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EFFECTS ON NON-TARGET BIRDS THROUGH SPRAYING OPERATIONS ON QUELEA ROOST AND COLONIES IN SOMALIA

(With a list of birds predatory on Red-billed Quelea and a list of palaeartic bird species observed in Somalia)

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Several species of birds in Somalia, such as Weavers and Starlings, damage ripening crops. The most serious pest species, however, is the Red-billed Quelea (*Quelea quelea*), which, because of its large numbers and distribution patterns, regularly adversely affects the agricultural production in certain parts of the country by its attacks on rice and sorghum. The Somalia Government realised this problem, and sought technical assistance from UNDP and GTZ.

From October 1985 to August 1990 the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH was running the "Somalia- German Bird Damage Prevention Project" as a succession of the UNDP/FAO "Bird Control Project". The aim of the Bird Damage Prevention Project was to introduce methods of protection and control in order to reduce as much as possible the damage caused by the Red-billed Quelea in sorghum and rice cultivations. These methods have to be economically justifiable as well as ecologically sound.

Somalia is located between the latitudes 2° S and 12° N and the longitudes 41° and 51° E. Except for the coastal dunes, the vegetation over most of the country consists of various combinations of grassland and scattered bush. The inter-riverine area, where the main range of Quelea is found, consists of grass and shrub steppe with dense bush, dominated by *Acacia mellifera*, *A. nilotica*, *A. miserea* and *A. bussei* in the vicinity of the rivers or in the depressions.

Agricultural production in Somalia is confined primarily to the Shabelle and Juba river valleys and the inter-riverine regions. Crops are cultivated twice annually: during the short rainy season, the "DER" season between October and December, and the long rainy season, the "GU" season from April to July.

In the area of operation, the Quelea population was found mainly south of 5° N and north of 2° S, from Beledweyne to the Lower Juba region. The control activities therefore would take place in this area.

In the past, the Red-billed Quelea was mainly being controlled with the organophosphate avicide QUELETOX R (Fenthion) by aerial spraying, or with the help of ground rotary drift sprayers. The main target of the new GTZ-project was developing a program to find and test suitable alternative methods of damage prevention. The aim was to reduce the application of avicide by using other suitable methods. Two scientific research assistants from the University of the Saarland (Fed. Rep. of Germany) and a GTZ-expert were working on this special program. The results were to be presented in form of dissertations.

One concomitant measure, which was taken very seriously by the project, was the evaluation of the injured and/or dead non-target species, especially bird species, after the treatment with avicide.

The authors carried out bird censuses in Quelea roosting, nesting, and feeding sites with one and more teams during the GU-season 86 (long rainy season), from 08.07.1986 to 03.08.1986, and during the DER-season 87/88 (short rainy season) from 27.12.1987 to 28.01.1988. Emphasis was put on recording the natural Quelea predators.

Apart from the projects' own rotary drift sprayers, a spraying plane from the Desert Locust Control Organisation (DLCO-EA) as well as a chartered helicopter for survey flights were utilized.

Due to the large size of the areas subject to control measures, and due to the partly impenetrable Acacia and Euphorbia thickets, it was impossible to do controls over the whole area, with the result that only spot-test evaluations could be made. Evaluation activities took place in a total of 7 sites, six in Acacia bush areas (5 - 25 ha) and one in a sugar-cane field (approx. 300 ha).

The treated sites were all situated in the North and North-West of Mogadishu and in the surroundings of Jowhar, in the alluvial land of the Webi Shabelle river.

At spot-test like investigations in Red-billed Quelea breeding and roosting sites after avicide treatment, the following 17 non-target bird species, 50 birds altogether, were registered in 7 different sites:

Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	1 bird
Emerald-spotted Wood Dove	<i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>	2 birds
Blue-naped Mousebird	<i>Urocolius macrourus</i>	1 bird
Von der Decken's Hornbill	<i>Tockus deckeni</i>	2 birds
Red-billed Hornbill	<i>Tockus erythrorhynchus</i>	1 bird
White-browed Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas leucophrys</i>	1 bird
Winding Cisticola	<i>Cisticola galactotes</i>	1 bird
Long-tailed Fiscal	<i>Lanius cabanisi</i>	1 bird
White-crowned Shrike	<i>Eurocephalus rueppelli</i>	5 birds
Golden-breasted Starling	<i>Cosmopsarus regius</i>	3 birds
Fire-fronted Bishop	<i>Euplectes diadematus</i>	10 birds
Golden Palm Weaver	<i>Ploceus bojeri</i>	4 birds
Black-headed Weaver	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>	5 birds
Masked Weaver	<i>Ploceus intermedius</i>	3 birds
Chestnut Weaver	<i>Ploceus rubiginosus</i>	5 birds
White-headed Buffalo Weaver	<i>Dinemellia dinemelli</i>	3 birds
Red-billed Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta senegala</i>	2 birds

Furthermore, there were many large insects, of which we registered the following:

Long-horned Beetles	(Cerambycidae)
Ground Beetles	(Carabidae)
Metallic Wood-boring Beetles	(Buprestidae)

and several species of:

Butterflies	(Lepidoptera)
Grasshoppers	(Caelifera)
Spider Wasps	(Pompilidae)

We also intensely observed the predators as well as Palaearctic bird species active in the vicinity of Quelea roosts, colonies and nearby stagnant water. We registered about 30 species of predators and 67 species of Palaearctic migrants. Fortunately, dead birds of prey and Palaearctic migrants were not found.

