

# A Working Bibliography of Sources for Bird Names in West African Languages



by Adam Manvell

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The image on the front page is taken from one of the sources used in this work: William Fairbairn's (1933) *Some Common Birds of West Africa*. Lagos: Church Missionary Society Bookshop; London: Highway Press.

The text accompanying the author's artwork includes names in seven languages for the Cattle Egret. This graphic contains names in 49 languages which I believe the author would appreciate. If the owners of the copyright do not consider this fair use, please contact me and I will remove it.

The Cattle Egret has been chosen because it is probably the most commonly named bird across all the sources included in this bibliography. The names follow the order the languages are presented in this work (see table in the introduction), with shade and font changes according to language family.

### Version Histories

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## Introduction

The genesis of this document began over a decade ago when I pooled the Hausa bird names that I had recorded in Niger in 2002 with other sources (Manvell, 2012). This was a learning process for me and underlined the importance of not only properly transcribing names phonetically, but also the additional value of recording how they were elicited, with who, when and where in order to increase their potential for analysis. As part of this learning exercise, I started to collect sources of bird names in other languages, which forms the basis of this work. This I realise is an ongoing task and hence the name of the document. Four important parameters define what I have included:

- My focus on West Africa is specifically on the languages spoken with the fifteen continental nations as per the UN subregion definition.
- I follow Glottolog's naming and categorisation system, which is not without its detractors in some instances and I have flagged these where a source differs in opinion.
- Only sources which twenty or more bird names are included. This is a low threshold and ideally in the future will be raised to forty if not fifty, which I believe is an achievable number of bird names in all the region's languages. Just under a third of the languages covered here fail to meet the fifty bar but hopefully their inclusion will encourage further work, especially as some are for languages with a large number of speakers (e.g. Yoruba, Igbo and Bambara) or are the sole representatives so far located of some linguistic family branches (e.g. Gourmanchéma and Mbire).
- Bird names within bilingual dictionaries are excluded, though one source appears to be solely based on an extraction from such a work. My reasons for this are not only are these works numerous and already covered in the reference section of Glottolog or in the now rather outdated bibliography of Hendrix (1982), but in my experience, their bird entries are often of limited value ('a bird' is a classic entry sometimes with an additional note on its size, colour or habits, but none of which aids its identification). Furthermore, many of them are hard to find. There are of course some notable exceptions to this and I gained a lot from Bargery's Hausa masterpiece and I may modify this stance in future versions.

For each source I provide a commentary of variable length. My aim is to provide the reader with some idea of how many bird names are included in the work. This is not a straightforward task as not only can one species have multiple names and one name can cover multiple species but there is also the issue of deciding at what point is one name distinct from another, e.g. in subtleties of spelling and pronunciation or in more fundamental aspects of the morphology of the name. Ideally, following Martin's recommendation for name analysis in ethnobotany (Martin, 1995: 213), they should be categorised into simple primary, complex primary or secondary names. None of the sources listed here have done that and it is far beyond what I intend to do. It would however be a very useful exercise going forward to help weed out what Fleck (2007: 90) calls *ad hoc* descriptive phrases:

“In elicitation of plant and animal names, *ad hoc* responses are especially common with under differentiated taxa. This is partly because consultants are asked to name multiple species that appear different from each other in the field guides, but for which they only have a single term.”

My name counts are therefore indicative only and what I have counted is hopefully reflected in how I have expressed the figures.

The commentaries, where possible, also aim to provide some information to the reader on who collected the names, how, when and where. I have also on occasion identified some shortcomings in the names, plus the odd potential ascription and observations on name borrowings.

The table below shows the 56 languages covered in this work and they are listed following the order of their respective family trees given in Glottolog and the sources are presented likewise. The table provides a hyperlink via the Glottocode which provides a basic map for those uncertain where the languages in question are spoken. The AES column in the table refers to the Agglomerated Endangerment Status of the language which is a metric used by Glottolog. Hammarström *et al.* (2018) provide the following definitions for the two statuses that are Not Endangered (NE):

- **Threatened (T):** The language is used orally by all generations but only some of the child-bearing generation are transmitting it to their children. Following Lewis & Simons (2010) this corresponds to the UNESCO status “Vulnerable”.
- **Shifting (S):** The child-bearing generation knows the language well enough to use it among themselves but none are transmitting it to their children. Following Lewis & Simons (2010) this corresponds to the UNESCO status “Definitely Endangered”.

Of the 56 languages covered in this bibliography, ten are threatened and ten shifting but what this means specifically for bird names is unclear. As discussed in relation to the Eten source, a language that is not endangered can still experience parts of its lexicon fading into disuse and bird names may be at particular risk in this regard. The factors that shape how bird names are retained, transformed and lost need to be much better understood. Establishing solid bird name datasets is foundational for this endeavour. In due course this will allow for a better understanding of naming practises across different languages and may offer insights into how certain names have spread. This bibliography hopefully provides a first stepping stone in this direction.

### Languages Included in the Bibliography

<b>FAMILY:</b> Sub-Family: <i>Sub-Division:</i> Branch	<b>Language and <i>Dialect(s)</i></b>	<b>Glottocode</b>	<b>AES</b>
<b>AFRO-ASIATIC:</b> Berber	<b>Tawallammat Tamacheq</b>	<a href="#">tawa1286</a>	NE
	<b>Tayart Tamajeq</b>	<a href="#">taya1257</a>	T
<b>AFRO-ASIATIC:</b> Chadic	<b>Buduma</b>	<a href="#">budu1265</a>	T
	<b>Hausa</b>	<a href="#">haus1257</a>	NE
	<b>Tal</b>	<a href="#">tall1250</a>	NE
	<b>Cakfem-Mushere: <i>Mushere</i></b>	<a href="#">cakf1236</a>	NE

<b>FAMILY:</b> Sub-Family: Sub-Division: Branch	<b>Language and Dialect(s)</b>	<b>Glottocode</b>	<b>AES</b>
	<b>Mwaghavul</b>	<a href="#">mwag1236</a>	NE
<b>AFRO-ASIATIC:</b> Semitic	<b>Chadian Arabic</b>	<a href="#">chad1249</a>	NE
<b>ATLANTIC-CONGO:</b> North-Central Atlantic	<b>Central-Eastern Niger Fulfulde: <i>Wodaabe</i></b>	<a href="#">cent2018</a>	NE
	<b>Hausa States Fulfulde</b>	<a href="#">nige1253</a>	NE
	<b>Maasina Fulfulde</b>	<a href="#">maas1239</a>	NE
	<b>Sereer</b>	<a href="#">sere1260</a>	NE
	<b>Bassari-Tanda</b>	<a href="#">bass1258</a>	T
	<b>Bedek</b>	<a href="#">bedi1235</a>	S
	<b>Wamey (Coniagui)</b>	<a href="#">wame1240</a>	T
<b>ATLANTIC-CONGO:</b> Niger-Congo: <i>Volta Congo:</i> Benue-Congo	<b>Gambian Wolof</b>	<a href="#">gamb1252</a>	NE
	<b>Bini (Edo)</b>	<a href="#">bini1246</a>	NE
	<b>Eten (Iten)</b>	<a href="#">eten1239</a>	NE
	<b>Yoruba</b>	<a href="#">yoru1245</a>	NE
	<b>Igbo</b>	<a href="#">nucl1417</a>	NE
	<b>Jere: <i>Buji (εBoze, Boje)</i></b>	<a href="#">jere1244</a>	NE
	<b>ATLANTIC-CONGO:</b> Niger-Congo: <i>Volta Congo:</i> Kwa Volta-Congo	<b>Ga</b>	<a href="#">gaaa1244</a>
<b>Akan</b>		<a href="#">akan1250</a>	NE
<b>Ewe</b>		<a href="#">ewee1241</a>	NE
<b>Gen (Mina)</b>		<a href="#">genn1243</a>	NE
<b>Gonja</b>		<a href="#">gonj1241</a>	NE
<b>ATLANTIC-CONGO:</b> Niger-Congo: <i>Volta Congo:</i> North-Volta Congo	<b>Gourmanchéma</b>	<a href="#">gur1243</a>	NE
<b>ATLANTIC-CONGO:</b> Niger-Congo: <i>Volta Congo:</i> Unclassified Congo	<b>Mbre (Pere, Bere)</b>	<a href="#">mbre1244</a>	S
<b>BANGIMI</b>	<b>Bangimi</b>	<a href="#">bang1363</a>	NE
<b>DOGON:</b> Escarpment Dogon	<b>Donno So Dogon</b>	<a href="#">donn1239</a>	NE
	<b>Tommo So Dogon</b>	<a href="#">tomm1242</a>	NE
	<b>Toro So Dogon: <i>Ibi So</i> and <i>Yorno So</i></b>	<a href="#">toro1252</a>	NE
<b>DOGON:</b>	<b>Bankan Tey Dogon</b>	<a href="#">bank1259</a>	S

