Original Research Article

ABUNDANCE AND DIVERSITY OF BIRDS IN THE OGBESE FOREST RESERVE, EKITI STATE, NIGERIA.

Abstract.

A study was carried out to evaluate the species composition and relative abundance of bird species of the natural and plantation forest of Ogbese Forest Rserve, Ekiti State .The study was conducted from April, 2010 to February, 2011 covering both wet and dry seasons. Sample sites were stratified based on the vegetation types and transect count techniques was employed for the evaluation. A total of 52 bird species consisting of 47 resident and 5 immigrant species was recorded. The species composition of birds during the wet and dry seasons was not significantly different. The natural forest vegetation had the highest species diversity and evenness. The relative abundance score of species during the Wet and dry seasons was variable in both habitats.

Key words: Vegetation, Diversity, Abundance, Immigrants, Birds

Introduction

Ogbese Forest Reserve, Ekiti State, Nigeria is an artificial planted forest of the former Ondo State Forestry Department. The forest reserve covers a land mass of 72 km^2 consisting of 27km^2 as forest, 16 km^2 savanna, 14 km^2 fresh water swamp forest and 10 km^2 as disturbed land. The plantation site of the reserve is 5 km^2 comprising of 4 km^2 of *Tectona grandis* and 1 km^2 of *Gmelina arborea*. The forest vegetation of the reserve constitutes 37.5% of the total land mass with pre-dominant tree species: *Enantia cholarentha, Cleistophohs patens,*

Barteria nigritana, Cola acuminata, Parinari congesis, Milicia excelsa, lckaya senegalensis, Albizia zygia, Terminalia superba and herbaceous species. The deciduous tree species provide the nesting sites for bird species inhabiting the area. The River Ogbese flows through the major part of the reserve and has pronounced impact on the vegetation. Annual rainfall varies from 1250 mm to 1400 mm, mean temperature varies from 21^0C to 25^0C and humidity is 75%. The taxonomic studies of tree species in Ogbese Forest Reserve, Ekiti State Nigeria, has been described in few studies focusing on its diversity as well as its conservation, but relevant information is completely lacking on the avifauna diversity of this reserve. The objectives of the study were to establish the diversity of avifauna species inhabiting the varying vegetation types in Ogbese Forest Reserve in Ekiti State so as to create the awareness towards biological conservation of birds in the area.

Materials and Methods

Study Area

The study was carried out in Ogbese Forest Reserve, Ekiti State, Nigeria. The reserve is located within the tropics and lies between latitude 50^0 32' and 40^0 27' North and longitude 70^0 50' and 90^0 28' East. The prevailing climate is tropical with an average temperature of 25^0C all year round and high relative humidity. The rainy season has an average of 240 days with mean annual rainfall of 1250 to 1400 mm. The pattern of rainfall distribution is bimodal with a long rainy season between April and mid- November with a peak in September while the dry season stretches from mid- November to the end of March. The total land mass of the reserve is about 72.52km^2 out of which 27 km^2 is of pure forest stand, 16 km^2 is savannah, 14 km^2 is swamp forest and 10.52 km^2 is a disturbed land. The plantation site of the reserve is 5 km^2 comprising 4 km^2 of *Tectona grandis* and 1 km^2 *Gmelina arborea*.

