

BIRDS

Comparative study of the habitat use and feeding behaviours of Black-lored Babbler (*Turdoides sharpei*) and Arrow-marked Babbler (*Turdoides jardeneii*) around the vicinity of Lake Naivasha, Kenya**Abstract**

A comparative study of the habitat use and the feeding behaviours of the Black-lored Babbler *Turdoides sharpei* and Arrow-marked Babbler *Turdoides jardeneii* was conducted in the vicinity of Lake Naivasha for ten consecutive days, from 07/07/99 to 17/07/99. Seven groups of each species were identified in six different sites. Significant differences were recorded in perch characteristics and the feeding site characteristics. Black-lored Babblers are found in a wider range of habitats, from open Acacia woodland with more open ground to shrubby woodland, and tend to perch on small trees and shrubs; whereas Arrow-marked Babblers are more restricted to Acacia woodland with thick herbaceous cover vegetation, and tend to perch on larger trees with dense canopy cover. Distinct niche differentiation was therefore inferred for both species. No substantial overlap of territory was recorded on neighbouring groups of both species. The two species tend to tolerate a certain degree of coexistence where boundaries are defined by habitat characteristics rather than territorial behaviours of both species.

Jean Eric Rakotoarisoa, University of Antananarivo, Madagascar

Tadesse Woldemariam Gole, Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society, Ethiopia

1999

Influence of cover on the vigilance behaviour of the Superb Starling (*Lamprotornis superbus*)**Abstract**

The need to understand the behaviour of birds for their effective conservation is appreciated by all. Superb Starlings (*Lamprotornis superbus*) are one bird species that surpasses many in beauty and abundance at the Elsmere Conservation and Field Study Centre. In order to provide information for the conservation and perpetuation of these birds at the Centre, a study was conducted to investigate the influence of tree cover on the foraging and vigilance behaviour of the starlings. The focal watch method was used to collect data on the birds in two adjacent habitats of the centre. The study concluded that cover has influence on the superb starlings' choice of foraging site but not vigilance during feeding. It is therefore recommended that cover should be maintained to perpetuate the starlings' presence at the Centre.

Emmanuel A. Frimpong, University of Science and Technology, Ghana

Robinah K. Nanyunja, Makerere University, Uganda

1999

Niche partitioning between three species of woodpeckers in acacia woodland surrounding Lake Naivasha, Kenya**Abstract**

Grey, Bearded and Nubian Woodpeckers exist together in acacia woodland surrounding Lake Naivasha, Kenya. The niche partitioning of the three species was investigated in terms of differentiation in species use of branch size, height in tree, angle of branch, dead or live wood and time of day for foraging. The most important dimensions for niche partitioning were found to be height in tree, dead and live wood, branch size and time of day. Angle of branch was not an important dimension in this study. Grey woodpeckers had a wide niche in terms of the dimensions

measured. Bearded Woodpeckers foraged high, on large dead branches, in the early morning and late afternoon. Nubian Woodpeckers foraged at low levels and on the ground and on small live branches in the middle of the day.

Will Frost, International Institute for Research in Agroforestry, UK

Alfred Owino, National Museums of Kenya, Kenya

1999

Temporal variation in the number and diversity of birds visiting a water point at Hell's Gate National Park, Kenya

Abstract

A study was undertaken into the temporal variation in the birds visiting a water hole at Hell's Gate National Park (HGNP). "Ad libitum" watches were conducted throughout the day for a total of four days. This was followed by a bird census in the area by using a transect method. Birds were categorised according to feeding guilds. The number of birds recorded was positively correlated with both time of day and temperature. Analysis of the temporal changes in the number of birds per guild showed that the number of granivores and aerial insectivores was positively correlated with time, while non-aerial insectivores and omnivores showed no relationship with time. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that guild, time of day and the interaction between the two all had significant effects on the number of birds visiting the water point. Temperature accounted for some of the remaining variation not explained by time. The proportion of granivores was shown to be higher than all the other guilds combined.

Richard Odhiambo Kenyatta University, Kenya

Luis Cayuela Department of Ecology, Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, Spain

1999

Perch types and heights used by the Grey-backed Fiscal and their influence on its feeding success

Abstract

The perch types and heights used by the Grey-backed Fiscal (*Lanius excubitoroides excubitoroides*) and their effects on its feeding success were assessed in five different sites around Lake Naivasha. Birds were found to use a variety of perch types but overall they perched more frequently on branches. Lower perches were used more frequently than higher ones but no significant difference was observed in the amount of time spent at different heights. Neither the perch type nor the perch height significantly influenced feeding success. However, the longer a bird spent on a perch, the more successful it was in its feeding attempts. Also, the mean distance from a perch to the ground (where the birds generally fed) was found to significantly influence feeding success. The shorter the distance, the more successful the birds were.

Fred Barasa Munyekenye, Nairobi University, Kenya

Asanga Patricia Bi, University of East Anglia UK and Cameroon

2001

A study into the daily pattern in feeding behaviour of sunbirds (Nectariniidae) on *Cotyledon barbeyi*

Abstract

In the present study the feeding behaviour of sunbirds on *Cotyledon barbeyi* was investigated to determine if a daily pattern was present. Data was collected over six days and included quantitative observations of species, sex, feeding time, probing and feeding rate. A general pattern in bird visits to the plant was recorded with a peak in the early morning and in the early afternoon. There was no

statistically significant correlation between this pattern and temperature, nectar volume and concentration. It is suggested that some other factor was involved that was beyond the recording of this project.

Agneta Heuman, University of Basel, Switzerland

Eugenie Regan, National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland

2001

Habitat selection and foraging strategies of the Common Fiscal, the Schalow's Wheatear and the Northern Anteater Chat in Hell's Gate National Park

Abstract

The Common Fiscal, the Schalow's Wheatear and the Northern Anteater Chat are found in Hell's Gate National Park and they share both savanna habitats and main preys, mostly insects. The foraging behaviour and habitats selection of these three species were studied over a six-day period in order to infer if they adopt different strategies and habitats in order to avoid competition. The Wheatear and the Northern Anteater Chat displayed an active foraging strategy and a preference for more open habitats, whereas the Common Fiscal revealed a more passive sit-and-wait behaviour and preference for more woody habitats. The similarity in habitat utilization and foraging behaviour between the Schalow's Wheatear and the Northern Anteater Chat leads us to suppose that these two species may overlap each other's niche.

Michela Maura, Roma Tre University, Italy

Ricardo Rocha, Lisbon University, Portugal