A.P. LEVENTIS ORNITHOLOGICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE,
UNIVERSITY OF JOS, NIGERIA

APLORI

WEST AFRICA'S FOREMOST ORNITHOLOGICAL RESEARCH CENTRE

Newsletter

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Published Research

- *Unveils the Rich Biodiversity of Hadejia Wetlands National Park: A Call to Action for Conservation*
- *Advancing Bat Identification Through Integrated Phenotypic and Genotypic Approaches*
- *Anambra Waxbill Sighted in Weppa, Edo State, Nigeria*

Leventis Foundation's Youth Engagement, A Blueprint for Agricultural Transformation in Nigeria -Executive Director, Leventis Foundation Nigeria

Deputy Director APLORI Dr T. Tende Emphasised the need for schools to start conservation education at an early stage

My Journey from a Citizen Scientist to a Bio-Monitoring Officer at NCF -Jalo Idris Muhammad

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FRONT COVER: Senegal Parrot -*Poicephalus senegalus*
(John Onah)

Director's Desk

I am happy to present the 11th edition of APLORI'S Newsletter. Like others, this edition has very rich content ranging from interviews, published research and news on activities that have transpired at the Institute in the outgoing quarter. These contents present the impacts APLORI continues to make across the Nigerian conservation landscape.

Our student's environmental advocacy outreach as reported also shows how we are enriching their learning experience and giving them the opportunity to put theory into action. We believe that responsible management of the environment depends greatly on the quality of manpower available to drive the process.

Positive outcomes from our ongoing projects can also be seen from the personal perspectives of one of our citizen scientists as highlighted previously and again in this edition. For the bird enthusiast, there are new bird records, updates on critical biodiversity hotspots that are of great interest for your learning.

We look forward to continuously enriching your reading experience with us.

Prof. Adams A. Chaskda
Director, APLORI

Editor's Note

As our global food systems strain under the dual pressures of a changing climate and mounting population demands, sustainable agriculture emerges not just as a best practice but as an imperative for conservation. By integrating crop diversity, regenerative soil management, and agroforestry, farmers can boost yields while restoring habitats, sequestering carbon, safeguarding water resources, and preserving biodiversity. These are the major focus of the Leventis Foundation Nigeria, hence our interaction with the Executive Director of the Foundation to emphasize these aspects in this edition of the newsletter.

This edition also spotlights tree planting campaigns, as well as a wave of media advocacy that are bringing these conservation issues into mainstream conversation. We also hope that this edition of our newsletter inspires you to see conservation and sustainable agriculture not as separate challenges, but as two sides of the same path toward a thriving planet.

Nanlep Kumle
Senior Communications Officer,
A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute, Centre of Excellence.

CONTENT

Bird On Front Page Series: Amurum Forest Reserve Bird Species 2
Senegal Parrot -Poicephalus senegalus

Senegal Parrot
Order: Psittaciformes
Family: Psittacidae
Name (Scientific name): (Poicephalus senegalus)

The Senegal Parrot (Poicephalus senegalus) is one of the most common parrots found in the reserve. They are often seen within the reserve close to the boundary and in nearby farmlands. This beautiful and brightly colored parrot feeds on a variety of foods, including Canarium fruits (Canarium sweinfurthii), figs, mangoes, and grains from farms. Senegal Parrots are quiet and agile compared to many other parrot species, but they are known for their sharp, high-pitched "krrreeeh" to much lower-pitched calls (Collar & Kirwan, 2020). They are popular in the pet trade globally due to their intelligence and calm temperament. In the wild, however, they play an important role in seed dispersal, helping maintain the forest ecosystem. They are one of the most colourful birds to see in the Amurum Forest Reserve. Below are interesting things to learn about this African resident species.

Plate 1: An image of Senegal Parrot inside the Amurum Forest Reserve.

Field Identification
The Senegal Parrot (Poicephalus senegalus) is a medium-sized parrot. "It has a green body with yellow underparts that turn orange in the middle (Burrow and Demy 2004). a grey head, and a short, squared tail. Its most distinctive feature is the bright yellow to orange "V"-shaped patch on its belly, which contrasts with its green plumage. The bill is short, strong, and dark grey to black, well-adapted for cracking hard seeds, while the eyes of adults are strikingly yellow (juveniles have darker eyes).

Habitat, Range and Status
The Senegal parrots are commonly found in lowland savannas, open woodlands, small patches of closed-canopy forest, farmlands, and even village areas (Collar & Kirwan, 2020). Its range covers the savanna woodland belt of West Africa, just north of the rainforest zone, stretching from Mauritania eastward through south-western Chad, north-eastern Cameroon, and into the northern Central African Republic (BirdLife International, 2019).

Records from the Nigerian Bird Atlas Project (NiBAP) shows that the Senegal Parrot has widespread distribution across Nigeria, outside the forest zone with few patches of occurrence within the forest zone, which may be the result of released or escaped pet birds (Figure 1). Although this species is listed as Least Concern by the IUCN Red List (IUCN, 2019), the species is heavily traded, with large numbers taken from the wild (BirdLife International, 2019). Studies have raised concern about population declines, as reductions have been reported in parts of its range (Martin et al., 2014).