Birds Assessment

A preliminary survey was conducted in April, 2010, for familiarization with the bird community and habitat types. The coordinates of the site were taken and the plots delineated. The study was conducted from April, 2010 to February, 2011, covering both wet and dry seasons. A survey of abundance and diversity of Avifauna species of the Ogbese Forest Reserve, Ekiti State was conducted from twenty (20) plots distributed in 72.52 km^2 area using transect count method as described by Burnham *et al.* (1980). The stratified random sampling technique (Thakur *et al;* 2003) was adopted for studying the birds of the area, which involved dividing the sites into different strata based on vegetation types. The relative value of each vegetation type for attracting different bird species was determined by the establishment of 0.5 km long transect in each of the four (4) plots located in each of the identified five vegetation types. Birds were observed by walking along the transects for three consecutive days in a month for the duration of twelve months. Data collection commenced about 30 minutes after dawn and was carried out for five hours at 6:30 – 10:00 and 16:30 – 18:00 daily that correspond to periods of prominent bird activities (Jones,1998).In order to avoid repeated counting of birds, transects were reasonably spaced at least 200 m apart. A record was made of all the types and group number of bird species through direct observation with binoculars (Olympus 10 x 42) and identified to the species level and taxonomic groups categorized based on Field Guides to Birds of Western Africa (Borrow and Demey, 2004) and Field Guides to Birds of Africa (Mackworth – Praed and Grant, 1970). Other materials used were Compass equipped with a sighting mirror and Global Positioning System (GPS).

Data Analysis

The cumulative list of bird species recorded in each of the five forest types of Ogbese forest reserve was used as a basic measure of avian richness. The relative abundance of avian species was determined using encounter rate that gives crude ordinal scales of abundance: abundant, common, common uncommon and rare (Bibby *et al;* 1998). The encounter rate

incorporates the field hours of observation and the number of individuals of each species observed. This allows the encounter rate to be calculated for each species by dividing the number of birds recorded by the number of hours spent searching, giving a figure of birds per hour for each species. The abundance categories ≤ 1.0, (rare) 1.1 – 2.0, (uncommon) 2.1 – 10.0, (fairly common) 10.1 – 40.0 (common) and >40 birds. Diversity was calculated using both Shannon-Weiner and Simpson's diversity indices. Shannon – Weiner diversity index 'H' was calculated using formula:

$$H' = - \sum pi \, In \, Pi$$

where, Pi = proportion of individual species and R = total – number of species of observed

Simpson's diversity index 'D' was calculated using the formula:

$$D = \frac{\sum ni \, (ni - 1)}{N \, (N - 1)}$$

Where ni = total number of birds of each individual – species and N = the total number of birds of all species. The value D ranges between 0 and 1 with this – index, 1 represents infinite diversity and 0, no diversity. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for analyze the variation in birds composition between the vegetation types with the General Linear Model (GLM) procedure of SAS (2000) package.

Differences were considered statistically significant at 5% level. The data were further subjected to detailed analysis to determine species richness index, species evenness index, Sorensen index of similarity, Margalef diversity index, and Simpson's index (Margalef 1968). **Results**

Fifty-two (52) bird species belonging to eleven (11) Orders and twenty two (22) families were recorded during the two seasons viz wet and dry in the five vegetation types of Ogbese Forest Reserve out of which forty (40) were non- passerine and ten (10) were passerine species (Table 1). The natural forest vegetation type contains the highest number of

bird species than the plantation vegetation type in both seasons. The higher numbers of birds: 49 and 47 were recorded in the natural forest vegetation in both the wet and dry seasons respectively out of which 45 bird species were residents and 7 species were migratory. Also 36 and 37 bird species were obtained in the plantation vegetation in both seasons out of which 33 were residents and 7 species were migratory, (Table 2 and 3). Most of the migratory bird species were observed from November, 2010 to February, 2011 in both the natural and plantation forest vegetation. The Order Passeriformes constituted the predominant group, representing 27.3% of families (n=6) and 20% of species (n=10). The families with the largest number of species were Ardeidae (n=6), Accipitridae (n=5) and Columbidae (n=5). The bird species were distributed within the natural forest and plantation ecosystems in Ogbese Forest Reserve.

In each season, 49 bird species were recorded and (47) bird species were common to both seasons while 2 and 3 species were exclusive to the wet and dry seasons respectively. Also 12 bird species were exclusive inhabitants of the natural forest while no exclusive species was recorded in the plantation forest (Table 3). The species composition of birds during the wet and dry seasons was not significantly different ($P>0.05$) but there was a significant difference among the two major vegetation types.