<b>FAMILY:</b> Sub-Family: <i>Sub-Division:</i> Branch	<b>Language and <i>Dialect(s)</i></b>	<b>Glottocode</b>	<b>AES</b>	
Nangan Dogon	<b>Ben Tey Dogon</b>	<a href="#">bent1238</a>	S	
	<b>Nanga</b>	<a href="#">nang1261</a>	S	
<b>DOGON:</b> North Plateau Dogon	<b>Dogul Dom Dogon</b>	<a href="#">dogu1235</a>	T	
	<b>Najamba-Kindige</b>	<a href="#">bond1248</a>	T	
	<b>Tebul Ure Dogon</b>	<a href="#">tebu1239</a>	T	
	<b>Yanda Dom Dogon</b>	<a href="#">yand1257</a>	S	
<b>DOGON:</b> Plains Dogon	<b>Jamsay Dogon: <i>Guru (Gourou) and Perge Tegu</i></b>	<a href="#">yand1257</a>	S	
	<b>Toro Tegu Dogon</b>	<a href="#">toro1253</a>	NE	
	<b>Tengou-Togo Dogon: <i>Togo Kan</i></b>	<a href="#">tene1248</a>	NE	
	<b>Tomo Kan</b>	<a href="#">tomo1243</a>	NE	
<b>DOGON:</b> West Dogon	<b>Ampari Dogon</b>	<a href="#">ampa1238</a>	S	
	<b>Bunoge Dogon</b>	<a href="#">buno1241</a>	S	
	<b>Mombo Dogon</b>	<a href="#">momb1254</a>	T	
	<b>Penange</b>	<a href="#">pena1270</a>	NE	
	<b>Tiranige Diga Dogon</b>	<a href="#">tira1258</a>	S	
<b>IJOID</b>	<b>Southeast Ijo: <i>Nembe</i></b>	<a href="#">sout2774</a>	T	
<b>MANDE:</b> Eastern	<b>Guro (Gurou/Gouro)</b>	<a href="#">guro1248</a>	NE	
<b>MANDE:</b> Western	<b>Bambara</b>	<a href="#">bamb1269</a>	NE	
	<b>Koro</b>	<a href="#">koro1306</a>	T	
	<b>Mandinka (Mandingo)</b>	<a href="#">mand1436</a>	NE	
	<b>Mende</b>	<a href="#">mend1266</a>	NE	
	<b>Jenaama Bozo</b>	<a href="#">jena1242</a>	NE	
	<b>SAHARAN</b>	<b>Central Kanuri</b>	<a href="#">cent2050</a>	NE

## AFRO-ASIATIC: Berber

### Tawallammat Tamajaq

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/tawa1286>

- Nicolas, F. (1950) *Tamesna : les Ioullemmeden de l'Est ou Touâreg "Kel Dinnîk", cercle de T'âwa, colonie de Niger : Notes de linguistique et d'ethnographic berbères, dialectes de la Tamâzeq-Taullemmêt*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale.
- Nicolas, F. (1957) "Vocabulaires ethnographiques de la Tamâjeq des Iullemmeden de l'est (Touâreg de la Colonie du Niger, Afrique Occidentale Française) (Sixième partie)." *Anthropos* **52**(1/2): 49-64. Available at: [https://www.digi-hub.de/viewer/image/DE-11-001896209/91/LOG\\_0016/](https://www.digi-hub.de/viewer/image/DE-11-001896209/91/LOG_0016/)

Francis Nicolas was a colonial administrator and for two successive postings before the war, was chief of the *subdivision nomade* of the Cercle de T'awa (Tahoua). He wrote extensively on the language, history, culture, social organisation and economic activities of the Kel Dinnik Tuareg who inhabit the Tamesna region in which he had worked for four years. His monograph includes over 50 bird names ascribed to their scientific counterparts and several are provided with their meanings. He gives at least 14 additional names in the subsequent article shown above, though as they given only with their common French names, some are difficult to ascribe.

### Tayart Tamajeq

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/taya1257>

- Hartert, E. (1921) "Birds collected by Capt. Angus Buchanan during his journey from Kano to Aïr or Asben" *Novitates Zoologicae* **28**(1):78-141. Available at: <https://biostor.org/reference/85634>
- Hartert, E., (1924) "Ornithological results of Captain Buchanan's second Sahara Expedition" *Novitates Zoologicae* **31**: 1-48. Available at: <https://archive.org/details/dli.ernet.28586>

By his own admission in the preface to his book about his first journey, Angus Buchanan was mute in the languages of the local people he travelled among and lacked the linguistic knowledge he considered the norm for the professional (Buchanan, 1921: xi). He nevertheless seems to have done a fair job with local bird names, taking care to sometimes note where he collected them and occasionally including their meanings. In Ernst Hartert's write-up of the first expedition 18 'Tuareg' or 'Targi' names are recorded and a further 25 names for the second expedition: I have assumed all of these are Tayart Tamajeq. The name given for the Greater Blue-eared Starling on the first trip (*takadaquot*) is very similar to the *takadagot* for the Black Wood-hoopoe on the second which may be an ascription error.

- Villiers, A. (1948) "Noms vernaculaires de quelques animaux de l'Aïr." *Notes Africaines* **40**: 23-25.
- Villiers, A. (1950) "Contribution à l'étude de l'Aïr (mission L. Chopard et A. Villiers). Oiseaux." *Mémoires de l'Institut Français d'Afrique Noire* **10**: 345-385.

In 1947, the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire (I.F.A.N) organised an expedition to the Aïr mountains in northern Niger led by two entomologists, Lucien Chopard and André Villiers. The latter was clearly competent with other taxa and in his note in IFAN's quarterly bulletin for short correspondences, he provides the Tamajeq names they collected for mammals, birds, reptiles and a few insects, prefaced with the following barb and a word of caution regarding their sphere of use:

« Il nous a toutefois semblé utile de publier les quelques termes que nous avons pu réunir car, étant naturaliste, nous possédons la détermination exacte des animaux désignés élément qui fait trop souvent défaut en cette matière à l'ethnologue ou au linguiste. Les noms en tamacheq donnés ci-dessous sont ceux employés par les Kel Oui. D'après nos informateurs indigènes, certaines fractions usent de termes plus ou moins différent. »

Linguists and anthropologists would certainly have something to say about his transcriptions and understanding of the social complexity in the Aïr. Oddly, whereas the first note gives 29 bird names the full write-up provides only 25. They add an additional 18 new species names to Buchanan's collection.



## AFRO-ASIATIC: West Chadic

### **Buduma (Yedina)**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/budu1265>

- Gaudiche (1938) “La langue boudouma.” *Journal de la Société des Africanistes* 8(1): 11-32. Available at: [https://www.persee.fr/doc/jafr\\_0037-9166\\_1938\\_num\\_8\\_1\\_1649](https://www.persee.fr/doc/jafr_0037-9166_1938_num_8_1_1649)

While Captain Gaudiche was the commander of the Cercle de Nguigmi (Niger) sometime up to 1933 he collected the Buduma words and language notes presented here. Given his location, it is most likely that his informants were Yedina as they prefer to be called—Buduma being an exonym that is sometimes used to cover both the Yedina living in the north of Lake Chad and the Kuri to the south-east who share the same language (Baroin, 2005). Gaudiche provides a list of 27 bird names, one of which is duplicated. Though these are only ascribed to basic French names such as *tourterelle* and *canards*, some can be ascribed to the species level. The inclusion of *lièvre* in both this list and that of wild animals is presumably an error. Since Gaudiche mentions the influence of the neighbouring Kanuri on Buduma vocabulary and Baroin (2005) reports that 'Kanurisation' had been observed among the southern Buduma through inter-marriage and adoption of their language, it is interesting to compare these bird names with the Kanuri ones collected by Benton (1916)—see later. For the 11 instances where names are given for the same species, six are identical or very similar and two are quite close. Obtaining further Kanuri names to complete the comparison with Gaudiche's names would be interesting, but it seems already that few are truly Buduma.

### **Hausa**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/haus1257>

- Clark, E. A. (1931) *One Hundred Birds of the Niger Province*. Jos: Niger Press

I was not aware of this delightful book when I compiled the lexicon below. It gives Hausa names for 80 species, 23 of which are not found in my compilation. Despite the author choosing, in her estimation, only the most common species, the relatively large percentage of new names in part reflects the different ecological zone she was in compared to my sources who collected to the north. As the following lines in the preface indicate, the author admits that some names may be incorrect and on several occasions she flags her uncertainty over some ascriptions with a question mark:

“Having lived only in Wushishi and Minna and the nearby towns, my choice of birds is chiefly from those of that section of the Province.