CONCLUSION

Numerous observations were made of the side-effects caused by Fenthion (60% a.i.) spraying applied at up to 2.5 l/ha either from a fixed-wing aircraft or from ground rotary drift sprayers.

Birds breeding and roosting near or in the Quelea sites were inevitably affected by the Fenthion spray. Nowadays Fenthion is also used as an avicide for the control of Weaver birds. However, it was originally an insecticide and thus has side-effects on insects, causing their population to reduce. This may adversely affect the insectivorous breeding birds.

The figure of 50 non-target birds registered should be considered as a minimum figure. It is possible that some species, especially insectivores which live in thick scrubs and do not fly out during a spraying treatment, hardly if at all come into contact with the avicide and thus have bigger chances of surviving. On the other hand, poisoned birds can easily hide in the dense bush vegetation and die there.

Birds perished in such places are hardly ever found. Apart from that, one has to assume that the mortality rate of non-target birds through secondary poisoning by feeding on poisoned insects, birds, etc. is higher than the actually recorded rate of dead birds found. It was not investigated whether the Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) and the Hornbills (*Tockus deckeni* and *T. erythrorhynchus*) died from the avicide itself or from feeding on poisoned Quelea.

However, considering that only 50 non-target birds were found dead among hundreds of thousands of Quelea, this loss in a period of 2 seasons is remarkably low.

For a proper estimation of the side effects on non-target species, observations should be carried out on several consecutive days also in the more distant surroundings of the colonies, roosts and nearby water places.

The project manager, Mr. Jan-Uwe Heckel, deserves special thanks for supporting the authors in all their plans. We are most grateful to Mrs Susanne Schels who read and corrected the manuscript.

A list of birds predatory on Red-billed Quelea in Somalia.

Family - Ardeidae	Herons
<i>Ardea melanocephala</i>	Black-headed Heron
<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Cattle Egret
<i>Egretta alba melanorhynchus</i>	Great White Egret
Family - Ciconiidae	Storks
<i>Ciconia abdimii</i>	Abdim's Stork
<i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>	Marabou
<i>Anastomus lamelligerus</i>	Open-billed Stork
<i>Mycteria ibis</i>	Yellow-billed Stork ?
Family - Accipitridae	Birds of Prey
<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Eurasian Marsh Harrier
<i>Circus macrourus</i>	Pallid Harrier
<i>Circus pygargus</i>	Montagu's Harrier
<i>Circus ranivorus</i>	African Marsh Harrier
<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	Black-chested Snake Eagle
<i>Accipiter badius</i>	Shikra
<i>Accipiter minullus</i>	Little Sparrowhawk
<i>Accipiter tachiro</i>	African Goshawk
<i>Aquila wahlbergi</i>	Wahlberg's Eagle
<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	Booted Eagle
<i>Hieraaetus spilogaster</i>	African Hawk Eagle ?
<i>Melierax gabar</i>	Gabar Goshawk
<i>Melierax poliopterus</i>	Pale Chanting Goshawk
<i>Milvus migrans aegyptius</i>	Black Kite
<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	Black-shouldered Kite
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Peregrine Falcon
<i>Polihiereax semitorquatus</i>	Pygmy Falcon
Family - Strigidae	Owls
<i>Bubo africanus</i>	Spotted Eagle Owl ?
<i>Bubo lacteus</i>	Verreaux's Eagle Owl ?
Family - Laniidae	Shrikes
<i>Laniarius ferrugineus</i>	Tropical Boubou ?
<i>Laniarius funebris</i>	Slate- coloured Boubou ?
<i>Malaconotus blanchoti</i>	Grey-headed Bush Shrike
<i>Malaconotus sulforeopectus</i>	Sulphur-breasted Bush Shrike
<i>Tchagra jamesi</i>	Three-streaked Tchagra ?
<i>Lanius cabanisi</i>	Long-tailed Fiscal
<i>Lanius dorsalis</i>	Taita Fiscal ?
<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>	Red-tailed Shrike ?
Family - Prionopidae	Helmet Shrikes
<i>Eurocephalus rueppelli</i>	White-crowned Shrike

? Birds marked with a question mark were not actually observed catching or trying to catch Quelea. Yet, their behavioural pattern and their presence in the vicinity of Quelea lead to the assumption that they also belong to the predators.