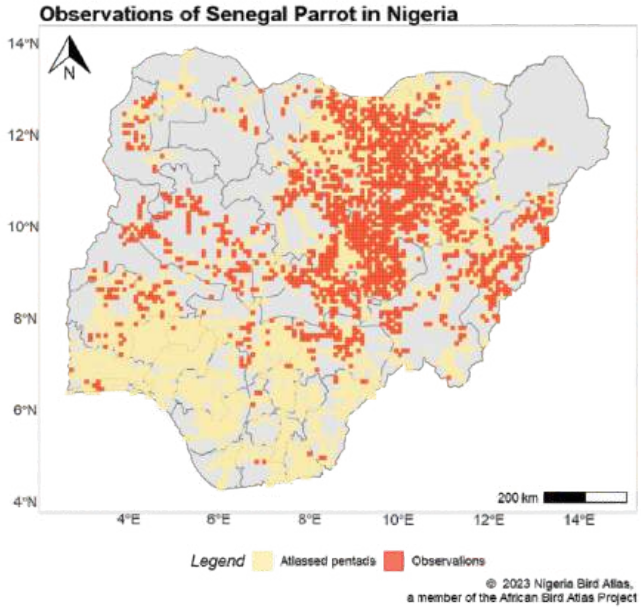

Figure 1: Distribution of the Senegal Parrot in Nigeria from the NiBAP database.

Feeding Behaviour and Breeding Biology of the Senegal Parrot
Senegal Parrots feed mainly on fruits, seeds, grains, and blossoms, but they also eat locust beans and young tree buds. Their strong beak allows them to crack open hard nuts and seeds (Animalia.bio). They are resident breeders across much of West Africa, mostly seen nesting in tree cavities, commonly in larger branches of Adansonia or Parkia tree and Palm tree - where they usually lay 2 to 4 white eggs (Alderton, 2003; Collar & Kirwan, 2020). The female incubates the eggs for about 27–28 days and remains in the nest to brood and feed the chicks until they are about four weeks old, while the male provides food and guards the nest, after which both parents share feeding duties until the chicks fledge (Animalia.bio). After 9 weeks, the young are observed leaving nest in October and November in Nigeria (Elgood, et al. 1994; Collar & Kirwan, 2020).

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John Onah and Prof. Adams A. Chaskda

1

From Science to Strategy: Stepping into Leadership

Dr. Hope Usieta, Executive Director, Leventis Foundation Nigeria

Dr. Hope Usieta's passion for conservation ignited as an undergraduate when he joined the first cohort of APLORI's Industrial Attachment students. During a six-month industrial attachment, he gained the basics of research, and his passion for conservation was ignited.

He co-founded a campus Nature Club that rallied peers and corporate partners for a World Environment Day cleanup in Jos. A chance conversation with Prof. Georgina Mwansat, then Dean faculty of Natural Sciences, inspired him to pursue a master's in conservation.

At APLORI, he mastered the art of blending rigorous theory with hands-on field work, designing research, honing critical thinking and exploring the link between hedgerow structure and farmland bird populations across Nigeria.

Graduating from APLORI, he was commissioned to establish a research unit at Okomu National Park, Edo State Nigeria in 2009 (a collaboration between APLORI and the Leventis Foundation Nigeria) to study frugivory in birds. A subsequent commission from Dr. Anastasios Paul Leventis and Philip Hall (board chair, APLORI) led him to Weppa Farm in Edo State, where he spent a year crafting and implementing the site's first woodland management plan.

A fully funded PhD at the University of Cambridge expanded his master's insights into a comparative analysis of gendered farmland management. His work revealed that plots tended by women often matched or exceeded both biodiversity and yield outcomes achieved by men; findings that continue to shape sustainable agriculture strategies in Nigeria.

In 2012, at the Pan-African Ornithological Congress in Tanzania, Dr. Usieta's poster on agriculture-bird dynamics caught A.P. Leventis's attention and led to an invitation to join the Leventis Foundation Nigeria's leadership team. Two years later, he assumed the Executive Director role, solidifying his induction with a month at Costa Rica's Earth University to study advanced sustainable-agriculture models.

For nearly eleven years, Dr. Usieta has guided the Foundation in its mission to train, mentor, and empower Nigeria's next generation of farmers and conservationists. Under his stewardship:

- Over 30,000 youths and farmers have completed residential training in sustainable-farming methods

- Setup six state Agriculture Training Schools, with four fully operational. The next to be setup is slated for Plateau State

Story 1

- A nine-to-eleven month curriculum covers cropproduction, agroforestry, livestock management, mechanization, enterprise development, and fund-pitching

- Fewer than 500 trainees are selected annually from over 23,000 applicants, receiving free accommodation and instruction

- 80% of alumni run successful agribusinesses, ranging from a poultry producer managing 20,000 birds to leading agricultural input suppliers and community trainers spread across Nigeria.

Dr. Usieta has also forged strategic partnerships, most notably with the Nigerian Conservation Foundation, to integrate food system enhancement with improved livelihoods, securing government buy-in through clear, data-driven outcomes.

Driven by his conviction that theory must meet practice, he aims to expand the Foundation's reach: scaling training schools, deepening public-private alliances, and ensuring Nigeria's youth not only find gainful employment in agriculture but also propel the country toward food security and export growth.

Speaking as a board member of the foremost West African Ornithological Research Institute, APLORI). Dr. Hope expresses his delight at seeing that APLORI has grown beyond its original mandate, demonstrating that every naira invested yields tangible results. He states that under Professor Adams Chaskda's visionary leadership, the Centre has:

- Broadened its research portfolio to address emerging conservation challenges

- Cultivated a steady pipeline of professionals equipped for the climate industry.

- It has expanded its infrastructure to meet students' and researchers' needs.

He emphasized that the crown jewel of these upgrades is the new molecular laboratory at APLORI. He is optimistic that Researchers who previously lacked local facilities can now process samples, run genomics assays, and even initiate in-house sequencing workflows (which will soon be feasible). He underscores that this capability underscores APLORI's commitment to transforming funding into cutting-edge resources.