Whenever possible, I have given the Hausa name of the species. I do not dare to hope all of these are correct but they are the best I have been able to secure after several years of inquiry.”

Who Miss Clark's informants were requires some consideration to better situate the names. Christian missions were largely prevented from working in the Islamic emirates in colonial Northern Nigeria, so the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) sites where she worked were outside of the areas where Hausa is widely spoken as a first language. Wushishi and Minna were then

inhabited largely by Gbaygi/Gbari (Gwari) and Nupe and Clark may have had some proficiency in their languages having been in post since 1912 (Percy, 1948) and before the SIM strategic turn to the Hausa language in the mid-1920s (Cooper, 2006: 101). Cooper (*ibid.* p121) notes: "SIM missionary exposure to Hausa language and culture prior to 1934 was derived from encounters with Hausa traders, ex-slaves, and non-native speakers outside the Hausa-speaking heartland of the Kano, Katsina, and Sokoto emirates." To these can be added migrant Hausa speakers. The construction of the railway line from Ibadan to Kano that passed through Minna stimulated an influx to the town of various people from different ethnic groups, including Hausa, who according to Baba (2022: 48), constituted the membership of the SIM church there. As Clark includes two examples of Hausa children's spontaneous sayings in response to cattle egrets and crowned cranes flying over, there were certainly Hausa families where she worked. What can tentatively be concluded is that her names are likely to have been imported to Wushishi and Minna. From where we will probably never know unless her archives are revealing. Though this arguably diminishes their value, they nevertheless capture an albeit imperfect record of their use at a particular time. The value of that time is particularly well illustrated in one of the few cases where Clark expands on the meaning of a name. For the Yellow-throated Longclaw she notes: "The Hausas think that the peculiar whir of the wings sounds like a weaver's shuttle, hence its names". Given the demise of weaving in the intervening years, this understanding of the meaning of these names may also be disappearing.

- Manvell, A. (2012) *A Preliminary Hausa Bird Lexicon*. Unpublished report. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/yy6j7xtf>

Hausa is the most widely spoken first language in Sub-Saharan Africa, with perhaps 40 million mother-tongue speakers, and is also a significant and expanding *lingua franca* in West Africa and beyond. Though the work draws together 12 diverse sources of bird names collected between c.1910 and 2002, the title includes the word preliminary for good reason. The methodologies behind how the names were ascribed to one or more species across the sources is examined. A name or names for 278 species of bird are recorded and despite being collected in an unsystematic way, some basic analysis of the data is attempted. I hope to update it in due course with both new sources that have been produced or old ones that have come to my attention in the intervening years. The work below includes some additions.

### **Tal**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/tall1250>

- Blench, R. & Bulkaam, M.S. (2017) Ethnozoology of the Tal, Chadic-speakers of west-central Nigeria. Available at: <http://www.rogerblench.info/Language/Afroasiatic/Chadic/West/A3/Talic/Tal/Tal%20ethnozoology.pdf>

This work on a barely studied language took place over four days in 2016 and 2017 by the authors with 14 informants who are listed and thanked in the introduction. It contains 57 bird names of which 49 are ascribed to species or genus and eight are for unknown species, only one of which has some description. For comparative purposes, Hausa names are also provided, but where these came from is not elaborated on. Four of these are interesting in

relation to the above Hausa Bird lexicon (for the Violet Turaco, Fork-tailed Drongo, Purple Glossy Starling and Brown-rumped Bunting) in terms of either shoring up ascriptions or in the case of the last species, use of a name for a similar species that has no listing.

### **Cakfem-Mushere**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/mush1239>

NB: Whilst Glottolog consider Mushere a dialect of Cakfem-Mushere (Glottocode: mush1239) Blench (2019) considers it a language albeit very close to Mwaghavul to the extent it is almost mutually intelligible.

- Pam, G. A. B. (2017) *Ethno-ornithology and Conservation: Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) of Birds among the Mushere and the Conservation of the Dulu Forest in Mushere, Plateau State, Nigeria*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. University of Oxford. Available at: <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:38679da9-fc64-4cff-9485-1dd2eb5ab413>

This doctoral thesis is set in an interesting language setting in which to explore bird naming dynamics as the number of Mushere speakers is on the small side—page 46 gives a 2015 population figure of 37,000 for Mushere Chieftdom, which is not to say all inhabitants speak Mushere—and most Mushere also speak Hausa (p. 46). Appendix 1 lists 102 Mushere bird names generated from freelists and focus group meetings of which only 43 were identified to either species or generic level. The key conclusion of the research in terms of bird-naming is stated on page 194:

“The ability of individuals to name on average only ten birds or less shows a poor knowledge of birds, and the observation that older Mushere respondents did not know significantly more than the younger respondents suggests that bird knowledge may have long been poor.”

The author goes on to coin the term ornithoapatheia to describe the indifference she encountered in respondents towards birds (p. 200). I find this a problematic proposition from a social science perspective and I don't believe her methodologies were appropriate to support such a claim. However, as the author is a zoologist and her doctorate was in ornithology, it is unreasonable to expect a deep focus on the sociological and linguistic reasons behind bird knowledge dynamics and performances of this through the use of bird names.

### **Mwaghavul**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/mwag1236>

- Roger Blench (2012) Mwaghavul Bird Names. Available at: <http://www.rogerblench.info/Language/Afroasiatic/Chadic/West/A3/Mwaghavul/ES/Mwaghavul%20bird%20names.pdf>

Roger Blench was involved at one stage with the Mwaghavul Literacy committee. His list of 83 bird names is prefaced with the following:

“This is a list of bird names in the Mwaghavul language, spoken around

Panyam, in Plateau State, Nigeria. It has yet to be fully updated with results from a workshop held in April 2012. The main source for identifications is Borrow & Demey (2001).”

Some ascriptions to species or the genus level are included and for others, the descriptions may aid identification—*nkùríít* is almost certainly the Piapiac. A few name meanings are also provided.

Given the aforementioned note from Blench (2019) that Mushere is very close to Mwaghavul, it would be interesting to properly compare the bird names for the two languages, especially once the above has been updated. The two different methods of transcription employed require harmonisation, preferably to the one Roger has used. Ahead of this, a quick examination from a non-linguist, indicates that at least 12 names are shared.

## AFRO-ASIATIC: West Semitic

### Chadian Arabic (Shuwa)

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/chad1249>

- Malbrant, R. (1936) *Faune du Centre Africain Français (Mammifères et Oiseaux)*. Paris: Paul Lechevalier.

René Malbrant was a colonial veterinarian and at the time the first edition of this book came out, was Chef du Service Zootechnique du Tchad. His book contains an impressive 142 Chadian Arab names for birds. To what extent these are used among the Shuwa in north-east Nigeria and eastern Niger, as the speakers of this language there are called, is unknown but Owens (1985) found some vocabulary differences between speakers from Nigeria and Chad. The current status of this language in the West African region defined in this bibliography is uncertain. Blench (2020:7) notes that the Boko Haram insurgency in north-east Nigeria has caused many Shuwa to flee the country and the situation in eastern Niger is unknown.

## NIGER–CONGO: North-Central Atlantic

### Central-Eastern Niger Fulfulde (Wodaabe)

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/cent2018>

- Schareika, N. (2003): *Westlich der Kälberleine. Nomadische Tierhaltung und naturkundliches Wissen bei den Wodaabe Südostnigers*. Berlin, Münster: Lit-Verlag.

This book is focussed on the animal husbandry and natural history knowledge of a unique Fulbe sub-group, the Wodaabe, who live principally in Niger and Chad, with the specific focus being a particular clan living in southeast Niger. As Loftsdóttir (2004: 56) has pointed out, even though the Wodaabe speak a dialect (Glottocode: woda1240) of the same language as the Fulbe, they do not identify themselves as belonging to the same ethnic group. Whether this distinction manifests in bird-naming is unknown. The thematic glossary of the book contains 91 bird names. The author gave the following details on how names were obtained but stressed that time and resources limited his ability to do in-depth ethno-zoological research (*pers comm.* 12/08/2013):

“I observed birds with Wodaabe informants and experts (e.g. a German forester) together and obtained the Fulfulde and Latin name from the[m] directly upon spotting the birds. Alternatively I checked published illustrations of birds with a Wodaabe informant who was experienced in looking at printed stuff (with most other Wodaabe this is a very problematic and error-prone technique).”

### Hausa States Fulfulde

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/nige1253>

- Fairbairn, W. (1933) *Some Common Birds of West Africa*. Lagos: Church Missionary Society Bookshop; London: Highway Press.