Palaearctic bird species observed in Somalia from 08.07.1986 - 03.08.1986 and from 28.12.1987 - 27.01.1988

<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	<i>Cormorant</i>
<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>	<i>White Stork</i>
<i>Anas acuta</i>	<i>Pintail</i>
<i>Anas crecca</i>	<i>Teal</i>
<i>Anas querquedula</i>	<i>Garganey</i>
<i>Aythya ferina</i>	<i>Pochard</i>
<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	<i>Eurasian Marsh Harrier</i>
<i>Circus macrourus</i>	<i>Pallid Harrier</i>
<i>Circus pygargus</i>	<i>Montagu's Harrier</i>
<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>	<i>Booted Eagle</i>
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	<i>Osprey</i>
<i>Falco peregrinus calidus</i>	<i>Peregrine Falcon</i>
<i>Porzana porzana</i>	<i>Spotted Crake</i>
<i>Haematopus ostralegus longipes</i>	<i>Oystercatcher</i>
<i>Charadrius asiaticus</i>	<i>Caspian Plover</i>
<i>Charadrius dubius curonicus</i>	<i>Little Ringed Plover</i>
<i>Charadrius hiaticula tundrae</i>	<i>Ringed Plover</i>
<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	<i>Great Sandplover</i>
<i>Charadrius mongolus atifrons</i>	<i>Mongolian Sandplover</i>
<i>Pluvialis dominica fulva</i>	<i>Lesser Golden Plover</i>
<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	<i>Grey Plover</i>
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	<i>Common Sandpiper</i>
<i>Numenius arquata orientalis</i>	<i>Curlew</i>
<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	<i>Whimbrel</i>
<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	<i>Spotted Redshank</i>
<i>Tringa glareola</i>	<i>Wood Sandpiper</i>
<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	<i>Greenshank</i>
<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	<i>Green Sandpiper</i>
<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	<i>Marsh Sandpiper</i>
<i>Tringa totanus</i>	<i>Redshank</i>
<i>Tringa cinereus</i>	<i>Terek Sandpiper</i>
<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	<i>Common Snipe</i>
<i>Lymnocyptes minimus</i>	<i>Jack Snipe</i>
<i>Calidris alba</i>	<i>Sanderling</i>
<i>Calidris alpina</i>	<i>Dunlin</i>
<i>Calidris canutus</i>	<i>Knot</i>
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	<i>Curlew Sandpiper</i>
<i>Calidris minuta</i>	<i>Little Stint</i>
<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	<i>Temminck's Stint</i>
<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>	<i>Broad-billed Sandpiper</i>
<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	<i>Bar-tailed Godwit</i>
<i>Limosa limosa</i>	<i>Black-tailed Godwit</i>
<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	<i>Ruff</i>

<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	<i>Turnstone</i>
<i>Larus argentatus heuglini</i>	<i>Herring Gull</i>
<i>Larus fuscus</i>	<i>Lesser Black-backed Gull</i>
<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	<i>Black-headed Gull</i>
<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	<i>White-winged Black Tern</i>
<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	<i>Gull-billed Tern</i>
<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	<i>Turtle Dove</i>
<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	<i>Eurasian Roller</i>
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	<i>Eurasian Swallow</i>
<i>Riparia riparia</i>	<i>Sand Martin</i>
<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	<i>Golden Oriole</i>
<i>Luscinia megarynchos</i>	<i>Nightingale</i>
<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	<i>Desert Wheatear</i>
<i>Oenanthe isabellina</i>	<i>Isabelline Wheatear</i>
<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i>	<i>Pied Wheatear</i>
<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	<i>Sedge Warbler</i>
<i>Hippolais languida</i>	<i>Upcher's Warbler</i>
<i>Anthus campestris</i>	<i>Tawny Pipit</i>
<i>Anthus cervinus</i>	<i>Red-throated Pipit</i>
<i>Motacilla alba</i>	<i>White Wagtail</i>
<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	<i>Grey Wagtail</i>
<i>Motacilla flava</i>	<i>Yellow Wagtail</i>
<i>Lanius collurio</i>	<i>Red-backed Shrike</i>
<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>	<i>Red-tailed Shrike</i>

FLASHING JEWELS IN COMBAT

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Sometime in October 1991 we were spending several days at a very secluded and small camp called Selinda in northern Botswana.

We were out on the afternoon game drive. The light had that special quality after a rain storm, when the sun bursts out under the clouds about an hour before it sets.

There were six Rollers putting up a tremendous show, raucously calling and performing aerobatics. We drove closer in the open vehicle and identified two pairs of Lilac Breasted Rollers (LBRs) and a pair of Broad Billed Rollers (BBRs). They were having an obvious disagreement which became more heated as we watched. It had something to do with territory, the LBRs trying to maintain ownership of a hole which the BBRs wanted for themselves. The two species flew at each other in spectacular attacks, their sparkling breeding colours blazing in that magnificent warm light. Often they would hit a strike and a feather would fly and a bird tumble, catch itself and rest for while on the large dead tree where the hole of contention was. The LBRs performed their rolling flight as they came out of each attack or defensive sortie.