chiradzulu: Benson & Benson 1947a; Ntchisi Mtn: RJD & FD-L, Jan. 1983) or roosts in them (Zomba Mtn: Garcia 1976).

Red-breasted Sparrowhawk *Accipiter rufiventris*

The southern limit of range is Kawandama, South Viphya (RJD & FD-L in 1982).

Little Sparrowhawk *Accipiter minullus*

The upper altitudinal limit of range is c. 1600 m, below the Jembya Plateau (RJD, 1982).

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Extreme dates of passage are (southward) 29 Sep. 1979 (single, Michiru, RJD *et al.*) and 3 Oct. 1980 (Nyika), with 27 flying south over Wilindi 5 Oct. 1982 (RJD & FD-L) also early, and (northward) 7 May 1989 (surprisingly still "large passage", Chikwawa, JDA). One seen flying south over Lilongwe 5 Aug. 1989 (RDM) must be truly exceptional. Southward migration may involve some numbers (max. 160 on 22 Oct. 1981 near Salima, HL), but the species may be more numerous on northward passage, with over 260 over South Viphya 13 Feb. 1994 (JA), 660 near Namitete 27 Feb. 1993 (MM), 112 over the Nyika 12 Mar. 1980 (RJD).

[Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*

In eastern Africa not known for certain south of Kenya (a sight record from north-eastern Tanzania (in Britton 1980) is not included in Zimmerman *et al.* (1996), as considered doubtful (D.A. Turner *in litt.*). The occurrence of vagrants any further south than this remains unproven, and the single purported specimen collected in southern Africa (Natal) has been re-identified as an immature Jackal Buzzard *B. rufofuscus* (Dowsett & Kemp 1988). Two records of single birds seen in the Dowa Hills (25 Feb. 1989) and Malawi Hills (3 Dec. 1999), the first of which was photographed, have been attributed to possible *B. rufinus* by the observers, but descriptions and photograph are considered lacking in some details needed to support this tentative identification (R. Porter *in litt.*).]

Forest Buzzard *Buteo oreophilus*

Discovered in the Misuku Hills in 1982-83, with an immature seen in Mugesse 2 Oct. 1982 and adult calling in Wilindi 5 Mar. 1983 (RJD).

Wahlberg's Eagle *Aquila wahlbergi*

Most common in the miombo belt; breeding in the *Acacia* belt too, as at Nchalo (1987-88, DBH).

Dates of first arrival in years with fairly good observer coverage are: 1 Aug. 1981, 3 Aug. 1986, 13 Aug. 1987, 13 Aug. 1988, 9 Aug. 1989, 19 Aug. 1990, 3 Aug. 1992, 1 Sep. 1993, 19 Aug. 1994; last departure dates: 28 Apr. 1981, 24 Apr. 1988, 9 Apr. 1989, 25 Mar. 1990, "stragglers" 14 and 27 Apr. 1991, 29 Mar. 1992, 4 Apr. 1993. Outside those "normal" dates, a very early one 29 Jul. 1996 (RN in Liwonde N.P.) and 19 Jul. 1981 (MGD & NJ-S near Sombani Dambo, Phalombe); unusual dates are 14 May 1983 (VB, Majete), Jun. 1983 (near Chikwawa, DBH) and 25 Jun. 1984 (Chikwawa, DBH), suggesting perhaps some winter in the Lower Shire.

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*

Earliest arrival is of one 5 Oct. 1982 (Wilindi, RJD), but not usually recorded before Nov. Much more com-

mon on northward passage, numbers in excess of 30 passing daily as follows: over 60 on 13 Feb. 1987 (South Viphya, *RDM*), up to *c.* 200 on 23 Feb. 1981 (south-western Nyika, *RJD & FD-L*), at least 45 on 27 Feb. 1993 (Namitete, *MM*), 55 on 22 Mar. 1981 (south-western Nyika, *RJD*). Only a few Apr. records: singles on 2-3 Apr. (1981, Nyika, *RJD*), the 12th (1993, near Ntcheu, *RDM*) and on the 17th (2002, Lengwe, *RJD*). Some reports in Aug. and Sep. are probably misidentifications and have not been accepted.

#### Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*

Sight records that have been accepted include: dry country south of Rumphi (*RJD & FD-L*), Lilongwe area (*RDM*), Mangochi plain (*RDM*), Makanjila (*JDA*), north of Lake Chilwa (*RJD*), whereas there are several records from the Lower Shire (including by *RJD*).

#### Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*

Earliest arrival date is 2 Oct. 1994 (Dzalanyama, *RDM*) but not normally before Nov., and latest departure date 6 Apr. 1990 (Lilongwe, *RDM*).

#### Black Eagle *Aquila verreauxii*

Nest sites located in recent years include Cape Maclear (May 1992, *NZ*) and Nkhudzi Bay (occupied nest Jun. 1993, *WSt*; also pair copulating 3 Aug. 1987, *Anon.*). Has been seen flying around Sapitwa, Mount Mulanje at 3000 m (*NJ-S*, 1984). Of older nesting sites, the one at Njakwa Gorge found in the 1930s (Benson 1940-41) was still occupied in 1991 (pair with immature, Nov., *JR*).

Ranges widely across the country, e.g. Mchinji Hills (seen once Aug. 1991, *RDM*) and western border of Kasungu N.P. (*MD*, an immature seen once in dry season of 1987).

A report of seven birds seen near Mowa, Vwaza Marsh (Jan. 1993) is considered as most unlikely in this usually unsocial species (possible confusion with immature Bateleur?).

#### African Hawk Eagle *Hieraaetus spilogaster*

A possible record of one soaring over Mount Mulanje (3000 m), but *H. ayresii* perhaps more likely. Has been found nesting in *Eucalyptus* plantation on Michiru Mtn (two nestlings Jun. 1994), the tree was cut down by forest guards and the contents destroyed (*JH*).

#### Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

Seen up to *c.* 2700 m over Mount Mulanje (single 24 Dec. 1986, *RDM*). Earliest arrival date is 29 Sep. 1988 (*RDM*, pale phase), and latest northward passage 28 Mar. 1993 (pale phase, Lake Chiwondo, *RDM*). Winter records of singles on 24 Aug. 1990 (Liwonde N.P.) and 28 Aug. 1990 (Lengwe N.P., both by *ID*), and one near Kasungu (Kamuzu Academy) 22 May 1994 (*JA*). Largest number reported flying over in a day is seven on 13 Mar. 1980 (south-western Nyika, five in dark phase and two pale ones, *RJD*).

#### Ayres's Hawk Eagle *Hieraaetus ayresii*

One seen feeding on *Streptopelia semitorquata*, Mchinji F.R., Aug. 1991 (*RDM*).

#### Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Regularly recorded over-summering on the Shire River in Liwonde N.P. (three on 31 Jul. 1983 (*JGMW & MGD*), two immatures 7 Jun. 1986 (*JDA*), two in Jun.-Jul. 1996 (*RN*), up to four birds May 1997 and one-two in Jun. 1997, *RN*); also noted at Nchalo (Jun. 1984, *DBH*), Lifupa Dam (Kasungu N.P., Jul. 1988, *RDM*) and Nyika (11 Jun. 1974, *TOO*).

#### Secretary Bird *Sagittarius serpentarius*

*DBH* saw one-two birds about six times in the big Ngabu grassland area in the 1970s, Sep.-Oct., Dec., Feb.-Mar. and May.

#### Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*

Often 30 birds around south-western shores of Lake Chilwa in Nov.-Mar., e.g. groups of 25-34 birds seen in Dec.-Jan. of different years (Wilson & van Zegeren 1998); "large numbers" on telephone wires on the road to Lake Chilwa, 24 Jan. 1985 (*JDA*); 17 near Kachulu on 4 Dec. 2000 (*RJD et al.*); up to 80 coming to a grass fire 18 Dec. 1998 at Likangala rice scheme (near Kachulu, *JGMW*). A roost of *c.* 1000 (or 1100) in Lilongwe

in Jan.-Feb. 2006, of which c. 5% *Falco amurensis* (KLo et al.).

#### Dickinson's Kestrel *Falco dickinsoni*

One was seen stealing a mouse from a *Melierax gabar*, near Golomoti (MIE, Jul. 1980). A rare visitor to the Nkhata Bay Lake-shore (a pair residing at Chombe Estate, Jan.-Feb. 1980, DFG).

#### Western Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*

Recent records include 21 Feb. 1980 (six at Dzalanyama, SLA), 6 Feb. 1987 (two males near Limbe, JDA), 23 Feb. 1991 (one male at Lilongwe Airport, MM & RDM), 19 Mar. 1991 (one, South Viphya, NJ-S), 13 Apr. (two birds including a female) and 15 Apr. 2002 (two males) at Lengwe and Sucoma (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002); also 18 Mar. 1996 at Thazima (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006).

#### Eastern Red-footed Falcon *Falco amurensis*

A large pre-migration roost was located in Lilongwe in mid-Feb. 2002, with several hundred present, peaking at c. 3500 birds in late Feb. and 2000+ in late Mar. (still some birds present on 5 Apr.); in 2003 only a few hundred were present (CS). An interesting record of four birds stoop-flushing small passerines from scrub at Ngabu in Feb. 1985 (DBH).

Extreme dates of passage are 14 Nov. 1995 (Nyika, DF, no numbers given) and 6-7 Apr. in several years (e.g. Johnston-Stewart 1977 (7th), RDM at Lilongwe in 1986 (6th) and 1990 (6th), Anon. in 1989 between Lilongwe and Dedza (7th), AW at Luwawa in 2003 (7th)). Also a flock of 20, "almost certainly this species", flying north at Nchalo at dawn on 2 May 1984 (JAH).

#### Red-necked Falcon *Falco chicquera*

An isolated recent record in the north-west (0933C2) is by DPC. The only nest known for Malawi is situated in a *Borassus* palm, at Chimpeni Estate near Zomba (KvZ, see also Wilson & van Zegeren 1998); JRA had already noted a pair in a *Borassus* at Chimpeni in Apr. 1979.

#### Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Extreme dates of arrival and departure that seem acceptable are 4 Oct. 1992 (JR) and 19 Apr. 1980 (Kumadzi, NJ-S), with 17 Apr. 1995 (Nchalo, JH) a close second. One observation on 18 Sep. 1995, Nyika, is considered unconfirmed. There have been several reports of very large flocks (hundreds) moving through, and up to 2000 birds (at Mzuzu in Mar.), which cannot be attributed to this species (but more likely to one of the Red-footed Falcons).

#### [African Hobby *Falco cuvierii*

Details of the first record submitted (Bunda Dam, Mar. 1981, published much later by Douglas (1989)) were examined by us as well as CWB (in 1981) and the record found unacceptable. Details of several subsequent sightings by single observers (Dzalanyama 1984, Liwonde N.P. 1985, 1987, 1988, 1990) are not available; more recent records (1994 from Nyika, 1995 including "six immatures" at Lake Kazuni!) are not supported by adequate descriptions or are improbable for other reasons. There remains the very possible sighting of one "hunting at high speed at dusk", 19 Feb. 1989 at Katete Farm near Lilongwe (RDM) for which details were submitted, but the possibility of *F. fasciinucha* cannot be completely excluded. A specimen from Mangochi originally identified in the British Museum as *F. cuvierii* was re-examined by CWB and re-identified as *F. fasciinucha*, and another collected at Mulanje (also identified as *F. cuvierii* in the BM) was later lost, but there is a description fitting *F. fasciinucha* rather than *F. cuvierii* (Benson 1960).]

#### [Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora*

There are a couple of sight records from Liwonde N.P. (15 Nov. 1994, 30 Nov. 1998), the first of which does not provide the necessary details for acceptance (in agreement with Auburn's (1995) comments); the second report appears more convincing but is cautiously considered no more than "possible" by the observer. The species remains on the list of those in need of confirmation.]

#### Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*

Details are not available for two reports of two birds in Liwonde N.P. (20 Oct. 1985, 15 Nov. 1987), as well as for another six apparently seen between Rumphu and Nyika N.P. on 11-12 Feb. 1994, moreover on an unexpected date.



Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus*

Laid in a nest of *Corvus albus* (C/2) Oct. 1986 in Blantyre, after having evicted the owners (K & MJ).

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

Observed up to 2800 m (Sapitwa) on Mount Mulanje (1984, Anon.).

Taita Falcon *Falco fasciinucha*

The only confirmed nest site (Kirk Range, discovered in 1977, occupied in 1978) was still occupied in May 1981 (DBH, WS *et al.*).

Shelley's Francolin *Francolinus shelleyi*

On Mount Mulanje recorded much higher than on the Nyika, up to 2700 m (Sapitwa in 1984, NJ-S). A brood of five chicks on Mount Mulanje (Sombani), 21 Aug. 1984 (NJ-S). Recently reported from mopane woodland in Liwonde N.P. (JGMW *in litt.*, 2005), where it must be rare.

Scaly Francolin *Francolinus squamatus*

At Mzuzu the species was discovered in patches of riparian forest at the Lunyangwa agricultural station in the 1980s at an altitude of *c.* 1300 m (ElaC & IlaC).

Harlequin Quail *Coturnix delegorguei*

Regularly observed (and breeding) at Nchalo in the Lower Shire, with earliest arrival 21 Oct. (1985, VB) or in Nov. At Lake Chilwa first noted also in Oct. (several pairs Oct. 1969: Schulten & Harrison 1975) and from Lengwe N.P. there is an early record on 12 Oct. 1996 (JH). Records outside the rainy season include: May-Jun. at Nchalo (three seen on 2 Jun. 1984 by VB, a late breeding record of N/8 newly hatched on 14 Jun. 1985, DBH), Aug. at Lake Chilwa (three pairs Aug. 1969, Schulten & Harrison 1975) and at Blantyre (seen twice Aug. 1994, Anon.); May on the Nyika (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006).

Crested Guineafowl *Guttera pucherani*

Reports from several Lake-shore forests are as follows: Nkuwadzi F.R. (forest guards in the 1980s and TlaC *in litt.*), Mzuma F.R. (forest guards in the 1980s), flocks of up to 30-50 birds in riparian forest at Mzenga and Kavuzi Estates (S. Wilson in 1989 *per IlaC*). Largest flocks seen at Lengwe are of 20 birds (on Link Road, 28 Jul. 1993, DF) and 11 at Main Hide 12 Oct. 1997 (Anon.).

Hottentot Buttonquail *Turnix hottentottus*

Specimens are from Karonga (Jul., Shelley & Sclater 1897), Bana (Nov., Belcher 1930), Mphunzi-Maonde (both Apr., Benson & Benson 1977), Zomba (Dec., Shelley 1894), Lake Chilwa (Apr., Benson & Benson 1948a; also Jun., Benson & Benson 1977). Benson (1953) also mentions Sep. for Zomba, but that seems to be in error for Dec. (the Whyte specimen mentioned by Shelley above). In addition, one bird was caught at night at Zomba on 4 May 1964 (Benson & Irwin 1967). Only two recent records, i.e. dambos in Upper Thyolo District (NJ-S, early 1980s) and rank grass in Lengwe on 6 Jan. 2002 (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). Reports from Dedza and Nyika Plateau (Nyala 1996, 19: 60, no observer's name) cannot be accepted without supporting detail.

Buff-spotted Flufftail *Sarothrura elegans*

One present and calling in a Lilongwe garden for several weeks up to at least 23 Mar. (1992, RDM *et al.*); also some records there in the 1980s, including Dec. 1982 (MGD) and Jan. 1989 (RDM *et al.*).

Red-chested Flufftail *Sarothrura rufa*

Surprisingly rare in S. Region, with recent records at Chileka Dambo (at least 10 birds heard Dec. 1985-Jan. 1986, JDA), Zomba Mtn (seen and heard Jan. 1986, NJ-S), in addition to published records for Lake Chilwa.

Streaky-breasted Flufftail *Sarothrura boehmi*

Extreme dates of recorded presence in the country are 20 Dec. (1992 at Kawalazi, NJ-S) and 14 Apr. (1979 in Lingadzi Dambo of Kasungu N.P., NDH).

*African Water Rail Rallus caerulescens*

Months of dated records in recent years include Oct. 1983 (Burn Dam at Blantyre, *JDA*); Aug. 1986 (with immature, Mpembe, *JDA & RDM*); Nov. 1986 (northern Lake-shore in 1034A1, *RJD*); Feb. and Apr. 1988 (near Lilongwe, *RDM*); pair copulating Nov. 1989 (Lilongwe, *RDM*); Jan. 1999 at Chintheche (*BP*); May 2002 Luwawa Dam (*WMC*), at the upper altitudinal limit for the species (1600 m).

*Corn Crake Crex crex*

Extreme dates of presence in Malawi are 5 Dec. 1982 (Nyika, *FD-L & RJD*) and 15 Apr. (a specimen collected near Chipoka, Benson 1940-41).

*African Crake Crecopsis egregia*

Just one record outside the normal months of Dec.-Apr.: one caught at night at Thyolo on the verandah of a house, on passage, on 7 Jun. 1978 (Hanmer *et al.* 1978). [This appears however as a bird netted at Nchalo in Hanmer (1998); the bird was indeed transported from Thyolo, ringed and released from Nchalo but not caught there originally.]

*Black Crake Amaurornis flavirostra*

The upper altitudinal limit for the species appears to be 1700 m at Kasitu Dam near Chikangawa, South Viphya (*FD-L & RJD*, Aug. 1980); occasionally encountered on the edge of sugar-cane at Sucoma (*DBH*).

*Baillon's Crake Porzana pusilla*

Only two recent records of the species: Namanja (north of Lake Chilwa, *RJD* in Nov. 2000) and Liwonde N.P. (Jun. 2001, *SC*).

*Spotted Crake Porzana porzana*

The very few recent records are from Mzuzu on the early date of 14 Nov. 1987 (wet dambo, *RDM*), Chileka Dambo 17 Jan. 1987 (*JDA & RDM*), Chileka again on 17 Jan. 1988 (*JDA & NJ-S*).

*Striped Crake Aenigmatolimnas marginalis*

The few recent records of this species include a male flushed at Kasungu Dam 25 Jan. 1988 (*FK*), one at Dwangwa (killed itself against a window at night) in Jan. 1990 (*JHW*). In 1993 *MM* located the species in dambos at Lilongwe Airport 23 Jan., Chileka Dambo 18 Feb., with one holding a territory at Bunda on 6-27 Mar. Caught at Lake Chilwa by fishermen in 1996 (about Mar., *JGMW*).

*Lesser Gallinule Porphyryula alleni*

The majority of specimens and sight records fall between Dec. and Apr. (Benson 1942, Benson 1947, Benson & Benson 1949, Benson & Benson 1977 (p. 251), Long 1960, Paget-Wilkes 1928, Schulten & Harrison 1975, van Zegeren & Wilson 1999, Wilson 1999). There is a sight record from Lake Chilwa on 16 Oct. 1992 (Anon., and no details); still in 1992 it was noted at Bunda Dam until 5 Apr. (*JR*), but clearly absent in the dry season. The other (few) records for Nov., May, Jul. and Aug. are as published. Several sightings of juveniles in Jan.-Feb., including one juvenile on 1 Feb. (Lilongwe), 10+ (some juveniles) at Kuti on 26 Jan. (*RDM*), two adults with two juveniles at Chirombo Dambo 23 Feb. (*NZ*), all in 1992. Six pairs with young on 4 Mar. 1984 at Burn Dam (Blantyre, *JDA*), and "breeding there by early Dec. 1984" (*JDA*), but without details.

*Common Moorhen Gallinula chloropus*

The upper altitudinal limit of range appears to be 1700 m at Kasitu Dam on the South Viphya (*FD-L & RJD*, Aug. 1980 and subsequently).

*Lesser Moorhen Gallinula angulata*

There is a recent record from a pool on the Kasitu River (in 1133B2), Mar. 1996 (*DF*), but surprisingly the species is still unreported from the nearby Nkhamanga Plain and Vwaza Marsh. Occasionally recorded from sugar-cane at Sucoma (*DBH*). Recent records include two in Nov.: 10 Nov. 1984 (dam near Limbe, *RDM*) and 11 Nov. 1995 (Liwonde N.P., *CHi* in Haugaard & Critchlow 1997); otherwise most records are from Dec. to Apr. (including adult and juvenile on 1 Jan. 1993 at Michiru dam, *MB*). All specimens were collected from Jan.-Apr. (see Benson 1951c, Benson 1952c, Benson & Benson 1948a, Harrison 1964). One immature seen

near Salima on 6 May 1983 is late (*RJD*). A Jun. breeding record (1986) has been withdrawn by the observer.

#### Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata*

Undergoes some movements, disappearing from some dams for periods (e.g. absent from Nantipwili for over a year, but appearing at Chikunda Dam at Michiru for the first time Feb. 1997 (*JH*)); at Bunda Dam in 1992 numbers fluctuated from eight in Jan. to 23 in Jul. (*RDM*).

#### Wattled Crane *Grus carunculatus*

In the Shire Valley it was last recorded in Oct. 1972 (a pair seen near Bangula by *DBH*). Singles or pairs were seen occasionally on the South Viphya dambos in the 1970s (*IC*), and also in neighbouring areas, especially Mzuzu Airport and environs (several occasions in the 1980s, including pair flying to roost, 15 Nov. 1987 (*RDM*); one on 3 Feb. 1988 at the airport, *TS*). At Chintheche one was seen on passage in Dec. 1977 (*RJ*). A pair spent several months at Kanyimbi Dambo (near Nathenje), Feb.-May 1993 (*MM et al.*).

#### Southern Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum*

East and south of Bembeke (Dedza), very few recent records in southern Malawi, as follows: pair near Balaka in Dec. 1987 (Anon.); pair in floodplain south of Mvuu, Liwonde N.P., Feb. 1996 (*NM*) and pair flying past Mvuu, 6 Dec. 1997 (*CBA*); three birds at Chileka Dambo Feb. 1982 (*TAH*); one on the south-western shore of Lake Chilwa 16 Dec. 2003 (*AT*).

Up to a dozen birds counted at Mpatsanjoka Dambo in 1992 (*RDM*); largest concentrations noted at Kanyimbi Dambo (near Nathenje) of 23 birds in Feb.-Mar. 1993 (*RDM et al.*), and on Dwangwa Estate of 16 birds in the cane fields on 4 Jul. 1993 (*J & WW*).

It was common at Limphasa Dambo in 1975-80 and "young seen" (*DFG*). There is indication of breeding in Kasungu N.P.: two adults and two immatures seen in the lower Lingadzi valley on 2 Aug. 1980 (*BAR et al.*); and a pair with immature was seen in Njakwa Gorge 8 Jun. 1992 (*DF*) – coming perhaps from the adjacent Nkhamanga Plain.

#### Denham's Bustard *Neotis denhami*

A record of a wanderer in maize fields near Ntchisi at c. 1350 m alt., 31 Dec. 1989 (*JHW*).

Up to six seen together on the South Viphya Plateau, Aug. 1980 (*MIE*) and Jan. 1981 (*BAR & JR*), and confirmed breeding there on 24 Dec. 1982 (very small chick with adult, *RJD & FD-L*).

#### African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*

One record of a wanderer at Kasitu Dam (Chikangawa, 1700 m) on 25 May 1991 (*MM*).

#### Lesser Jacana *Microparra capensis*

Has bred at Lifupa Dam (Kasungu N.P.): adult with half-grown chick on 15 Jun. 1996 (Anon.).

#### Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

The largest concentration reported in the north is 77, from Lake Chiwondo (Karonga) on 2 Aug. 1997 (*JGMW*).

#### Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Large concentrations have been seen in recent years at the mouth of the Dwangwa River (c. 50 on 14 Dec. 1997, *SC, CHi & JH*) and on the Shire River in Liwonde N.P. (34 on 25 Aug. 1993 (*NM*) and 51 on 27 Dec. 1998, *DCh & JH*).

#### Water Dikkop *Burhinus vermiculatus*

Rather local in the north of Malawi, including on the South Rukuru River (in 1133A2: *SP*). One turned up at Lilongwe sewage ponds on 13-20 Feb. 1988 (*RDM*), and a group of eight in a field near Lilongwe Airport on 17 Dec. 1989 (*RDM*) is even more unusual. Largest flock reported is of 11 birds on the Shire, Liwonde N.P., on 1 Oct. 1992 (*RN*).

#### Spotted Dikkop *Burhinus capensis*

Observed in the rains on the Nyika (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006) and also at lower altitudes: in the Shire Valley,

one in Liwonde N.P. (15 Mar. 1993, *LH*) and in Lengwe N.P. (4 Mar. 1985, *JDA*); five in Kasungu N.P. (at night) on 30 Mar. 2002 (*CS*).

#### Bronze-winged Courser *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus*

Largest numbers observed in the early dry season, with *c.* 100 counted on the road from Golomoti to Monkey Bay on 23 May 1986 and 17 in same area on 20 Jun. (*BW*), in addition to small numbers reported from numerous localities from 17-23 May (*per RDM*). Similarly in 1989, up to three from numerous locations from 14 May to 30 Jul. Records in the rainy season include Liwonde N.P. (where recorded all year (even "common" Nov. to Apr. and Jul. 1995-96 according to *RN*), a vagrant on the Nyika Plateau in Jan. (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006), one near Thyolo on 1 Jan. 1985 (*NJ-S*), 31 Jan. 1993 at Dwangwa Estate (*JW & WW*), one in a Blantyre garden on 18 Jan. 1997 (*JL*).

#### [Three-banded Courser *Rhinoptilus cinctus*

An Afrotropical species of relatively open and low-lying, dry woodland from south-central Africa to Eritrea. From its distribution and habitat preferences in Zambia (Dowsett et al. in prep.), Zimbabwe (Tree in Harrison et al. 1997) and elsewhere it should not be expected to occur in Malawi except very marginally. One bird possibly of this species was seen on a gravel road on the South Viphya Plateau (1133D4, *c.* 1600 m) on 29 Dec. 1985 (Medland 1989a), but full frontal views could not be obtained and from a back view confusion with juvenile *R. chalcopterus* cannot be entirely excluded; the altitude and habitat are also most unusual for this species. Rather more likely is a bird apparently heard in Vwaza Marsh (in mopane) by APZ in the dry season of 1981; this requires confirmation and further prospection of the area is desirable.]

#### Temminck's Courser *Cursorius temminckii*

Observations at the height of the rains include a small flock of 10 (with immatures) on 21 Jan. 1976 at Kumadzi (where also recorded in Feb.-Mar.: Johnston-Stewart 1977), 20 at Chileka Dambo on 11 Feb. 1989 (still 10 on the 18th, *MB*) and over 50 near Chileka on 7 Mar. 1982 (*NJ-S et al.*).

#### Common Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*

Nesting colonies documented in the past include Lake Nderendere in Vwaza Marsh (Benson 1942, Gray 1945), Bana (Benson & Benson 1977), Nchalo (Hanmer 1988), Ngabu (Benson 1951c), Chiromo (Belcher 1930) and Lake Chilwa (Benson 1953, Schulten & Harrison 1975). More recently a nesting colony of *c.* 20 pairs in Salima wetlands (Lifu, Oct. 1988), with egg-laying back-dated to Aug. (*RDM*). The Salima wetlands harbour large numbers seasonally, up to 500 on 4 Aug. 1985 and (post-breeding) from 450-500 in Jan. 1991-92 to *c.* 1200 in Jan. 1993, and 2000 in Jan. 1989 (*RDM*). A claimed breeding record of five pairs on the northern Chilwa plain (Nov. 1997) has been withdrawn by the observer.

#### Black-winged Pratincole *Glareola nordmanni*

About 20 were observed at Kasinthula on 13 Mar. 1982 by *JBH & PEH* (*Nyala* 1984, 10: 46): the birds circled overhead within 15 m and the black under-wings were seen clearly. They were slowly moving northwards up the Shire Valley, hunting as they flew.

#### Rock Pratincole *Glareola nuchalis*

An unusual record of a wanderer resting on the back of a Hippopotamus at Lake Kazuni, 19 Sep. 1992 (*NJ-S*). A passage bird noted on 31 Jul. 1997 at Kamuzu Dam (Lilongwe, *KvZ*); singles resting on Lake-shore rock, Madzidzi Bay on 1 Nov. 1992 (*RDM*) and nearby Namaso Bay 26 Dec. 1992 (*MRO*). At breeding sites on the Shire, the earliest return was noted on 6 Aug. 1986 (a few km south of Mpatamanga, Anon.); two post-breeding flocks of 22 and *c.* 60 birds at Shire bridge (south of Matope) on 5 Feb. 1986 (*WS*).

#### Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Concentrations on southward passage include *c.* 30 south of Lake Chilwa 20 Sep. 1987 (Anon.), up to 20 at Bana 11 Oct. 1992 (*J & WW*); wintering flocks of 25 at Lifu on 22 Jan. 1989, *c.* 20 on 26 Jan. 1992, 50 on 16 Jan. 1993 and 32 on 30 Jan. 1994 (*RDM*); with smaller numbers in the Lower Shire (e.g. *c.* 12 late Dec. 1986 to late Jan. 1987 at Sucoma (*DBH*)). Few birds on northward passage, including four on 4 Mar. 1989 (Lifu), single on 18 Mar. 1990 (Lifu) – *RDM*.

*Kittlitz's Plover Charadrius pecuarius*

Breeds commonly at Nchalo airstrip (*DBH*, who provided 74 dated nesting records) and in ploughed canefields (Dwangwa Estate, *JW & WW*).

*Three-banded Plover Charadrius tricollaris*

In 1988, 1992 and 1994 at least numbers fluctuated seasonally at Lilongwe (Lumbadzi) sewage ponds, reaching a peak of 17 birds on 3 May and 18 on 6 Jun. 1994 (*RDM*). A maximum of 24 at Bunda Dam on 26 Jul. 1992 but only one in Dec. (*RDM*).

*White-fronted Sand Plover Charadrius marginatus*

Uncommon away from the Lake-shore. First observed on the Shire River in Oct. 1986, with at least five seen on sandbars 5 km north of Chikwawa (*JDA & NJ-S*), and four-five seen at two places at Nchalo from Nov. 1986 to Jan. 1987 (dried mud on edge of wet areas, *DBH*). Occasional visitor to artificial ponds on the plateau (one-four birds seen at Lilongwe sewage ponds, Jan.-Apr. 1986, Jan.-Mar. 1987, Jan.-Feb. 1988, Apr. 1990, Jan. 1993, *RDM*); single at Kasungu Dam 7-8 Oct. 1987 (*FK*) is the only other high-altitude record, apart from Blantyre (as published in Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2006).

*Caspian Plover Charadrius asiaticus*

The earliest arrival date in recent years is 22 Aug. 1993 at Dwangwa Estate ("numerous", *JW & WW*) and there is a record from Nkhotakota airstrip from 22 Aug. 1990 (*ID*); also two on 27 Aug. at Lifu and three on 28 Aug. at Mpatsanjoka in 1990, and one on 25 Aug. 1991 in Kasungu N.P. (*RDM & MM*). Regular in Sep.-Jan., no observations in Feb., and only one possible record of a single in Mar. (20 Mar. 1979) at Lake Chilwa, in short grassland. Away from Chileka Airport, largest flocks reported are of 65 birds at the southern end of Lake Chilwa (23 Sep. 1989, *JDA & NJ-S*), c. 30 in grassland on the Rusa River (15 Dec. 1987, *FK*), 20 at Mpatsanjoka Dambo (on 25 Sep. 1995 by *DF*, 12-17 in Oct. of various years).

*Greater Sand Plover Charadrius leschenaultii*

One of this species or Mongolian Plover *C. mongolus* was seen at the southern end of Lake Chilwa on 4 Oct. 1987 by *JDA & NJ-S*. One *C. leschenaultii* photographed on Palm Beach on 31 Dec. 1989 by *RDM* is the second confirmed record for the country.

*Grey Plover Pluvialis squatarola*

Extreme dates of presence (of singles) are 27 Aug. (1983 at Kasinthula, *JBH, NJ-S et al.*) and 22 Jan. (1989 at Lifu, *RDM*). Singles on 3 Sep. (1977, southern Lake-shore, *JC*), and on 4 Oct. (1987 at Mpatsanjoka, *RDM*) were still in partial breeding dress, but one at Bunda Dam on 11 Sep. 1977 was in winter plumage (*JC*). There are 22 recent dated records (since 1977) from late Aug. to Jan., mostly from the Lake-shore (Bana southwards) and Lake Chilwa, also Bunda and Blantyre dams; plus undated records from Vwaza Marsh, Namitete and Chiromo.

*Senegal Wattled Plover Vanellus senegallus*

Very few records from the Lower Shire (Nchalo and Kasinthula, *DBH*).

*White-crowned Plover Vanellus albiceps*

In addition to recently published records, reported on the Shire south to Nchalo (15 Jul. 1989, *DBH*, also near Chikwawa on 30 Sep. 1989 (*JDA*), where discovered in 1986). A vagrant on the South Rukuru River (Vwaza Marsh) on 27-28 Oct. 1990 (*NZ*).

*Blacksmith Plover Vanellus armatus*

Bred at Bunda Dam in 1977 (nest with C/2 and N/1 on 14 Aug., *JR*), also at Lilongwe (Lumbadzi) sewage ponds (N/2 on 3 Oct. 1986, pair had arrived early Jul. and left by 26 Oct., *RDM*). One large flock of 85 birds at Lake Kazuni on 4 Aug. 1999 (*DF*).

*Spur-winged Plover Vanellus spinosus*

First observed in Malawi in Liwonde N.P., 27 Jul. 1993 near Makanga, and present until the end of the year (*DF, RDM et al.*). Seen in Liwonde N.P. in all subsequent years, with a maximum of two adults and three

immatures on 8 Dec. 1996 (*JH et al.*), and at least two pairs, sometimes three, in 2002 (*AW*). At Dwangwa Estate from Dec. 1997 (as published); three adults by a pool at the southern end of Mpatsanjoka Dambo (1334D3) in Dec. 2002 (*AW*); one pair on the western shore of Lake Chilwa on 19 Jul. 2005 (*JGMW*); one bird at Lilongwe sewage ponds in Oct. 2005 (*ID*). Apparent hybridization, mixed pair with male *V. armatus*, observed in 1998 in Liwonde N.P. (*JH*). In Oct. 2000 *RB* (*per JH*) photographed a pair at its nest "with chicks".

#### Lesser Black-winged Plover *Vanellus lugubris*

Post-breeding flocks of notable size include *c.* 20 birds in Kasungu N.P. (airfield) on 20 Dec. 1991 (*MM*), 36 in Liwonde N.P. on 25 Jan. 1996 (*RN*) and 44 at Makanga airstrip (in Liwonde N.P.) on 5 Jan. 1999 (*JH et al.*), in addition to 50+ birds in Lengwe N.P. in late 1996 and up to 21 and 35+ in Dec.2001-Jan. 2002 (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). Important pre-breeding flocks roosting in cut sugar-cane at Sucoma from May-Sep. 1988 (of 50+, *DBH, VB*).

#### Crowned Plover *Vanellus coronatus*

A single "recent" record of a vagrant in the north, at Lake Chiwondo near Karonga, *c.* 1982 (*MGD*). Two recent reports of post-breeding flocks as follows: 13 (with immatures) near Lilongwe on 17 Nov. 1985 (*RDM*), and 10 near Salima in Feb. 1999 (*JH*); also seven at Mpatsanjoka on 22 Apr. 1994 (*RDM*).

#### Long-toed Plover *Vanellus crassirostris*

One large concentration of *c.* 80 birds at Chisoni (Lake Chilwa) on 6 Mar. 1998, in loose family units, was seen by *KvZ*. An unusual observation (during a violent storm) of one on road near Thyolo, 8 Jan. 1980 (*NJ-S*).

#### Ethiopian Snipe *Gallinago nigripennis*

*MM* saw *c.* 25 in the upper Lumbadzi Dambo (Lilongwe Airport) on 19 Jul. 1992.

#### Great Snipe *Gallinago media*

The latest date in Malawi is 4 Apr. 1991 (Lilongwe Airport, *MM*). After Benson's (1953) early date of 22 Oct., the earliest in recent years is 4 Nov. (1993, Liwonde N.P., *LL*).

#### Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

*RDM* photographed one at Lifu, 22 Jan. 1989, only the second record for the country.

#### Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Five recent records of the species, of singles, as follows: Bunda Dam (14-28 Aug. 1977, *JC et al.*), Namitete (21-27 Oct. 1977, *DWKM*), near Chikwawa on the Shire (27 Oct. 1986, *JDA & NJ-S*), Lumbadzi sewage ponds (Lilongwe, 11-15 Oct. 1987, *MD & RDM*) and Liwonde N.P. (30 Oct. 1993, *RDM*).

#### Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Extreme dates of southward passage are 20 Aug. (1998 in Liwonde N.P., *JH*) and 30 Nov. (1993 at Chintcheche, *ID*). There are 10 dated (monthly) records in Benson & Benson (1977, and references therein), and another 17 since (but some "Atlas" records have not been dated).

#### Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Very few recent reports of this species, as follows: one at Lake Malombe 13 Nov. 1988 (*SP*); one at southern end of Lake Chilwa 23 Sep. 1989 (*JDA*) and two at northern end of Lake Chilwa 3 Nov. 1989 (*JGMW*); one at Lifupa Dam (Kasungu N.P.) 30 Oct. 1994 (*JH*); one at Senga Bay 1 Nov. 1997 (*BB*). Also a couple of Atlas records undated. One in Liwonde N.P. on 26 Sep. and 16 Oct. 1996 requires confirmation (Hauggaard & Critchlow 1997).

#### Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Three recent reports as follows: one at Namitete on 26 Oct. 1977 (*DWKM*), at Kasinthula on 21 Sep. 1986 (*NJ-S*; appears as one bird in *Vocifer* 1986, 2: 2, and as three birds in *Nyala* 1989, 13: 88), two at Chinguma, Lake Chilwa on 20 Dec. 2000 (*JGMW*).

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

The two reports of singles are by *ID* and *DD* (Kasinthula, 16 Dec. 1976) and *RDM* (near Mangochi, 14 Nov. 1984).

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

Extreme dates are: 5 Aug. 1984 at Sucoma (*DBH*), possibly as early as 31 Jul. 1996 (Liwonde N.P., *RN*); and 24 Apr. 1994 (*RDM*). One exceptional record in May (14 May 1972 at Lake Chilwa, Ryder 1993).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Earliest arrival date of 14 Aug. 1986 at Nchalo (Anon.) and latest departure date 13 Apr. 1991 at Lilongwe (Lumbadzi).

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Very limited over-summering in Malawi: in recent years only one Jun. observation (a highly unusual flock of 28 birds at Sucoma on 20 Jun. 1998 by *JH*); there are no other reports between 21 May (1986, Lumbadzi near Lilongwe, Anon.) and 9 Jul. (Laycock 1965).

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

Of 14 recent records, 12 are from Sep.-Dec. on southward passage, extreme dates 6 Sep. (1977 at Lake Chilwa, *JC*) and 10 Dec. (2000, Lilongwe, *JH*). In addition there is one on 1 Jan. (1982 at Kasinthula, *JR*), and one apparently on northward passage, 20 Mar. 1979 (Lake Chilwa, *DS*).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Earliest arrival date overall is 11 Jul. (2000 at Sucoma, *JH*) and latest departure 18 May (Long 1960). Lilongwe arrival dates (*RDM*) in the years 1987-1993 were: 27 Jul., 20 Aug., 2 Aug., 19 Aug., 21 Jul., 22 Jul., 28 Jul., and latest dates noted in 1986-1992: end Apr., 30 Apr., (no date in 1988), 14 Apr., 28 Apr., 7 May (1991). Similarly early dates on the high Nyika, 21 Jul. 1972 and 22 Jul. 1995 (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006).

From 20 to 40 birds noted at Limbe sewage ponds 24 Sep. to 30 Nov. 1985; at Lilongwe maximum of 26 on 2 Sep. 1988, 28 on 24 Sep. 1989, 21 on 2 Oct. 1990; 30+ at Limbe on 22 Jan. 1994; surprisingly 22 flying north at Monkey Bay on 28 Dec. 1992.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Extreme dates of southward passage are: 21 Aug. 1993 (Lifu, *RDM et al.*) and 26 Nov. (Laycock 1960). In addition to 13 recent dated records, there are a couple of undated Atlas records.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Extreme dates of 13 acceptable recent records are 11 Sep. 1986 (two on Nyika, Dyer 1987) and 14 Dec. 1997 (three at mouth of Dwangwa River, *JH et al.*). Reports from Jan. (two), Feb. and Mar. (one each) are considered doubtful. Maximum number noted is 12 at Sucoma, 13 Dec. 1987 (*JDA & MD*). On 12 Nov. 1988, one bird (seen at Ntcheu by *RDM*) was still moulting out of breeding dress.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Extreme dates of passage are 2 Aug. 1989 and 14 May 1992 (three birds), exceptionally once as late as 3 Jun. 1986 (all at Lilongwe, *RDM*). On southward passage numbers up to a few hundreds locally (e.g. *c.* 200+ to 250+ from Sep.-Nov. 1985 at Kasinthula, *c.* 150 Dec. 1986 at Sucoma, 121 at Lilongwe on 10 Dec. 2000); in Jan.-Feb. some flocks may number up to 50-60 birds (Lifu in Jan. 1989, Kasinthula in Feb. 1994), maximum of 30 anywhere in Mar. (4 Mar. 1989 at Lifu), with smaller numbers thereafter.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

In recent years not recorded before Aug. (earliest 5 Aug. 1984 at Sucoma, *DBH*). Few stay in Dec.-Jan. (maximum 11 at Limbe on 22 Jan. 1994, *MP*). Only two records in Feb. (10 Feb. 1985 at Sucoma, *JDA*; single at Lilongwe on 11 Feb. 1989), two in Apr. (10 at Kasinthula on 6 Apr. by *MB* and two at Lilongwe on 20 Apr. 1986) in addition to Laycock's (1965) from 3 Apr. Two specimens collected in Jun., as published.

*Phalarope Phalaropus* sp.

Two birds were photographed at Dwangwa Estate by *JW* & *WW* in Jan. 1993, either on the 3rd (as in *Nyala* 1995, 18: 58) or on the 31st (as in *Nyala* 1996, 19: 66). The photograph was seen at the time by *RDM* and was not clear enough to allow specific identification.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Arrives usually in Aug., earliest on 27 Jul. 1986 (one at Kasinthula, *JDA*). Last reports in May: 14 May 1972 (two at Lake Chilwa, *Ryder* 1993), 14 May 1992 (five still at Lilongwe), 2 May 1993 (one at Lilongwe). Largest flock reported of *c.* 250 at Lake Chilwa in Nov. 1971 (*Ryder* 1993).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Probably overlooked most years as it seems to occur largely off-shore on Lake Malawi. Thus in 1992 *AT* saw three adults off Nkhata Bay on 5 Mar., singles near Karonga on 9 Mar. and off Nkhotakota on 2 Apr., also a second-year individual off Karonga on 17 Jun. and Nkhotakota on 30 Jun. *MM* saw at least two near Likoma and Chisumulu Islands on 10 and 12 Dec. 1992. On 4 Jul. 1999 *JG* and *JH* counted 15 individuals between Sungu Spit (or Island) and Nkhotakota, of which eight were in adult plumage. Seen at Lake Chilwa on at least three occasions (Dec. 1960, Sep. 1994 (two adults): *Wilson* & *van Zegeren* 1998, and Dec. 2000 (two), *RJD* & *JGMW*). Also reported in Oct. (1981) at Nkhata Bay (*HL*). With other records in *Donnelly* (1994), it has by now been reported in all months except Aug., but not all "Atlas" records have been dated.

Grey-headed Gull *Larus cirrocephalus*

One recent report of large breeding numbers at Lake Chilwa by *RDM*, with over 1000 occupied nests on 5 Sep. 1994, south of Kachulu. Breeding colonies were also observed at Chilwa in the past, in 1924 (*Paget-Wilkes* 1928), and in the 1940s (in their hundreds, *Benson* & *Benson* 1947a, see also *Schulten* & *Harrison* 1975).

Largest non-breeding concentrations observed at southern end of Lake Malawi: *c.* 300 at Monkey Bay early Jan. 1989 (*BW*, and *c.* 150 at Nkhudzi Spit 22 Jul., *NZ*), 200 at Madzidzi Bay on 29 Sep. and 700 at Club Makolola on 10 Dec. 1991 (the latter with a large proportion of juveniles in moult, *RDM*), 570 at Nkhudzi Spit on 19 Jul. 1992 (*NZ*, also 140 on bank of Lake Malombe on 4 Dec., *RDM*). Also a flock of 700 at Lake Chilwa on 24 Jul. 1994 (*JGMW*).

Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica*

Observed north to Unaka Lagoon (one on 28 Dec. 1995, *JH*).

Numbers reported from southern end of Lake Malawi have increased in recent years: up to 240 on 30-31 Oct. 1993 from 26 on 21 Sep. (*Liwonde N.P.*, *RDM*) and still "many" on 20 Nov. (*LL*); 20 on 31 Aug. 1994 (*per RDM*); common again in Oct.-Dec. 1998, with a maximum of 73 birds on 18 Oct. (*JH*), and up to 20 at Club Makolola on 4-7 Nov. 1998 (*AJS*); in previous years, maximum of six seen (13 Nov. 1988 at Mvuu, *RDM*), one-three at various points Sep.-Oct. and Dec. 1991, one-two in Oct. 1992, one at Mpatsanjoka on 15 Sep. 1985 (*RDM*). Small numbers seen at Lake Chilwa in Aug. 1995, Oct. 1992, Dec. 1995 (*Wilson* & *van Zegeren* 1998), 23 Jan. 1994 (four at Kachulu, *JGMW*), 28 Jul. 1996 (*Anon.*, two at Kachulu), 26 Jul. 1997 (three), 4 Dec. 2000 (two at Kachulu, *RJD et al.*), 20 Dec. 2000 (one at Chinguma, *JGMW*). Thus most common in Sep.-Dec.; reports from other months include Jan. and Jul. as above for Lake Chilwa, also one on 29 Jul. 1998 in *Liwonde N.P.* (*JH*), two there on 23 Apr. and two on 15 Aug. 1999 (*JH*), one on 3 Jun. 2001 also in *Liwonde N.P.* (*SC*).