Contains names for 37 species which presumably the author collected himself in Nigeria. In an initialled-only article on the African Scops Owl (W.A.F 1934), he reports seeing it throughout Niger Province and in Kaduna, so these may be where he collected these names but details of his posting are otherwise scant—see however footnote in Bini entry.

### Maasina Fulfulde

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/maas1239>

- Rousselot, R. (1939) "Notes sur la faune ornithologique du cercle de Mopti, Soudan Français." *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Afrique Noire* **1**: 1-88.

René Rousselot was a veterinary doctor in the French colonial service whose various posts included Chef de la Circonscription d'Élevage de Mopti from where he wrote this article. I have gathered a few scant details about him in relation to the Hausa bird names he collected at a later posting to Niger (Manvell, 2012: 20-21). Thirty-four phonetically transcribed Peulh (Fulfulde) names are provided but due to printing problems, they are not shown with diacritics. Of additional note is the inclusion on page 47 of a song Fulbe children used when

chasing Namaqua Doves towards their traps. I have assumed the names are in Maasina Fulfulde solely on the basis of the location of Mopti in relation to the map in Harrison (2003). However, given the mobile lifestyle of many Fulbe in the region, and the unknown status of Rousselot's informants, it is possible speakers of other dialects/sub-languages provided names.

### **Sereer**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/sere1260>

- Singleton, M. & Vincke P. P. (1985) "Chasse coutumière et législation cynégétique: le cas des Sereers du Sénégal" *Journal d'Agriculture Traditionnelle et de Botanique Appliquée* **32**: 215-234.  
Available at: [https://www.persee.fr/doc/jatba\\_0183-5173\\_1985\\_num\\_32\\_1\\_3937](https://www.persee.fr/doc/jatba_0183-5173_1985_num_32_1_3937)

This interesting article by an anthropologist (Singleton) and zoologist (Vincke) is focussed on a particular village within a region depleted of game mammals. It contains 73 Sereer bird names ascribed to species within Table 1 which lists all animals traditionally consumed. The names are transcribed using the system used at the time by the Centre de Linguistique Appliquée, Université de Dakar. Birds are a key food source and unschooled children aged 8-16 are noted as having been particularly at ease with their identification, but how this was achieved is not elaborated beyond the comment that specimens were sometimes provided by hunters. In a related output (Vincke, *et. al.* 1985), it is noted that the children (boys only?) who catch birds often don't bring them home, preferring instead to grill and eat them in the bush. It should perhaps be born in mind that some of the bird names provided by children could be nicknames specific to the context of their trapping activity amongst their peers.

### **Bassari-Tanda**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/bass1258>

- Gessain, R. & Blume C. A. (1967) "Contribution à l'ornithologie du Sénégal oriental et à l'ethno-ornithologie des Bassari et autres populations Tenda." *Cahiers du Centre de recherches anthropologiques* **2**(1): 7-57.

This pioneering article is written in two parts. The first is by the ornithologist Carl Blume who describes the birds of the area of study in Kédougou and the second by the anthropologist Robert Gessain who gives the bird names in six languages, only three of which reach the minimum threshold of 20 names used in this bibliography. These names are often times enriched with details specific to each linguistic group regarding the meaning of the name and the uses and beliefs about the bird in question. Where names are given without a number, it indicates the corresponding bird wasn't seen by the ornithologist. Among the unnumbered bird names, some were ascribed to a species using the illustrations in a popular fieldguide containing colour, painted plates (Elgood, 1960) and others are provided with a description and/or a generic name.

The 90 Bassari names were collected by Robert Gessain between 1961 and 1964 and then completed in 1967 with one informant. Both singular and plural forms of the names are transcribed with tonal marks in IPA except for the palatals which are differently indicated.

**Bedik**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/bedi1235>

- Gessain, R. & Blume C. A. (1967) "Contribution à l'ornithologie du Sénégal oriental et à l'ethno-ornithologie des Bassari et autres populations Tenda." *Cahiers du Centre de recherches anthropologiques* 2(1): 7-57.

See above. The 49 Bedek names were collected by Marie-Paule Ferry in 1964-65 and are transcribed as above but without the tonal marks.

**Wamey (Coniagui)**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/wame1240>

- Gessain, R. & Blume C. A. (1967) "Contribution à l'ornithologie du Sénégal oriental et à l'ethno-ornithologie des Bassari et autres populations Tenda." *Cahiers du Centre de recherches anthropologiques* 2(1): 7-57.

See above. The 57 Coniagui names were collected "pour la plupart" by Monique Gessain in 1946 and 1948-49<sup>1</sup> and are transcribed as above but without tonal marks.

**Gambian Wolof**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/gamb1252>

- Dr. E. Hopkinson (1912) List of Mandingo and Jollof Bird-Names. Pp 277-297 in the Appendix of Reeve, H. F. (1912). *The Gambia: Its History, Ancient, Mediaeval, and Modern, Together with Its Geographical, Geological, and Ethnographical Conditions, and a Description of the Birds, Beasts, and Fishes Found Therein*. London: John Murray. Available at:  
<https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.499290/page/n357/mode/1up>

Dr. Hopkinson was the Medical Officer of the British Protectorate of The Gambia for the ten years preceding the publication of this book for which he also penned the chapter on birds. It contains 51 Wolof names without any translations. It does however contain an interesting remark that the French ornithologist Louis Pierre Vieillot must have coined the French name, (and English at the time), *combasou* for the Village Indigobird (*Vidua chalybeata*) from its Wolof name *kumba-suban*.

- Fairbairn, W. (1933) *Some Common Birds of West Africa*. Lagos: Church Missionary Society Bookshop; London: Highway Press.

Contains names for 26 species for whom Fairbairn thanks Dr. E. Hopkinson. Though the bulk of these are in Hopkinson's above work, names for four additional species are included here (Vulturine Fish-eagle (a.k.a Palm-nut Vulture), African Pied Wagtail, Scarlet-breasted Sunbird and Red-billed Fire-finch) and he assigns one of his original two unspecified heron names to the Grey Heron. The first of the new species is however problematic as it is given the same

<sup>1</sup> I presume this was among Coniagui over the border in Guinea where Monique de Lestrang, as she was then known, initially worked before Sékou Touré's revolution shifted her focus over to Senegal (Gessain, 1989).



name for Hooded Vulture which seems unlikely. In a similar vein, whereas Hopkinson records distinct Mandingo names for the four doves (Red-eyed Turtle-dove, Vinaceous Turtle-Dove, Senegal Dove and Red-billed wood-dove) in Wolof they all assigned a generic name which is perhaps unlikely. It is also noteworthy that the name given to Bruce's Fruit-pigeon is in the original work listed as one of the two Mandingo names for it: whether the error was here or in the work is unclear. Additionally, whereas in the original work the Wolof name for the Senegal Golden Oriole is listed as *katcha-katcha*, in this work it is *katcha-bà*, which is the Mandingo name for it in the original.

## NIGER-CONGO: Volta Congo: Benue-Congo

### **Bini (Edo)**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/bini1246>

- Fairbairn, W. (1933) *Some Common Birds of West Africa*. Lagos: Church Missionary Society Bookshop; London: Highway Press.

Contains names for 35 species which the author collected himself but doesn't elaborate on<sup>2</sup>. The name given for Yellow-fronted Canary would seem an Anglicism. Four years after this publication, Hans Melzian (1937) in the acknowledgements to his excellent Bini dictionary thanks Fairbairn for "the Bini names of birds with their correct English equivalents". Quite how helpful he was is however unclear as Melzian has several entries for very loosely described birds, many of which from an ethno-ornithological perspective would be useful to identify given the interesting ancillary information he provides. Melzian also omits several of Fairbairn's names which is a further pity as his deep knowledge of the language and culture would help with their etymologies and context, with the name of Egyptian Plover being especially interesting.

### **Eten (Iten)**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/eten1239>

- Blench, R. (2008) Iten Birds.  
Available at: <http://www.rogerblench.info/Language/Niger-Congo/BC/Plateau/Beromic/Iten/Iten%20birds.pdf>

No information is provided in this document on when, where and how the data were collected. The date of 2008 is from the author's Ethnoscience: Birds home page, but likely to be from earlier fieldwork. Starting in December 2002, the author was part of a project conducted under the auspices of the UNESCO Chair of Cultural Heritage at the University of Port Harcourt, in which he surveyed endangered music in Central Nigeria. In an article shortly afterwards in the newsletter of the Foundation for Endangered Languages (Blench, 2003), the author makes the case for enlarging the focus of endangered language research to include what he calls endangered cultural vocabulary. With reference to his work on Eten he notes:

"Most of the population speaks some version of the language and most adults are fluent, so the language cannot be described as immediately threatened. But many specialised areas of the lexicon are threatened; ethnoscientific vocabulary, terms connected with traditional religion and songs and words connected with traditional music."

