



**West African Ornithological Society
Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest
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I have recorded it are :

1954 : 23.vii in Sokoto and 27.viii in Gusau
 1956 : 3.vi in Kaduna / Kaduna
 1957 : 24.vii., and 5.viii to 25.ix frequently in
 1959 : 1.vii in Kaduna
 1961 : 6.v and 12.v in Kaduna
 1962 : 19.vii in Kaduna.

D.E. Macgregor

Mist Netting Hazards. On 18th September 1964 I found a 3½ ft. long File Snake Mohelya poensis caught by the head in a mist-net set up in the bush behind Egbado College, Ilaro. The snake had obviously been attracted by the flutterings of a male Olive Sunbird Cyanomitra olivacea already in the net and had climbed five feet up the net after crossing over from nearby vegetation. Rather optimistically it had been trying to swallow the sunbird. The bird was already dead; the snake very much alive.

Once before, on 2nd February 1962, I netted a snake, this time a West African House Snake Boaedon lineatus. The mist-net had been lowered at dusk to avoid the inevitable harvest of Epulette Bats Epomophorus gambianus and lay loosely along the ground across the hunting path of the 4 ft. long snake. It got itself hopelessly entangled and unlike the File Snake could not be extricated alive.

J.A. Button

White-throated Bee-eater Eating Oil-Palm Nut Fibres. Bee-eaters are certainly amongst the more specialised birds as regards their food requirements, and I was very surprised to find oily red-orange fibres of the Oil-palm (Elaeis guineensis) 'nut' in several gizzards of a number of White-throated Bee-eaters Aerops albicollis which I collected for research purposes at Ibadan in April 1964. This food is of course extremely lipid-rich and is eaten by a very wide variety of mammals and birds etc. It is tempting to surmise that the bee-eaters eat it 'in order to' build up lipid food reserves in the body prior to their longish northwards migration to the breeding grounds. Presumably the birds strip the epicarp from the fruits in the trees, rather than descending to fallen fruits on the ground, but any observations on this score which can be made by people resident in Aerops' winter range would be greatly appreciated. C.H. Fry

Finfoot in Kaduna. The Finfoot Podica senegalensis is not an easy bird to see well, and the following note of its occurrence in Kaduna

may well be of interest*. In the late afternoon of 1st May 1964 we were on a stretch of the Kaduna 30 to 40 ft. wide, with steep 10 ft. high banks, The water was deep and swift-flowing, interrupted by not more than a few rocks. The banks were almost completely covered by a thorny scrub growth (a favourite roost of finches, weavers etc.) which overhangs the water by several feet, so as to make the actual shore invisible. Our attention was drawn by a big flopping splash as something took cover on the other side of the channel. After a few minutes a Senegal Finfoot quietly emerged from cover and began to move freely and slowly down the bank, exploring every nook and cranny and occasionally apparently taking food off the trailing weeds. We followed it down the river for some way, in full view, and it took no further notice of us. On this showing it could hardly be called a very shy bird.

The orange-red bill with brown culmen, and big white spots on the back and sides make it a very handsome bird. It swam with the tail spread wide and lying flat on the surface of the water, and this seemed to erase any trace of the bird's passage. Certainly it was remarkable for the fact that there was no sign of a ripple or wake to betray its presence, and if one had not had one's attention drawn in the first place the bird could very easily have been overlooked, even when it was in full view in comparatively open water.

D.E. Macgregor

Mottled Swifts on the Jos Plateau. This note is to record the only addition I can make to the Plateau Check-list (Ebbutt et al., p. 9 this issue). On 12th May 1961, about 1600 hrs., a violent storm was brewing up some 10 miles South of Jos. There were high winds and a black sky, and a remarkable movements of swifts, hirundines and Abdim's Storks. Sphenorhynchus abdimii flew into wind. The swallows were mainly H. aethiopica but included about 20 Banded Martins Riparia cincta, and the swifts were mainly A. affinis, with some A. caffer and Cypsiurus and about 5 huge dark fork-tailed swifts with irregular dark transverse markings on a slightly paler belly. I have seen Apus aquatorialis, the Mottled Swift at Bamenda and have subsequently seen it at Zaria; there is no reason to believe that the Jos birds were not this species, caught up (from where?) with a mass movement of other swifts and swallows.

C.H. Fry

C O R R I G E N D U M

Topo Island Avifauna, N.O.S. Bulletin No 2 page 6 : For "Tchagra australis Brown-crowned Tchagra" read "Tchagra senegalensis Black-crowned Tchagra".

R E Q U E S T S F O R I N F O R M A T I O N

- European Swift J.A. Button would be pleased for any observations on mass movements of this species in Nigeria.
- Ibadan Malimbe See J.H. Elgood's request, p. 9 of this issue.
- White-throated Bee-eater See C.H. Fry's request on preceding page.

*This is also the first record of the species in Nigerian Northern Guinea Savannah that has come to my notice. It occurs on the Plateau. -Ed.