Dr. Hope wrapped up the interview by saying- "If there's a model for ensuring every kobo matches every outcome, APLORI exemplifies such." Expressing deeper insight that the institute's transparent stewardship and Professor Chaskda's strategic direction have fostered an environment where faculty and students alike thrive, innovate, and advance conservation science.

2

Director French Institute for Research (IFRA-Nigeria) Visits APLORI on a Courtesy Basis

Prof. Barbara Morovich, Director of the French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA-Nigeria), visited the A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI) on September 1, 2023. She was warmly welcomed by APLORI's Director, Professor Adams Chaskda. The visit highlighted shared commitments to research excellence and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Professor Chaskda showcased APLORI's success stories in both research and human capacity development. He emphasized how core funding from the Leventis Foundation Nigeria, under the guidance of the Board Chairman, Phillip Hall and the Management of the University of Jos has fueled numerous milestones. Key developments include; broader internationalization of the MSc Conservation Biology Programme of the Institute beyond West Africa to admit students from other parts of the continent. Also, diversification into other environment-related disciplines to foster holistic understanding of ecological processes.

Recognizing IFRA's own quest for excellence, Professor Chaskda encouraged the visitor to forge meaningful partnerships that advance both human and environmental development. He stressed that integrating social, cultural, and natural sciences will yield deeper insights into conservation issues.

Accompanied by Fred Akinyemi- an engineer and research assistant, Morovich expressed her admiration for APLORI's achievements. She states that her discipline in archaeology and socio-cultural anthropology has endeared her to the centre of excellence as well as her values in interdisciplinary Perspectives on minority heritage and socio-spatial transformations. Though her tenure at I FRA-Nigeria is concluding, she is committed to introducing APLORI to her professional network across Europe and Africa and personally, exploring joint research collaborations to create more global impact.

The visit culminated in a guided tour of APLORI's Facilities and the Amurum Forest Reserve, home to one-third of Nigeria's bird species. This biodiversity haven underscored APLORI's pivotal role in ornithology and conservation studies.

APLORI and IFRA-Nigeria are hopeful for a sustainable relationship going forward.

3

Advancing Bat Identification Through Integrated Phenotypic and Genotypic Approaches (Monday Okpanachi)

Background

Bats rank among the most diverse and ecologically vital mammals, offering services like insect control, pollination, seed dispersal, and nutrient cycling. With over 1,400 species world wide — and more than 300in Africa—taxonomic clarity remains a hurdle, particularly in Nigeria. Phenotypic identification is rapid and field-friendly but vulnerable to misclassification, while genotypic approaches(DNA barcoding) deliver precision at higher cost and technical demand.

Study Design

- Sampling was done across six ecological zones in Nigeria at the following sites; Amurum Forest Reserve, Omo Biosphere Reserve Pandam Wildlife Park, Yankari Game Reserve Idanre and the University of Ibadan campus.
- Capture method: mist nets, yielding 91 individual bats.
- Phenotypic ID: morphology via the Mammals of Africa field guide.
- Genotypic ID: wing-punch tissue, COI (mitochondrial cytochrome oxidase I) sequencing.

Key Findings

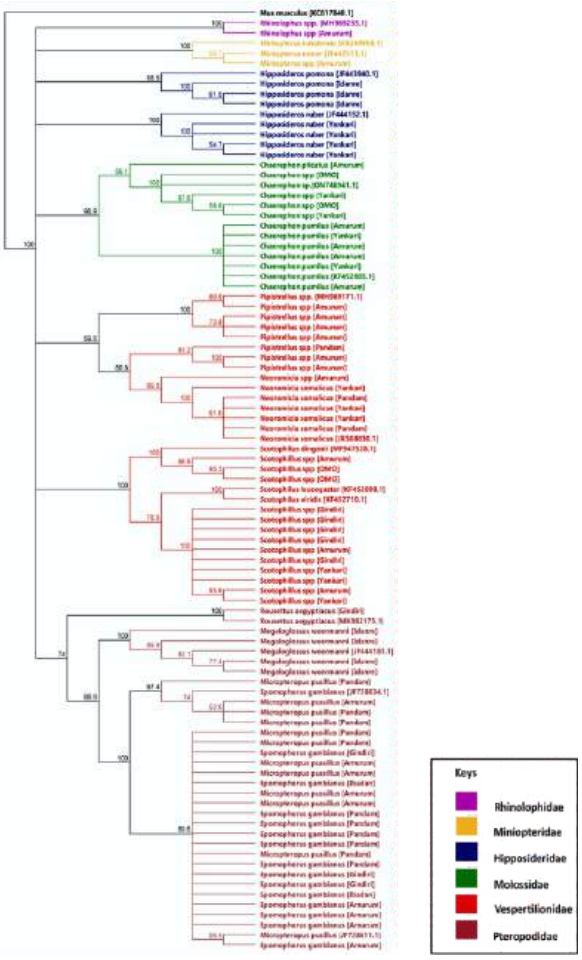
- Perfect concordance (100% sensitivity and specificity) between phenotypic and genotypic methods for species such as;
  - o Epomophorus gambianus
  - o Micropteropus pusillus
  - o Rousettus aegyptiacus
  - o Scotophilus spp.

- Major discrepancies in other groups:
  - o Banana pipistrellus identifications were genetically reassigned to Hipposideros and Neoromicia.
  - o Glauconycteris spp. showed only 14% sensitivity.