<sup>2</sup> Piecing together Fairbairn's career in the Colonial Forestry Service in Nigeria, which commenced in 1925 ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Alexander\\_Fairbairn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Alexander_Fairbairn)), on the basis of two of his contributions in *The Nigerian Field* (Adams *et al.* (1935) and Fairbairn, W. (1935)), I think he spent a fair period in Benin Division until at least 1934 by which time he was Conservator of Forest Benin District (archival report cited in Ikponmwo, 2020). His latter *Nigerian Field* article describes the nesting habits of the black bee-eater in Benin Division, but oddly Melzian's entry for this species is almost identical to the one Fairbairn gives in his book for the Grey-headed Kingfisher. In the former he provides the Bini name for Hartlaub's duck: *kpekpeye eze* "the swamp duck".

“The trees have all been cut down with the exception of a few economic species. The animals have all been hunted out or fled for lack of a habitat. The consequence is that although older people still know the names of animals, birds and trees, it is very difficult to identify many of them very accurately, because they have not been seen for decades. Trees cannot be pointed out because no examples of many less common species remain. Only a book of West African agricultural weeds generated a significant number of identifications. What I have recorded is likely to be all that there is, for with a few years the hunters who remember these names will be dead and the words will disappear forever.

I raise this point because Iten would normally be classed as a language that is not endangered, with up to 40,000 speakers. But in some important way, these are semi-speakers unable to bring up any areas of specialised vocabulary and increasingly prone to substitute loans from the dominant lingua franca, Hausa. Endangered languages and endangered cultures go together and we probably need to enlarge our concept of endangerment if we are to have any chance of reversing the decline that engages our concern.”

In the light of the above, the 67 bird names presented here is particularly impressive as only five are assigned to unidentified birds. Furthermore, potential ascriptions for two of these can be deduced from the accompanying comments: Northern Anteater Chat for *èhwurìhwi* and more tentatively Piapiac<sup>3</sup> for the *egyweèk*. I would also hazard a guess that *ececèbhêt* might be one of the more vocal plovers or lapwing and *èkúphyep* the African Thrush. It is interesting to note that the primary name for the two *Serinus* species, *èkànàri*, may be an English rather than Hausa borrowing.

### Yoruba

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/yoru1245>

- Fairbairn, W. (1933) *Some Common Birds of West Africa*. Lagos: Church Missionary Society Bookshop; London: Highway Press.

Contains names for 48 species for whom the author thanks Captain P.R. Foulkes-Roberts, M.C., M.B.O.U, of the Nigerian Administrative Service. As his second initials indicate, Foulkes-Roberts was a keen ornithologist and indeed Bannerman (1959: 93) makes mention of his contributions in the coastal districts of the west of Nigeria. It might be fruitful to work out where he gathered these names (and perhaps others recorded elsewhere) in order to identify their dialect. His brother deposited his letters home during his service in Nigeria with the Royal Anthropological Institute<sup>4</sup> and these may be useful in this regard. Interestingly of the 12 species named in this report and also in either or the two studies below, three are distinctly different.

<sup>3</sup> Though only immature piapiacs have pinkish bills and the Hausa term *bardo* more often, but far from exclusively, refers to doves, they are fond of fan-palms where they rob nests of doves (Clark 1931:47).

<sup>4</sup> <https://therai.org.uk/archives-and-manuscripts/manuscript-contents/0293-foulkes-roberts-pr-ms-293>

- Welianje, W. S., Kolawole R. A., Prasannajith N. S., Afolabi A. S. & Ameachi E. C. (2015) "Ethno-Ornithological Knowledge and Uses of Birds in Omiaro and Labaka Villages, Kwara State, Nigeria." *Malimbus* 37(2): 41-54. Available at: <http://malimbus.org/en/contents/articles/V37/sept/41%E2%80%9354.pdf>

Contains names for 20 species collected in two villages over four days. Though at the limit of inclusion in this bibliography, the attention to detail in the orthography and the accompanying details on beliefs about the birds and how they relate to their names is highly commendable.

- Odeyemi, O. M. & Babatunde T. A. (2021) "Man-Bird Interaction: Ethno-Ornithology of Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria." Pages 1067-1074 in Proceedings of the 46th Annual Conference of the Nigerian Society for Animal Production (NSAP). Edited by Saulawa, L. A. Usman H. B. Aruwayo A. Garba M. G. Rotimi E. A. Dauda A. B. Adeola S. S. & Sabo M. N. Available at: <https://njap.org.ng/index.php/njap/article/download/6177/4809>

Contains names for 20 wild species. Though not as rich in detail as the above, it is interesting that given the proximity of the study sites in these two works (c. 50 km), of the 15 species which are named in both, five are distinctly different. There are a few errors in English and Latin bird names in this work to be aware of. The Yoruba name ascribed to the domesticated Quail, which is confusingly given an unknown Latin species but is surely *japonica*, is interestingly the same as Foulkes-Roberts provided Fairbairn for the Double-Spurred Francolin, which is found in the area<sup>5</sup>. Though there is a resemblance in plumage between these species there is an important size difference and it is perhaps a little curious that the imported species lacks a modifier to its name to convey this.

### **Igbo**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/nucl1417>

- Fairbairn, W. (1933) *Some Common Birds of West Africa*. Lagos: Church Missionary Society Bookshop; London: Highway Press.

Contains names for 43 species for whom the author in his preface in a combined thanks with the Efik names<sup>6</sup>, cites five sources. Working out which of these provided the 'Ibo' names, as Fairbairn calls them, might perhaps narrow down the dialect—Blench (2020: 42) notes the language has many dialects varying in mutual intelligibility. Among the five thanked is Mr. R. F. G. Adams who had written a modern Igbo grammar the year previously and was an important protagonist in the ongoing Igbo orthography controversy<sup>7</sup>. Adams, who worked for the Nigerian Education Department, backed the new orthography which disposed of diacritic marks and has been referred to as the "Adams-Ward" orthography. The colonial government as well as the Roman Catholic missions adopted it but the Protestant missions (except the Methodists) opposed it. Curiously, in a book published by the Church Missionary Society, who led this opposition having long used the Lepsius orthography, the Igbo bird names appear in

<sup>5</sup> <https://nigeria.birdmap.africa/species/1218>

<sup>6</sup> These are not however included in this bibliography as they only attain 12 names.

<sup>7</sup> See <https://franpritchett.com/00fwp/igbo/igbohistory.html> for a timeline of this. The brief details given here originate from this source.

the new orthography. In 1961, diacritics returned with the formal adoption of the official Igbo orthography, so the names require updating.

### **Jere**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/jere1244>

N.B. Whereas Blench & Nengel (2012) considers εBoze to be a language within the 'Jere cluster' with three dialects, Glottolog classify it only as a dialect they write Buji (Glottocode: buji1242) of the Jere language. Blench & Nengel also consider it an endangered language whereas Glottolog do not.

- Blench & εBoze Literacy Committee (2013) Boze Birds.  
Available at: <http://www.rogerblench.info/Language/Niger-Congo/BC/Kainji/East%20Kainji/Boze/Ethno/Boze%20birds.pdf>

Like the author's Eten names above, no information is provided within this document on when, where and how the data were collected and the date of 2013 is from the author's Ethnoscience: Birds home page. It contains 37 names, five of which are not identified either to a general group or species. In the author's background notes on the Boze (Buji) people, they had early contact with the Hausa and Fulbe and nowadays, virtual all of them are bilingual in Hausa (Blench & Nengel, 2012). A Hausa influence is clear in some names: in the first part of the generic for ducks and grebes (*agwagwa manye*), Ostrich (*bijimina*) and Speckled Pigeon (*u-tantabara*). As the Ostrich is exotic to their area and historically a domesticated and traded species, this borrowing is not surprising. The other two are a little more puzzling. In the first case perhaps *agwagwa* is a qualifying term. In the second, the ascription of *tantabara* is interesting. In Hausa it appears often, but not strictly, to be applied to the domestic pigeon and Blench has noted this name is borrowed<sup>8</sup> from Twareg (1995:208). The Boze ascription to the Speckled Pigeon might relate to it being a recent coloniser to their lands<sup>9</sup>. It may also be an aided commensal/quasi domesticate through the provision of nesting sites, which has been observed for this species in Hausaland (Staudinger, (1990 [1889]: V1: 296), Mundy & Cook (1972: 41) and Manvell (2010: 57)) as well as in Bornu (Bannerman, 1931: 324). The transposing of the name could reflect its arrival from the Hausa north or shared domestication. Alternatively it could be due to a shared morphological trait such as the large red orbital ring found in some domestic pigeon races but also a unique trait of the wild rock dove subspecies *Columbia livia gymnocyclus* found in Mauritania, Mali, Ghana, Senegambia and Guinea (Baptista et al.(2009) and Hernández-Alonso et al.(2023)).

