



**West African Ornithological Society
Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest
Africain**



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EDITORIAL

Nigerian ornithology has suffered greatly in its development from the fact that a regrettably high proportion of bird-watchers in the country are not permanent residents; and observations accumulated within the space of a few short years have all too often left Nigeria unpublished, or, if published, then perhaps in a museum journal inaccessible to the majority of ornithologists on the spot. The need has been felt for an organ in which to disseminate knowledge of the birds, and largely to the end the Nigerian Ornithologists' Society has recently been formed. It is hoped that this its first Bulletin will pave the way for a long series linking successive and contemporaneous observers in Nigeria in the furtherance of the country's ornithology.

Without being too pretentious, it is desirable that the Bulletin adopt a standard format; only to this extent have contributions to the present issue been edited. Contributors are requested to adhere to the following conventions :

1. Dates to be written e.g. 23rd September 1959 (or, in tables, 23.ix.1959).
2. Both English and scientific names to be used at the first mention of a species.
3. Nomenclature should follow Bannerman, D.A., The Birds of West and Equatorial Africa (2 Vols.), 1953, or give reasons for departure from this work. Order and nomenclature of birds not in Bannerman should follow Voous, K.H., Atlas of European Birds, 1960, and Chapin, J.P., The Birds of the Belgian Congo (4 pts.), 1932-1954.
4. Trinomials to be avoided except where subspecific identity is without doubt or where necessary to discussion.
5. Scientific names to be underlined, except when tabulated.

To ease the editorial burden, it would be greatly appreciated if lengthier contributions could be submitted typed on stencils.

CIRCULATION LIST

Owing to absence on leave, etc., replies have not yet been received from all the invited potential founder members. *Indicates members from whom subscriptions have been received.

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NOTES ON SOME WEST AFRICAN BEE-EATERS

M.T. Horwood

These notes, mainly on the distribution of bee-eaters in Ghana and Nigeria, were abstracted in response to a request for information from C.H. Fry (see p.26), and were thought to be of sufficient interest for inclusion in the Bulletin.

Merops apiaster European Bee-eater

The records from West Africa given in Bannerman (1) are surprisingly few and far between considering that this is a common bird of passage on both southward and northward migration. I list hereunder all my records for both Ghana and Nigeria.

- 8th December 1954 Four birds in South Ghanaian Togoland.
 9th December 1954 Two separate flocks of about a dozen in the same area.
 21st March 1955. 30 plus circling over Ho in Ghanaian Togoland at mid-day had gone in the evening.
 23rd March 1955 Over 40 seen moving slowly northwards, North of Ho and just South of the Vane Pass.
 25th March 1955 Several seen over the residential area of Ho.
 28th March 1955. Many seen over the residential area at Ho.
 1st April 1958 A flock of 40-50 over Oturkpo in Idoma Division of Benue Province.
 5th April 1958 Four or five over Makurdi G.R.A. and moving in a general West-North-Westerly direction.
 11th April 1959 Three, apparently at the edge of a large flock, seen flying in a westerly direction some 10 miles to the East of Minna in Niger Province.
 25th September 1963 A flock of over 60 circling high over Kwal, 16 miles West of Bukuru and on the edge of the scarp face. Moving slowly southwards towards Kagoro and Kafanchan.

Between 1938 and 1954 I never saw one, presumably because during this period I was always stationed in the High Forest areas of S.W. Ghana. Since then I have been off and on in the savannah areas and have frequently seen them but only at the times of Spring and Autumn migrations. Further I have never known them to remain anywhere; they have always been moving in a leisurely way, feeding as they go.

Merops malimbicus Rosy Bee-eater

To state that this bee-eater is "...entirely absent from the Southern Territories of the Gold Coast..." during the rainy season is incorrect. I have one record for 2nd July 1956 at Brimsu Reservoir, 9 miles North of Cape Coast and have certainly seen it there many times