- Overall sensitivity spanned 14–100%, while specificity consistently exceeded 96%.
- Statistical analysis revealed minimal correlation between external morphology and genetic assignment.

Conservation and Public-Health Implications

- Biodiversity conservation relies on accurate species records; misidentification can obscure rare or vulnerable taxa and misdirect resources.
- Zoonotic surveillance depends on correct host–pathogen mapping; morphological errors risk hiding true reservoirs of coronaviruses, lyssaviruses, filoviruses.
- A third strategy is advocated: rapid phenotypic surveys for scale, with genotypic validation for uncertain or high-risk cases, sharpening both ecological management and disease preparedness frameworks.



Read the full paper on Wiley: Dami, F.D., Adeyanju, T.E., Chaskda, A.A., Okpanachi, I.M., Adeyanju, A.T., Ezekiel, S.M., Gwom, T., Iniunam, I.A., Hitch, A., Pam, D.D., Luka, P., Weaver, S.C., Paessler, S., Cross, R.W. and Shehu, N. (2025), The Eye of the Chiropterologist: Phenotypic Versus Genotypic Identification of Bats. Ecology and Evolution, 15: e71561. https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.71561

4 Unveiling the Rich Biodiversity of Hadejia Wetlands National Park: A Call to Action for Conservation *(Nanchin Winfred Kaze)*

The Hadejia Wetlands National Park (HWNP), a vital Ramsar site and an essential wintering ground for numerous bird species, has recently been the subject of an extensive study, revealing new insights into its remarkable biodiversity. Conducted from June 2023 to June 2024, this comprehensive research combined direct and indirect observational methods with advanced spatial analysis, offering invaluable data for conservation efforts within this significant ecosystem..

Avian Discoveries and Conservation Imperatives

The study recorded an astonishing 80,399 individual birds across 246 species, representing a notable 28.4% of Nigeria's total avian species. Among the most exciting discoveries were a leucistic White-billed Buffalo Weaver (Bubalornis albirostris) and other rare, range-restricted species such as the African Reed Warbler(Acroceph alusbaeti catus), Little Rush Warbler(Bradypterus baboecala), and Spotted Crake Porzanaporzana).

Conservation assessments identified the presence of three Near-Threatened species—the Great Snipe (Gallinago media), Pallid Harrier (Circus macrourus), and Woodchat Shrike (Lani us senator)—and four Vulnerable species: Beaudou in's Snake Eagle (Circaet us b eaudouini), European Turtle Dove (Streptopelia turtur), Scissor-tailed Kite (Chelictinia riocourii), and Southern Grey Shrike (Lani us meridionalis). Interestingly, ten bird species (4% of those recorded) had no prior documentation in HWNP, underscoring the dynamic nature of this ecosystem and the importance of ongoing monitoring.

In terms of abundance, the White-faced Whistling Duck (Dendrocygna viduata), Ruff (Calidris pugnax), and Knob-billed Duck (Sarkidiornis melanotos) were the most prevalent species, highlighting the park's vital role as a refuge, particularly for waterbirds and waders owing to their social behaviours and communal foraging habits. The study also categorised bird species by residency status, revealing a diverse mix of breeding visitors, non-breeding visitors, partially migratory residents, and resident birds. While many bird populations in HWNP remain stable, the study identified 24.6% of the total bird species recorded with declining trends that emphasizes the urgent need for conservation actions. Among feeding guilds, insectivores formed the largest group (42.3%), followed by granivores (18.5%) and omnivores (15.3%).

Seasonal variations had a significant impact on bird abundance and richness, with the colder season exhibiting a notable increase in bird numbers, while diversity declined during this period.

Beyond Aves: A Rich Tapestry of Life

Apart from the extensive avian findings, the research also documented other vital faunal groups within HWNP. The study identified 49 butterfly species, 10 dragonfly species, 15 reptile species, and 13 mammal species, including common species like the African Monarch (Danaus chrysippus alcippus) among butterflies , Northern Banded Groundling (Brachythemis impartita) among dragonflies, Peter's Rock Agama (Agama picticauda) among reptiles, and Red Patas Monkey (Erythrocebus patas) among mammals. While most populations of reptiles and mammals appeared stable, some, such as the Northern Lesser Galago (Galago senegalensis) and Red Patas Monkey (Erythrocebus patas), showed declining trends, with the Red Patas Monkey classified as Near Threatened.

A Forward-Looking Perspective

These findings underscore the ecological importance of the Hadejia Wetlands National Park, not only as a national treasure but also as a globally significant site for biodiversity, especially for migratory birds. Nevertheless, the park continues to face threats from human activities such as poaching, deforestation, and uncontrolled grazing, emphasising the need for improved conservation strategies. The recent designation of the area as a national park presents a promising opportunity for enhanced protections. Future research should focus on long-term monitoring to track population trends of both common and vulnerable species and to understand the impacts of habitat loss and climate change on this invaluable ecosystem. By integrating these scientific insights into proactive management and community engagement, we can secure the enduring vitality of the Hadejia Wetlands National Park for future generations.

The interdisciplinary team was led by Dr. Sulaiman Inuwa Muhammad and comprised of ecologists, ornithologists, and conservationists from Nigerian universities and organisations like the Nigerian Conservation Foundation and the A. P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute, Centre of Excellence.

5

Amurum Forest Reserve Hidden Gem: The Elusive Narina Trogon Captured in Mist-Net!