The name for the *Serinus* spp., *bikànaré*, would appear to be an English rather than Hausa borrowing.

8 The sources in this bibliography for Tayart Tamajeq and Tawallammat Tamacheq in fact indicate that the name is used for *Streptopelia* doves: *tedabear/tédèbért* and *taḍābīrt*. Curiously the names for the wild rock dove, the domestic pigeons ancestor, that inhabits the Saharan mountains, *Columbia livia targia* in Tayart are given as *eleelookum* and *édilloukoum*, with the latter noted as the name for the domestic pigeon, whereas in Tawallammat, *taḍābīrt-ta-m-Mākkāt* (tourterelle de la Mekke), though I am not certain that this species is found in their area.

9 Though this species has been expanding its range southwards in recent decades (Elgood, 1982), as it is indigenous to the Guinea and Sudan savannas it has probably long been around the Jere lands, though perhaps previously in smaller numbers.

## NIGER-CONGO: Kwa Volta-Congo

### Ga

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/gaaa1244>

- Fairbairn, W. (1933) *Some Common Birds of West Africa*. Lagos: Church Missionary Society Bookshop; London: Highway Press.

Contains names for 32 species for whom the author gives a combined thanks in the preface with two other language sources from the same country to three expatriates. I suspect given their location where Ga is spoken that they were either or both Miss Field and Mr. C. Clark of Achemota, Accra. For a language spoken in a relatively small area around the capital, though most of the species named can still be found according to the eBird Greater Accra list<sup>10</sup>, how many Ga speakers are familiar with these names today would be interesting to find out.

### Akan

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/akan1250>

Fairbairn, W. (1933) *Some Common Birds of West Africa*. Lagos: Church Missionary Society Bookshop; London: Highway Press.

Contains names for 25 species in the Twi dialect for whom the author gives a joint thanks with two other languages, to three expatriates. I suspect Mr. D. Benzies of the Gold Coast Scottish Mission was the source for these names since he translated a prayer book into this language (Westermann *et al.*, 1935: 413) and was one of the producers of the *Kaŋ Me Hwe* series of Twi school readers published by Longman (Smith, 1963: 183 footnote 44).

Though in most cases these 25 names are contained in sometimes slightly changed orthography in the following two sources, it provides one addition (Little African Swift, *asufuna*) which may be a particular localism or have dropped out of use. It also has a couple of more subtle differences. The first being the ascription of an interesting historical reference<sup>11</sup> within a bird name to a different species to that recorded more recently (*anoma polise* for the Orange Bishop a.k.a Northern Red Bishop as opposed to *akyem-polis* for the equally red Malimbos reported in Deikumah *et al.* (2015)). Secondly it provides a binomial name for the swallows that the one recorded in Borrow & Demey does not, which may be of etymological value.

The book also contains names for three birds in Fanti, which is another Akan dialect. Two of these are for birds where the Twi name is also given, and in one case they are very similar (for the Grey Hornbill) and in the other they are distinctly different (Grey Parrot). This is a yet another illustration, if one was needed, of the importance of recording dialectic (and local) bird name differences.

<sup>10</sup> <https://ebird.org/region/GH-AA/bird-list?yr=curM>

<sup>11</sup> The reference is to the red in old police uniforms, an attribute which is also recorded in one Hausa name for the Northern Red Bishop (see Manvell, 2012).

- Borrow, N. & Demey, R. (2010) *Birds of Ghana*. London: Christopher Helm.

Provides an impressive list of names for 268 species, though many of these are not unique. The title page states the Ghanaian local names were contributed by Erasmus H. Owusu and Yaa Ntiamoa-Baidu, but no details as to who provided which of the three languages covered and more importantly, how and where they were acquired.

As both a note and a warning, there is an article that appeared five years after this publication that is easy enough to find online and claims to be about Akan bird naming systems (Deikumah *et al.* 2015). Borrow & Demey's book was said to be "...relied on for bird images and for confirmation of some of the local names". Despite the elicitation of names from the book's images allegedly being buttressed by participant observation to overcome the admitted limitations of this method, and a large and purportedly dialectically representative sample drawn upon (25 communities, 10 respondents in each), the results sadly add very little to our knowledge of Akan bird names. A comparison of the names presented in Table 6 with those in Borrow & Demey indicates only four fully new names but two are clearly problematic. *Epo-noma* for Common Teal, a species that the book describes as a Palearctic vagrant and maps only to a small corner of the Ewe-speaking southeast. Furthermore the given 'derivative' casts further doubt on the ascription ("sea bird"). *Nsu-noma* for the African Darter with the derivative "water bird" is a dubious real name but on the other hand the new name *sukonkon* for the somewhat similar Long-tailed Cormorant with the given derivative "surface of water" makes sense. The second name given for the Yellow-billed Turaco (*brobe*) is the fourth new name.

There are several cases where names in Borrow & Demey are used for similar or not so similar species and a few where new modifiers are added to primary names they include, which might be legitimate. However, questions have to be asked about the data when distinct names are given for Yellow-billed Kite and Black Kite which are unlikely to be differentiated in the field and when one of these (*osansa*) is also given for the distinctly different looking Grey and Fox Kestrels (plus the Palearctic vagrant Red-footed Falcon). Yellow-billed Kite and Black Kite are not surprisingly both illustrated on the same page in Borrow & Demey as are the Red-footed Falcon and Grey Kestrel. Likewise the Palearctic vagrant Shelduck is given the same name (*nsu-dokodoko* "water goose") as the Afrotropical vagrant Egyptian Goose, which also both appear on the same page. Clearly not enough critical attention was given to the name ascription process and whatever value there is in this paper—which is perhaps more in some of the so-called 'derivatives' as the above mentioned *akyem-polis* indicates—it is unfortunately lost in the dubious names. Sadly the article was clearly inadequately reviewed.

### Ewe

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/ewee1241>

- Borrow, N., & Demey, R. (2010) *Birds of Ghana*. London: Christopher Helm.

Provides a list of names for 195 species, though many of these are not unique. Despite the large number, there are some notable omissions of common and often commensal species such as the Black-crowned Tchagra, Common Fiscal, African Thrush, the Bishops, Firefinches and Grey-headed Sparrow.

- Aziaku, V. E. (2016) *A Linguistic Analysis of Ewe Animal Names Among the Ewe of Ghana*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. Westafrikanische Studien: Band 37.

This is a valuable doctoral study by a linguist and native Ewe speaker. An unstated number of informants were sampled from speakers of the Aɲɔ, Tɔɲu and Eveme dialects in both rural and urban settings at Sogakope, Dabala, Akatsi, Keta, Anyako, Ho and Kpandotonu and among workers at the Kalakpa Game Reserve (p.28-29). Regarding the collection of bird name on page 31 it is stated:

“The bird names for this study were recorded in interviews and retrieved from a book entitled *Birds of Ghana* by Borrow and Deme [sic] published in 2010. The names extracted from the secondary sources were validated by the speakers from the various dialect backgrounds. We can see that the Ewe names have been modified to conform to Ewe standard orthography.”

In the appendix, pages 214-224 contains a list of c.122 Ewe names covering 212 bird species<sup>12</sup>. Though this work adds to the list in Borrow & Demey, it is unfortunate and a little surprising that the curious omissions in that are not completed. Each name is assigned to one or sometimes two “Name Indicative” categories (descriptive, designation or cultural). These it is explained (p.191) are “to give a hint of the emic viewpoints and lexemic categories as well as the meanings of the names.” Whilst understanding the viewpoints contained within these names is an important objective of the study, it is a shame that each name is not broken down or any dialect data included. That said, the study is replete with relevant information and pages 135-140 has an interesting analysis of the etymology of 26 bird names.

