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TWO INTERESTING PLATEAU BIRDS

The Red-Capped Lark Calandrella cinerea and the Three-Banded Plover  
Afroxyechus tricollaris

R. E. Sharland

On 8th October 1958 whilst travelling from Laminga to Bukuru on the Jos Plateau, my wife and I noticed a small lark on the road. The bird had a pale red head and a rusty patch on either side of the breast. After a long chase I eventually secured it and sent it to the British Museum for identification. It was identified as the Red-Capped Lark Calandrella cinerea natoriator.

This lark has a wide range in South Africa but according to R.E. Moreau (pers. comm.) has not been recorded previously in West Africa north of Eastern Congo or South-Western Kasai.

As Roberts (1) describes the Red-Capped Lark as a restless bird I thought that the Jos birds were probably migrants from further South. When I returned from leave I revisited the Laminga area and on 3rd July found a pair in the same area. It seems likely therefore that the bird is resident\*.

Several pairs or single birds were seen altogether in the winter of 1958 either in the Laminga area or near Sabon Gida Reservoir. Three were caught flying to drink on Tollemache Dam and were ringed and released. I would be interested to hear any reports of the bird in other areas and any evidence of nesting\*.

In August 1952 I noticed three small plovers on a mining dam near Jos and shot one of them. It turned out to be a Three-Banded Plover Afroxyechus tricollaris which is found in South and East Africa. Ten years later in August 1962 Mr R.G. Newell secured another Three-Banded Plover in the same area - about 12 miles from Jos on the Bauchi road.

This bird is very similar to Forbes' Banded Plover Afroxyechus forbesi, a widespread and locally common bird in Nigeria, but differs in having a white forehead and paler throat. The only previous West African records of A. tricollaris are from Marua, N. Cameroon, in 1922 and Accra in 1945.

Reference

- (1) Roberts, A. The Birds of South Africa. 1940

\* Juvenile birds have now been found on the Plateau; it is hoped that a note on this occurrence will follow. -Ed.