



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



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Erolia temminckii Temminck's Stint - one on an oxbow pool by the R. Galma, Zaria, 20th March, 1966.

Cuculus solitarius Red-chested Cuckoo - in June 1965 I heard the call of this cuckoo clearly imitated by a singing Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat Cossypha niveicapilla at Zaria. The cuckoo was hitherto unrecorded from the area, but since C. niveicapilla is thought to be migratory at Zaria it was quite probable that it had heard and learned to imitate C. solitarius well to the south in Nigeria. However on 23rd June, 1966 several C. solitarius were heard and one seen in Dunbi wood, Zaria. The species is evidently rare or very local here however. The same applies to C. clamosus, of which there is only one record in the Zaria area, in May, although it occurs regularly throughout the wet season at Kano.

Monticola solitaria Blue Rock-Thrush - one, Kuffena Rock, Zaria, 24th-29th March, 1966 (Bull. Nig. Orn. Soc. 3 (9) : 13-14). A further record of this species in Nigeria has come to my notice; it is recorded from Sokoto on 3rd April, 1948 by Dobbs (1959, Niger. Field 24 : 102-119 & 185-191). Unfortunately no field details are given, but the same author has also recorded the Rock-Thrush M. saxatilis at Sokoto (1949, Niger Field 14 : 102-105.).

Cyanosylvia svecica ?svecica Red-Spotted Bluethroat - on 28th February a very good view was obtained of a red-spotted race of the Bluethroat, a male in full plumage, on the R. Galma in Zaria. The white-spotted C. s. cyanecula has also been recorded at Zaria (Bull. Nig. Orn. Soc. 2 (6) : 42), and the present race may have been C. s. svecica, although there are several Asian red-spotted forms as well.

Anomolospiza imberbis Cuckoo-Weaver - on 23rd June, 1966, two males and a female were clearly seen on the R. Galma flood-plain, Zaria.

C.H.Fry

NOTES

Three Interesting Birds in Lagos. On 19th March, 1966, after the conclusion of the inaugural meeting of the Resident Committee of the Nigerian Field Society in Lagos, the writer and N.J. Skinner visited the small park on the east of Ikoyi Island and the stretch of marsh beyond, where there are remains of mangroves which formerly covered a large part of Ikoyi.

We saw two rollers, very similar to the Abyssinian Roller Coracias abyssinica of northern Nigeria, but lacking the long tail streamers. The foreheads were concolorous with the crown. We are confident that they were European Rollers C. garrulus. It is of interest that the first two European Rollers I saw in Nigeria were in a very similar habitat, on Burutu Island.

Whilst we were watching the Robblers, a cuckoo flew by and settled on a mangrove. The uniform slate back and long tail were clearly seen. Unfortunately the bird flew off rather soon. The Yellow-billed Cuckoo Cuculus gularis has not been recorded as far south as this, and this bird may well have been the European Cuckoo C. canorus.

We noticed that amongst the many swifts flying over the area were a number whose silhouette was markedly different from the Little African Swift Colletoptera affinis. These birds had longer wings, shorter tails, and there appeared to be a notch on the trailing edge of the wing where it joined the body. One bird was seen flying low and a pale line across the lower belly was seen. The birds were clearly Spine-tailed Swifts Chaetura ussheri, which were not recorded at Lagos by Sander (Niger. Field 21 : 147-162 & 22 : R.E.Sharland 5-17, 1956 & 1957)

The European Little Bittern in Nigeria. Bannerman (1953) and Elgood et al. (1966, Ibis 108 : 84-116) refer to the possibility of the European race of the Little Bittern Ixobrychus minutus occurring in West Africa as well as the local I. m. payesii. In Kano Little Bitterns are seen fairly regularly as the reed-beds in borrow pits dry up at the end of March, and they occur in the wet season. On 20th April, 1966, my wagtail-catcher caught a female Little Bittern in the mist-net. The wing measured 145 mm and the first primary was 5 mm longer than the fourth, indicating that it belonged to the European race I. m. minutus. This appears to be the first positive record for West Africa, but it is probably a regular visitor. R.E.Sharland

Breeding of Red-Necked Kestrels. On 15th January, 1966 a pair of Red-necked Kestrels Falco chiquera flew around my compound at Mbaakon, southern Tiv Division, Beane Province. They drew attention to themselves by their call "ki ki ki ki". They were seen on several successive days, and on 28th January I noticed that they often perched in a certain Borassus palm. On 9th February one bird was sitting cross-wise in the axil of a horizontal leaf-stem of this palm tree, about 30 ft above the ground. The other bird sat on another leaf stem nearby. At the end of February the presumed female sat for short periods and spent the rest of the day away, hunting or perching at the top of a 40-ft high Isoberlinia doka tree, 50 metres away from the palm. At dusk both birds returned to the palm. On two occasions, one of the kestrels chased away a West African Goshawk Accipiter macroscelides, which also has been frequenting the area. No nesting material was visible from below, but the female did arrange some palm fibres on the leaf stem where she was sitting.

On 5th March white droppings were noticed on the sides of the Borassus leaf stem, and on the following day I saw a nestling for the first time. On 11th, two young were visible. They were already losing their white down and developing dark primaries and a dark