### **Gen (Mina)**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/genn1243>

- Millet-Horsin (1923) "Contribution à l'étude de la faune ornithologique du Bas-Togo." *Bulletin du Comité d'Etudes Historiques et Scientifiques de l'AOF* 6(1): 47-73. Available at: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1227372>

The author was a military doctor whose article gives an account of the 125 bird species he observed during his four month stay at Aného, the capital of the occupying French forces, in 1919. Many of these he states he captured and this may have helped him acquire the local names he notes, sometimes with additional details of related beliefs. He clearly took interest in these names, sometimes noting where no local name distinction is made between species or a species is unknown to them and even goes to the unusual length of remarking that he couldn't find the local name in his notes for *Vidua principalis* (now *Vidua togoensis*). The author lists 48 Popo names (now known as Gen or Mina) for more than 73 bird species, however he also gives 23 names for at least 24 species under the entry 'nom indigene'. What language these latter are is uncertain especially as on the four occasions where several species are shown with the same 'nom indigene', he adds to the last listed species the observation “même nom popo”. Perhaps all these names are Popo and the following remark in the

<sup>12</sup> Cattle egret is listed twice with different names, though as the second entry is out of systematic order (following the Viduidae) the three names given presumably related to another species.



preamble strengthens this idea:

“J'ai autant que j'ai pu joint les noms popo que j'ai orthographiés de mon mieux en français. Seul, le son KH correspond à la valeur aspirée arabe.”

Examination of a good bilingual dictionary<sup>13</sup> may resolve this but fieldwork would undoubtedly be better even though the local avifauna is likely to have changed considerably in the intervening 105 years in the small coastal area in which Gen is spoken.

As the foregoing source (Aziaku, 2016) notes that some linguists have considered Gen to be a dialect of Ewe, it is interesting to note how limited the accordance seems to be with Millet-Horsin's names: I can only identify nine tentative similarities, but a linguist would be much better placed to say.

### **Gonja**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/gonj1241>

- Borrow, N., & Demey, R. (2010) *Birds of Ghana*. London: Christopher Helm.

Provides a list of names for 102 species, though several of these are not unique.

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<sup>13</sup> The only known one which I have yet to consult is: Pazzi, R. (1981) *Dictionnaire de la Langue Gen, avec Grammaire et Recueil de Textes Ancestraux*. Lomé : Université du Bénin, Institut National des Sciences de l'Éducation, [Etudes et Documents de Sciences Humaines. Série A, Etudes ; No 4].

**NIGER–CONGO: North-Volta Congo****Gourmanchéma**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/gour1243>

- “NiBDaB: information on bird names in African languages in Niger, and on associated lore” from the West African Bird DataBase, [www.WABDaB.org](http://www.WABDaB.org). Available at: [https://www.wabdab.org/files-nibdab/NiBDaB local names.xls](https://www.wabdab.org/files-nibdab/NiBDaB%20local%20names.xls)

This is a spreadsheet file that among some other languages contains 20 Gourmantché names for 26 species complete with columns indicating the dialect/locality where each was collected, its literal translation and/or explanation, name of the collector, year collected and the name of their source (and year of birth) plus their position/function.

The names were all collected in western Niger either at Makalondi, near the border with Burkina Faso by the Swiss missionary Pierre Souvairan who lived and worked in the area from 1968–1998, or at Tapoa on the edge of Parc W by Joost Brouwer a Dutch agronomist and ornithologist who co-founded the excellent West African Bird DataBase.

**NIGER-CONGO: Unclassified Congo****Mbre (Pere, Bere)**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/mbre1244>

- Heath, J. (2019) Pere lexicon of flora and fauna [Data set]. Zenodo.  
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3354206>

Background to Heath's work on this unclassified language can be found on the "Other Languages" section of the Dogon and Bangime Linguistics website (<https://dogonlanguages.info/other#top>). The above lexicon is presented in a spreadsheet which includes a separate sheet for birds that contains 25 entries for bird species.

**BANGIMI**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/bang1363>

- Moran, S., Forkel, R. & Heath, J. (Eds.) 2016 *Dogon and Bangimi Linguistics*. Jena: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.  
Available at: <https://dogonlanguages.info/florafauna.cfm>

From a linguistic perspective, Bangimi is perhaps the most interesting language in this bibliography. It is one of only four language isolates in Africa<sup>14</sup> (Blench, 2017), in other words it is not known to be related to any other language. It is spoken by only about 1,500 people in seven villages at the western end of the Bandiagara Escarpment and was only identified as distinct from Dogon by a linguist early this century (Hantgan & List, 2022).

Bangime was included in the Dogon Languages of Mali project—see following entry. Their wonderful website provides background information and makes the fauna and flora data easily available in spreadsheet format. The Bangime data has an impressive 92 names for species which includes several sets of synonyms. Similarities of these names with those in other languages could potentially be interesting.

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<sup>14</sup> The other three are Jalaa (or Cuj Tuum) in northeast Nigeria, which is probably extinct, Laal in southern Chad and Hadza in northern Tanzania

## DOGON

NB: Though Glottolog place the Dogon languages in a unique family, Blench (2005) notes they have always been considered part of Niger-Congo, but in which part is difficult to determine.

- Moran, S., Forkel, R. & Heath, J. (Eds.) 2016 *Dogon and Bangimi Linguistics*. Jena: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.  
Available at: <https://dogonlanguages.info/florafauna.cfm>

Until relatively recently the languages spoken in the communities living on and around the Bandiagara Escarpment were treated by some authors as a single Dogon language (Blench, 2005). Detailed work has now shown there may be at least 20 languages. The Dogon Languages of Mali project carried out research on 19 of these plus several dialects and their wonderful website provides a helpful overview and a map of their study villages.

The fauna and flora data generated by this project is easily available in spreadsheet format for each language/dialect and the table below summarises their impressive tallies of bird names. Since this bibliography follows the Glottolog system of classification, the languages are arranged according to their groupings, which may be disputed.

How the bird names were elicited is not revealed but the project clearly worked hard to connect local names to biological taxa. Jeffrey Heath compiled a handy guide to birds of Dogon country and northern Mali available which is available via the website.

Glottolog Grouping	Language Name	Glottocode	No. of Bird Name Entries plus relevant <i>Dialect Name</i> and its Glottocode
Escarpment Dogon	<b>Donno So Dogon</b>	<a href="#">donn1239</a>	56
	<b>Tommo So Dogon</b>	<a href="#">tomm1242</a>	87
	<b>Toro So Dogon:</b>	<a href="#">toro1252</a>	<i>Ibi So</i> (ibis1234): 50 <i>Yorno So</i> (yorn1234): 60
Nangan Dogon	<b>Bankan Tey Dogon</b>	<a href="#">bank1259</a>	70
	<b>Ben Tey Dogon</b>	<a href="#">bent1238</a>	96
	<b>Nanga</b>	<a href="#">nang1261</a>	96
North Plateau Dogon	<b>Dogul Dom Dogon</b>	<a href="#">dogu1235</a>	72
	<b>Najamba-Kindige</b>	<a href="#">bond1248</a>	103
	<b>Tebul Ure Dogon</b>	<a href="#">tebu1239</a>	63
	<b>Yanda Dom Dogon</b>	<a href="#">yand1257</a>	68
Plains Dogon	<b>Jamsay Dogon</b>	<a href="#">yand1257</a>	129
			<i>Guru (Gourou)</i> (guru1265): 42
			<i>Perge Tegu</i> (perg1234): 84
	<b>Toro Tegu Dogon</b>	<a href="#">toro1253</a>	104

<b>Glottolog Grouping</b>	<b>Language Name</b>	<b>Glottocode</b>	<b>No. of Bird Name Entries plus relevant <i>Dialect Name</i> and its Glottocode</b>
Plains Dogon	<b>Tengou-Togo Dogon</b>	<a href="#">tene1248</a>	<i>Togo Kan</i> (togo1254): 45
	<b>Tomo Kan</b>	<a href="#">tomo1243</a>	83
West Dogon	<b>Ampari Dogon</b>	<a href="#">ampa1238</a>	63
	<b>Bunoge Dogon</b>	<a href="#">buno1241</a>	20
	<b>Mombo Dogon</b>	<a href="#">momb1254</a>	57
	<b>Penange</b>	<a href="#">pena1270</a>	65
	<b>Tiranige Diga Dogon</b>	<a href="#">tira1258</a>	62

## IJOID

### **Southeast Ijo: *Nembe***

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/sout2774>

N.B. Glottolog indicates two dialects for this language, Akassa and Nembe (Glottocodes: akas1241 and nemb1238). Given the title of the work, I assume that it concerns the second one only, but this may be incorrect.

- Roger Blench & Martin Walsh (2007) Nembe Bird Names.  
Available at: <http://www.rogerblench.info/Language/Niger-Congo/Ijoid/Nembe/Nembe%20bird%20names.pdf>

The origin of the 73 names in this document is not immediately obvious. However, they all appear in the draft second edition of the Nembe-English Dictionary that was originally written by M.H.I. Kaliai in 1964 (Blench & Kaliai, 2008). As that was prepared by the first author with the help of the second in checking scientific names, it is likely an early output of that work. The introduction to the new dictionary does not indicate any additional fieldwork except in relation to some new material added on dance and musical instruments. Importantly the editor's preface notes regarding his main reason why the draft was not yet ready for publishing in hard copy:

“...the ms. represents a form of Nembe current fifty years ago, and the language has changed. It will need to be reviewed by competent speakers of the current language.”

