



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



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SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER IN GHANA - On 24 October 1976, while counting waders on salt-pans at Iture (about 8 km west of Cape Coast), Ghana, I noticed a plump wader about the size of a Knot Calidris canutus with a very long snipe-like bill. It was obvious that the bird was a dowitcher Limnodromus sp., a conclusion confirmed by the faintly streaked grey upperparts, whitish supercilium and whitish underparts barred with black on the sides and indistinctly spotted or streaked on the breast. In flight the trailing edge of the secondaries formed a thin white wing-bar, and a narrow white patch on the back was visible. The tail was barred darker. The bill was relatively shorter than that of a Snipe Capella gallinago but seemed rather longer than that of Jack Snipe Lymnocyptes minimus or Woodcock Scolopax rusticola. In flight it was held pointing downward as in the other small long-billed species.

The bird was identified as the Short-billed Dowitcher L. griseus on the basis of the call it gave three times just after rising - a very unwader-like 'kekeke', the syllables being uttered rapidly. The described resemblance to the call of the Turnstone Arenaria interpres (Hollom 1968, 'Popular Handbook of British Birds', Witherby, London) did not strike me at the time, but in retrospect was the closest comparison. The dowitcher's call was, however, rather higher pitched, more nasal and less hard than the Turnstone's.

This appears to be the first record of a dowitcher from West Africa.

M. A. Macdonald

NESTS OF WHITE-FRONTED BLACK CHATS Mymecocichla albifrons - During March and April 1977, five nests of White-Fronted Black Chats were found in erosion gully areas at Samaru and Zaria. Three had been built on top of re-sprouted tree stumps, between 0.5 and 1.0 metre above the ground. The two others were on exposed tree roots at ground level, and all incorporated the root or stump as part of the wall of the nest. Bark pieces were used as foundation material for the nests, and fine grass, leaf debris, moss, lichens, and spider webs were used for building materials. None of the nests were directly on the ground or in crevices as described in Mackworth-Præd and Grant (1970-73). Three clutches were pale green with chocolate spots. Young birds were covered in black down; displaying a bright orange mouth-lining when they gaped. Because of their solid attachment to the tree bark the nests were not shaken when an adult landed, and the nestlings responded by gaping only to a click or chirp produced by the parent and not to movement.

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