Ventral view of Narina Trogon Apaloderma narina (Left) and the Wing view(Right)

Our ringing team at Amurum Forest Reserve had a rare and thrilling encounter when they captured one of nature's most dazzling birds-the Narina Trogon (Apaloderma narina)-during the Constant Effort Site (CES) mist-netting survey on 27th June 2025. This Individual was trapped near the reserve entrance (9.877° N, 8.980° E), just behind the lecture theatre, within our protected habitat. Though currently listed as least concern globally, this striking species remains uncommon to scarce the Western and Central African regions.

A Glimpse of Beauty

The trapped individual was an adult female in active wing moult, displaying nature's artistry: a vibrant emerald-green back glowing in the morning light. Rich crimson belly contrasting against the forest greens. striking serrated yellow bill - a perfect insect-catching tool and subtler, grey-washed green on the forehead, throat, and breast. Tail white below (outer 3 feathers white and graduated) and blackish blue above. Adults lacking the large tipped white and buffish spot on the wing coverts and secondaries as seen in juvenile.

Conservation Significance

The Narina Trogon, though widespread, is a vital forest-dependent species. Its presence in Amurum Forest Reserve serves as a key indicator of ecosystem health, while providing crucial data on population trends across Nigeria's changing forests. Each carefully handled bird-like this dazzling trogon - contributes valuable insights to biodiversity conservation. By studying these encounters, we are better equipped to protect Nigeria's precious forest habitats.

Join Our Mission

Stay tuned for more field discoveries! Your support helps maintain these critical forest ecosystems for the trogon and countless other species. Consider donating/volunteering today to be part of our conservation journey.

Dr. Yahkat Barshep , Iki Ezekiel, Jonathan Izang, Martha Samuel, Joy Akpanta Ishong

6 New Sightings of the Anambra Waxbill Estrilda poliopareia in Weppa Farm, Edo State, Southern Nigeria

Our researchers recently sighted Anambra Waxbill Estrilda poliopareia (Fig. 1) in Weppa Farm, Edo State, southern Nigeria. This species has a Near Threatened (NT) conservation status. Historical records indicate that the species' occurrence is primarily in southern areas of Nigeria, including Onitsha, the Niger Delta, Forcados, Tombia, and Badagri in southwestern Nigeria, as well as the lower River Ouémé in the southeastern region of Benin Republic

Figure 1: Anambra Waxbill Estrilda poliopareia sighted along an irrigation canal in Weppa Farm, Edo State, southern Nigeria.

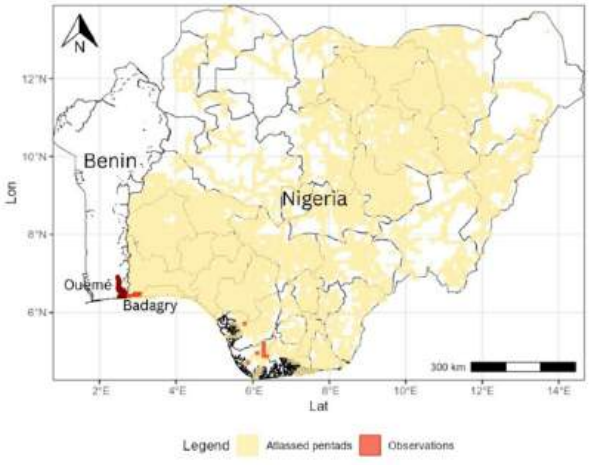


Figure 2: Map showing the distribution of Anambra waxbill Estrilda poliopareia according to historical records and Nigerian Bird Atlas Project observations (NiBAP, 2025).

Being a granivore, the species feeds on small seeds of grass and sedges associated with disturbance, including Digitaria, Panicum, Kyllinga, and Finbristylis species. It forages in pairs and sometimes in small mixed flocks with other Estrildid finches; however, it can also forage in larger flocks. Habitat of the species is known to be tall grasses such as Pennisetum species and sedges such as Cyperaceae on sandy riverbanks, swamps, and sandy shores at estuaries. Also, long grass on fringes of open deciduous forest and in Cassava Manihot esculenta plantations, and recurrently found close to human habitations. The species uses elephant grass Pennisetum purpureum as a nest-building material and as a nesting substrate during breeding periods, which have been observed in April, June, and October to November after floods. It is thought to be a resident and possibly moves short distances after flooding in severe rainy seasons. Other observations, however, have suggested that in some areas, the species is sedentary.

The sighting of Anambra waxbill Estrilda poliopareia in Weppa Farm is of significant importance to our current understanding of its distribution in Nigeria (Fig. 3), also providing renewed hope to its recovering population. Please refer to the link below for further details on the new record https://res.cloudinary.com/wabis/image/upload/v1757511303/aplori/hnu6nryf74edy2i6wzc3.pdf

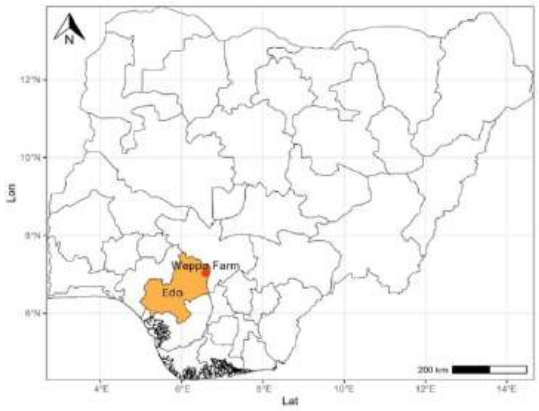


Figure 3: Map of Nigeria showing the new location where Anambra waxbill Estrilda poliopareia has been sighted.

