



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



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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