The highest species diversity during the wet season was observed in natural forest vegetation (3.63) while the plantation vegetation had a lower species diversity (5.39). During the dry season, the species diversity in the natural forest vegetation and plantation vegetation was 3.67 and 3.34 respectively. The higher species evenness was registered in the natural forest vegetation in both the wet and dry seasons (Table 2).

124 **Table 1. Avian Distribution of Natural and Artificial forests of Ogbese Forest Reserve,**
125 **Ekiti State.**
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S/N	SPECIES SCIENTIFIC NAME	ORDER	FAMILY
1.	Little Egret *Egretta gazetta*	Ciconiiformes	Ardeidae
2.	Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*	Ciconiiformes	Ardeidae
3.	Great Egret *Ardea alba*	Ciconiiformes	Ardeidae
4.	Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath*	Ciconiiformes	Ardeidae
5.	Grey Heron *Ardea Cinerea*	Ciconiiformes	Ardeidae
6.	Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii*	Ciconiiformes	Ardeidae
7.	Wooly – necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*	Ciconiiformes	Ciconiidae
8.	Yellow – billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*	Ciconiiformes	Ciconiidae
9.	African Black kite *Milvus migrans*	Falconiformes	Accipitridae
10.	African harrier hawk *Polyboroides typus*	Falconiformes	Accipitridae
11.	Lizard Buzzard *Katpifalco monogrammicus*	Falconiformes	Accipitridae
12.	Shikra *Accipiter badius*	Falconiformes	Accipitridae
13.	Grasshopper buzzard *Buteo butco*	Falconiformes	Accipitridae
14.	Lesser kestrel falco naumanni	Falconiformes	Falconidae
15.	Scaly francolin francolinus squamatus	Galliformes	Phasianidae
16.	Double spurred francolin *francolinus bicalcaratus*	Galliformes	Phasianidae
17.	Forest – francolin francolinus lathami	Galliformes	Phasianidae
18.	Crested Guineafowl *Guttera pucherani*	Galliformes	Numididae
19.	Common sandpiper *Actitus hypoleucos*	Charadriformes	Scolopacidae
20.	Chestnut – bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus*	Pterocliformes	Pteroclidae
21.	Lemon dove *Columba larvata*	Columbiformes	Columbidae
22.	Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*	Columbiformes	Columbidae
23.	African Green Pigeon *Treron Calva*	Columbiformes	Columbidae
24.	Tambourine dove *Turtur tympanistria*	Columbiformes	Columbidae
25.	Mourning collared Dove *Streptopelia decipiens*	Columbiformes	Columbidae
26.	Senegal coucal *Centropus senegalensis*	Cuculiformes	Cuculidae

27.	Common cuckoo Cuculus canorus	Cuculiformes	Cuculidae
28.	African cuckoo *Cucolus gularis*	Cuculiformes	Cuculidae
29.	Black coucal *Centropus grillii*	Cuculiformes	Cuculidae
30.	Little swift *Apus affinis*	Apodiformes	Apodidae
31.	Common swift *Apus apus*	Apodiformes	Apodidae
32.	African palm-swift *Cypsiurus parvus*	Apodiformes	Apodidae
33.	African pygmy – king fisher *Ispidina picta*	Coraciiformes	Alcedinidae
34.	Dwarf kingfisher *Ispidina lecontei*	Coraciiformes	Alcedinidae
35.	African Grey hornbill *Tockus nasutus*	Coraciiformes	Alcedinidae
36.	Black casqued hornbill *Ceratogymna atrata*	Coraciiformes	Bucerotidae
37.	African pied hornbill *Tockus fasciatus*	Coraciiformes	Bucerotidae
38.	Lesser honey guide *Indicator minor*	Piciformes	Indicatoridae
39.	Spotted Honey guide *Indicator maculatus*	Piciformes	Indicatoridae
40.	Fire-bellied wood pecker *Dendropicos Pyrrhogaster*	Piciformes	Picidae
41.	Black – headed weaver *Ploceus cucullatus*	Passeriformes	Ploceidae
42.	Slender-billed weaver ploceus pelzelni	Passeriformes	Ploceidae
43.	Grey wood pecker dendropicous goetae	Piciformes	Picidae
44.	Mosque swallow Cecropis daurica	Passeriformes	Hirundinidae
45.	African pied wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*	Passeriformes	Motacillidae
46.	Ethiopian swallow Hirundo aethiopita	Passeriformes	Laniidae
47.	Pied crow (Corvus albus)	Passeriformes	Corvidae
48.	Little bee eater (Merops pusillus)	Coraciiformes	Meropidae
49.	Olive – bellied sunbird (Nectarinia chloropygius)	Passeriformes	Nectariniidae
50.	Superb sunbird (Nectarinia superba)	Passeriformes	Nectariniidae
51.	Olive sunbird (Nectarinia olivacea)	Passeriformes	Nectariniidae
52.	Pin tailed whydah (Vidua chalbeata)	Passeriformes	Ploceidae