Article contributed by ***Samson A. Da'an PhD & Imoisime O. Igbode***

7

Aficionado's Binoculars'

A Turning Point in Conservation: My Journey From Citizen Scientist to Bio-Monitoring Officer *(Jalo Idris Muhammad)*

I honoured an invitation in 2018 to join a bird-atlas expedition in Kano, led by my mentor Dr. A. S. Ringim and the then Nigerian Bird Atlas Project Manager (NIBAP) Dr. Sam T. Ivande. That experience ignited a passion for birds and biodiversity I had never known. Their encouragement and guidance opened the door to the structured world of biodiversity monitoring, setting my life on a new trajectory.

When I first arrived in Kano as a volunteer citizen scientist, I had minimal exposure to formal conservation work. Under NIBAP I learned bird identification, habitat characterization, and species distribution recording. I submitted checklists via the BirdLasser app, joined the Dutse Bird Club and later earned a full scholarship for NIBAP's inaugural monitoring course which transformed my beginner's curiosity into genuine expertise.

Each expedition refined my observational abilities and deepened my understanding of Nigerian ecosystems. Through bird counts and surveys across diverse ecological zones, I witnessed firsthand: The impact of habitat degradation, urban growth, and climate change on bird populations. How data-driven mapping supports targeted conservation strategies and the power of community outreach in translating scientific findings for non-specialist audiences. Mentors and fellow citizen scientists became partners in my learning, teaching me not only techniques but also the art of inspiring others to protect our natural heritage.

Motivated to broaden my impact, I transitioned into a formal role with the Nigerian Conservation Foundation. Today, as a Bio-Monitoring Officer working alongside the Lekki Conservation Centre's Project Manager. My present role focuses on: Systematic species monitoring, bio-mapping habitat protection initiatives, community awareness campaigns and environmental education. I'm proud to say my NIBAP foundation fuels every project, grounding my work in rigorous data collection and collaborative stewardship.

My journey underscores how accessible pathways like citizen science can cultivate tomorrow's environmental leaders. Moving forward, I aim to: expand bio-inventory projects in under-surveyed regions, mentor new citizen scientists through workshops and online platforms and advocate for integrated conservation policies that unite geology, ornithology, and community needs. As I remain committed to safeguarding Nigeria's biodiversity for generations to come.

I owe my career journey success to the following organisations and professionals who saw the hidden passion I had and worked to make it fruitful: Nigerian Bird Atlas Project team, A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI), and especially to Dr. Talatu Tende, Dr. A. S. Ringim, Dr. Sam T. Ivande, Dr. Sulaiman I. Muhammad, and my Arewa Atlas family. Your support sparked my transformation and continues to inspire my work.

8 *Where Rock Meets Wing: Planting Trees for Birds and Beyond*

The A. P. Levenetis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI) and the Department of Geology, both under the Faculty of Natural Sciences atthe University of Jos, have teamed up to echo the need for sustainable management of the ecosystem. Their inaugural collaboration involved staff and students planting native and, in many cases, endangered tree species to stabilize soil, protect waterways, and create vital habitats for birds, insects, and other wildlife.

Welcoming participants to the planting exercise at the Geology Department block, Head of Department, Professor Raymond Ishaya Daspan, explained that the idea emerged from a shared desire to create a tranquil, life-supporting environment within the faculty. The planted trees will help regulate temperature and moisture, creating a micro-climate conducive to both human learning and animal habitation. By enriching campus green spaces, the initiative reinforces biodiversity even within academic settings.

Director of APLORI, Professor Adams Chaskda, elaborated on the strategic vision behind the partnership. He emphasized the need for multidisciplinary approach to solving environmental issues and the Geological field is a critical partner in this regard. As initiatives such as the tree planting campaign, highlights the need for innovative thinking into sustainable management of the environment especially in resource-exploitative fields as well as fosters understanding of the interconnectedness of the ecosystem

Both department leads are looking forward to a productive research collaboration that fosters better understanding of the ecosystem from the geological perspective using PhD studies.

The Head of APLORI's Plant Propagation Unit, Christopher Yohanna, eventually Coordinated the tree planting Exercise and also expressed optimism that the project will not just end at the department, but translate to individual actions.

9

2024/2025 MSc Cohort Visit Government Secondary School Kerker to Promote Conservation and Plastic Waste Management

The 2024/2025 masters cohort of the A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute paid a sensitization visit to the Secondary School to engage students on environmental management and the urgent need to start conservation efforts early.

The delegation, led by the Deputy Director of The Institute Dr. Talatu Tende, introduced key themes of sanitation, menstrual health, and plastic waste management. Students took turns speaking about proper waste disposal, personal hygiene, and becoming environmental ambassadors both at school and at home. Through interactive discussions and demonstrations, she emphasized that young people are ideally positioned to grasp conservation principles early and to influence their families and peers.

Dr. Tende underscored the longstanding, mutually beneficial relationship the institute and the Laminga community enjoys. She noted that ongoing knowledge-sharing initiatives have fostered trust and yielded tangible rewards in community relations.

The team urged the entire community to adopt a culture of sanitation, reminding everyone that proper plastic disposal protects local land and water resources.

The outreach underscores the believe that children who learn these habits early become advocates for environmental stewardship, ultimately strengthening the well-being of the whole community.

The cohort then took time to distribute menstrual kits to the female students, ensuring they have the resources to manage their menstrual health with dignity.

This gesture was made possible by Professor Chris Kwaja, Special Envoy to the Governor of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang.

10

Laminga Community Congratulates the Director APLORI on His Elevation to a Professorial Rank

> *"Receiving this visit from Laminga Elders fills me with humility,"*
> *Professor Adams Chaskda*

Professor Adams Chaskda, Director of the A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI) Centre of Excellence, received a delegation of elders from the Laminga Community who visited to congratulate him on his elevation to the rank of a professor.