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

Reported monthly from Lake Chilwa, based on *Benson* & *Benson* (1977), *Wilson* & *van Zegeren* (1998), and also Jul. 1996 (several in breeding dress, *Anon.*), a few dozen at Kachulu on 4 Dec. 2000 (*RJD et al.*). Largest numbers reported from Lake Chilwa include "hundreds" on 17 Oct. 1992 (*JR*). Elsewhere, a maximum of *c.* 20 near Chiromo in the Elephant Marsh on 17 Aug. 1990 (*DSa*). Otherwise *Long* (1960, 1967) reported only a few from Chiromo and the Ndindi Marsh, and more recently a few have been observed along the Shire River (from *Liwonde N.P.* to Chiromo) at any time of year (Jul. 1985, Dec. 1986, Oct. 1988, Aug. 1990 (*Liwonde* and *Chiromo*), Aug. and Nov. 1993, Apr. 1994, Jun. 1996, Oct. 1998, Mar. 2002). It is not often seen away from Lake Chilwa and the Shire: thus single wanderer at Lake Kazuni, 24 Jul. 1995 (*JH*); six in breeding dress visiting Mpatsanjoka Dambo on 16 Jan. 1993 (*RDM*); 10+ at Unaka Lagoon on 28 Dec. 1995 (*JH*).



*White-winged Black Tern Chlidonias leucopterus*

In addition to published records for Lake Chilwa (14 May: Benson 1940-41, 25 Jun.: Benson & Benson 1948a), other "late" sightings include: one in full breeding dress on 14 May 1971, seven on 15 Jun. 1974 and 20+ on 3 Aug. 1975, all by Ryder (1993). Also three birds in the Elephant Marsh on 27 Jul. 1986 (VB).

Largest concentrations in recent years were reported from Lifu, with 1700 on 13 Jan. 1991 (MM & RDM), also 300 at Monkey Bay on 10 Jan. 1991 (BW & NZ). Otherwise up to 1000 at Bana (Mar., Benson & Benson 1977) and Lake Chilwa (Oct., Schulten & Harrison 1975).

*African Skimmer Rynchops flavirostris*

Breeding was suspected in or near Liwonde N.P. in 1994-1999, as flocks seen in Dec. contained c. 20-30% immatures (JH).

In 1984 large flocks appeared on the Shire near Nchalo in May-Jul. (VB); in 1985 there was a large flock on 19 Jan. 1985, then only small numbers until May when the species was numerous again (AL & DBH). In other years large flocks are normally recorded from Aug. to Nov. or Dec.: as in Aug.-Sep. at Nchalo from 1973-76, Aug.-Nov. 1977 upriver from Sucoma (DBH), c. 200 (with many immatures) at Chiromo on 9 Nov. 1981 (Hanmer 1989a), also c. 200 near the Mwanza confluence Aug.-Oct. 1986 (DBH), 100+ in the Elephant Marsh Aug. 1987 (Anon.), 200+ in Dec. 1994 in Liwonde N.P. (JH & SL, up to 400 according to local guards), up to 100 on 26 Aug. 1990 and 156 on 6 Sep. 1996 (ID), 146 in Nov. 1998 (NB) and 131 Dec. 1999 (JH). It is likely that similarly large flocks seen at Lake Chilwa (up to 140 in Jul. 1994 and 280 in Dec. 2000, JGMW) originate from the same stock.

Further north on the Lake-shore flocks of 30-40 have been reported, c. 35 north of Lifu in May 1992 (MR), a "resident" flock of 30-40 at Bana beach, Oct.-Dec. 1992 (J & WW).

*Double-banded Sandgrouse Pterocles bicinctus*

Seen regularly from 1975-1985 near Ngabu, drinking at the Nyakamba River in mornings and evenings in the dry season; also six pairs on the Ngabu airstrip on 9 Mar. (JBn & PBn). Not reported since.

*Bronze-naped Pigeon Columba delegorguei*

Last reported in Malawi (Thyolo Mtn) in 1993 (MvBe). The song was heard in Nov. (Benson 1945 as well as FD-L & RJD, Nov. 1983).

*Laughing Dove Streptopelia senegalensis*

Subject to local wandering on the central plateau, thus an "influx" at Kamuzu Academy near Kasungu on 3-5 Oct. 1992 (JA); status highly variable from month to month in Lilongwe 1993-94 (RDM), absent in some months (Nov.-Dec.) but breeding Jan. (RDM).

*Blue-spotted Wood Dove Turtur afer*

The upper altitudinal limit of range appears to be normally around 1750 m (Chikangawa, FD-L & RJD), marginally higher on the Nyika (1980 m, Dowsett-Lemaire 2006).

*Tambourine Dove Turtur tympanistria*

One bird ringed at Zomba was retrapped locally by RDM on 16 Dec. 2003 after four years, 10 months and 22 days.

*Namaqua Dove Oena capensis*

Of irregular appearance on the moist Nkhata Bay Lake-shore, e.g. Aug. 1978 (DFG), 23 Aug. 1992, 30 Dec. 1992 (NJ-S). Common on the drier Lake-shore near Ngara Mar. 1993 (RDM). Only occasional in the Shire Highlands (near Blantyre), several Oct. 1992, "possibly new for the area" (MB), once Jan. 2003 (JH).

*African Green Pigeon Treron calvus*

A flock of at least 150 birds feeding in a fig tree, Kasungu N.P., 2 Aug. 1986 (Anon.).

*Meyer's Parrot Poicephalus meyeri*

Near the south-eastern limit of range, RDM had three observations of one-two birds between Salima and Chipoka (Jun. 1986), and no sign of *P. cryptoxanthus*.

Brown-headed Parrot *Poicephalus cryptoxanthus*

At its north-western limit of range, reported only once from Mpatsanjoka in 1334D3 (JGMW). One pair visiting a hole in a Baobab on 11 Aug. 1989 (Liwonde N.P., RJD & FD-L).

Lilian's Lovebird *Agapornis lilianae*

Reported from the Mbalachanda area by SP (Atlas card) in the early 1980s. About 200 birds in Liwonde N.P. on 22 Aug. 1990 (DSa); several flocks of c. 100 on 27 May 1995 (JH). Seen eating flowers of *Euphorbia candelabrum* (Aug.) in Liwonde N.P. by ID.

Livingstone's Turaco *Tauraco livingstonii*

The lowest altitudinal limit is at Zoa Falls (300 m) in riparian on the Ruo River (NJ-S).

Schalow's Turaco *Tauraco schalowi*

Not recorded from the Lake-shore plain *sensu stricto*, but occasionally from as low as 600-700 m on ridges and hills just above the Lake-shore: thus on the slopes of Kuwilwe Hill (FD-L & RJD, Dec. 1986), Bua Camp in Nkhotakota W.R. (BB, Oct. 1997). Although not ticked for Thambani forest in Dowsett-Lemaire (1989), we observed it inside the forest in Nov. 1983 (1000-1100 m) and also in a forested gully at adjacent Zobue Hill, alongside *T. porphyreolophus*. It is likely both species defend interspecific territories in such a situation, but there was no time to investigate this.

Bare-faced Go-away Bird *Corythaixoides personatus*

A few found in the extreme north-west (Chiwanga - Kameme) in degraded, mixed miombo woodland, Oct. 1986 (RJD & FD-L).

Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius*

At Lilongwe in 1984 seen as late as 12-13 May, 28 Jun., then on 18 Aug. (LR). In years with fairly good observer coverage in Lilongwe, noted back on 24 Jul. 1986 (LR); until 9 May 1987, back in "late Jul."; until at least 5 Mar. 1988, and back on 24 Jul. (LR, RDM); back on 25 Jun. 1989 (three birds) and common until Nov.; until Mar. 1991 and back in mid-Sep.; back on 10 Sep. 1992; until 28 Mar. 1993 and back on 29 Jul. (RDM). In 1997 an immature on the Lake-shore (north of Salima) on 26 Jul. (JH).

Only one record of *Onychognathus morio* as a host, feeding a juvenile at Palm Beach, 31 Dec. 1989 (RDM); all others refer to *Corvus albus*.

Jacobin Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus*

There are two records of black *serratus* in Jun.: 4 Jun. 1974 in the Thyolo area (Johnston-Stewart 1977) and 5 Jun. 1975 at Nchalo (DBH), in addition to published records for other months. [One record of the white-breasted form from 28 Aug. 1994 in Liwonde N.P. is in doubt.]

Striped Crested Cuckoo *Clamator levaillantii*

First arrival date 1 Oct. 1989 (Lilongwe, Anon.) and in some years common from mid-Oct., in others not noticed before Nov. In addition to published records (in Benson & Benson 1977), there are also quite a few recent records of late departure dates (after Apr.), and of juveniles still fed at late dates: adults noted until 30 Jun. 1975 and 15 May 1976 in Thyolo District (Johnston-Stewart 1977), 1 Jun. 1988 (Lilongwe, Anon.), 13 May 1989 (Lilongwe) and 28 May 1989 (Monkey Bay), one mistnetted at Limbe 6 Aug. (SL), one in Madzidzi Bay 26 May 1991 (MB), one (in very worn plumage) close to a party of *Turdoides jardineii* at Mchinji F.R. 7 Jul. 1991 (RDM), juvenile begging from *T. jardineii* 17 Jul. 1991 at Lilongwe (RDM), one at Lilongwe Airport 8 May 1994 (RDM *in litt.*), juvenile with *T. jardineii* at Kamuzu Academy (Kasungu) 28 May 1995 (JA), immature at Michiru 8 Jun. 1996 (DPC), one on 12 Jun. 1997 at Michiru (JH).

Thick-billed Cuckoo *Pachycoccyx audeberti*

The upper altitudinal limit of range appears to be c. 1600 m, in mossy miombo on the South Viphya Plateau (Mtangatanga F.R., Oct. 1986, FD-L & RJD).

In addition to published records (in Benson & Benson 1977), observed in recent decades in all months except Feb. and May (which must be artefacts, and recorded in Feb. in the past).

Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius*

Earliest dates of return (birds in song) are 29 Aug. 1995 (Blantyre, *L* & *KJ-H*) followed by 9 Sep. 1998 (Nyika, *DF*), with a very early date of 19 Aug. 1988 in Vwaza Marsh (*JH*). Very last song heard on 4 Apr. (1999, Lilongwe); a juvenile still fed on 24-29 Mar. 1992 (Lilongwe, *GH*), and last bird (immature) seen 17 Apr. (Lengwe, Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). Also a pair seen mating as late as 8 Mar. 1982 (Lirangwe, *NJ-S*).

Recent breeding records include: two juveniles fed by *Cossypha heuglini* on 20 Jan. 1984 (Blantyre, *KJ* & *MJ*); one fed by *C. heuglini* late Mar. 1992 (as above); juvenile (tail half-grown) fed by *C. caffra* on 16 Dec. 1981 (Nyika, *FD-L*).

Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus*

The two earliest dates of return in recent years are 29 Sep. 1992 (Zomba, *K* & *MC*) and 1 Oct. 1981 (Mzuzu, *JDA*); normally departs in Apr., in 1993 "stayed around Lilongwe until 22 May" (*GH*), and one still heard on 1 Jun. 1988, also at Lilongwe. In 1988 still, a well-flying juvenile fed by *Laniarius aethiopicus* 25 Jun.-15 Jul. at Lilongwe (*RDM*)!

African Grey Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis*

The earliest return date (since 19 Sep. in Benson & Benson 1977) is 20 Sep. 1987 (Kasungu N.P., Anon.). Very few records of calling birds after Dec., latest 13 Feb. 1988 in Lengwe (*JDA*). Possibly one seen as late as 30 Apr. 1996 (Liwonde N.P., *RN*).

Asian Lesser Cuckoo *Cuculus poliocephalus*

In addition to published records, an immature was netted at Nchalo 7 Feb. 1989 (in moult, *DBH*), a hepatic female was reported from Nchalo 10 Mar. 1989 (*DBH*), and Chingale F.R. 1 Apr. 1990 (*MB*, *RDM*).

Madagascar Lesser Cuckoo *Cuculus rochii*

A rather interesting observation of one "lesser cuckoo" in Liwonde N.P. (9-10 Mar. 1999) responding agitatedly to tape (*JH*); the tape played was that of Gibbon (1991), which is in fact of *C. rochii* and not of *C. poliocephalus* as indicated.

Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx montanus*

The strongest reaction of *Cossypha natalensis* to the taped song of the cuckoo was obtained in Kuwilwe F.R. near Chintheche (Dec. 1986, *FD-L* & *RJD*).

Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus*

Recent records of birds calling in May-Sep. include: singing in Lengwe 14 May 1990 (Anon.), at Zomba on 14 Sep. 1991 (Anon.), in Tuma F.R. on 30 May 1993 (*JR*), in Liwonde N.P. on 8 Jul. 1993 (*LL*) and at Namitete on 8 Aug. 1993 (*C* & *LH*), in Lengwe N.P. on 20 Aug. 1994 (*RDM*), in Liwonde N.P. again on 25 May 1996 (Anon.).

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas*

Sixteen host species have been identified in Malawi: *Eremomela icteropygialis* (fledgling fed 29 Nov. at Mwabvi, Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002), *Cisticola njombe* (fledgling fed 15 Feb. 1982 on the Zambian/Malawi border of Nyika, *FD-L*), *Bradornis pallidus* (fledgling fed 17 Feb. 1995 at Thazima, Nyika, *DF*), *Myioparus plumbeus* (Benson 1952a), *Batis "molitor"* (Benson F.M. 1946, or rather *B. soror* as this was in Blantyre), *Platysteira peltata* (fledgling fed 5 Nov. 2001 at Zomba, *K-DD*), *Terpsiphone viridis* (fledgling fed 10-15 Jan. 1986 at Lilongwe, *MG* & *RDM*), *Anthreptes collaris* (fledgling fed, mid-Dec. 1991 onwards, *MB*), *Nectarinia amethystina* (Benson F.M. 1946), *N. senegalensis* (Belcher 1930), *N. venusta* (fledgling fed 4 Apr. 1986 at Lilongwe, *RDM*), *N. talatala* (Hanmer 1982), *N. manoensis* (fledgling fed 20 Oct. 1979 at Dzalanyama, *FD-L*), *Dryoscopus cubla* (fledgling fed 30 Oct. 2001 at Zomba, *FD-L*), *Euplectes orix* (Benson 1952b), *Serinus mozambicus* (Benson & Benson 1977). One record for each species and two for *N. senegalensis*. Also fledgling seen fed by adult male *C. klaas* 29 Sep. 1979 at Michiru Mtn (*FD-L* & *RJD*) and Oct. (Baird 1945).

Didric Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius*

Unusual dates in recent years are: one singing at Nchalo on 15 Aug. 1986 (DBH), and in Liwonde N.P. 16 Aug. 1999 (DCh). Occasionally encountered in May-Jun.: one male in Matope Marsh 12 May 1986 (JDA), one male seen at Michiru 26 Jun. 1994 (Anon.), 2 May 1995 at Blantyre (JG) – in addition to a specimen collected on 7 May in Dedza District (Benson 1940-41).

On host species (in addition to published records) there are recent reports of: *Ploceus xanthopterus* (two juveniles just flying fed, 4 Mar. 1984 at Nchalo, DBH), *Ploceus intermedius* (eight cases based on cuckoo's eggs or chicks, all at Nchalo in Feb. 1974, DBH), *Ploceus velatus* (immature fed, Lilongwe on 12 Apr. 1988, RDM), *Ploceus cucullatus* (13 cases based on cuckoo's eggs or chicks, all at Nchalo in Feb. 1974, DBH).

Green Coucal *Ceuthmochares aereus*

An observation of one in low bush on the edge of Lake Kazuni, Jan. 1995 (MD & FM) is way west of the normal range in the north of Malawi (on the Lake-shore and eastern scarp of South Viphya) and in much drier country than seems suitable for the species. Presumably a vagrant.

African Black Coucal *Centropus grillii*

There are several recent records in the late rains or just after the rains in Mar. to early May, especially from the dambos at Lilongwe Airport in the 1990s, including one still calling 8 May 1993 (RDM). One seen at Lake Chilwa on 26 Aug. 1995 (JH *et al.*) is unusual and perhaps best left unconfirmed, as plumage details were not noted.

Coppery-tailed Coucal *Centropus cupreicaudus*

In Nov. 1986 this highly localized species was seen near the mouth of the Songwe River in small remnant pockets of reeds, and also in the marsh at the mouth of the South Rukuru (RJD & FDL).

Senegal Coucal *Centropus senegalensis*

Comments on the status of the species from Kasungu N.P. north to the Nyika are based essentially on our own observations in 1979-1989. Records from 1333D3 (west of Lilongwe) and 1434B1, B2 and B3 (in the Mtakataka and Monkey Bay area) by RDM and NDH have been accepted, and there is a specimen from Mphunzi (1434A3). Senegal Coucal is difficult to tell apart from the race *burchelli* of *C. superciliosus* and we have had to leave out a number of other records.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

A sound record from Lichenya (Mount Mulanje, c. 2000 m, by DPC & JH in May 1998) could also relate to *T. capensis*. Has been found breeding in a hollow Baobab (C/6, Aug. 1984) on the Mwanza road (MRO); MB reported a family of five chicks occupying a Hamerkop nest at Kabula Hill (Blantyre), Jun.-Jul. 1992.

Grass Owl *Tyto capensis*

A couple of records from Blantyre, one of which was in unusual (suburban) habitat in Namiwawa area, flew into a power line and killed itself (c. 1981, JHo), also one at Chigumula Jul. 1994 (JG). One seen in miombo woodland in Michiru in Jan. 1990 (JWK *et al.*) was either a vagrant or perhaps a misidentified *T. alba*. RDM (*in litt.*) is not aware of the source of the record from Mount Mulanje in Newman *et al.* (1992: 61); there is much suitable habitat on Mulanje, nevertheless the occurrence of the species there requires confirmation.

African Scops Owl *Otus senegalensis*

The upper altitudinal limit is around 1600-1650 m, in the extreme north-west (Chiwanga Hill) and at Thazima (Nyika, RJD & FD-L).

At lower levels in the Shire Valley seems to avoid *Acacia-Combretum* but is not uncommon in mopane woodland (as in Liwonde N.P., Lengwe N.P., Mwabvi W.R., FD-L & RJD); found in mixed miombo woodland on the Shire escarpment, as in the Malawi Hills (FD-L & RJD) and elsewhere (Long 1974).

Cape Eagle Owl *Bubo capensis*

Mwabvi W.R. is mentioned in Newman *et al.* (1992: 61) without reservation but the observer (MD *in litt.*) feels this record remains unconfirmed, and given the low altitude and location in the Rift, we consider the

occurrence of this species there is most unlikely.

Giant Eagle Owl *Bubo lacteus*

One re-used a nest of *Aquila wahlbergi* at Lilongwe (May-Jun. 1986, *RDM*).

Pel's Fishing Owl *Scotopelia peli*

B. Bijl found a nest with young in Aug. 1998 in Nyala Park (Sucoma), at a distance of *c.* 1.5 km from the Mwanza River. Nest with young in Liwonde N.P. in Apr. 2005 (Anon.).

Marsh Owl *Asio capensis*

Several recent reports from dambos in the Lilongwe area, including up to six together around Lilongwe Airport in Mar. 1992 (*MM & RDM*). Appears locally common in the Chilwa floodplain, e.g. 13 were seen one evening on the south-western shore of the Lake, 24 Jul. 1994 (*JGMW*). The breeding record from Nchalo, in 1982, is by *DBH*.

Eurasian Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Earliest recent record of 24 Oct. (1992, on the Nyika, by *NC*, but see Dowsett-Lemaire 2006 for reservations on racial identification); the identification of a much earlier bird (seen 29 Sep. 1985, Mulanje) is unconfirmed as no details are available. A dead bird was examined on the road between Monkey Bay and Mangochi on 1 Apr. 1989 (*NZ*), and the species was "present" at Nchalo until 6 Apr. (1987, *DBH*); a much later report from 25 Apr. is considered as requiring confirmation. Reported in several successive seasons (Nov.-Dec. to Mar.-Apr.) from Nchalo where a few seem to winter (*DBH*).

Freckled Rock Nightjar *Caprimulgus tristigma*

We have heard this species's song in the second half of the dry season (Aug.-Nov.) in many localities in the woodland belt; also May (South Viphya) and Dec.-Mar. (Nyika: Dowsett-Lemaire 2006). On the Shire escarpment (Majete, Lengwe extension) in Nov.-Apr. 2001-2002 it was heard in Nov. until early Dec., then again from Apr. In addition to Benson (1940-41), thus heard overall in all months.

Fiery-necked Nightjar *Caprimulgus pectoralis*

We have numerous personal observations of this species in song on the central plateau from Aug.-Nov. In Ngara thicket on the Lake-shore, it was not calling in Nov. 1986 but was very noisy in Aug. 1989. In the Lower Shire in 2001-2002 the species was silent (except for alarm calls of a pair) in Nov.-Jan., but singing again from Mar. Noted as calling from May-Jun. in Blantyre (1984, *JBH & PEH*). Added to published records (Benson 1940-41, Benson 1951b, Benson 1952c), this shows that the species calls at all times of year, with an interruption (presumably during moult) of two-three months, the precise timing of which may vary regionally.

Mountain Nightjar *Caprimulgus poliocephalus*

Common in the northern highlands, from the Misuku Hills to the South Viphya Plateau (south to Champhila), *FD-L & RJD*. One was heard calling at Lunyangwa near Mzuzu in Aug.-Sep. until 12 Oct. 1986 (*IlaC*). Heard on the Nyika mainly from Feb. to early Nov. (further details in Dowsett-Lemaire 2006). In our 1982 forest survey of northern Malawi, heard everywhere (from Sep.) until 12 Nov. (Uzumara) and again from last week of Jan. 1983 (Chikangawa); not heard at some well-known localities in May-Jun. 1983, when calling is rare. Can be very noisy in Aug. (as in 1980 and 1989, South Viphya).

Gaboon Nightjar *Caprimulgus fossii*

Recorded at all times of year in Liwonde N.P. (*JH*), as elsewhere at low altitude.

Pennant-winged Nightjar *Macrodipteryx vexillarius*

Earliest arrivals in recent years noted on 24 Aug. 1982 (Kumadzi, *NJ-S*) and 26 Aug. 1983 (Mount Mulanje, *NJ-S*). One male was incompletely moulted into breeding dress on 5 Sep. 1987 (Lilongwe, *RDM*); a male without its pennants as early as 11 Jan. 1992 (Dzalanyama, *RDM*) and a late one still wearing them on 25 Mar. 1995 (Michiru, *JH*). Late records of females killed on the road near Kasungu on 1 Apr. and Kasikidzi on 7 Apr. 1988 (*FK*).

Scarce Swift *Schoutedenapus myoptilus*

The main distribution was given in Dowsett-Lemaire (1989); in Nov.-Dec. 2000 it was confirmed to occur also on the south-eastern slopes of Zomba Mtn, with members of pairs chasing each other and calling (*FD-L* & *RJD*); previously thought to be merely on passage over Zomba Mtn, i.e. recorded in Sep. at Chingwe's hole but not seen again on the high plateau in Dec. (*FD-L* & *RJD*, 1983). Not found over the Mafingas in Oct.-Dec. 1982, but recorded in Oct. 1986 (*FD-L*, *RJD*); its status there is unclear.

No longer recorded at Thyolo Mtn in Nov. 2000, as forest destroyed. Normally leaves the country in Apr., very last date accepted is 10 May 1986 (Mount Mulanje, *NJ-S*). Two later reports (in May and Jun.) are considered uncertain.

Mottled Spinetail *Telacanthura ussheri*

Recorded from the southern Lake-shore (including Monkey Bay, *RDM*, Makanjila, *JGMW*) to the Lower Shire Valley (regularly observed in Lengwe, more rarely in Majete and Mwabvi, cf. Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002), and there is an old specimen from Nsanje (Benson & Benson 1977: 253). A sighting of two reported from Ntchisi (Dec.) is off the normal range and is considered unproven.