Table 2: Avian Species Diversity during Wet and Dry Seasons.

Vegetation	Season	No of species	Abundance (No of Individuals)	D	H	H /Hmax
Natural forest	Wet	49	234	0.96	3.63	0.83
	Dry	47	597	0.97	3.67	0.84
Plantation	Both	52	831			
	Wet	36	240	0.96	3.39	0.77
	Dry	37	135	0.95	3.34	0.76
	Both	40	375			

H^1 – Shannon–Wiener Index, D = Diversity Index, H^1/H^1max = Evenness H^1max = In(s).

Table 3. Status of bird species in the natural and plantation forest of Ogbese Forest Reserve

FT	NR	NI	TS	NEBS	NWEBS	NDEBS
Natural Forest	45	07	52	12	02	03
Plantation Forest	33	07	40	0	-	-

FT= Forest types, NR= Number of residents, NI=Number of immigrants, TS=Total Species, NEBS= Number of Exclusive bird species, NWEBS= Number of Wet season Exclusive bird species, NDEBS= Number of Dry season Exclusive bird species

The relative abundance scores of species during the wet season showed that 6 and 2 species were frequent, 5 and 1 were common, 7 and 4 were uncommon, 23 and 10 were rare while 4 and 1 were abundant in the natural and plantation vegetation respectively. During the dry season 10 and 3 species were frequent, 5 and 2 were common, 3 and 4 were uncommon, 12 and 10 were rare while 5 and 4 were abundant in the natural and plantation vegetation respectively (Table 4).

Table 4: Number of bird species in different relative abundance categories.

Vegetation	Season	Frequent	Common	Uncommon	Rare	Abundance
Natural	Wet	06	05	07	23	04
	Dry	10	05	03	12	05
Plantation	Wet	02	01	04	10	01
	Dry	03	02	04	10	04

Discussion

The record of fifty two (52) bird species observed during wet and dry seasons in the limited area shows that the diversity is very high. The occurrence of high number of resident bird species in the area indicates that the area could provide the necessary requirements for resident bird species.

The species composition of birds counted during the wet and dry seasons of the study was not significantly different. The extended time of inundation of the area during the wet and dry seasons could contribute to the insignificant effect of seasons on bird species composition in the study areas. Ward (1969) asserted that bird species shift their feeding habit between seasons in temperate habitats and this may likely be responsible for the insignificant effect of seasons on bird species composition in the present study.

The species diversity index and evenness of both the natural forest and forest plantation during the entire season revealed that the natural forest vegetation had the higher species diversity and evenness. The species diversity of flora in the natural forest compared to the plantation forest might play a determinative role in the higher diversity and evenness recorded. This may be as a result of the presence of multiple and variety of alternative feed sources for birds. In addition, natural forest vegetation community which has been for reasonable number of years without disturbance is more diverse and comprises of various plant species and life forms which provide better food, cover, breeding and nesting sites could have contributed to high species diversity and evenness in the natural forest vegetation.