The Acting Village Head of Laminga Adagwom Musa Arin on stating the essence of their visit, pointed that none of them were surprised by the promotion. Adagwom Musa says Professor A. Chaskda's excellence in scholarship and service has shone far beyond the walls of the institute while emphasising that he embodies the very ideals that drive academic pursuit and community impact.

The team went on to pledge Laminga's continued partnership: offering local counsel, and working side-by-side with staff and students so that all may benefit from APLORI's presence. He also reminded the professor of the elders' role in upholding integrity, urging him to bring any staff misconduct forward to the council, so that accountability deters future lapses.

Responding, the Director APLOR, pledges to deepen the Institute's community engagements and expand its corporate-social-responsibility, ensuring that the bond between the institute and Laminga grows even stronger.

The visit concluded in prayers for Professor Chaskda to even greater heights of service and scholarship

11 *A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute Climate Action Planting at Sureway Boys and Girls School, Nukpis – Laminga Community*

In a hands-on effort to tackle climate change, the A.P. Leventis Ornithological tree and shrub species across the grounds of Sureway Boys and Girls School in Nukpis of the Laminga community. By boosting green cover and biodiversity, this initiative transforms climate science into local, tangible action while engaging students as future environmental stewards.

APLORI's plant propagation and horticulture lead, Christopher Yohanna, explains that the main goals are to: Increase carbon sequestration on school premises, create an open-air classroom for environmental learning, showcase native species' role in ecosystem resilience and to foster a sense of ownership and stewardship among students.

Christopher says to maximize ecological impact and adaptability, fifty species were carefully chosen, to include flowering shrubs that support pollinators and fruit trees providing future food resources.

The Senior Communications Officer at APLORI Nanlep Kumle highlights how planting on school grounds sends a powerful message. Emphasising that practical climate solutions begin at the grassroots. She suggested that students and teachers should take ownership of seedling care and site maintenance. She also said students could be paired to look after the trees, making them climate-smart and proactive while adding their voices and actions to address the urgent challenge of climate change.

Story 11

Francis Gochin Gomper, Sureway Boys and Girls School Director, warmly welcomed the APLORI team and pledged that both staff and pupils will nurture the young trees to their full potential.

Through initiatives like this, APLORI demonstrates that local actions seedling by seedling can make a measurable difference in the global fight against climate change.

12

APLORI Marks World Nature Conservation Day with Media Outings, Advocating Sustainable use of the Environment.

As the world marks World Nature Conservation Day, the call is for all to be reflective and use nature wisely for the present and future generations.

To intensify these campaigns, Director A .P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI), Centre of Excellence Prof. Adams Ch askda and Dr. Samson Da'an (APLORI, Weppa Field Station Coordinator) were on Plateau Radio Television Corporation (PRTVC) and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), to talk about the Institute's conservation mandates which revolves around research, capacity building and conservation practice. They emphasised that awareness about the importance of protecting biodiversity is critical with everyone having a role to play.

They equally acknowledged the urgent need for sustainable practices as it plays a vital role in maintaining biodiversity and a healthy ecosystem. This year's World Nature Conservation Day has the theme: “Connecting Humans and Plants: Exploring Digital Innovation for Wildlife Conservation.”.

APLORI Marks World Nature Conservation Day With Renewed Focus on Research, Innovation, Collaboration, and Biodiversity Conservation (Spotlight on Radio Nigeria)

Observed annually on July 28th, World Nature Conservation Day reminds us all of our obligation to preserve and protect the natural world for both present and future generations.

The theme for 2025"Connecting People and Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation "emphasizes sustainable practices that bring people closer to nature, while harnessing technologies like GIS mapping, artificial intelligence, and smart monitoring systems to safeguard endangered species and forests. It encourages a digital reconnection with the Earth's natural treasures.

This day also calls on governments and international organizations to review their conservation pledges, evaluate progress toward global targets including those set by the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and raise public consciousness for a greener future.

In light of this, the A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI), a Center of Excellence at the University of Jos under the leadership of Professor Adams Chaskda, is championing coordinated efforts by government agencies and non-governmental organizations to intensify actions aimed at protecting the earth's limited resources. This call comes at a time marked by climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, and mounting pollution.

Through research and capacity-building, APLORI recognizes the inter-dependency between humans and nature, and stresses the importance of sustainable development working in tandem with environmental protection.

The Institute carries out a range of research and conservation projects, including the Nigerian Bird Atlas Project, which documents bird distributions across the country; an acoustic laboratory used to study birds through sound recordings; and bird ringing activities that help track bird movements, life history, and monitor populations. These efforts support the conservation of birds, their habitats, and broader ecosystems. APLORI also promotes sustainable land use through its greenhouse demonstration projects, which have trained both formal and informal learners to adopt practices that protect the environment while meeting local needs.

Through its plant nursery, the Institute propagates endangered plant species and supports smart agriculture aimed at reducing pressure on natural ecosystems. In addition to these, APLORI hosts the first and only Centre for Species Survival in Africa, dedicated to protecting threatened species, and houses the only Molecular Ecology Laboratory in West Africa, where research on the DNA and origins of animals and plants continues to inform conservation strategies across the region.

Recent research from APLORI advocates for sustainable urbanization in response to rapid population growth. Proposed strategies include maintaining and creating green spaces that enhance biodiversity, and enacting laws that mandate collaboration between town planners, ecologists, and conservation biologists in designing urban spaces. These measures ensure cities are built to support natural resources, reinforcing the idea that a healthy society depends on a healthy environment.