Bat-like Spinetail *Neafrapus boehmi*

Reported from two squares in the Mzuzu and Mazamba area in the early 1980s (*JDA*, without details); also one record (c. 1981) from Chilumba Point (1034A4), which we consider remains unconfirmed. Appears resident in the Lower Shire Valley; although less often seen than *T. ussheri*, so far reported from Lengwe in the months of Jan. (1987, *DBH*, *MPE*), Mar.-Apr. (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002, also *JDA* in Apr. 1987), Aug. (1989, *NJ-S*, 1994, *RDM*), Oct. (*NDH* in Benson & Benson 1977: 253, *JDA* in 1987), Nov. (1993, *RDM*), Dec. (*RJD* & *FD-L* in 1983, *JDA* & *RDM* in 1986). Reported from Mwabvi in Apr. (1995 and 1996, *JH*, also in Apr. 2002: Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002), Nov.-Dec. (three pairs in 2001, Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). In addition to published records in Benson & Benson (1977) for Mar. and Aug. (Chididi) and Oct. (Chikwawa).

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus*

The evidence of breeding on buildings in Malawi is limited: active nests were observed at Zomba (on the Government rest house) on 5 Sep. 1980 (*HC et al.*), and we saw several attending nests under the bridge over the North Rumpi River (near the Lake-shore) on 25 Nov. 1986.

Alpine Swift *Apus melba*

Extreme dates of double passage: 28 Feb. (1984 at Lilongwe, *LR*) to 25 Apr. (1992 on southern Lake-shore, c. 150 seen by *RDM*), and 2 Aug. (1993, c. 100 in Liwonde N.P. 2-3 Aug., *ID*) to 25 Nov. (1990 at Lilongwe, *MM*).

Mottled Swift *Apus aequatorialis*

A few records of wanderers a long way from rock faces: one at Lilongwe on 28 Feb. 1984 (*LR*), one at a Lilongwe dam on 29 Jan. 1989 (*RDM*), two at Sucoma fish ponds on 4 Jun. 1989 (one fell in and was ringed, *DBH*) and one near Lengwe (Sucoma) on 14 Aug. 1989 (*FK*).

Eurasian Swift *Apus apus*

Large numbers do not appear before the first storms, but a few may be seen earlier: thus on the Nyika from 3 Sep. 1980 and 6 Sep. 1981 (*RJD* & *FD-L*), also 5 Sep. 1986 on Mount Mulanje (*NJ-S*).

African Black Swift *Apus barbatus*

The observation of an enormous flock (at least 4000) of swifts flying south over Limbe on 12 Aug. 1986 was initially attributed to *Apus apus* but this identification has been withdrawn by the observer (*JDA in litt.*), and we all feel they were most likely *A. barbatus*. One flock of c. 100 (screaming) over Shire River, Liwonde N.P. on 2 Sep. 1994 (*RDM*), probably on southward passage.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*

Is expanding slowly into urban areas: first reported nesting at Lilongwe in Sep. 1982 (*LR*), and c. 100 breeding on airport control tower in Oct. 1993 (*RDM*, "possibly a new colony"). Reported to use an old nest of

*Hirundo abyssinica* (1982, *LR*); also seen re-using nests of *Hirundo smithii* at Nchalo (Oct. 1988, *DBH*). Rare visitor to Liwonde N.P., Jan.-Mar. 1996 (*RN*).

Horus Swift *Apus horus*

At the Chikwawa breeding site, *c.* 100 were seen on 7 Jan. 1984 at the bridge and only two on 3 Jun. (*JBH* & *PEH*); *c.* 100 were seen entering old bee-eater holes on 10 Feb. 1985 (*JDA* & *RDM*). Later in 1985, 12-15 birds were seen there on 29 Sep. but none by 5 Oct. (*JDA*). The species does not probably wander very far, as for instance several were seen on the Shire in Majete in Nov. 2001 (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). At Mtonga near Salima, four apparently investigating old *Merops bullockoides* holes on 4 May and eight there on 22 Jun. 1986 (*RDM*); seen at the same site again in May-Aug. 1988 (maximum 10 on 6 Jul., *RDM*). Examples of wandering at some distance from likely breeding sites include: several at Lifupa Dam (Kasungu N.P.) on 3 May 1999 (*BB*), six flying along the South Rukuru River north of Rumphu on 27 Mar. 1993 (*RDM* & *NJ-S*), one over dambo west of Nkhata Bay on 30 Nov. 2002 (*WMc*).

African White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer*

At Lilongwe over a period of three years they were present on Capital Hill only from mid-Aug. to mid-May (*LR* in 1984), and returned (in 1987) on 11 Sep. after an absence of three months (*LR*); similarly at Michiru present mainly in the rains (*JH*). It has been seen in Liwonde N.P. in Jul. (1994: Haugaard & Critchlow 1997) and in Liwonde town on 28 May 1995 (*DPC*); there is also a Jun. record from Nsanje District (Long 1961a).

Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus*

Has been seen in mixed flocks (with *Urocolius indicus*) in Blantyre gardens (e.g. Jan. 1997, *JH*).

Red-faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus*

There is an isolated record in the extreme north-west of the country (0933C4, *NJ-S*). More common in Blantyre than congener, especially noticeable in the mango season (Nov.-Dec.); both are sometimes seen together in mixed flocks (see above).

Narina's Trogon *Apaloderma narina*

The only breeding record that can be back-dated to a possible month of laying is a "newly fledged" young seen on 20 Mar. 1982 (Mulanje, *NJ-S*), which suggests a Jan. clutch.

Bar-tailed Trogon *Apaloderma vittatum*

In addition to many observations of wanderers in small forest patches away from breeding locations, one male (and others heard) was observed in *Pinus patula* plantation in Chambe Basin (Mulanje), 8 Sep. 1996 (*CHi* & *JH*).

Half-collared Kingfisher *Alcedo semitorquata*

A wanderer observed at Sucoma fish ponds on 12 Jan. 1991 (Anon.).

Malachite Kingfisher *Alcedo cristata*

The normal upper altitudinal limit appears to be 1600 m, at Luwawa Dam (South Viphya, *RJD* & *FD-L*). Not seen as high as Kasitu Dam (1700 m) on several visits, but a vagrant turned up on the Nyika once (see Dowsett-Lemaire 2006). Two immatures visiting Lilongwe sewage ponds in May (1993) were taking insects from surface of water (*RDM*).

Pygmy Kingfisher *Ceyx pictus*

In the Lower Shire (Nchalo) Hanmer (1979a) mentions an increase in the number of immatures in the months of Mar.-Jul. (and passage noticeable in Mar.-Apr.); there are subsequent records of immatures wintering in the 1980s, with first "new" adult on 17 Aug. 1984, 24 Aug. 1985, several passing from 28 Sep. 1987 and 26 Sep. 1988. In addition, two adults in the winter (Jun.-Jul.) of 1985, "known to be 2.5 years old" (*DBH*, initially ringed as immatures). From ringing retraps, it appears that most wintering birds arrive in Mar.-Apr. and are not local birds (*DBH*). The species breeds in the Nchalo area, but in Nov.-Apr. 2001-2002 was not found in Lengwe except on passage (Apr.) and similarly in Majete and Mwabvi the species was fairly common passing through in Nov. but not seen in subsequent months (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). There is also a

May record for Lengwe (4 May 1985, *JDA*); winter records from other locations include Soche Mtn on 2 Jun. 1985 at an altitude of 1400 m (*RDM*), near Thyolo Mtn on 9 Jun. 1996 (*VS*). Early arrivals (Aug.) other than those above at Nchalo include 30 Aug. 1981 in miombo near Mount Mulanje (*NJ-S*) and 25 Aug. 1988 at Chiradzulu (*DFG*), but most birds arrive much later, in Oct.

Brown-hooded Kingfisher *Halcyon albiventris*

Recorded in Lilongwe gardens as a non-breeding visitor (Apr. 1992, Feb.-Mar. and May 1993, *RDM*). On the northern shores of Lake Chilwa has adapted to small patches of *Eucalyptus* and *Bambusa* plantations (Nov. 2000, *FD-L* & *RJD*).

Chestnut-bellied Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala*

In addition to published records (Benson 1940-41, Benson 1951b, Long 1961a), some other winter (May-Aug.) observations at low altitude include: one at Lilongwe on 16 Jul. 1980 (*MIE*), one at Phirilongwe on 5 Jun. 1984 (*NJ-S*), one at Nchalo on 28 May (*DBH*), two in Liwonde N.P. on 7 Jun. 1986 (*JDA* & *NJ-S*), one at Zomba on 3 Aug. 1986 (Anon.), Balaka and Salima on 7 and 29 May 1988, three in Lengwe on 14-15 May 1990 (Anon.), pair displaying in Lengwe on 6-8 Aug. 1992 (*C* & *LH*), one in Liwonde N.P. on 20 Jun. and 10 Jul. 1996, regular in Jul. 1997 (*RN*) and one on 26 Jul. 1997 near Kachulu (Lake Chilwa, *JH*), one in Liwonde again on 6 Jun. 1998 (*JH*) and 27 Jun. 1999 (*SS*), one on north-western shore of Lake Chilwa (1535B1) on 8 Aug. 2001 (*JGMW*).

An independent immature arriving in a Lilongwe garden on 5 Oct. 1990, others noted in Nov.-Dec. (1989) or late Dec. (1991, all *RDM*) are possibly not of local origin; but could breed very early at least in the Lower Shire Valley, as all observations from Nov. 2001 (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002) were of wandering adults and independent immatures, and adults are known to be present early.

Senegal (Woodland) Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis*

One "fishing" for some time in Liwonde N.P., 13 Nov. 1988 (*RDM*). Generally arrives in Oct.-Nov. Unusual early records include: 3 Sep. 1984 and 19 Aug. 1985 (three present by 30 Aug.) at Nchalo (*DBH*), 18 Sep. 1992 at Lilongwe (*JR*, otherwise not before Nov. that year). Unusual late records include 5 May 1996 in Liwonde N.P. (*RN*) and 26 May 1978 near Mugesse (*MGD*). One adult ringed in Liwonde N.P. by *JH* on 8 Dec. 1998 was recovered locally on 1 Jan. 2004.

Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti*

Not normally present in woodland above the altitude of 1400 m, but reaches *c.* 1600 m in the dry woodland in the extreme north-west (Chiwanga), in the rain shadow of the Misuku Hills (Oct. 1986, *FD-L* & *RJD*). Has bred in a nest box, Lilongwe, in Oct. 1986 (*MG*).

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*

Exceptional wanderer to Kasitu Dam at Chikangawa (*IC*, n.d.). Unusual visitor to Lilongwe (Lumbadzi) sewage ponds on 15 Oct. 1988 (*RDM*).

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus*

Occasional concentrations of immatures after the breeding season, with *c.* 25 dustbathing at Nchalo, 17 Mar. 1989 (*DBH*). Similarly, 15 together flying off in the evening, Majete, on 29 Mar. 2002 (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002).

Swallow-tailed Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus*

Birds arriving in early dry season are often in little groups, e.g. up to 10 at various localities in May-Jun. 1986; *c.* 10 at Michiru on 19 May 1984 (*JBH* & *PEH*); *c.* 10 Chingale F.R. 8 Jul. 1990 (Anon.). In addition to published records for the "off-season" of Jan.-Mar., a recent observation of three birds in worn plumage in Liwonde N.P. on 14 Feb. 1996 (*JH* & *RN*).

Böhm's Bee-eater *Merops boehmi*

Recorded along the Lake-shore north to Bana (*RJD* & *FD-L*, Dec. 1986). In Jun.-Oct. 1989, 32 nests in Liwonde N.P. belonged to five colonies (*RN*, nest-building starting in Jun., nestlings in Oct.). Some local movements at Nchalo/Sucoma (in marginal habitat) include a flock of 30 on the Shire on 29 May 1988 (*VB*);



and near Salima a group of 40+ was seen along the stream entering the lagoon behind the Grand Beach Hotel on 20 Jul. 1984 (*JDA*).

Madagascar Bee-eater *Merops superciliosus*

More discreet on northward passage, including once in Mar. at Karonga (13th, 1988, *JDA*), and latest on 19 May (1985, Nyika, *MD*).

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus*

Earliest definite arrivals are in the first half of Oct.: 5 Oct. 1980 (Nyika, *FD-L* & *RJD*), followed by 11 Oct. 1998 (Lengwe, *JH*). A 20 Sep. record was withdrawn by the observer. Much active passage north in Apr. petering out in early May: Nyika 4 May 1986 (*MD*), Lake Malawi 7 May 1986 (Anon.), Sucoma 6 May 1987. Flocks of up to 100 seen in the Salima wetlands (95 at Kuti, 100 at Mpatsanjoka) on 13 Jan. 1991, c. 100 at Kuti on 16 Jan. 1993 (*RDM*); often quite numerous on the Shire plain along the Chikwawa-Nchalo road in the rains.

Eurasian Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

Earliest arrival date 29 Aug. (in Benson & Benson 1975) followed by 1 Sep. 1990 (at Likuni), 2 Sep. 1987 (Kasungu N.P., Anon.), 3 Sep. 1982 (Ntcheu, *MGD*) etc.; latest departure date 3 May 1986 (Mount Mulanje, *NJ-S*).

Only one recent record could probably be attributed to the southern African population: five at Michiru on 2-3 Jul. 1994 (*JH*).

Southern Carmine Bee-eater *Merops nubicoides*

Seen feeding in association with Elephants in Liwonde N.P. (Dec. 1993, *WSt*). *JU* reported the species excavating holes in Majete W.R. on 6 Jul. 1984, which is very early.

Disperses widely after the breeding season, with numerous recent records of singles or small groups at all seasons upriver on the Shire, on the Lake-shore plain and higher; sometimes large numbers are reported from the much-visited Liwonde N.P., of up to 100 birds in Aug. 1994 (C. Hennig *per RDM*), and we have seen up to 100 also in Lengwe N.P. in Dec.-Jan. (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002).

The precise location of the large breeding colonies on the Shire (upriver from Chikwawa) has not been identified in recent years. In 1999 a colony became established 2-3 km north of Chikwawa (*MB per JH*, numbers not specified).

Eurasian Roller *Coracias garrulus*

Extreme dates of arrival and departure: 16 Oct. 1981 (Cape Maclear, *HL*) followed by 19 Oct. 1985 (Phirilongwe, *JDA*), and 23 Apr. 1986 (Nyika, *MD*), otherwise 21 Apr. 1989 (Nchalo, *DBH*).

Racket-tailed Roller *Coracias spatulatus*

Occasional wanderers to high altitude miombo: at 1600 m on the South Viphya (Oct. 1986, *RJD* & *FD-L*), Mafinga slopes in Nov. 1987 (*RDM*). In the dry year of 1994, some unusual records of wanderers on the Lilongwe plain: up to 10 along the road Lilongwe to Namitete 23 Jul. (*JWh per RDM*), pair on roadside wires at Bunda 28 Jun. and 2 Oct. (*RDM*), one in Lilongwe garden 30 Sep. (*RDM*); also singles along the Dedza-Lilongwe road on 14 and 17 Aug. 1994 (Anon.), between Bvumbwe and Mpingwe Jun. & Dec. 1994 (*JG et al.*). Individuals of the pink-breasted form "weigalli" (= immature plumage) have been reported from Mpingwe (Dec. 1994, *SL* & *JH*) and Liwonde N.P. (Aug. 1995, *JH*).

Purple Roller *Coracias naevius*

Wanderers may turn up in unexpected places, as on the moist Nkhata Bay Lake-shore: single in Jan. 1987 (*PR*). In 1992 there was a noticeable influx in the late dry season: singles at Cape Maclear in mid-Aug. (*RK*), at Lilongwe on 8 Sep. (*RDM*), Nankhumba and Salima 18 Sep. (*RDM*), Lilongwe Airport 3 Oct. (*MM* & *RDM*), on the road from Monkey Bay to Mtakataka on 8 Oct. (*NZ*).

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*

Specimens of the nominate race were obtained as follows: Palombe (= Phalombe, 3 Oct., Shelley 1894), Chiradzulu ("late Nov.", Benson 1953, which appears rather late), Kuwilwe (27 Feb., Benson 1942), Zobue

(5 Apr., Vincent 1933-36) and above Nsanje (5 Apr., Long 1974); there is also an undated specimen from Nkhotakota District (Belcher 1930). An influx of *c.* 60 at Kawalazi on 6 Oct. 1992 (*NJ-S*) may not relate to *suaehelicus* but to the nominate race. Only two sight records of nominate *glaucurus* have been claimed: one on 26 Feb. 1993 and a flock on 1 May 1995 at Kamuzu Academy (*JA*), but the differences are only of size, difficult to confirm in the field.

#### Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

One occupied nest hole at Njuli was in a barn (Nov. 1986, *DFG*).

#### Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus erythrorhynchus*

Very rarely observed in the Lower Shire Valley, as exceptional wanderers: one between Chikwawa and Kapichira Falls on 21 Jul. 1985 (*RDM*), and a group of six in Lengwe N.P. on 20 Aug. 1994 (*RDM*). Earlier reports of the species found "breeding" in *Acacia-Dalbergia* savanna in Lengwe in Nov. 1981 are considered doubtful as more intensive surveys in 2001-2002 showed the species to be genuinely absent from Lengwe. Possibly there was confusion with immature *T. leucomelas* (which have a bill tinged with red).

#### Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill *Tockus leucomelas*

There is at least one record from as far north as 1534D3 (by *DBH*), presumably from the southern edge of Majete W.R. where the only suitable *Acacia* savanna occurred; but not found again during recent investigations (2001-02, *FD-L* & *RJD*).

#### Pale-billed Hornbill *Tockus pallidirostris*

Recent reports of wandering flocks include: *c.* 20 feeding on fruits of riparian trees at Bua Camp (Nkhotakota W.R.) on 16 Jun. 1991 (*RDM*), *c.* 15 at the same location on 22 Jul. 1995 (*JH*).

#### Trumpeter Hornbill *Bycanistes bucinator*

A large flock of up to 92 birds was seen flying from fig trees to roost at dusk, near Karonga, 27 Mar. 1993 (*RDM* & *NJ-S*). An occupied nest on Chimaliro Mtn (North Viphya) in a lateral stump of *Polyscias fulva*, 2-4 Nov. 1982 (*FD-L*), is surprisingly the only breeding record.

#### Silvery-cheeked Hornbill *Bycanistes brevis*

Several nests occupied (with males bringing food) in the Misuku Hills (Mugesse and Wilindi) on 24-26 Oct. 1986 (*FD-L*).

#### White-eared Barbet *Stactolaema leucotis*

Its status in the forest at Thambani (west of the Rift) needs further investigation: it was not recorded there in Nov. 1983 (*RJD* & *FD-L*) nor in the past, but *RDM* noted at least one on 7 Jul. 1985.

#### Whyte's Barbet *Stactolaema whytii*

Records from the southern foothills of the Nyika Plateau (Thazima, 1033D3) and Chiweta Escarpment (1034C1) are by *RDM*; we saw it occasionally on the South Viphya Plateau, up to *c.* 1700 m, which appears to be the upper altitudinal limit.

#### Green Barbet *Stactolaema olivacea*

There is one report of a wanderer seen in riparian forest in Bvumbwe on 16 Mar. 1993 (*JG*). In Dec. 2005 the species was discovered on Mabu Mtn in adjacent Mozambique (*CSp*), a new locality.

#### Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus chrysoconus*

Has been seen feeding on the nectar of *Erythrina*, like other barbets (e.g. *S. whytii*, *FD-L*).

#### Golden-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus*

The range of the northern population (10°30' to 12°30'S, Lake-shore, eastern Nyika and Viphya Plateaux) was extended south to 1233D4 and 1234C3 by *RDM*, who found the bird in riparian forest in Nkhotakota W.R. in the lower Bua basin.

**Miombo Pied Barbet *Tricholaema frontata***

The upper altitudinal limit is around 1600 m, in the extreme north-west (Chiwanga, *FD-L & RJD*, Oct. 1986). Not recorded as high as 1600 m on the Nyika (e.g. absent from Thazima).

**Black-collared Barbet *Lybius torquatus***

Recorded regularly up to 1600 or 1700 m (*FD-L & RJD*); once as high as 1800 m (in riparian on old Mbuzinandi road, southern slopes of Nyika Plateau, *MD*).

**Brown-breasted Barbet *Lybius melanopterus***

Today regularly reported only from the much-visited Liwonde N.P.; the only other relatively recent record otherwise is a bird seen in *Acacia* savanna near Matope Marsh on 17 Sep. 1979 by *JBH & PEH*. In Oct.-Dec. 1988 a pair occupied a nest hole in dead branch of *Acacia xanthophloea* in Liwonde N.P. (*RN*), but no breeding details noted.

**Green-backed Honeyguide *Prodotiscus zambesiae***

Known south to the slopes of Mount Mulanje (*NJ-S*). The only breeding record comes from Dzalanyama, 30 Oct. 1977 (*JC*: juvenile begging and fed by *Zosterops senegalensis*); in addition *PML* saw a pair copulating late Sep. 1995 above Thazima.

**Scaly-throated Honeyguide *Indicator variegatus***

In addition to the four cases of parasitism of *Mesopicos olivaceus* (as published), there is also: a juvenile fed by this woodpecker in the Misuku Hills on 14 Oct. 1989 (*NJ-S*). Johnston-Stewart (1982) reported a juvenile fed by female *Dendropicos fuscescens* at Thyolo; the precise date was 14 Sep. 1980, thus from Jul. egg. *MvBe* and colleagues saw a fledgling fed by a pair of *Dendropicos stierlingi* in Dzalanyama on 23 Oct. 2000. The two cases of parasitism of a barbet (*Stactolaema whytii*, in Benson 1952b) may seem unusual, but J.F.R. Colebrook-Robjent confirmed (*in litt.*) that the published measurements of the eggs seem to exclude the more usual barbet parasite, *I. minor*. One of the barbet's nests contained C/3 of *I. variegatus*, C/3 of the barbet and C/1 of *I. minor*! The date is given as 16 Oct. 1921 under *I. variegatus* but as 29 Sep. 1926 under *I. minor* (Benson 1952b), but presumably these details refer to the same nest and one of the dates is wrong. The other barbet's nest had five eggs of its own species and one of *I. variegatus*.

**Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator***

Local wandering above normal altitudes includes to the South Viphya Plateau (c. 1800 m, Benson 1940-41) and the high Nyika at 2200 m (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006). A fledgling fed by *Merops pusillus* at Dzalanyama on 28 Dec. 1980 (*R & MG*); another fed by *Upupa epops* at Lilongwe on 20 Dec. 1985 (*LR*).

**Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor***

Unpublished breeding records include: two juveniles fed by pair of *Stactolaema leucotis* on 9 Dec. 1980 (Thyolo, *NJ-S*), juvenile leaving nest (*Lybius torquatus*) on 27 Mar. 1987 at Nchalo (*DBH*); much interaction seen with *L. torquatus*, such as chasing (by barbets) and female Honeyguides trying to enter nests (Nchalo, Oct.-Nov. 1983, *DBH*).