It therefore seems that the bird names here were extracted and edited from Kaliai's work. The first volume of that can be consulted online<sup>15</sup> and typical of many bilingual dictionaries, it provides no information on how, when and where the names were collected. As the above indicates, some may have dropped out of use in the intervening 60 years.

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15 <https://archive.org/details/nembeenglishdict0000kali/>

## MANDE: Eastern

NB: Glottolog place the Mande languages in a holding category of unproven affiliation with the comment that “Mande has not yet been shown to contain systematic sound correspondences, noun class systems or verbal extensions with Niger-Congo”<sup>16</sup> and cite Güldemann (2018: 189-192 & 353-358) in this regard. Other linguists clearly differ on this stance.

### **Guro (Gurou/Gouro)**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/guro1248>

- Koué-Bi, T. M. Koudaio K. P. & Yaokokoré-Béibro K. H. (2023) "Nom des oiseaux et leur base de dénomination chez le peuple Gouro de la région de la Marahoue (Côte d'Ivoire)." *European Scientific Journal* **19**(27): 142.  
Available at: <https://eujournal.org/index.php/esj/article/view/17252/17110>

The study behind the nearly 200 bird names in this article covering 232 species was conducted over eight months in 19 villages and involved an impressive 1,146 informants. Methods used included guided walks and name elicitation interviews using photographs and the Chappuis (2000) sound recordings with those generated from the recordings verified by asking about the morphology and ecology of the ascribed bird. All names were said to have been transcribed using the *orthographe pratique des langues ivoiriennes* (OPLI)<sup>17</sup>. Information regarding the meaning of the names collected was also investigated with informants.

Presumably for simplicity, the data presented in this article has been stripped down. The names are not presented phonetically (i.e. not in OPLI) and are shown according to which *département* they were collected in (Bouaflé, Zuénoula or Sinfra). Setting aside names without any specific meaning or with insufficient data, the meanings of the remainder were assigned to one of the following six categories—a few were also indicated as having more than one meaning:

- |                                  |                                     |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Comportement                  | 4. Morphologie ou forme d'un organe |
| 2. Vocalisation et bruitage      | 5. Couleur du plumage               |
| 3. Lieu d'habitation et écologie | 6. Utilisation sociale              |

For those interested, many of the named birds presented in this work also appear in an earlier publication that deals more specifically with the use of birds in traditional medicine (Koue Bi *et al.* (2017).

<sup>16</sup> <https://glottolog.org/resource/reference/id/549181>

<sup>17</sup> [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthographe\\_pratique\\_des\\_langues\\_ivoiriennes](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthographe_pratique_des_langues_ivoiriennes)



## MANDE: Western

### **Bambara**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/bamb1269>

- Rousselot, R. (1939) "Notes sur la faune ornithologique du cercle de Mopti, Soudan Français." *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Afrique Noire* 1: 1-88.

See the earlier entry for Maasina Fulfulde for details about the author. This work provides 39 phonetically transcribed Bambara names but due to printing problems, they are not shown with diacritics.

### **Koro**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/koro1306>

- Heath, J. (2019). Pere lexicon of flora and fauna [Data set]. Zenodo.  
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3354206>

Initial work on the Unclassified Volta-Congo language Mbire (a.k.a Pere or Bere) was conducted by a native Koro speaker from a nearby village. Details of that study can be found on the "Other Languages" section of the Dogon and Bangime Linguistics website (<https://dogonlanguages.info/other#top>). The lexicon is presented in a spreadsheet which includes a separate sheet for birds and this contains a separate column with 26 Koro names for comparison purposes.

### **Mandinka (Mandingo)**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/mand1436>

- Dr. E. Hopkinson (1912) List of Mandingo and Jollof Bird-Names. Pp 277-297 in Reeve, H. F. (1912). *The Gambia: Its History, Ancient, Mediaeval, and Modern, Together with Its Geographical, Geological, and Ethnographical Conditions, and a Description of the Birds, Beasts, and Fishes Found Therein*. London: John Murray. Available at:  
<https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.499290/page/n357/mode/1up>

See above under Gambian Wolof for details on the author. He provides 77 Mandingo names, two of which are given with their meanings.

- Fairbairn, W. (1933) *Some Common Birds of West Africa*. Lagos: Church Missionary Society Bookshop; London: Highway Press.

Contains names for 39 species for whom Fairbairn thanks Dr. E. Hopkinson. Though the bulk of these are in Hopkinson's earlier work, names for eight additional species are included here (Vinaceous Turtle-Dove, Senegal Dove, Red-billed Wood-dove, African Pied Wagtail, Scarlet-breasted Sunbird, Orange Bishop, Yellow-mantled Whydah and Senegal Yellow-fronted Canary), though the last of these would seem an Anglicism. Hopkinson has also provided a new name for the Vulturine Fish-eagle (a.k.a Palm-nut Vulture) and assigns one of his original three unspecified heron names to the Grey Heron. This work also provides helpful clarification

on four old English birds names in the work above: Black Dove = Vinaceous Turtle-Dove, Variegated Turaco = Grey Plantain-eater, Blue Kingfisher = Grey-headed Kingfisher and Brown Hornbill = Grey Hornbill.

### **Mende**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/mend1266>

- Migeod, F.W.H. (1913) *A Mende Natural History Vocabulary*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner.  
Available at: <https://archive.org/details/mendenaturalhist00migerich>

The preface to this book notes it was compiled at Sekondi in Ghana, a country which the author estimates at the time had a population of probably 1500 Mende living away from their homeland in Sierra Leone. By the time of publication it is not clear whether the author himself had yet visited Sierra Leone. The c.88 bird names given therefore need to be treated with some caution. In any case, only about a third are ascribed to a scientific name, some of which are marked as tentative and others only to the genus level.

### **Jenaama Bozo (Sorogaama)**

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/jena1242>

- Heath, J. (n.d.) *Jenaama lexicon*. Available at: [https://github.com/clld/dogonlanguages-data/raw/master/beta/literature/JH\\_Jenaama\\_lexicon.xlsx](https://github.com/clld/dogonlanguages-data/raw/master/beta/literature/JH_Jenaama_lexicon.xlsx)

Background to Heath's work on this language can be found on the "Other Languages" section of the Dogon and Bangime Linguistics website (<https://dogonlanguages.info/other#top>). The lexicon is presented in a spreadsheet which includes a separate sheet for fauna that has 59 entries under the category "fa-bird". There are separate columns for species and comments and the latter contains several translations.

## SAHARAN

### Central Kanuri

<https://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/cent2050>

- Benton, P.A. (1916) *A Bornu Almanac for the Year A.D. 1916 (A.H. 1334 and part of 1335)*. London: Oxford University Press. Reprinted in Volume 2 of Benton, P. A. with an introduction by A. H. M. Kirk-Greene (1968) *The Languages and Peoples of Bornu: Being a Collection of the Writings of P. A. Benton. (2 Volumes)*. London: Cass. Available at: <https://archive.org/details/languagespeoples0002bent/page/85/mode/1up>

Philip Askeell Benton was a British colonial administrator whose service in Bornu led to a fascination in all-things Bornuan which resulted in various important scholarly contributions to the study of the languages and history of its inhabitants. Anthony Kirk-Greene in the introduction to the first volume of the above re-published collection of four of his works, notes (pp. 15-16) in regard to the publication of relevance here:

“The Bornu Almanac is an amusing tour de force rather than a serious contribution to African studies, and was, like its 1918 posthumous counterpart, in all likelihood written primarily for the amusement and edification of his civil and military colleagues in Bornu Province.”

It contains 37 Kanuri bird names ascribed to the common English names of the time when there were no identification guidebooks available and names from the homeland were often transposed on to the novel, but sometimes similar avifauna. An example of this that I haven't previously encountered in sources of this period is jay, which presumably refers to the three rollers commonly found in Bornu. At least thirteen of Benton's names are however easily identifiable to the species level.

- Malbrant, R. (1936) *Faune du Centre Africain Français (Mammifères et Oiseaux)*. Paris: Paul Lechevalier.

This books contains 79 “Bornouan” bird names which is rather curious given that Central Kanuri is a minority language in Chad spoken in a small area.<sup>18</sup> The Bornuans in this country are descendants of pilgrims who followed a reformist Fulani Mallam into Bagirmi between 1856 and 1860 and then colonised the region north of Bousso (Seignobos, 2016).

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<sup>18</sup> For the SIL language map of SW Chad see: <https://www.sil.org/blog/barayin-chad>

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