Over the years, APLORI has recorded several important milestones in biodiversity research and conservation. The Institute has published over 300 scholarly articles in high-impact international journals and contributed over 500,000 biodiversity records to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), the highest from any institution in Nigeria. It has also distributed and planted more than 20,000 seedlings, with support from various partners, as part of its reforestation and community outreach efforts. APLORI manages the Amurum Forest Reserve in Jos-East, designated as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA), where ongoing conservation efforts have contributed to increased vegetation cover and improved habitat quality. These achievements reflect APLORI's long-term commitment to ecological research, environmental education, and habitat restoration.

To intensify its advocacy, APLORI is engaging in public awareness campaigns through television and radio appearances, tree-planting initiatives, and stakeholder visits across the environmental sector. These efforts emphasize that a habitable earth built on biodiversity and sustainability is possible if individuals and organizations each play their part.

Nanlep Kumle
Senior Communications Officer APLORI.

Lekki Bird Club

Gallery

2024/2025 Masters Mini Project Presentation









Students on Industrial Attachment go through a Learning Curve on Reviews and Presentations of Research. ***Guided by Dr. Jecinta Abalaka***


Gallery

APLORI's Tree Planting Campaigns Captured









Purple Pupils Reading Club on an Educational Visit to APLORI




Gallery

Department of Natural Sciences, Oswald Waller College of Education Lifidi, Shendam on a Learning Visit to the foremost Ornithological Research Institute, Centre of Excellence, APLORI



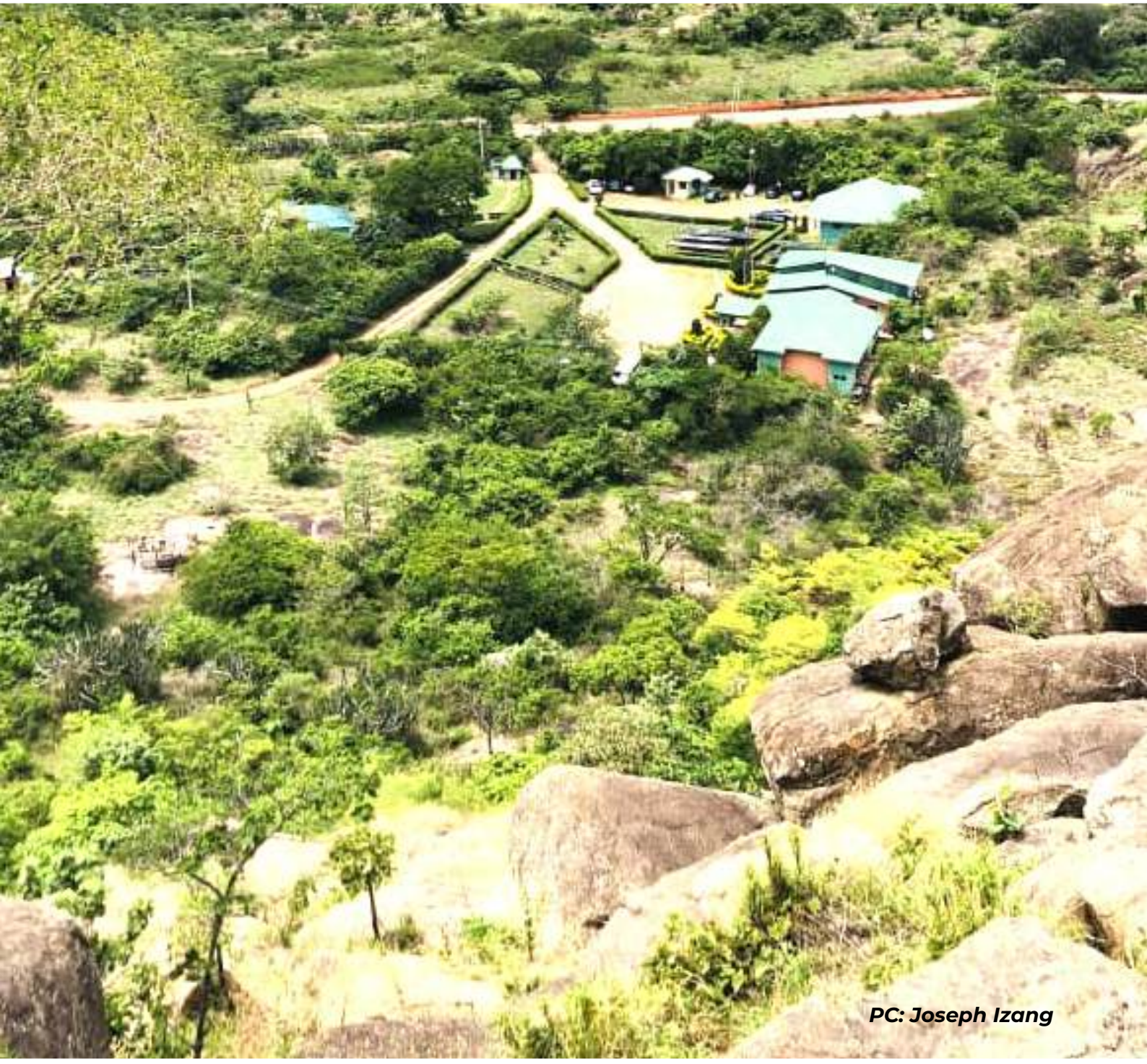

2024/2025 MSc Cohort's Two-Week Field Outing at Weppa Farm, Edo State











PC: Joseph Izang