**Eastern Least Honeyguide *Indicator meliphilus***

Records from the plateau east of Mabulabo (1233D2) are by *RJD*, Dzalanyama by *RDM* and *ID*, Zomba by *NDH et al.*

**[Red-throated Wryneck *Jynx ruficollis***

The species was tentatively accepted by Benson & Benson (1977) from a single breeding record near Ntcheu (Paget-Wilkes 1928). However, a number of other records by this observer are also open to question (including *Halcyon senegalensis* breeding as early as August, in an earth bank) and the locality is very far from the nearest population of *J. ruficollis* in north-western Zambia (Dowsett *et al.* in prep.) and South Africa (Tarboton in Harrison *et al.* 1997). The species is now rejected from the country's list, as was anticipated by Dowsett (1982).]

Stierling's Woodpecker *Dendropicos stierlingi*

Seen taking flying termites at Namizimu on 11 Apr. 1982 (NJ-S); one adult and two immatures catching emerging termites at Dzalanyama on 29 Oct. 1988 (RDM). Immatures have been seen as above in Oct. 1988, pair with immature 20 Oct. 1979 also at Dzalanyama (FD-L & NDH), Nov. 1988 at Namizimu (NJ-S), adult and immature near Neno on 31 Jul. 1988 (JDA, NJ-S). Female of a pair investigating a possible nest hole in dead branch of *Brachystegia* near Neno on 26 Mar. 1988 (JDA). Otherwise the only occupied nest noted was one in a garden with much *Brachystegia* on Ngapani Farm at Namizimu, the nest being situated in a dying *B. boehmi* (late Aug. 1990, no other details observed, NJ-S per RDM). A pair feeding a juvenile *Indicator variegatus* at Dzalanyama on 23 Oct. 2000 (MvBe et al.) would have laid probably in early Sep.

In Fry et al. (1988) Short wrote "eggs Aug.", although Short (1982) and Short & Horne (1981) to the contrary stressed that breeding was undocumented. Attempts to obtain information on this have come to nothing.

Olive Woodpecker *Mesopicos griseocephalus*

The southern limit of range in the Lwanjati area was already known to Benson (1940-41) and confirmed by recent sight records (FK). It is common elsewhere on the South Viphya (Kawandama to Nthungwa) and north to the Misukus (FD-L, RJD et al.).

African Broadbill *Smithornis capensis*

Heard up to 1920 m in Uzumara (RJD & FD-L).

African Pitta *Pitta angolensis*

Recent records in the north indicative of breeding include one displaying vigorously 3 Dec. 1986 in Njakwa Gorge (FD-L, RJD), and one caught on nest by a child at Chilumba on 15 Nov. 1987 (per HG); and in the south seen on 7 Feb. 1994 in Liwonde N.P. (RN) and heard displaying there 25 Nov. 2001 (JH), also three records of displaying birds in Lengwe thickets Nov.-Jan. (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). A "female" with an apparent brood patch was mistnetted at Esperanza (Mulanje) on 26 Nov. 1988 by M & TR but never seen again.

A dead bird was found in Njakwa Gorge on 19 Nov. 1990 (partly eaten and cached by a predator in the fork of a tree, ID).

Rufous-naped Lark *Mirafra africana*

We searched for this species without any success in the Namizimu area in Dec. 2000. One mention of a bird of this species at Matope on 24 Feb. 1985 (JDA), a long way away from known range; the species was not confirmed to occur in the area and the record has been dropped.

Flappet Lark *Mirafra rufocinnamomea*

The upper altitudinal limit of range appears to be c. 1700 m at Chiwanga Hill (FD-L, RJD); it is unknown from Thazima at 1600 m.

Dusky Lark *Pinarocorys nigricans*

Four records between 1976-1991 are as follows: Ngabu on 23 Jan. 1976 (Benson & Benson 1977: 254), Kumadzi on 1 Jan. 1977 (Johnston-Stewart 1977), Kamuzu Academy (Kasungu) on 14 Jun. 1989 (GM), Chankhandwe Dambo near Lilongwe on 16 Nov. 1991 (RDM). Usually as singles, except two at Ngabu (alongside c. 30 *Eremopterix leucotis*). Newman et al. (1992: 71) give the locality "Karonga" but this is erroneous.

Red-capped Lark *Calandrella cinerea*

Large numbers occur in the dry season only: seen occasionally at Chisombezi Farm (Mikolongwe), until Jun. (1984) when good numbers appeared (JDA); c. 100 at Chileka Dambo 8 Jul. 1986 (JDA); c. 50 Mpatsanjoka Dambo 8 Aug. 1992 (Anon.); "numerous" at Dudu Farm (near Dedza) 1 Aug. 1993 (RDM). Records from the highlands are from May and Sep. on the South Viphya (Benson 1940-41), and at least late Apr.-Nov. on the high Nyika with some in Jan. 1964 (see Dowsett-Lemaire 2006).

In addition to the Nyika Jan. record, small numbers in the rains at Chileka (Harrison in Benson & Benson 1977) and Mikolongwe (JDA); observed from at least Apr. at Dowa and Dedza (Benson 1940-41).

Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix leucotis*

Hoho Farm (at 1500 m in Mzimba District, *FK*) is probably close to the northern limit of range but could not be located accurately. Recorded year-round at Chileka Dambo (Harrison in Benson & Benson 1977) but in large numbers especially in the dry season, thus *c.* 100 in Apr.-May 1986 and over 200 in Jul. (*JDA*). The Hoho record is Feb. 1988, other rains sightings include Mar. 1988 near Kasungu (*FK*) and Dowa (*RDM*), Mar. and Dec. at Mangochi and Jan. in Lilongwe (Benson 1940-41); *c.* 30 at Likoma Is. 11 Dec. 1992 (*MM*). See also Long (1961b).

Fischer's Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix leucopareia*

Six birds noted at the Dowa-Ntchisi road junction on 7 Sep. 1996 (*MD & DPC*); a more recent record of three birds from a dry dambo near Salima (1334D3) on 1 Dec. 2002 (*WMC*) shows the species continues to extend its range southwards. Rains records include: 28 Nov. 1986 at Ekwendeni (*NJ-S*), Dec. 1992 at Likoma (*MM*) and Kasungu District (*JA*), 22 Jan. 1988 near Kasungu (*FK*) – either singles or small numbers.

Black Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne pristoptera*

Race *orientalis*: in the Lower Shire (Nchalo) noted as a regular winter visitor from Apr.-May to Oct.-Nov. (*DBH*).

Race *holomelas*: since first reported at Nchalo (netted Sep. 1980), seen subsequently in small numbers from May-Sep., occasionally to Oct., also one straggler on 9 Dec. 1982 (*DBH*). Elsewhere there is a sight record of three from Mulanji in Jul. 2001 (*TOO*) and it was claimed from Lilongwe on 17 Jun. 1984 (*LR*).

White-headed Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne albiceps*

Departs somewhat later from the South Viphya than the Nyika (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006), several until 14 May 1983 and last on 26 May (*RJD & FD-L*). A few seen at lower altitudes in the winter months: three at Mzimba 19 Jun. 1938 (Benson & Benson 1977), one male 3 Aug. 1989 in miombo in 1333B2 at 1100 m (*RJD*), one male at Dzalanyama 2 Jun. 2002 (*WMC*) and several in Limphasa Dambo (500 m) near Nkhata Bay in Jun.-Jul. 1991 (*JDA*). One accompanying *P. pristoptera* at Kawalazi 24 Dec. 1992 (*NJ-S*) is very unusual at the altitude of 600 m, but that location is not very far from the escarpment. The southern limit of breeding range appears to be Lwanjati (*RJD & FD-L*).

Mascarene Martin *Phedina borbonica*

In addition to published records, *c.* 10 were seen in the Elephant Marsh 20 Jul. 1985 (Medland 1988), several at the southern end of Lake Chilwa 12 Jul. 1987 (*JDA & NJ-S*) and at least two at Thekerani on the Thyolo escarpment 25 Mar. 1989 (*RDM*).

Eurasian Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Extreme dates of arrival and departure are 23 Sep. (1992, one on Nyika, Anon.) and 28 Apr. (1990, two near Lilongwe, *RDM & MM*), while an observation on 21 May 1983 at Blantyre (*JBH*) is exceptional. Northward passage of over 300 individuals in 15 minutes at Lifu in the morning of 13 Jan. 1991 (*MM & RDM*) probably referred to birds leaving a roost.

African Sand Martin *Riparia paludicola*

One-two birds visiting Lilongwe sewage ponds in May-Aug. 1988.

A large colony of *c.* 100 nest holes (and a smaller one of 15-20 holes) occupied in the banks of the Shire River 10 km downstream of Kasinthula on 21 Jul. 1983 (*DBH*).

Banded Martin *Riparia cincta*

The picture of presence and movements at low or medium altitudes is unclear, and few recent records have been dated. Johnston-Stewart's (1977: 86) account of this species in the Thyolo area appears to apply to *R. riparia*.

Grey-rumped Swallow *Pseudhirundo griseopyga*

Pattern of movements best documented for the Nyika Plateau (*RJD et al.*) and the Lilongwe area (*RDM et al.*) as indicated. Large post-breeding concentrations were noted in the Lower Shire in 1983, with over 1000 on telephone wires at the turn-off to Lengwe (Sucoma) on 30 Sep. (*NJ-S*) and some 500 at Sucoma fish ponds

on 20 Oct. (many immatures), with large numbers until 6 Nov. (DBH).

Red-breasted Swallow *Hirundo semirufa*

Very few records from east of the Rift: a pair near Blantyre 7 and 11 Sep. 1963 (Jeffrey in Benson & Benson 1977), one over Mangochi Mtn, mid-Oct. 1983 (RJD), a pair over Zomba Mtn 30 Sep. 1992 (KC & MC), one record from 1534D4 in Nov. 1981 (DBH); also an older record from the Lower Shire (Bwangu) by Long (1961b) of two on 20 Feb. 1955.

Earliest returns in late Jul.: 25 Jul. 1994 at Mchinji (RDM) and 26 Jul. 1987 in Kasungu N.P. (FK).

Recorded breeding at Bunda, nest-building in culvert, 8 Dec. 1985 (RDM); at Lilongwe, nest-building 17 Nov. 1989 (RDM); in Kasungu N.P., nest-building in culvert 25 Aug. 1991 (RDM); pairs at culverts also near Mchinji (29 Aug.) and at Kasungu (13 Nov. 1993, RDM).

Mosque Swallow *Hirundo senegalensis*

Unusual concentrations of 40-60 birds hunting over floodplain in Liwonde N.P. 17-19 Oct. 1985 (DBH); about 20 grouped in a Baobab, also in Liwonde N.P., 11 Jul. 1993 (LL); Benson (in Benson & Benson 1977) had noted a concentration of 30 around a bush fire at Monkey Bay, 15 Aug. 1942.

Lesser Striped Swallow *Hirundo abyssinica*

Unpublished reports of large concentrations in the winter months include c. 700 at Sucoma 23 Aug. 1987 (VB), and a roost of over 200 in a dead tree (Sucoma) 18 Jun. 1997, with many immatures (CHi & JH).

African Rock Martin *Hirundo fuligula*

Recent reports of breeding on brick buildings are from the Commercial Bank in Blantyre 1984, Aug.-Dec. (RDM), Njuli Farm (Chiradzulu, any time of year, 1986, DFG), also a pair flying around buildings at Senga Bay Sep. 1986 (Anon.), occupied nest in the city centre of Blantyre 13 Aug. 1992 (RDM), several pairs noted at the bridge over the Bua River (Kasungu), 26 Mar. 1993 and again in Blantyre city centre May-Jun. 1993 (RDM), several records in 1994 (Capital Hotel, Lilongwe in Nov., city centre in Blantyre in Jul. and University at Zomba in Sep.-Oct.).

Blue Swallow *Hirundo atrocaerulea*

Two recent reports of passage birds away from mountains: one at Kamuzu Academy near Kasungu 2 Mar. 1994 (JA) and one over Ntchisi Mtn 11 Apr. 1992 (CH & LH).

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*

More reports of this species nesting on boats (since Benson F.M. 1946) are a nest on anchored boat at Monkey Bay (1989, NZ), and others in Aug. and Oct. 1993 in Liwonde N.P. (moored boat on the Shire), apparently by the same pair, the Oct. clutch being a replacement after N/1 was killed by *Haliaeetus vocifer* (LL). Still mentioned as nesting on boats in Liwonde N.P. in Oct. 2005, on this occasion in the "canopies of boats, leading them to follow the boats out on their river trips" (GB). Also an occupied nest in a hollow, dead palm tree on bank of Shire River, Liwonde N.P. 24 Apr. 1993 (RN & RDM).

One unusual concentration of about 100 over Limbe sewage ponds on 16 Jul. 1993 (RDM).

Pearl-breasted Swallow *Hirundo dimidiata*

Two were seen on the lower slopes of Zomba Mtn 6 Jun. 1978, and a full description was provided by the observers (S. Potter & J. Pawsey) in *Nyala* 1980 (6: 73).

RDM observed c. 10 individuals in Jun.-Jul. 1989 on the edge of Malingunde Dam (near Lilongwe), and a few at Lilongwe (Lumbadzi) sewage ponds in Jun. & Aug. 1988, Jul.-Sep. 1989, 7 May 1991, Jul. 1992, Aug. 1993; MG also reported one from a dambo (Lilongwe) on 28 Sep. 1987.

Has been reported breeding at Lilongwe (Aug. & Oct. 1989 in a man-hole, Aug. 1990) and Dzalanyama (Aug. 1989 in a culvert) (RDM).

White-throated Swallow *Hirundo albigularis*

Records from the Lilongwe Plain to Liwonde following Medland's (1989b) publication are from 13 Aug. 1989 (two at Liwonde), Aug. 1992 (a few at Kutu ponds, RDM), 15 Sep. 1992 (at least 10 on the Shire in Liwonde N.P., RDM & RN), 14 Aug. 1993 (one at Lilongwe sewage ponds), 30 Jul. 1994 (one at Kutu, RDM).

*Eurasian (Barn) Swallow Hirundo rustica*

Largest wintering roosts have been reported as follows: Chiromo swamps, about 8000 on 20-27 Jan. 1958 (Long 1959); in 1988, around 10,000 roosting in reedbeds at Kasungu 9 Jan. (FK, RDM) and similar number at Chitedze Dam (Lilongwe District) 23 Jan. (RDM); in 1994, roost of over 10,000 at Manzi Dam (west of Lilongwe) on 28 Feb. (RDM).

*Angola Swallow Hirundo angolensis*

Range limits, from Wilindi-Matipa to Uzumara, are all based on pers. obs., in addition to older records from the Misukus (in Benson & Benson 1949 for Matipa, and Dowsett 1975 for Wilindi). At Livingstonia recorded breeding on a brick house as well as under overhang of bank (Benson & Benson 1977); see also Dowsett-Lemaire (2006).

*Eurasian House Martin Delichon urbicum*

Earliest arrival date appears to be 3 Sep. (1972, seven+ at Chongoni F.R., JR). Latest two records on 6 May, in 1983 (a few in Salima and Nkhotakota District, RJD) and in 1990, "large numbers" over Michiru Mtn (NZ). The report of 20 on the Kaombe River (Nkhotakota District) as late as 26 May (1987) is considered doubtful, perhaps the result of confusion with *Pseudhirundo griseopyga*.

*Yellow Wagtail Motacilla flava*

Earliest arrival date 20 Sep. 1987 (Lake Chilwa), followed by 23 Sep. 1998 at Liwonde N.P., 29 Sep. 1984 at Nchalo. Normal last date of 25 Apr. 1980 (Nyika). A possible sighting of one male of the race *beema* at Lilongwe on 6 Mar. 1980 (NDH; see also Ryder & Ryder 1981). The very unusual observation of five over-summering at Lake Kazuni 24 Jul. 1995 is by JH; plumage details were not noted.

*Long-tailed Wagtail Motacilla clara*

Non-breeding visitors in the Lower Shire include a wanderer on 9 Dec. 2001 on the Nkombedzi in Lengwe (then dry), whereas pairs dispersed widely on small sandy streams in Majete W.R. in Mar. 2002 (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002); one at Nchalo on 27 Jul. 1982 (DBH). Also observed in gardens Jan. 1995 (Michiru, JH, and Limbe, SL).

*Grey Wagtail Motacilla cinerea*

Records from Zomba Mtn after 1965 are: singles at trout ponds on 22 Dec. 1974 (Garcia 1976), mid-Feb. 1982 (TAH), 5 Jan. 1986 (NJ-S), 17 Dec. 1994 at Williams Falls (JH). One at Limbe (sewage ponds) on 3 Nov. 1984 (RDM & JDA).

*African Pied Wagtail Motacilla aguimp*

Breeding on rock in mid-stream, on the Linthipe River at Salima in 1989 (RDM).

[White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Benson (1942) apparently saw one bird near Mangochi in Dec. 1932 and Feb. 1933 when he was recently arrived in Malawi, and wrote he could not identify the race even though *alba* (the form encountered in eastern Africa) is strikingly different from *yarrelli*; some doubt is therefore attached to this observation.]

*Golden Pipit Tmetothylacus tenellus*

One bird was seen by a group of tourists in Liwonde N.P. in Feb. 1999, and confirmed to be that species by BB on 13 Mar.

*Richard's Pipit Anthus richardi*

Breeding was documented for Nchalo on 28 Oct. 1982, with C/2 and N/1 just hatched, and Dec. 1985 (small fledgling) by DBH.

*Long-billed Pipit Anthus similis*

Comments on the ecology and altitudinal distribution of the species are all based on pers. obs.

(Dark) Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys*

Very local in the north: found on the Songwe plain by Benson (1951b) and relocated there by ourselves in Nov. 1986, in short moist grassland. Elsewhere on the Lake-shore from Limphasa Dambo south to Benga (*RJD, FD-L*); more often encountered in the dambos of central Malawi (*RDM et al.*), but apparently very local in the south, confined to Chileka Dambo.

Buffy Pipit *Anthus vaalensis*

Several were seen at Lifupa (lawn and airstrip) in Kasungu N.P. on 14-15 Apr. 1979, next to *A. richardi* (*NDH*); a possible record of two on 29-30 Mar. 2002 also from Kasungu N.P. A breeding record from Dzalanyama (dependent fledglings) on 3 Nov. 1991 (*RDM*) indicates egg-laying Sep.

At Chileka Dambo occurs alongside *A. richardi* and *A. leucophrys* (*RDM*), as in a number of locations in central Malawi.

Bushveld Pipit *Anthus caffer*

Recent observations in Kasungu N.P. (1986 and 1989) are by *RJD & FD-L*.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Not normally arriving before the end of Oct. or early Nov., but a very early observation on 3 Oct. 1987 (Bunda) by *RDM*. Last departure dates are 23 Apr. (in 1982, Nyika, *NJ-S*, as well as in the late 1930s from Dedza (Benson 1940-41))

Striped Pipit *Anthus lineiventris*

Range limits (from Chiwanga and Misuku Hills to the Shire escarpments) are based on pers. obs. The only miombo pipit recorded so far from the slopes of Mount Mulanje, and in southern Malawi generally much more common than *A. similis* where they coexist (Namizimu, Liwonde Hills, Shire highlands).

Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus*

The upper altitudinal limit is *c.* 1700 m, on the Kasitu stream near Chikangawa (*FD-L, RJD*).

Rosy-breasted Longclaw *Macronyx ameliae*

The southern limit of range is a dambo near Ntcheu (reported once by *MGD*) in the Kirk Range, in 1434D3. Several pairs were observed displaying at Mtengowanthena (Dowa) on 5 Mar. 1989 (*RDM*), whence there is also a breeding record back-dated to egg-laying Nov. (1989, *RDM*).

Black Cuckoo-shrike *Campephaga flava*

Although *DBH* seems to have recorded this species at Nchalo (in marginal habitat) mainly in the winter months (Mar.-Apr. to Oct.-Nov.), it is abundant throughout the summer months (Nov.-Apr.) in adjacent Lengwe (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002).

Grey Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina caesia*

By Nov. 2000 there was very little forest left on Thyolo Mtn but the species was still present in small remnants (*RJD & FD-L*); on the edge (Satemwa) a pair was feeding a juvenile on 15 Jan. 2003 (*AW*), which suggests egg-laying Nov. or early Dec. Both breeding records presented (Sep. and Nov.) are from Thyolo, the Nov. one (in Benson 1953, nest complete 5 Nov.) was not repeated in Benson & Benson (1977), whereas the Sep. one (from Vincent 1933-36) had been overlooked in Benson (1953).

The species was still recorded at Satemwa in 2005 (*CSp*).

White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina pectoralis*

Pairs calling in tall mopane woodland in Mwabvi at 150-200 m alt. (Nov. 2001, *RJD & FD-L*) could be breeding locally; breeding evidence was obtained at Golomoti at 550 m in Oct. 1989 (*RDM, N/2*).

Little Greenbul *Andropadus virens*

One bird ringed at Zomba was retrapped locally after eight years and 30 days, on 2 Jan. 1997.



Yellow-bellied Bulbul *Chlorocichla flaviventris*

The upper altitudinal limit is *c.* 1700 m, on Mvai Mtn in scrubby forest (*FD-L & RJD*, Nov. 1983). Located in closed-canopy, low *Brachystegia taxifolia* near Mzimba (1133C4,D3), more thicket than woodland (*FD-L & RJD*, Nov. 1986).

Cabanis's Bulbul *Phyllastrephus cabanisi*

One bird ringed at Zomba by *M & TR* in Dec. 1988 was retrapped 8 and 10 years later (Jan. 1997 and 1999) by *RDM*.

White-throated Nicator *Nicator gularis*

Recorded from Manchewe Falls (northern limit) in the past (Benson 1942) as well as more recently (Dec. 1982, *FD-L & RJD*); much of the forest around the falls was destroyed in the 1990s (D.W. Cornelius *in litt.*).

Miombo Rock Thrush *Monticola angolensis*

Altitudinal limits are from 500 m (Diwa Hill in Majete: Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002) to 2050 m (upper limit of tall woodland on western Nyika, Dowsett-Lemaire 2006). Seen on the fringe of Pine plantations on the South Viphya (*RDM*).

Olive Thrush *Turdus olivaceus*

Seen once only near the top of Michiru Mtn, 2 Oct. 1994 (*JH*), *c.* 1450 m.

Groundscraper Thrush *Psophocichla litsitsirupa*

Irregular presence of this species at Lilongwe (golf course) was noted by *RDM*.

Spotted Ground Thrush *Zoothera guttata*

Indications that the species is just surviving on the slopes of Thyolo Mtn come from a sighting of one in a little patch of forest at Satemwa Estate in Oct. 2000 (*IB*) and Oct. 2002 (*AW*), on the edge of the defunct forest reserve; and a couple were singing there in Dec. 2005 (*CSp*). At Soche Mtn, the species was last seen in 1996 and possibly heard in 2000 (*JH*). Observations at low altitude at the foot of Mulanje include: one on 24 Jul. 1987, and several times between 19 Jun.-19 Oct. 1988 (*NJ-S*), all at Esperanza Estate (720-760 m).

Starred Robin *Pogonocichla stellata*

One bird ringed at Zomba in Jul. 1989 by *M & TR* was retrapped locally in Jan. 1999 by *RDM*.

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*

Earliest arrival date is 15 Nov. 2000, one in song in thicket at Namanja, north of Lake Chilwa (*FD-L & RJD*), followed by 18 Nov. 1993 (Lilongwe, *RDM*). Often not noted in the Lower Shire before the end of Dec. or Jan., once only in late Nov. (*DBH*); in 2001 in the Lower Shire the rains started late and the first birds were noted on 20 Dec., becoming numerous before the end of the month (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). Leave rather suddenly end of Mar.-early Apr., with last three dates 4 Apr. 1988 (Kasungu), 5 Apr. 1989 (Nchalo) and 7 Apr. 2002 (Mwabvi). One in song 16 Apr. 1981 (Lilongwe) is exceptionally late and considered unconfirmed.

