Main Page

Welcome toWikipedia

From today's featured article

Did you know ...

In the news

On this day

From today's featured list

Today's featured picture

Other areas of Wikipedia

Wikipedia's sister projects

Wikipedia languages

Edward Drinker Cope(July 28, 1840 – April 12, 1897) was an Americanzoologist,paleontologist,comparative anatomist,herpetologist, andichthyologist. Born to aQuakerfamily, he published his first scientific paper at age 19. He made regular trips to theAmerican West, prospecting in the 1870s and 1880s. A feud between Cope andOthniel Charles Marshled to an intense fossil-finding competition called theBone Wars. Cope's financial fortunes soured after failed mining ventures in the 1880s, forcing him to sell much of his fossil collection. His contributions helped to define the field of American paleontology and he wrote more than 1,400 published papers, although rivals debated the accuracy of his rapidly published works. He discovered, described, and named more than 1,000 vertebrate species, including hundreds of fishes and dozens of dinosaurs. His proposal for the origin of mammalianmolarsis notable among his theoretical contributions. (Full article...)

Thegrey-headed kingfisher(Halcyon leucocephala) is a species of bird in thekingfisherfamily, Alcedinidae. It is found across large parts of Africa and southern Arabia – from Mauritania through Senegal and the Gambia, east to Ethiopia, Somalia, Yemen, Oman and Saudia Arabia, and south through to South Africa. It is also found in islands off the African coast such as the Cape Verde islands and Zanzibar. The grey-headed kingfisher is around 21 centimetres (8.3 inches) in length, with the two sexes being similar in size and appearance. The adult of the nominate subspeciesH. l. leucocephalahas a pale grey head, black mantle and back, bright blue rump, wings and tail, and chestnut underparts. The beak is long, red and sharp. Its song features a succession of notes, ascending, descending and then ascending again, becoming increasingly strident, while the warning call is a series of sharp notes. The bird's habitat constists of scrub and woodland and it moves either solitary or in pairs, often near water; however, unlike most kingfishers it is not aquatic. It nests in holes in steep riverbanks and is aggressively protective of its nest by repeated dive-bombing of foraging monitor lizards. This grey-headed kingfisher perching on a twig was photographed inQueen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda.

Photograph credit:Giles Laurent

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