On the other hand, plantation forests are in some areas fragmented, exposed to agroforestry practices and tree species exploitation. In view of this, birds which inhabit this habitat are affected. Rana (2005) was of the opinion that pristine natural habitats properly preserved from human interference are of higher diversity and evenness of species than the fragmented areas where anthropological activities takes place. Variations that exist in feeding habits and habitats might also contribute towards the increment of diversity, evenness and species richness (Smith, 1992).

The unregulated anthropogenic disturbances impact negatively on the plantation forest habitats and this might have been responsible for low evenness and species diversity experienced in the plantation forest vegetation types during both the wet and dry seasons. The relative abundance of individual bird species during the seasons might be dictated by the availability of food, habitat physiognomy and breeding season of the species. Lee and Rotenberry (2005) asserted that the distribution and abundance of many bird species are influenced by the composition and structure of the vegetation community that serves as cover to bird species. As vegetation structure changes, a particular bird species may subsist. Human activities which are more pronounced in the plantation forest of Ogbese Forest Reserve might be responsible for the lower number of bird species recorded in the vegetation types during both dry and wet seasons of the study year. Human activities threaten the existence of many birds by altering the vegetation structure of their habitats and thereby impeding their reproductive success (Green and Hirons 1991). The intensive timber logging activities and agroforestry practices in the plantation forest are major factors that affect bird species richness.

Conclusion

The result of this study has shown that the natural and plantation vegetation types of Ogbese Forest Reserve, Ekiti State considered in this study are not similar in bird species diversity,

evenness and abundance. The heterogeneity of flora species in the natural forest compared to the plantation forest might be responsible for the variation**.** The management of birds in the reserve should take cognizance of the vegetation types for effective conservation of bird species which are resident in the reserve. Flora species richness favours higher diversity and abundance of bird life and management measures that aim at increasing flora composition might help in the maintenance of healthy bird population

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est is a major factor that might affects bird species richness.

Appendix 1. Total number of bird species observed during the wet and dry seasons in natural forest.

S/N	SPECIES SCIENTIFIC NAME	WET	DRY
1.	Little Egret *Egretta gazetta*	22	19
2.	Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*	34	36
3.	Great Egret *Ardea alba*	14	12
4.	Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath*	09	07
5.	Grey Heron *Ardea Cinerea*	-	04
6.	Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii*	06	07
7.	Wooly – necked stor *Ciconia episcopus*	04	-
8.	Yellow – billed stor *Myeteria ibis*	12	10
9.	African black kite *Milvus migrans*	-	44
10.	African hafier hawk *Polyboroides typus*	05	08
11.	Lizard Buzzard *Katpifalco monogrammicus*	06	06
12.	Shikra *Accipiten badius*	06	05
13.	Grasshopper buzzard *Buteo butco*	07	-
14.	Lesser kestrel falco naumanni	07	06
15.	Scaly francolin francolinus squamatus	28	30
16.	Double spurred francolin *francolinus bicalcaratus*	05	07
17.	Forest – francolin francolinus lathami	24	19
18.	Crested Guineafowl *Guttera pucherani*	20	22
19.	Common sandpiper *Actitus hypoleucos*	07	-
20.	Chestnut – bellied sandgrouse *pterocles exustus*	-	10
21.	Lemon dove *Columba larvata*	11	17
22.	Laughing Dove *Streptopelia enegalensis*	16	14
23.	African Green Pigeon *Treron Calva*	06	08