Cape Robin *Cossypha caffra*

The upper altitudinal limit is 2940 m near the peak of Mount Mulanje (1983, *NJ-S*). Was reported once near Mzuzu, on the edge of riparian (*c.* 1300 m) in Jun. 1986 (*IlaC*). Dzalanyama is mentioned in Benson & Benson (1977) but there are no specimens; the species does not breed there and was not found on several visits (including Mar. and Jun. 1983 to the top of the escarpment). C.W. Benson's visits to Dzalanyama were all in May (1936, 1950 and 1951, *in litt.* to *RJD*) and presumably his record was of a winter visitor.

Red-capped Robin *Cossypha natalensis*

We suspect that the species is recorded only in winter at Nchalo because the habitat (garden with fragmented thickets) is marginal. In nearby Lengwe N.P. it is present year-round and very common in the summer months in all large thickets and patches of deciduous forest; numbers increase in Apr. through immigration (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). The winter record from Soche Mtn is 13 Jul. 1996 (*JH et al.*) and the altitude

would have been *c.* 1300-1350 m.

Evidence that some birds are resident is shown by retraps of a ringed adult in Kalwe, half way through moult on 7 Apr. and in fresh plumage on 22 Jun., another ringed on 18 Nov. 1982 was recovered on 1 Sep. 1986 (*RJD*). One ringed at the foot of Mount Mulanje on 27 Aug. 1983 was present at the same site two years later (17 Nov.).

Also recorded year-round in the Malawi Hills (Long 1961b).

#### Boulder Chat *Pinarornis plumosus*

The species was first reported in Malawi at Mchinji Hill in Jul. 1978 (Chapman 1978), but subsequently (in 1985) PBN (in *Nyala* 11: 90) mentioned having seen Boulder Chat about 8 km south of Majete Hill in the winter of 1977; in the same *Nyala* volume Sherry (1985) wrote that the Boulder Chat was first discovered in Majete (on the slopes of Majete Hill) in Jun. 1984. We also found it on Mamine Hill in the north-west of Majete W.R. in Apr. 2002 (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). Other locations are: Dzalanyama F.R. (north-west and Kasitu rock area) where recorded breeding in Nov. 1985 and 1986 (*RDM*) and seen on regular occasions since; Nkanya Hill near Neno in Feb. and Jul. 1988 (*JDA*); Kangoli Hill in Chongoni F.R. in Nov. 2000 (*RJD* & *FD-L*). In addition there is a single record (presumably of a wanderer) from Michiru Mtn across the Rift, 4 Apr. 1987 (*JDA*).

#### Collared Palm Thrush *Cichladusa arquata*

Local in the north, reaching Kameme in the extreme north-west (where the only palm in thin riparian forest there is *Raphia farinifera*), at *c.* 1300 m (*FD-L* & *RJD*). Highly adaptable in its breeding sites, e.g. a nest with N/2 was discovered on a functioning air-conditioner in Liwonde N.P. (Oct. 1987, *LR*).

#### Central Bearded Scrub Robin *Erythropygia barbata*

On the northern Lake-shore just south of Karonga the species is found in tall miombo (Vinthukutu) as well as in deciduous *Acacia* thicket (Ngara, in 1034A1, *FD-L* & *RJD*); in the moister Lake-shore forests or transition woodland of the Nkhata Bay area, only *E. quadrivirgata* occurs. In *Vocifer* of Jan. 1999 (pp. 4-5) *JH* wrote that *E. barbata* was called up near Chintheche and in Nkuwadzi F.R. with tapes of the species; however we never found *E. barbata* in the Nkhata Bay forests and *NB* (*in litt.*) who was present at the time confirmed that, from illustrations, all birds seen in the area were indeed *quadrivirgata*. From many tape playback experiments carried out in Zambia by R. Stjernstedt, it is well known that either *Erythropygia* reacts to tapes of either species.

The southern limit appears to be Mvai Mtn in the Kirk Range (*FD-L* & *RJD*, 1983). [A record from "Ntcheu" in Belcher (1930) is apparently based on a nest (with adult collected, Dec. 1924) from the Bwanje Valley (*c.* 1434D2) found by Paget-Wilkes (1931); given the low altitude and habitat (thicket) and confirmed presence of *E. quadrivirgata* in the general area, the species is more likely to have been *E. quadrivirgata*. Benson & Benson (1977) either rejected this record without saying so or overlooked it.]

#### White-browed Scrub Robin *Erythropygia leucophrys*

Very adaptable locally, as found in tea fields in various places from Mulanje to Thyolo (Johnston-Stewart 1977, *FD-L* & *RJD*).

#### Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*

Details on the winter distribution at low altitude have been extracted from Belcher (1930), Benson (1940-41), Benson & Benson (1949, 1977), Long (1961b), as well as pers. obs., *MB*, *RDM*, *DBH* and other observers in recent years.

#### Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Rare in the southern half of the country, south to Zomba Mtn (three records by *JBH*, Oct., Jan. & Feb.). Extreme "normal" dates are 19 Oct. (Songwe, in Benson 1953) and 15 Apr. (1979 in Kasungu N.P., *NDH et al.*), with an exceptionally early observation of one on Nyika 24 Sep. 1992 (*RDM*). Most birds seem to leave in Feb. (no Mar. record traced), and there are only two Apr. records, the one above and one on the Nyika, 10 Apr. 1995 (*DF*).

Northern (Eurasian) Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Normal extreme dates are 30 Sep. (Benson 1951b at Mzimba) and 18 Mar. (1990, one female at Lifu, *RDM*). Records of birds over-summering at Chileka Airport are by Harrison (in Benson & Benson 1977: 238); "two pairs" by *TAH* for the year 1982 appears odd; in addition, a male in breeding dress was seen at Lilongwe 22 Jul. 1993 (*JR*) and one bird (without details) at Kawalazi 11 Jun. 1992 (*NJ-S*).

Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata*

Records from the Lower Shire are based on Long (1961b, 1976), Benson & Benson (1977) and a few recent reports (*VB*, *DBH*). Extreme dates of presence of adults are 8 May (South Viphya, Benson 1940-41) to 10 Dec. (Lilongwe Airport in 1989, *RDM*); a few immatures have been seen outside that period, on the Nyika in late Dec. 1979 and Mar. 1980 (*FD-L* & *RJD*) while one was collected near Dedza 2 Jan. (Benson 1940-41). Newman *et al.*'s (1992: 77) statement that the species is "present only in summer" is evidently a slip of the pen for "mainly in winter".

Interspecific aggression was noted between this species and *Oenanthe oenanthe* near Lilongwe Airport in Nov.-Dec. 1989 (*MM*, *RDM*).

Arnot's Chat *Myrmecocichla arnoti*

The record of a wanderer on the southern Lake-shore in Dec. 1991 is by *NZ*.

Mocking Chat *Myrmecocichla cinnamomeiventris*

The upper altitudinal limit of the species on Mount Mulanje has not been investigated, but it has been seen up to at least 2550 m by *RDM*; on the Nyika seen up to Chosi Rock at *c.* 2350 m (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006). Colonized the cathedral on Likoma Is. by 1981 (*SL*) if not earlier. Has re-used old nest of *Hirundo abyssinica* at Dzalanyama (Oct.-Nov. 1985, *RDM*).

Broad-tailed Warbler *Schoenicola platyurus*

Locally common on the South Viphya and Nyika Plateaux, in lush grass with some bracken, especially 1500-1800 m (Viphya) and 1900-2150 m (Nyika), rare above that (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006). In dambos near Lilongwe has been recorded in the dry season (Jul., *MM* & *RDM*) as well as in the rains and there are records on the high Nyika for all months except Aug.

Little Rush Warbler *Bradypterus baboecala*

Encountered regularly on the Viphya dams up to 1700 m at Kasitu Dam (Chikangawa, *FD-L* & *RJD*).

Cinnamon Bracken Warbler *Bradypterus cinnamomeus*

On Mount Mulanje recorded up to 2840 m on Sapitwa (*NJ-S*, 1983) and down the western slopes (Likabula) to 1300 m (*FD-L* & *RJD*, 1983).

African Moustached Warbler *Melocichla mentalis*

We have seen this species on the central plateau in the rains as well as in the dry season (Aug.-Sep.), at Namitete, Kasungu N.P. and elsewhere (1233D4). Its upper altitudinal limit (1750 m) is reached on the South Viphya Plateau (*FD-L* & *RJD*).

River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis*

The species was netted near Lilongwe (Chankhandwe Dambo) by *RDM* as follows: four individuals from 12-22 Dec. 1990, two on 26 Dec. 1992, one on 16 Apr. 1994 (the latest date in Malawi) and on 8 Jan. 1997. The earliest bird was trapped at Thyolo on 17 Nov. (1987, *M* & *TR*). In the Lower Shire in 2001-02 it was present from early Jan. (Mwabvi) to 14 Apr. (Lengwe), but was seen earlier in 2000 (one on 23 Nov. in Mwabvi) (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). Few birds netted at Nchalo (*DBH*) in the months of Dec., Jan., Feb. In addition, one was netted near Michiru (1534D2) on 1 Jan. 1996 (*JH*).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Earliest bird caught at Nchalo on 27 Nov. (Hanmer 1979b), with two seen on the Shire River near the Mozambique border as early as 9 Nov. (1955, Long 1961b); last departure dates of 28 Apr. 1990 (Monkey Bay, Anon.) and 3 May 1994 (Lilongwe, in full song, *RDM*).

Found numerous on the south-western edge of Lake Chilwa in Dec. 2000 (*RJD* & *FD-L*) and likely under-recorded elsewhere in the area.

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus s. scirpaceus*

Few recent records as follows: one in *Acacia* scrub on Karonga Lake-shore 13 Nov. 1987, the earliest date (*RDM*), Lilongwe (24 Jan. 1980, one singing in tall reeds and bushes by the Lilongwe River, *FD-L* & *RJD*), and one trapped at Chankhandwe 21 Feb. 1993, 25 Nov. 1993 and 19 Jan. 1994 by *RDM*, Mvuu in Liwonde N.P. (one netted 1 and 22 Mar. 1999 by *JH*), one trapped at Limbe (10 Mar. 1989 by *SL*). Others netted at Nchalo (Hanmer 1979b) until the late date (latest in Malawi) of 14 Apr. 1987 (*DBH*).

African Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus baeticatus*-group

Occurs on the Lake-shore north to Hara stream (*FD-L* & *RJD*, 1986). Known to breed near Lilongwe (N/2 Jan. 1985, C/2 Jan. 1987, *RDM*) and Nchalo (N/1 Feb. 1988, *DBH*).

(European) Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

Once recorded as high as 1350 m, edge of evergreen forest on Bangwe Hill (20 Dec. 1983, *FD-L* & *RJD*). Not normally arriving before Dec. or the very last week of Nov., one "seen" 3 Nov. at Nchalo is far too early to be acceptable, one netted 10 Nov. (1985, *DBH*) is also very early. The normal earliest dates are 23 Nov. 1991 at Lilongwe (*RDM*) and 21 Nov. 1996 at Blantyre (*JH*).

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*

Earliest arrival dates are 13 Oct. (1988, at Nchalo, *DBH*) followed by 17 Oct. (1992 at Lake Chilwa, *JR*) and 3 Nov. (1986, South Rukuru, *FD-L* & *RJD*); departs usually by early Apr., latest 1 May (1989 at Nchalo, *DBH*), otherwise 16 Apr. (also Nchalo, Hanmer 1979b).

Basra Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus griseldis*

Unpublished recent reports include two birds mistnetted at Lilongwe (14-21 Feb. and 25 Nov. 1993, *RDM*), three ringed at Mvuu (two on 1 Mar. and one on 22 Mar. 1999, *JH*), and one seen in *Lantana* thicket on northern shore of Lake Chilwa (15 Nov. 2000, *RJD*). The latter is the earliest date; latest departure dates are 11 Apr. 2002 in Lengwe (*FD-L*) and 12 Apr. at Nchalo (Hanmer 1979b).

Lesser Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris*

The upper altitudinal limit is around 1600-1650 m, on the South Viphya (Benson 1940-41, also *FD-L et al.*).

[Olivaceous or Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais pallida* or *H. languida*

A grey *Hippolais* warbler was seen in *Acacia* in Vwaza Marsh, 28 Nov. 2002; it was flicking its tail in a conspicuous manner, but not enough details were noted to identify positively either of the above species (*WMc*.)]

Olive-tree Warbler *Hippolais olivetorum*

Extreme dates in recent years are 10 Nov. (1987 at Nthalire, *RDM*) and 16 Apr. (1987 at Nchalo, one netted by *DBH*). Monthly records are extracted from Benson & Benson (1977) and recent records in the *Nyala/Vocifer* literature, in addition to *DBH* (Jan. for 1434B2).

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

Extreme dates are 7 Oct. (1989 at Vwaza Marsh, Anon.) and 31 Mar. (1975 at Liwonde, Garcia in Benson & Benson 1977).

African Yellow Warbler *Chloropeta natalensis*

Dated records at low altitude are extracted from: Benson (1942), Benson (1953), Benson & Benson (1948b, 1977), Long (1961b), *RDM* and *DBH* (25 individuals caught at Nchalo by 1985, only between 30 Mar. and 10 Oct.).

Green-capped Eremomela *Eremomela scotops*

Occasional wanderers into gardens at Lilongwe Feb.-Aug. (1991-92, *RDM*), where main vegetation is open *Acacia-Combretum* woodland. Also found in tall mopane and mixed *Combretum* woodland in the Shire Valley

(from Liwonde N.P. to Mwabvi W.R., *FD-L & RJD*).

Yellow-bellied Eremomela *Eremomela icteropygialis*

Recorded regularly up to 1600 m (e.g. extreme north-west at Chiwanga) and once as high as 1800-1900 m on the south-western scarp of Nyika (*FD-L & RJD*).

Red-capped Crombec *Sylvietta ruficapilla*

Surprisingly we recorded a pair in the Malawi Hills (1635C3) in Aug. 1983 at 750 m, but only *S. whytii* to the north (1635C1) in the Mulaka Hills at 200 m (Mwabvi). The northernmost square (Misukus, 0933C2) is based on Benson (1937) only, but there are recent records from 0933C4 (*DPC*) and 0933D3 (*FD-L & RJD*); there are several recent observations in the Kirk Range, including by *NJ-S* for 1534B1.

In the north of Malawi comes close to *S. whytii* in the Mzuzu area and on the South Viphya (*FD-L et al.*).

Red-faced Crombec *Sylvietta whytii*

The northern population reaches the North Viphya Plateau (including Uzumara Mtn, *RJD & FD-L*) south to Bana and Dwangwa Estate on the Lake-shore (*FD-L et al.*); it marginally interdigitates with *S. ruficapilla* near Mzuzu and on the South Viphya Plateau (where we saw *S. whytii* near the eastern scarp, in 1133D2 and 1233B2, the latter on the Kawandama ridge at 1700 m at the upper altitudinal limit, Nov. 1986).

There are so far no confirmed records from Lengwe N.P.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Extreme dates are 18 Sep. (1984 in Ruo Gorge, Mulanje, *JBH & PEH*) and 5 May (near Mangochi in 1979, *MGD & JHo*, Lilongwe in 1990, Anon.). *RDM* apparently ringed the subspecies *yakutensis* at Lilongwe.

Yellow-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus ruficapilla*

This species is of irregular occurrence in the hills around Blantyre: e.g. a pair seen (and heard) on Soche Mtn on 14 Nov. 2000 (*FD-L*) is the only record for that locality.

Yellow-bellied Hyliota *Hyliota flavigaster*

Very few observations in south-eastern Malawi, including the following unpublished records west of the Rift at Phirilongwe Hill (seen May 1986, *JDA & NJ-S*, previously collected there, Benson & Benson 1977), and east of the Rift: Namizimu (*NJ-S*), Chinduzi Hill (in the Liwonde Hills) with pair nest-building Nov. 2000 (*FD-L & RJD*), which is just north of an old breeding record mentioned for Lirangwe in Benson & Benson (1977), at the southern limit of range (1535C1).

*RDM* saw a male wanderer in *Acacia-Combretum* woodland in Lilongwe Sep. 1992.

Southern Hyliota *Hyliota australis*

Much less common in Kasungu N.P. than congener (*FD-L & RJD*), also the less common of the two at Dzalanyama and Mchinji (*RDM*). Found nest-building on Mchinji Hill at 1600 m (*RDM*) at the upper altitudinal limit, whereas the lower limit in the breeding season is 400 m (Majete W.R., Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). Records of birds wandering to lower altitudes or unusual habitat include a pair in Lengwe (in *Acacia nigrescens*) Aug. 1983 (*RJD & FD-L*), one in Lengwe Aug. 1994 (*RDM*), one at Nchalo on 31 Aug. (1983, *VB*), one in *Terminalia* woodland on the Shire in Majete 29 Mar. 2002 (*RJD & FD-L*), one in a Lilongwe garden in *Acacia-Combretum* (May 1992, *RDM*) and in riverine thicket in Liwonde N.P. (Jul. 1992, *LL*).

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Extreme dates are 23 Sep. (1960 at Limbe, Jeffrey in Benson & Benson 1977) and 25 Apr. (1989 at Limbe, Anon.) and a very late bird (sick?) on 11 May 1989 at Lilongwe (*RDM*). A record from 3 Jul. (1986), without details, is considered improbable.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Recorded more frequently in the north (e.g. Nyika, where annual) than in the south. Extreme dates for the whole country are from 9 Nov. (Nyika, Dowsett-Lemaire 2006) to 15 Apr. (a male on South Viphya, 1990, *RDM*). This is the only April record, second latest date in the country being 17 Mar. (South Viphya in 1988,

*FK*). South of Mangochi Mtn (one Nov. record in Benson 1953), it has been observed only in Dec.-Jan.: at Limbe (few netted by *SL* Dec. 1987, Jan. 1988, Jan. 1989), at Zomba (Jan. 1975 in Garcia 1976) and Mount Mulanje (one female at 2120 m 26 Dec. 1988, *RDM*, several birds in Dec. 1995-Jan. 1996, *KB in litt.*).

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Extreme dates are 16 Nov. (1991 at Lilongwe, *RDM*) and 27 Apr. (1985 at Chelinda, *MD*). Sources of monthly records come from Benson & Benson (1949, 1977), Long (1961b, 1976), the *Nyala/Vocifer* literature, and unpublished observations from the Nyika (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006).

Brown Parisoma *Sylvia lugens*

A pair said to be "very active at nest" on Chongoni Mtn on 18 Aug. 1996 (*FM & JGMW*), presumably nest-building as early as this, but details were not recorded.

Ayres's Cisticola *Cisticola ayresii*

Discovered on the main grassy plateau at Jembya (around 1900 m alt.) in Dec. 1982, with several displaying (*FD-L & RJD*).

Wailing Cisticola *Cisticola lais*

Locally up to 2800 m on Mount Mulanje (Sapitwa, *NJ-S*).

Tinkling Cisticola *Cisticola rufilatus*

Discovered in four squares in short depauperate woodland in the north-west of Malawi in 1986 (*FD-L, RJD*); the southern limit is in the Kirk Range (Dzonze), based on Benson (1942).

It is listed for Kasungu N.P. (Medland 1994) but details of the source are not available.

Neddicky Cisticola *Cisticola fulvicapilla*

The upper altitudinal limit is around 1700 m (Chiwanga Hill in the north-west, and South Viphya) in miombo woodland (*FD-L & RJD*).

Trilling Cisticola *Cisticola woosnami*

The limits of range and altitude as indicated are all based on pers. obs.

Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops*

Recorded up to 1600-1650 m in the north of the country and up to at least 1400 m at Namizimu in the south-east (*FD-L & RJD*).

Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans*

A pair located (singing) near the beacon of the Malawi Hills in 1983 at 900 m is at the lowest altitudinal limit, and we found it up to 2350 m on the Nyika Plateau (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006). We searched for this species in the Namizimu, Mangochi and Namwera highlands but found it only on the higher reaches of Mangochi Mtn.

Black-lored Cisticola *Cisticola nigriloris*

Benson (1940-41) recorded this species as low as 1400 m above Nchenachena (eastern Nyika) in Jul. and Dec.; we found it even lower on the moist eastern scarp of Uzumara Mtn, at 1300 m (Nov. 1986). Rare or at least local in the Mafingas, not found in gullies above Chisenga, but further north, on edge of riparian (*Acacia abyssinica*) at 1720 m (Dec. 1982, *FD-L & RJD*). Chimaliro Mtn (North Viphya) was already identified as the southern limit of range by Benson (1942) and confirmed by more observations in the 1980s (*FD-L & RJD*).

Red-winged Warbler *Heliolais erythropterus*

The lowest altitudinal limit is 400 m in miombo woodland just north of Majete W.R., followed by 600 m in the north-west of Majete (*FD-L & RJD*). Absent from the Lake-shore plains *sensu stricto* but present on some ridges or small hills just above it as indicated (*FD-L, RJD, ID*). Found commonly up to 1700 m on the Viphya Plateaux and Mafinga Mts, locally up to 1900 m at Uzumara (*FD-L, RJD*). A record of the species breeding at Chiromo (Walker in Long 1961b) is considered unacceptable, and we doubt it occurs in Lengwe N.P.

(listed in Medland n.d.) as there is no suitable habitat.

#### Rudd's Apalis *Apalis ruddi*

The four observations from Lengwe N.P. are as follows: one in Oct. 1981 north of North Hide (*DBH*), a group of four in Nov. 1983 (*DBH*), one in Oct. 1986 (*JDA*) and last one in Nov. 1988 (*ID*, who reported *in litt.* its absence on five subsequent visits to 1993). We completely failed to find it in 2001-02 and in 2000 scout H. Munthali informed *JH* that he had not seen the species for many years. A female with active brood patch was netted at Nchalo 2 Jan. 1978 and another 27 Mar. 1989; a second female netted 23 Apr. 1989 was moulting. Breeding records in Urban *et al.* 1997 ("eggs laid Mar.") are based on capture of juveniles which could not be aged accurately (*DBH in litt.*). Not reported in Malawi since *DBH* left Nchalo (in 1989) and the thicket remnants on the edge of her garden were destroyed. Not found in Nyala Park (Sucoma) either in Apr. 2002, where there may not be enough thicket habitat.

#### White-winged Apalis *Apalis chariessa*

The mid-altitude forest at Dzonze where one male was discovered in Dec. 1981 (*NJ-S*) is only 12 ha in size (as measured on aerial photograph). The species was searched for but not found there again in Nov. 1983; the rest of the evergreen forest in the area is at much higher altitude and not suitable for this species. Reported from marginal riparian forest near Blantyre in 1994 and 1999 (*JG*) and also the western side of Michiru Mtn in 1994-95 (including adult with juvenile Dec. 1994, *JH*). On Michiru Mtn most of the patches of riparian forest (on the south-eastern slopes, amid Pine plantations) have not been explored but could be very suitable.

First discovered nest-building in *JGMW*'s garden in Zomba by *FD-L* in Nov. 2000, in a large *Pinus patula*; subsequently seen nest-building in the same tree in various fruitless attempts at different heights in the rains of 2002 and 2003 (*JGMW*). In 2000 only the female was seen building, whereas Benson & Benson (1947a) had observed both male and female working on the nest. In Feb. 2004 nesting was again attempted in Pine tree (Zomba), with *Usnea* added (*JGMW*), with incubation in progress late Mar. and feeding in Apr. The female rebuilt the nest in late Aug. 2004, with feeding observed from 18 Sep.; nesting started again in Jan. 2005, but the female disappeared and three small dead chicks were found in the nest on 8 Feb. (*JGMW*). Nesting was apparently successful in Apr. 2005 (both parents feeding at nest late Apr.), as two juveniles were seen in Jul. (*JGMW*). Nest-building was also seen in Jan. 2005 in a forest fragment on Satemwa Estate, Thyolo (*CSp*).

#### Miombo Barred Warbler *Camaroptera undosa*

Found regularly up to 1700 m alt., locally to 1800 m (southern Nyika, Dowsett-Lemaire 2006). On the Shire scarps at lower altitudes recorded from the slopes of the Malawi Hills (Nyamatika stream in Long 1976, at 550 m), and lower down still in the western half of Majete W.R. (in miombo, 350-700 m) and in tall mopane woodland in Mwabvi at 150 m (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). Recorded as "exceptionally in mopane" by Benson & Benson (1977) for the Liwonde area, and recently (2002) also found in mopane woodland in Liwonde N.P. (*WMc*). An exceptional wanderer at Lengwe, 10 Oct. 1991 in 1634B1 (*RDM*), an area of thick-et-clump savanna.

#### Slaty Flycatcher *Melaenornis chocolatinus*

Previously known south to Dedza (Benson & Benson 1977), the current southern limit of range was extended to Chirobwe Mtn in 1434D1 (1983, *FD-L* & *RJD*); we also found it in neighbouring 1434C2 on the edge of small graveyard forest (Nov. 2000).

#### Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis*

Several holding territories in miombo in Majete W.R., Dec., at an altitude of *c.* 400 m (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002); regular up to 1700-1800 m in miombo in the north, or slightly higher; once as high as 2300 m (Chelinda, Dowsett-Lemaire 2006). One in a Baobab at Namanja (north of Lake Chilwa) at 620 m, 16 Nov. 2000 (*FD-L* & *RJD*) was merely passing through; all records of wintering birds are from miombo woodland.

Extreme dates are 23 Oct. (1986 at Chiwanga Hill, *FD-L* & *RJD*) and 21 Mar. (1997, Chipome Valley on Nyika, *JH et al.*).

#### Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Recorded regularly in the highlands (Nyika, up to 2300 m, Dowsett-Lemaire 2006) as well as in the lowlands

– one of the commonest Palaearctic migrants in the Lower Shire Valley as indicated. Extreme dates are 7 Oct. (1976 on the Nyika, *RJD*) followed by 9 Oct. (Kasungu in 1987, Lilongwe in 1988) to first half of Apr.: 9 Apr. (Blantyre in 2000, *JH*) and 13 Apr. (Johnston-Stewart 1977).

#### Dusky Flycatcher *Muscicapa adusta*

Information on altitudinal movements in the off-season (Apr.-Aug.) comes from: Benson (1942, 1944), Benson & Benson (1948b), Long (1961b), and the *Nyala/Vocifer* literature (especially *DBH* for Nchalo, other winter records from the Lake-shore and Lilongwe); in 2002 the first individual appeared in the Lower Shire (Lengwe) on 15 Apr., and there is a Jul. record from Mwabvi (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). The latest date for the "Low veld" near Nsanje is 8 Sep. (Long 1961b).

#### Böhm's Flycatcher *Muscicapa boehmi*

The northern limit of range is near Nthalire on the western scarp of the Nyika (*FD-L* & *RJD*, 1983). One recent observation of *M. boehmi* re-using old nest of *Plocepasser rufoscapulatus* (with nestlings fed on 16 Nov. 1987, Mphongole Mtn near Kasungu, *FK*).

#### Lead-coloured Flycatcher *Myioparus plumbeus*

This species appears particularly liable to be confused or misidentified; the localized distribution in the north is largely based on our own observations (from Igembe Hill in 0933D2 to Vwaza Marsh, and Bua Camp in 1234C3) and also on Benson (1940-41, 1942) from the Mafingas to Njakwa Gorge. Thus recorded up to *c.* 1550 m in the foothills of the Mafingas (Benson 1940-41) and Jembya Plateau (*RJD* & *FD-L*, 1983). There are no documented records from the Kasungu area nor Kasungu N.P.

There appear to be very few records from Dzalanyama, including a tape-recording by C. Chappuis (that appears in the background of *Phoeniculus cyanomelas*, Chappuis 2000); this was recorded in Aug. 1980 (C. Chappuis *in litt.*). From the Dedza region and Kirk Range, the species occurs throughout south-eastern Malawi.

#### Woodwards' Batis *Batis fratrum*

In Dec. 1999 only one male was located in a remnant of forest amid devastation on the Malawi Hills (*JH* & *LDCF*).

#### Chinspot Batis *Batis molitor*

In the Liwonde area is common on the plains, with *B. soror* confined to the hills (Chinduzi, *RDM*, *FD-L* & *RJD*, Chinguni, *JH* and Chikala, *FD-L* & *RJD*).

#### Livingstone's Flycatcher *Erythrocerus livingstonei*

The upper altitudinal limit is 1200 m in riparian thicket in Tuma F.R. (on the Dedza-Salima escarpment, *JC et al.* in 1977 and subsequent records (*RDM* in 1986)). One unusual record of a wanderer on the edge of forest in Mikundi Estate, 1000 m, 18 Apr. 1998 (*JH* & *CHi*).

#### White-tailed Blue Flycatcher *Elminia albicauda*

Range limits from Kameme in the extreme north-west (*RJD* & *FD-L*) to the southern tip of the Kirk Range (breeding record at Neno in Benson & Benson (1947b), also some recent records), Zobue (Vincent 1933-36) and Thambani (Benson & Benson 1977) both in 1534C2. Regularly encountered up to *c.* 2000 m on the Nyika Plateau, only as wanderers above that, to 2220 m (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006), and Benson (1940-41) found it up to 2050 m in the Mafingas. One seasonal wanderer to Mitongwe in Jun. 1942 (Dent in Benson & Benson 1977), at 600 m below the Dedza escarpment.

#### African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis*

A winter observation at Soche Mtn (1350 m) in Jul. (1996, *JH*) is at an unusual altitude. *DBH* (in *Nyala* 1989, 13: 91) wrote that the race *granti* occurs all year round at Nchalo, but in fact *granti* occurs only in winter whereas *plumbeiceps* is the local breeding form.

#### Arrow-marked Babbler *Turdoides jardineii*

A brood of three newly-hatched pulli fed by seven-eight full-grown birds, Lilongwe (26 Sep. 1988, *RDM*).



*Southern Black Tit Parus niger*

The northerly limits of the southern population at Benga (1334A4) and Makanjila (1334D2) are from Benson & Benson (1977), but there are recent records from neighbouring squares and throughout the south-east to Nsanje; the northern population is most common in Vwaza Marsh (many recent observations) with one old record from nearby Katumbi (Benson & Benson 1977). Whether or not the species occurs on the Kasungu plateau needs further investigation. The species was seen eating nectar of *Erythrina* in Sep. (Machemba Hill, *FD-L*).

*White-winged Black Tit Parus leucomelas*

There are many records from the Misukus south to Chongoni F.R., the southern limit (Dzonze) coming from Benson & Benson (1977: 37). Common in the highlands, up to 2200 m in open wooded grassland and riparian scrub (Nyika: Dowsett-Lemaire 2006).

*Miombo Grey Tit Parus griseiventris*

There are old as well as recent records from geographical range limits: foothills of the Mafingas (0933C4, Benson 1940-41, *DPC* in 2002) and the Misukus (0933D3, *FD-L* & *RJD* in 1986) in the north, and Zobue-Thambani in the south (Vincent 1933-36 for Zobue, *RDM* in 1987 for Thambani). Recorded from 600 m (ridge on the Nkhotakota escarpment at Bua Camp, *FD-L* & *RJD*), usually above 900 m, to 2000 m (Nyika: Dowsett-Lemaire 2006).

*Red-and-blue Sunbird Anthreptes anchietae*

Near the southern limit of range there are breeding records from Dedza (Benson 1951a), Mphunzi (Benson 1940-41) and more recently Dzalanyama (*HC* in 1980). Off-season wandering noted at Kamuzu Academy near Kasungu in Mar. 1990 (*GM*).

*Violet-backed Sunbird Anthreptes longuemarei*

Present in miombo woodland at the lowest altitudinal limit (western Majete near 400 m, Dec., several in song), but only a wanderer lower down (100 m) in Lengwe (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). Seen nest-building 29 Oct. in Dzalanyama while accompanied by a dependent juvenile (*RDM*, 1989).

*Olive Sunbird Nectarinia olivacea*

The lower limit of 450 m comes from riparian forest in the Kalulu Hills (*NJ-S*); otherwise common from c. 500 m in the Lake-shore forests to 1900 m in the north, regular to 2050-2100 m on the south-western Nyika (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006). One male was retrapped at Zomba after 14 years (ringed in Dec. 1989 by *M* & *TR*, retrapped in Dec. 2003 by *RDM*) and another male after 11 years (from 1992 to 2003).

*Green-headed Sunbird Nectarinia verticalis*

Regularly encountered on the South Viphya south to 12°S (Benson 1937, *FD-L* & *RJD*) and once as far south as Lwanjati (*FK*, 1988).

*Black Sunbird Nectarinia amethystina*

Wandering to the floor of the Shire Valley occasionally, at Nchalo (May-Sep. *DBH*), Chikwawa (Aug.: Benson & Benson 1948b), Kasinthula (Jun., *AfWC*).

*Scarlet-chested Sunbird Nectarinia senegalensis*

Details of ringing recoveries are given in *Nyala* 1989 (14: 131).

*White-bellied Sunbird Nectarinia talatala*

Limits of the northern population all based on recent observations by *RJD*, *FD-L*, *RDM*, *JR*; in the north recorded up to 1110 m (Uledi) and marginally 1300 m (dry miombo near Nthalire, *FD-L* & *RJD*); in the south recorded up to 850 m in the foothills of Michiru Mtn (Nov. 1994, Anon.).

*Oustalet's White-bellied Sunbird Nectarinia oustaleti*

One acceptable record as indicated based on a description supplied by the main observer (*RDM*), who was accompanied by *CM* and *NJ-S*. This follows the sighting of a pair of "white-bellied" sunbird in miombo at

1300 m in the same area in Nov. 1986 (Johnston-Stewart 1987), published as possible *oustaleti* because of the habitat and altitude, although the short description included points suggesting *N. talatala* (especially the bluish metallic throat of the male).

Miombo Double-collared Sunbird *Nectarinia manoensis*

On the Nyika observed up to 2050 m at the upper limit of miombo woodland, but never in montane scrub above this (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006), whereas on Mount Mulanje has been collected and observed up to 2130 m (Penry & Talbot 1975, Benson & Benson 1977, RDM Dec. 1987).

Eastern Double-collared Sunbird *Nectarinia mediocris*

One bird ringed on the slopes of Zomba Mtn in Jan. 1992 (*M & TR*) was retrapped locally in Jan. 1999 (*RDM*). Although recorded as a wanderer down to Zomba town (3000 feet or 915 m) in Jun. (Garcia in Benson & Benson 1977), it seems to be resident on the lower slopes at 1050-1100 m in a forested garden (*JGMW, FD-L & RJD*); recorded down to 700 m at Mulanje Jan. (Benson & Benson 1977).

Shelley's Sunbird *Nectarinia shelleyi*

Recorded in Kasungu N.P., Nkhotakota W.R., and the South Rukuru Valley north to 1133C4 (*FD-L & RJD*), and Vwaza Marsh (*NJ-S*); several records from Dzalanyama (*RDM et al.*), Kasungu plateau (*FK*), Chongoni F.R. (*RDM*), wandering to Lilongwe gardens in the off-season (*RDM*) and in S. Region locally from Phirilongwe (*JDA*), Makanjila to Thyolo (*NJ-S et al.*). One breeding record from Kasungu District of a fledgling fed 24 Nov. 1987 (*FK*).

Purple-banded Sunbird *Nectarinia bifasciata*

On the Lake-shore, particularly common in the Nkhata Bay-Chintheche region year-round (*FD-L & RJD*), and in the past also from Karonga to the Songwe River, occurring now in small numbers (e.g. Igembe Hill, *FD-L & RJD*). Small population present on the Dzalanyama-Kasungu plateau (several observers), Lilongwe (*RDM et al.*) and the South Rukuru Valley in 1233A2 (*RJD & FD-L*). Unusual observation at Chipata Mtn at 1600 m in 1980 (*NDH*). Widespread in the Shire Valley with complicated movements, data from the Nchalo area based on *DBH*.

Coppery Sunbird *Nectarinia cuprea*

Known to breed down to c. 500 m in Liwonde N.P. (Apr. 1993, *RDM*). Details of movements at Nchalo over several years from *DBH*; occasionally seen outside the normal period, as in Feb. at Ngabu (1979, *NDH*), rarely Jan. Sucoma (1991, *RDM*).

Yellow-tufted Malachite Sunbird *Nectarinia famosa*

Absent from south-central Malawi, reaching its southern limit in the country at Lwanjati (South Viphya, *RJD & FD-L* in 1983, as in Benson 1951b).

Scarlet-tufted Malachite Sunbird *Nectarinia johnstoni*

Two males were seen by M. Iwarsson on the ridge above Chisenga, Mafinga Mtn, at 2200 m on 23 Jul. 1978. This must be very close to the Zambian border.

Bronze Sunbird *Nectarinia kilimensis*

Reaches its southern limit in the Kirk Range, near Nsambi at 1300 m (*FD-L & RJD*, 1983). Comes down the Viphya eastern scarp to about 1250 m (below Chamambo and below Uzumara, *FD-L & RJD*).

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Extreme dates of passage are 14 Oct. (1986 near Rumphu, *FD-L & RJD*) followed by 15 Oct. (1986 on Nyika, *FD-L*), to 30 Mar. (1984 at Nchalo, *DBH*) – also 26 Mar. in Nsanje District (Long 1976) – and very latest on 4 Apr. (1994, two females in Liwonde N.P., *RDM*). Only one observation later than this, 23 Apr. 1989 (in forest on Thyolo Mtn) which is considered doubtful (*O. auratus?*).

One immature harassed by *O. auratus* at Dzalanyama (Nov. 1991, *RDM*).

Green-headed Oriole *Oriolus chlorocephalus*

A wanderer seen in Pine plantation near Thyolo on 26 Jun. 1983 (NJ-S). A pair feeding at nest in a large patch of forest at Mwalantunzi Estate on 4 Nov. 1983; the nest was situated at a height of 14-15 m in a *Rothmannia manganjae* (FD-L & RJD).

Sousa's Shrike *Lanius souzae*

Range limits from the north-western scarp of the Nyika (FD-L & RJD) to Thyolo District (Johnston-Stewart 1977). Observed up to c. 1800 m on the southern slopes of the Nyika (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006), and down to c. 600 m on the Nkhotakota escarpment (Bua Camp, FD-L & RJD). In the Shire Highlands near Blantyre has been reported occasionally in marginal habitat (including *Eucalyptus*, JG), but more details and verification are needed. At Dzalanyama at least 20 birds were supposedly seen on 20-21 Mar. 1979 (JRA), but the size of the area investigated is not given and this observation is considered abnormal, as well as another of over 20 perched on fences and low branches near roadside on 2 Jun. 1974 (BAR & JR).

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*

Few records on southward passage: earliest 30 Oct. (Long 1961b), latest 22 Nov. (Benson 1942), also 2 Nov. (Benson & Benson 1949) and a couple of recent records (3 Nov. 1993 on the slopes of Thyolo Mtn (JWh), 11 Nov. 1993 on the Nyika (RDM)). Exceptionally as late as 17 Dec. (1987 in Kasungu N.P., FK) and 23 Dec. (Long 1976). January is unlikely to be correct (Dent in Benson 1953, Long 1961b). More common on northward passage, apart from an early record 27 Feb. 1982 (Kasinthula, WS) from mid- or late Mar. (earliest 14-15 Mar. 1986 at Chikwawa, DBH). Noted then as locally common, e.g. by Benson & Benson (1949) for the Karonga area, and again more recently on 10-11 Apr. 1989 (SJ); latest dates 20 Apr. (1992 at Mponela, RDM), 21 Apr. (1990 on the Nyika, MM) and 25 Apr. (1991 at Lilongwe Airport, Anon.)

Magpie Shrike *Urolestes melanoleucus*

A sight record of one from near Liwonde 8 Mar. 1994 must be left unconfirmed, as the observer saw it briefly from a moving vehicle and did not realize the unlikelihood of the observation (LL *in litt.*).

Brubru *Nilaus afer*

DBH (*in litt.*) confirmed that the correct time span of the bird she retrapped at Nchalo is three years, and not eight as in Hanmer (1989b).

Marsh Tchagra *Tchagra minutus*

One immature was netted by DBH wandering into her garden at Nchalo on 26 Feb. 1985. The most westerly record (1333C3) is by MGD, in an area with many dambos.

Orange-breasted Bush Shrike *Malaconotus sulfureopectus*

Records at high altitude, in addition to the Nyika, include Dedza Mtn at 2050 m (18 Oct. 1987, RDM).

Olive Bush Shrike *Malaconotus olivaceus*

On 8 Sep. 1996 JH & CHi saw birds of both *M. olivaceus* and *M. multicolor* "within metres of each other" in a small patch of evergreen forest in the Chambe basin; at this altitude (above 1800 m) *M. multicolor* is more likely to have been a wanderer.

Gorgeous Bush Shrike *Malaconotus viridis*

DBH caught an immature in her garden (Nchalo) in Apr. 1975; there were still some extensive thickets in the area outside Lengwe, later cleared by Sucoma.

Square-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus ludwigii*

We found this species in riparian forest in the foothills of Mangochi Mtn (Dec. 2000), but never in the sub-montane forest at 1550-1700 m; a wanderer on Mount Mulanje (Lichenya) as high as 1800 m was seen on 25 Dec. 1986 by RDM, in open bracken-briar!

African Red-winged Starling *Onychognathus morio*

A flock of c. 60 birds noted by RDM on Dedza Mtn on 11 Sep. 1994, moving around forest patches.

Slender-billed (Chestnut-winged) Starling *Onychognathus tenuirostris*

Discovered on the South Viphya Plateau in 1980-1982: pair at Chikangawa on the Kasitu stream Jan. 1980 and Nov. 1982, four at Kawandama Dec. 1982, pair at waterfalls below Kawandama ridge in Nov. 1986 (all by *FD-L & RJD*).

Lesser Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chloropterus*

A flock of c. 100 feeding on figs (*F. natalensis*) in Lilongwe city centre mid-May to early Jun. 1988 (*RDM*); 500 seen once in Nsanje District in June (Long 1961b); 2000+ roosting at Chitedze Dam (near Lilongwe) on 31 Jul. 1992 and up to 5000 at Chankhandwe Dambo (Lilongwe) late Sep. of the same year (*RDM*).

Southern Long-tailed Starling *Lamprotornis mevesii*

One record of a single in Chingale F.R. 1 Apr. 1990 (*RDM & MB*), an area with some dry miombo and remnants of mopane woodland, is presumably of a wanderer; but might have bred in the past in more extensive habitat.

Amethyst Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster*

Information on their complicated movements is taken from Benson (1940-41), Long (1961b, 1976), pers. obs. and the *Vocifer/Nyala* literature.

White-winged Starling *Neocichla gutturalis*

Breeding evidence based on pers. obs. of dependent fledglings on 1-2 Dec. 1986 (Vwaza Marsh), occupied nest on 19 Nov. 1998 (*NB et al.*) and nest-building observed early Nov. 2002 (*MvBe*).

Wattled Starling *Creatophora cinerea*

Small flocks feeding on fruit of *Lannea stuhlmanni* in Lengwe, Jan. 2002 with c. 20 *Lamprotornis chloropterus* and some *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). Frequently associated with *L. chloropterus* in the Lilongwe area too (1991-1994, 1998): few in Jan., Apr. and up to 60 in pre-roost flocks of *L. chloropterus* 20 Jul. 1991, up to 50 throughout the year in 1992 with larger flocks of *L. chloropterus*, maximum of c. 130 on 31 Jul.; again regular in flocks of *L. chloropterus* around Lilongwe Feb.-Jul. 1993; 50 with 100s of *L. chloropterus* at Lilongwe Sep. 1994 (all *RDM*); pair in group of *L. chloropterus* at Lilongwe Airport 28 Mar. 1998 (*JH*). Eight seen with a flock of *L. chalybaeus* in Apr.-May 1984 at Nkhudzi Bay (*JBH & PEH*) and four seen with same in Liwonde N.P. in Sep.-Nov. 1992 (*LL & RN*).

Largest flocks observed near Lilongwe (60 to 130 Jul. as above), and in Lengwe N.P. (c. 200 on 28 Aug. 1990 (*ID*)); also at least 80 at the northern end of Lake Chilwa on 27 Aug. 1989 (*JDA & NJ-S*). *JH* found it common in late Feb.-early Mar. 1999 in Liwonde N.P., seen with young on 5 Mar. Single males with developed wattles have been seen at Liwonde Feb. 1975 and Kasungu N.P. Dec. 1973 (Benson & Benson 1977); more recently two males with developed wattles were reported from a party of eight in Liwonde N.P. on 8 Feb. 1996 (*RN*).

Yellow-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus africanus*

Historical records are based on: Benson (1951b) for Katumbi ("many" on c. 50 Buffalo), Benson (1944) for "10 miles north" of Nkhotakota, Benson & Benson (1977) for Ngara in Dowa District, Vincent (1933-36) for Namitete, Long (1961b) for Kanyimbi on the edge of Mwabvi, and Belcher (1930) for Chiromo. The species was recorded in Liwonde N.P. in the 1970s by Stead (1979); by 1995 *JH* remarked (in *Vocifer*) there had not been any sightings for a long time. It was confirmed to survive in Nkhotakota W.R. in Sep. 1996 by *MD & DPC* (one on Eland with *B. erythrorhynchus* near Chipata Mtn), first observation since the 1940s' Nkhotakota record. Inexplicably rare in Lengwe N.P., with one seen 29 Oct. 2000 (*MvBe et al.*) and two in Dec. 2001 (*RJD & FD-L*). One old record of *Buphagus* sp. on the South Viphya 10 miles east of Mount Hora on Roan Antelope (Benson 1942). Largest number ever mentioned is two flocks of 10 and six birds in Vwaza Marsh (on Kudu, Nov. 2002, *WMc*).

Host species mentioned in the old literature include Buffalo (Benson 1944, 1951b). Recent reports have also mentioned Buffalo in Vwaza Marsh (*JH* in 1995) and Lengwe (*MvBe, RJD & FD-L* in 2000-01), Eland and Roan Antelope on Nyika (Critchlow & Haugaard 1996, also *DF* in 2000), Eland in Nkhotakota W.R. (*MD & DPC* in 1996), Zebra on Nyika (*DF* in 2000), Sable and Kudu in Liwonde N.P. (Stead 1979), Kudu in Vwaza Marsh (*WMc* in 2002), Hippopotamus in Vwaza Marsh (*JH* in 1995) and Kasungu N.P.