24.	Tambourine dove *Turtur tympanistria*	08	13
25.	Mourning collared Dove *Streptopelia decipiens*	13	11
26.	Senegal coucal *centropus enegalensis*	08	08
27.	Common cuckoo Cuculus canorus	10	12
28.	African cuckoo *Cuculus gularis*	13	09
29.	Black coucal *Centropus grillii*	07	05
30.	Little swift *Apus affinis*	16	10
31.	Common swift *Apus apus*	06	05
32.	African palm-swift *Cypsiurus parus*	20	24
33.	African pygimy – king fisher *Ispidina picta*	10	05
34.	Dwarf kingfisher *Ispidina lecontei*	14	17
35.	African Grey hornbill *Tockus nasutus*	05	07
36.	Black casqued hornbill *Ceratogymna atrata*	09	06
37.	African pied hornbill *Tockus fasciatus*	10	12
38.	Lesser honey guide *Indicator minor*	05	07
39.	Spotted Honey guide *Indicator maculates*	08	10
40.	Fire-bellied wood pecker *Dendropicas Pyrrhogaster*	09	12
41.	Black – headed weaver *Ploceus cucullatus*	23	22
42.	Slender-billed weaver Ploceus pelzelni	81	21
43.	Grey wood pecker Dendropicous goetae	09	08
44.	Mosque swallow Cecropis daurica	19	17
45.	African pied wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*	10	12
46.	Ethiopian swallow Hirundo aethiopita	07	-
47.	Pied crow (Corvus albus)	20	21
48.	Little bee eater (Merops pusillus)	11	08
49.	Olive – bellied sunbird (Nectarinia chloropygius)	8	10
50.	Superb sunbird (Nectarinia superba)	08	06
51.	Olive sunbird (Nectarinia olivacea)	08	07
52.	Pin failed why dah (Vidua chalbeata)	10	-

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233 **Appendix 2. Total number of bird species observed during the wet and dry seasons in**
234 **plantation forest**

S/N	SPECIES SCIENTIFIC NAME	WET	DRY
1.	Little Egret *Egretta gazetta*	25	17
2.	Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*	27	28
3.	Great Egret *Ardea alba*	15	14
4.	Grey Heron *Ardea Cinerea*	-	08
5.	Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii*	07	05
6.	Woolly – Necked stock *Ciconia episcopus*	02	04
7.	Yellow – billed stock *Myeteria ibis*	03	03
8.	African black kite *Milvus migrans*	-	67
9.	Lizard Buzzard *Katpifalco monogrammicus*	06	05
10.	Shikra *Accipiten badius*	05	04
11.	Grasshopper buzzard *Buteo butco*	05	-
12.	Lesser kestrel falco naumanni	06	08
13.	Scaly francolin francolinus squamatus	32	35
14.	Common sandpiper *Actitus hypoleucos*	05	04
15.	Chestnut – bellied sandgrouse *pterocles exustus*	-	05
16.	Lemon dove *Columba larvata*	11	10
17.	Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*	13	15
18.	African Green Pigeon *Treron Calva*	12	15
19.	Tambourine dove *Turtur tympanistria*	9	08
20.	Mourning collared Dove *Streptopelia decipiens*	14	16
21.	Senegal coucal *centropus senegalensis*	10	08
22.	Common cuckoo Cuculus canorus	07	08
23.	African cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*	07	06
24.	Little swift *Apus affinis*	24	21
25.	Common swift	14	15
26.	African pygimy – king fisher *Ispidina picta*	09	11
27.	Dwarf kingfisher *Ispidina lecontei*	10	11
28.	African Grey hornbill *Tockus nasutus*	07	07
29.	African pied hornbill *Tockus fasciatus*	09	08

30.	Spotted Honey guide *Indicator maculates*	12	11
31.	Fire-bellied wood pecker *Dendropicas Pyrrhogaster*	05	07
32.	Black – headed weaver *Ploceus cucullatus*	23	30
33.	Slender-billed weaver Ploceus pelzelni	36	21
34.	African pied wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*	12	10
35.	Ethiopian swallow Hirundo aethiopita	12	-
36.	Pied crow (Corvus albus)	16	17
37.	Olive – bellied sunbird (Nectarinia chloropygius)	-	12
38.	Superb sunbird (Nectarinia superba)	07	07
39.	Olive sunbird (Nectarinia olivacea)	08	07
40.	Pin tailed why dah (Vidua chalbeata)	11	-

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