(Lifupa, Anon. in 1994). The only breeding record (Kasungu N.P.) was obtained in 1991 by *FL*.

Red-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythrorhynchus*

There are historical records from Mpimbe (or Mpimbi) from Shelley (1901) and Blantyre (one at a bird-bath, Benson & Benson 1948a); more recently (25 Jan. 1989) in the Shire Highlands one was seen on cattle at Chikunda Farm (Michiru, *JH*) while another was seen at a bird-bath in Jul. 1975 at Namitete (Benson & Benson 1977). Reports of the species feeding on cattle also come from Chiromo (1950 and 1955 in Long 1961b). Wild host species at Lengwe in recent years include Buffalo, Kudu, Impala, Warthog and exceptionally Nyala and at nearby Mwabvi also Buffalo and Warthog (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002); Eland has been reported from Nkhotakota W.R. (*MD & DPC*); Sable and Kudu (Stead 1979), Hippopotamus (*JDA* in 1986) and Warthog (*SB* in 1994) from Liwonde N.P. Seen feeding together with *B. africanus* at Lengwe (on Buffalo, *MvBe, RJD & FD-L*) and in Nkhotakota W.R. (on Eland, *MD & DPC*). Noted on Buffalo also in Vwaza Marsh (*MD*).

The only breeding record (Liwonde N.P.) was obtained by *RN* (*per RDM*) in 1988.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

The precise timing of arrival in the northern towns (Chitipa to Karonga) is not known as these were not visited between 1982 and 1986 (*RJD & FD-L*).

Southern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer (griseus) diffusus*

A flock of *c.* 60 were feeding at edge of grassland and mopane on 9 May 1992 in Liwonde N.P. (*RDM*).

Chestnut-mantled Sparrow-weaver *Plocepasser rufoscapulatus*

The only record from Kasungu N.P. (north-west) is of a pair found in miombo woodland, 19 Jan. 1988 (*FK & MD*), and the only other record from Kasungu District is based on a nest (then occupied by *Muscicapa boehmi*) seen at Mphongole Mtn, Nov. 1987 (*FK*). Since a vagrant was seen at Thazima (26 Oct. 1991, *MM*), at the entrance of Nyika N.P., all the remnants of miombo woodland between the Nyika and Vwaza Marsh have been destroyed and, as for *Neocichla gutturalis*, this species will now be confined to the protected area of Vwaza. Fairly common in Vwaza Marsh, with for example *c.* 16 nests noted along the road on the western side in Oct. 1989 (*NJ-S*).

Bertram's Weaver *Ploceus bertrandi*

Present down to 900 m in southern Malawi in the breeding season (e.g. Zobue in Nov. 1983, Mulanje on south-western slopes in Aug. 1983, feeding on nectar of *Leonotis nepetifolia*, *FD-L & RJD*).

Had become a widespread garden bird in Blantyre by 1989 (several reports), seen nesting in a palm tree in a Blantyre garden in 1991 (*K & MJ*); also in gardens on Ngapani Farm (Namizimu) in 2000 (*FD-L & RJD*). At Michiru mentioned as having moved down to 930 m alt. during a cold spell in Aug.-Sep. 1994 (*JH*).

Golden (Yellow) Weaver *Ploceus subaureus*

The distribution and status on the northern Lake-shore (south of Karonga in 1034A1, common Nkhata Bay to Bana) is based largely on pers. obs.; still several nests being built (in reeds) and birds displaying at Nkhata Bay beach 7 Apr. 1980 (*FD-L & RJD*). Rather local in the Shire Valley (cf. Long 1961b & 1976, Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002 for its status in Lengwe). Occasionally recorded in dry bush away from water, as in 1034A1 (Aug. 1989), Lengwe (in *Acacia*, Oct. 1999 in Haugaard 2001), in Mua-Livulezi F.R. (mixed woodland at 775 m, 7 Jul. 1989, Medland 1989c).

Southern Brown-throated Weaver *Ploceus xanthopterus*

The sample of birds ringed at Nchalo was given by *DBH* (*in litt.*) for the years 1974-1989.

Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius*

One large colony of this species reported from the southern Lake-shore by *RDM* (*c.* 100 nests at Club Makolola, with nest-building activity Dec. 1991). Not observed in the Lilongwe area by *RDM* but there is a tape-recording of this species (from 1980) at a colony in Chappuis (2000), thus presumably highly local.

Some reports from the highlands (e.g. Namizimu) are believed to be the result of confusion with *P. bertrandi*.

Spotted-backed Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus*

DBH informs us some *P. cucullatus* she ringed at Nchalo have been recovered as far as Nsanje; the ringing recovery from Dwangwa Estate (Sep. 1987) is mentioned in *Nyala* (1989, 14: 131). The breeding season at Nchalo depends on start of rains, in 1987-88 it was Dec.-Feb.; in 1985 nest-building started in late Oct. some 10 days after heavy rain, although males were not in full breeding dress until mid-Nov. (DBH).

Olive-headed Weaver *Ploceus olivaceiceps*

Seen north to Uzumara Mtn, in open but very wet miombo woodland on the eastern scarp and in similar habitat on the Kawandama ridge (South Viphya) as high as 1700 m alt., and generally found widely on both Viphya Plateaux as well as in Chimaliro F.R. (FD-L & RJD 1986); as many as four males counter-singing on the edge of territories on Msondole Mtn (Namizimu) Dec. 2000 (FD-L & RJD). Considered reasonably common in Dzalanyama F.R. (many observers). The southern limit west of the Rift is at Thambani (RDM in 1987); the last observation in the Thyolo area is from Namingomba Estate with six birds on the edge of riparian forest, 24 Apr. 1980 (NJ-S).

Pair nest-building at Ntchisi Mtn (miombo) on 14 Aug. 1980, nest (with much lichen) hanging down from a big lateral branch of *Julbernardia globiflora* (FD-L et al.).

Thick-billed Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons*

At a Blantyre dam Molly Benson (1946) saw a colony of 30 nests reduced to 20 (after some floods) of which (by 2 Jan.) nine contained eggs or chicks, nine were empty and two were occupied by mice. At Burn Dam in Dec. 1983 there was a colony of c. 15 nests (JDA), contents not examined. Information on flocking is extracted from Long (1976), Benson & Benson (1977) and Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (2002). In 1985 at Nchalo this species started nest construction in late Oct. (10 days after heavy rain, DBH). A ringing recovery (from Nchalo to Ngabu) is documented in *Nyala* 1989 (14: 131).

Cardinal Quelea *Quelea cardinalis*

The species was present again at the 1991 Lilongwe site in Feb.-Apr. 1992 (with one adult male and three juveniles mistnetted on 5 Apr.) and in late Feb. and Mar. 1993 (about seven on 14 Mar., RDM et al.).

Red-headed Quelea *Quelea erythrops*

First male in partial breeding dress noted at Tuma F.R. 15 Oct. 1989 at 1150 m (RDM) and some in the first week of Nov. in the South Rukuru Valley in 1986 (RJD & FD-L).

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*

First reported breeding in Lengwe by game scouts in May 1994 (per MD & RDM), with some tens of thousands of nests in at least 20 big *Acacia nigrescens*; in 2002 the main colonies (nests with young) were in several *A. nilotica* on the park's western boundary (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). Subject to much wandering: an adult male ringed at Nchalo on 30 Mar. 1975 was recovered at Mpsa (near Phalombe) in Aug. 1975; another ringed at Nchalo on 15 May 1975 was recovered near Thyolo on 14 Nov. 1975 (*Nyala* 1989, 14: 131).

Black-winged Bishop *Euplectes hordeaceus*

The upper altitudinal limit (near 1600 m) is reached in the extreme north-west at Chiwanga Hill (RJD & FD-L, 1986); never recorded at Thazima at the same altitude.

Red-shouldered Whydah *Euplectes axillaris*

The upper altitudinal limit is reached at Chileka Dambo (725 m) where uncommon, with two males observed 17 Jan. 1987 (RDM).

Yellow-mantled Whydah *Euplectes macroura*

One record from 1534B1 at the south-eastern limit of range (MGD), precise locality uncertain.

White-winged Whydah *Euplectes albonotatus*

Very local on the northern Lake-shore, with one old record from Chintheche (specimen, Benson 1942) in an area normally too wet for the species; also Karonga (Benson & Benson 1977) in drier country and more

recently Bana (Dec. 1986, *RJD & FD-L*).

Red-collared Whydah *Euplectes ardens*

Very uncommon in the Lower Shire Valley and more usual on the escarpments: a few males in breeding dress near Chikwawa Feb. (Benson & Benson 1948b), in the Nsanje area widespread on the escarpments with very few on the plains (sight records of males in breeding dress from two localities at 100 m a.s.l. (Feb.) and once two males at Chiromo in Mar.: Long 1961b). More recently a male in breeding dress at Kasinthula 29-30 Jan. 1982 (*WS*).

Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba*

May be found in little patches of thicket at medium altitudes, e.g. in a graveyard forest in the Kirk Range at 1500 m (*FD-L*); and up to at least 1600-1650 m elsewhere (extreme north of the country, *FD-L & RJD*). A ringing recovery from Nchalo to Makwasa is documented in *Nyala* 1989 (14: 131).

Orange-winged Pytilia *Pytilia afra*

Is overall much scarcer than *P. melba* in the Lower Shire Valley; for example in Lengwe in 2001-02 only one-two pairs were found in thicket-clump savanna whereas *P. melba* was throughout all thicket areas (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). In Nsanje District more common on the escarpments (especially the Malawi Hills) than on the plains (Long 1976); rare near Ngabu (Benson & Benson 1948b).

Lesser Seedcracker *Pyrenestes minor*

Recorded as high as 1700 m on Choma Mtn, North Viphya (*JDA*), on the South Viphya (Benson 1940-41) and Chongoni Mtn in the centre (*FD-L & RJD*). On the slopes of Mount Mulanje and near Thyolo there are old records (Vincent 1933-36), as well as more recent ones, in the 1980s (*NJ-S*); there are several observations of pairs at Dzalanyama, in dambos on the edge of riparian forest.

Red-throated Twinspot *Hypargos niveoguttatus*

Two birds ringed at Zomba were retrapped locally after four years and four months, on 25 Jan. 1999.

Green Twinspot *Mandingoa nitidula*

The upper altitudinal limit is *c.* 1800 m (Mugesse in the north, *FD-L & RJD*, Dzonze Mtn in the south, Benson 1942); marginally higher on the Zambian side of the Nyika (wanderers to 2150 m, Dowsett-Lemaire 2006). In the north also regularly seen at forest edges on Ntchisi Mtn (including small Pine plantations, *FD-L & RJD*).

Jameson's Firefinch *Lagonosticta rhodopareia*

Rather local in the north, with recent records coming from the Chiweta-Karonga Lake-shore (several observers), Vwaza Marsh (*DPC*), the vicinity of Rumphu (*RBP*), the drier (northern) foothills of the Nyika and Misukus (*RJD & FD-L*) and 0933C1 (at the altitudinal limit of 1300 m, *RDM*).

Black-tailed Grey Waxbill *Estrilda perreini*

Two came to perch on a rock in the Lake at Usisya, 18 Oct. 1987 (Ryder 1988). Two were seen in evergreen riparian forest on the Choulongwe stream at Dzalanyama on 29 Aug. 1989 (*ID*), and another was found in a dambo at Msondole Mtn (Namizimu) on 20 Nov. 1988 (*NJ-S & RDM*).

Swee Waxbill *Estrilda melanotis*

Recorded as low as 600 m on the Ruwile stream near the northern Lake-shore, 3 Sep. 1994, by *DPC*.

Crimson-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda rhodopyga*

Located on the northern Lake-shore from the Songwe River to Usisya, including Lake Chiwondo, sometimes mixed with *E. astrild* (*RJD & FD-L*, 1986) and Chiweta (*RDM et al.*: a flock of *c.* 60 Oct.-Dec. 1991). There are some recent records from Likoma Is. (*RDM*, also *JCr* Nov. 2000).

Blue Waxbill *Uraeginthus angolensis*

This species started nest construction at Nchalo on 27-29 Nov. 1985 after the October rain, before moult was

completed (*DBH*), but whether nesting individuals were still moulting is not clear.

Zebra (Orange) Waxbill *Amandava subflava*

Some (no numbers given) seen once at 2140 m on Mount Mulanje on 10 Dec. 1983 and 2 Jan. 1984, apparently feeding on seeds of new grass produced by Sep. fires (*NJ-S*). In the north, seen up to *c.* 1700 m near Chikangawa (*FD-L et al.*).

Locust Finch *Paludipasser locustella*

A recent record (Nov. 2000) from the floodplain north of Lake Chilwa at Namanja (*RJD*) and another from the same square (Mpili, *NJ-S* in Jul. 1987). About 40 near Bunda on 19 Jul. 1987 (and generally common in dambos of C. Region, *RDM et al.*); also 40 present in a dambo at Lilongwe Airport on 19 Jul. 1992 (*MM & RDM*).

African Quail Finch *Ortygospiza atricollis*

Relocated at Lake Chiwondo on 27 Mar. 1993, with 20 birds present; several pairs first located near Lilongwe on Katete Farm in Feb. 1989 and up to 20 birds seen since; extending to Dudu Farm dambo by 1993 and seen most months (*RDM et al.*). Atkins (1988) identified the species at Chileka Dambo, with 15-20 birds present on several dates in Jul. 1986; it was seen again there on 18 Feb. 1993 (*MM*).

Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullata*

A group of 12 individuals all participating in nest-building in a Baobab, Namanja, 16 Nov. 2000 (*RJD*). The recovery near Mulanje of a bird ringed at Nchalo in 1988 is documented in *Nyala* (1989, 14: 131). In 1985 at Nchalo the species started nest-building on 27-29 Nov. (after heavy rain in Oct.) before moult was completed (*DBH*), but whether nesting individuals were still moulting is not clear.

Red-backed Mannikin *Spermestes bicolor*

*K & MC* saw some feed on open cones of *Pinus patula* on Zomba Mtn, 29 Sep. 1992.

Pied Mannikin *Spermestes fringilloides*

Recorded from the Malawi Hills by Long (1976) and more recently (Dec. 1999) by *JH & LD*. Seen in riparian forest (with *Oreobambos buchwaldii*) on the eastern scarp of the South Viphya, below Chamambo (*FD-L & RJD*, 1982), and in association with *Oxytenanthera abyssinica* in several places, especially in Lilongwe N.S. (many observers), also Majete (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002). In Thyolo District has been observed in *Brachystegia* (Johnston-Stewart 1977) and also in "flowering bamboo" at Mikundi Estate (Apr. 1989, *SL*); the species of bamboo was not specified but *Oreobambos* is common in the preserved patches of rain forest.

Cut-throat Finch *Amadina fasciata*

Just a couple of records from the northern Lake-shore, near Karonga (*JR*, Oct. 1991) and Chilumba (*IlaC*, 1987). The upper altitudinal limit is 1420 m, at the road junction to Ntchisi/Dowa (5 Oct. 1996, *MD & JH*). On 4 Sep. 1989 a pair was investigating a nest of *Ploceus xanthops* in a Lilongwe garden (*RDM*), and on 24 Feb. 1994 a pair was around a nest of *P. velatus* at Chankhandwe Dambo (Lilongwe, *RDM*). A pair was resident around houses at Michiru in 1989 (900 m), roosting in an old weaver's nest and carrying nest building material in Jan. (*JH*). A pair was occupying a nest of *P. xanthopterus* in Liwonde N.P. in late Oct. 1993 (*NM*).

Parasitic Weaver *Anomalospiza imberbis*

Recent records from the Lower Shire are by *DBH, RJD et al.* Large flocks in recent years as follows: at least 50 roosting in reeds at Chileka Dambo 28 Dec. 1987 until late Jan. 1988 (*JDA & RDM*); *c.* 40 at Lifu 27 Aug. 1990 (*RDM*); flocks of 100 or more in dambos around Lilongwe Airport northwards Feb. to mid-Jul. 1992 (*RDM & MM*); over 100 in an overgrazed dambo north of the Bua River 22 Nov. 2002 (*WMc*). Similarly recorded flocking near Dowa (50) by Benson (1940-1941) in Sep., also Oct. (Benson 1953).

Village Indigobird *Vidua chalybeata*

At Limbe juveniles were soliciting from adult *Lagonosticta senegala* on 19 Jun. 1989 (*SL*); at Lilongwe two juveniles soliciting from *L. senegala* alongside two young firefinches on 9 Sep. 1990, and one juvenile soliciting



(with two young firefinches) on 11 Apr. 1992 (*RDM*). A late observation of one in breeding dress, singing, 21 Sep. 1991 in Liwonde N.P. (*RDM*), and an unusual observation of one moulting into breeding dress on 25 Nov. while another was moulting out of it on the same day (*RDM*, Lilongwe).

#### Dusky Indigobird *Vidua purpurascens*

The two breeding records are based on the handling of small fledglings at Nchalo by *DBH* in 1988. Additional information on distribution (including specimens and tape-recordings from the area around Rumphu) was sent by *RBP* (*in litt.*), resulting from two field trips to Malawi in 1988 and 1991.

#### Variable Indigobird *Vidua funerea*

In north-central Malawi this species appears to have pale legs and thus can be confused with *V. purpurascens*; similarly Payne (1973: 249) noted that the foot colour of males collected near Lilongwe was whitish, whereas in one female the feet were pinkish-white (and the bird was not distinguishable in plumage from female *V. purpurascens*). A few records come from unpublished information sent by *RBP* (*in litt.*), resulting from two field trips to Malawi in 1988 and 1991. Garcia (1976) reports males in breeding dress from Zomba Mtn from Feb.-Jun.; see also Dowsett-Lemaire (2006).

#### Green Indigobird *Vidua codringtoni*

*JH* saw possibly as many as three territorial males at Michiru from 28 Jan. to late Jun. 1996, of which one was heard to mimic *Hypargos niveoguttatus*. Long's specimens of this species from Nsanje District (as re-identified by Payne *et al.* 1992) were in breeding dress from mid-Jan. to late June (Long 1961b, 1976).

#### Pin-tailed Widow *Vidua macroura*

Surprisingly pre-breeding numbers built up around Blantyre dams to *c.* 1000 on 10 Dec. 1989 (*MB*). One breeding record involving *Estrilda astrild* in 1988 at Nchalo (*DBH*, without details). The season of males in breeding dress is based on Benson (1953), Garcia (1976), Johnston-Stewart (1977) and pers. obs.

#### Long-tailed Paradise Widow *Vidua paradisaea*

Seen in the extreme north at *c.* 1650 m (*RJD*, Oct. 1986) at much the same altitudinal limit as *Pytilia melba*. A recent breeding record was obtained through a female laying in ringing bag (May 1988 at Nchalo, *DBH*). The season of males in breeding dress is based partly on Benson (1953) and Long (1976). In 1991 *NZ* noted breeding males in the Monkey Bay area from 2 Feb. to 17 Aug. In the Lower Shire in 2001-02 we saw males turning into dress 29 Nov. (Mwabvi), 27 Dec. (Majete) while one on 4 Jan. (Lengwe) was not fully moulted (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002).

#### Broad-tailed Paradise Widow *Vidua obtusa*

One juvenile *Vidua* was fed by *Pytilia afra* next to its own young on 26 Aug. 1980 in Dzalanyama (*RJD*, *FD-L et al.*). In an area of degraded miombo and cultivation near Lilongwe (1333C1) we saw four juvenile *Vidua* next to four juvenile *Pytilia afra* perched on the same branch fed by both parent *Pytilia* in quick succession, 28 Jul. 1989. The season of males in breeding dress is based on pers. obs., Long (1976), and *JH* who saw a male in full dress still on 2 Jul. 1999 at Michiru.

#### Cape Canary *Serinus canicollis*

The southern limit on the Viphya Plateau seems to be at Lwanjati (*RJD* & *FD-L*, May 1983).

#### African Citril *Serinus citrinelloides*

It is apparently absent from the high Mulanje plateaux, once noted at 1850 m (*NJ-S*, 1989). In Jan. 1993 *RDM* saw some eat from *Pinus patula* cones on the Viphya Plateau (Luwawa).

Altitudinal movements in the off-season noted by Benson (1942), Benson & Benson (1977), Johnston-Stewart (1977); possibly scarcer on the Nyika in the winter months of May-Jul. (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006).

#### Lemon-breasted Canary *Serinus citrinpectus*

Recorded from Nsanje by *RDM*. *DBH* reported a considerable increase in numbers at Nchalo in the rains of 1982-83; and a breeding record (Feb.) was obtained there from two juveniles just flying on 3 and 6 Mar. 1984.

A flock of 20 was seen near Chikwawa on 21 Jun. 1996 (*VS*).

Yellow-eyed Canary *Serinus mozambicus*

Uncommon on the South Viphya Plateau, up to 1750 m (irregular at Chikangawa: *FD-L* & *RJD*). This should be near the normal upper altitudinal limit, but see Dowsett-Lemaire (2006).

Black-eared Seedeater *Serinus mennelli*

We saw this species in miombo woodland west of Karonga (0933D4) at an altitude of 800 m (Nov. 1986), and in Majete W.R. territorial birds appear at 350-400 m alt. at the lower limit of miombo woodland (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002).

Stripe-breasted Seedeater *Serinus reichardi*

Recorded by Benson (1940-41) from the Mafingas and by ourselves from the Misukus (in miombo, Oct. 1986), south to the Kirk Range (Dzonze Mtn, Nov. 1983, *RJD* & *FD-L*). One adult female ringed at Ngapani (Namizimu) on 30 Jun. 1990 was retrapped locally after nearly five years on 11 Apr. 1995 (Oatley 1995).

Streaky Seedeater *Serinus striolatus*

The most southerly record is at 12°05'S just north of Luwawa, seen on 1 Jan. 1993 by *RDM*.

Cinnamon-breasted Rock Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi*

Information on seasonal movements is taken from Belcher (1930), Benson (1942), Benson & Benson (1977), Garcia (1976), the recent *Nyala/Vocifer* literature and pers. obs. We had an early pair (with male in full song) on Nkhangane Hill (Mwabvi) on 29 Dec. 2001. Very uncommon on the high Nyika Plateau, noted overall from late Mar. to Jul. and in Dec. (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006).

Cape Bunting *Emberiza capensis*

Recorded from the inselbergs in the west of Kasungu N.P. by *MD* (in Medland 1996), on the slopes of Mount Mulanje by Benson & Benson (1948a) and ourselves in Aug. 1983 (Chisongeli at 1100 m). Altitudinal range from c. 600 m (Cape Maclear in Benson & Benson 1977, Nkhudzi Hill in Medland 1996) up to at least 2000 m (Mlunduni Mtn: 27 Nov. 1983, *FD-L* & *RJD*).

Cabanis's Bunting *Emberiza cabanisi*

The lower limit of the altitudinal range in the breeding season corresponds to the lower limit of miombo woodland (c. 400 m in Majete W.R., Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002), but the species ascends above the upper limit of miombo to wooded grassland (*Protea-Faurea*) at 2150 m on the Nyika (Dowsett-Lemaire 2006). Not on the Lake-shore plains but present on some adjacent hills, e.g. Kandoli Mts (Dec. 1986, *RJD*). Has limited off-season movements: a pair noted in *Terminalia* woodland on the Shire in eastern Majete (150 m) on 28 Mar. 2002 (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2002); one record near Nsanje on 10 Apr. 1962 at 60 m, all others in Nsanje District being from above 500 m (Long 1976).

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