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Estrilda melpoda: Orange-Cheek Waxbill (Sav. Res. C).

Odd sightings of small parties of 3/5 in D. Savannah parts of the locality. Observed in flocks of 30/40 birds with Spermestes cucullatus: Bronze Mannikin in swampy environment at Ebute-Igboro on the Yewa River; in flocks of 100's also with S. cucullatus in the reeds at Ewekoro Quarry. These observations were made on visits to both places between November and March (i.e. the dry season). (Omission from The Birds of Ilaro II B Resident Passerines).

Author's Note:

The status designations which follow the English names of species treated in the article are taken from Elgood's Check List of the Birds of Nigeria (1964) and of course refer to Nigeria as a whole, and not the Ilaro area.

References: Elgood J.H. (1964) A Check List of the Birds of Nigeria (Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 1 (1): 13- 25).

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Notes on Bee-eaters in the Borgu Area

by Frank Walsh.

Considerable attention has been focussed on the Bee-eaters of Nigeria, thanks to the efforts of our former Editor. As the Borgu area has yielded records of seven species it seems worthwhile to give a fairly detailed account of the situation there.

Table I gives the Seasonal Occurrence in Borgu and is followed by amplifying notes with remarks on breeding and ecology where these seem helpful.

TABLE I - Species present in Borgu: Seasonal Occurrence.

Species	First Date	Last Date	Remarks.
Merops superciliosus	1. iv. 67	29. vii. 67	
Merops malimbicus	9. viii. 67	21. ix. 67	Only two records.
Merops nubicus	20. ix. 67	20. vi. 67	Regular visitor.
Aerops albicollis	24. x. 67	4. v. 67	Regular passage.
Melittophagus pusillus	Resident - Some local movement.		
Melittophagus bullocki	Resident - Disperses in rains.		
Dicrocercus hirundineus	Resident - Much local movement.		

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Blue-cheeked Bee-eater. *Merops superciliosus*.

A small breeding colony of this species was detected in 1966-Walsh (1966). This colony was revisited in 1967 and was found to have increased greatly to ninety holes. Five miles to the south a five hole colony was discovered in another Niger sand-bank. On the 16th May a fresh egg was collected from the entrance to one of the holes at the main colony. It was a rather translucent white colour and fairly round, measuring 23.5 x 19 mm., Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1957) give about 28 x 23 mm for the eggs of the nominate race from Madagascar. Unfortunately the colony could not be visited again in 1967. On 29th July a pair of birds was seen on a sand-bank at Bussa - the only other sightings away from the colony being on 6th April, 1966 at Shagaru 10° 20'N and on 10th April, 1966 at Minni where D. Wells saw this species on migration (pers. comm.)

Rosy Bee-eater. *Merops malimbicus*.

There are two records of this species in Borgu: 20-21st September, 1966 ca. 24 birds were seen wheeling over open bush in the Central Borgu Reserve 10°N. 4° 20'E.

9th August, 1967 3 birds feeding over open bush at New Bussa. These sightings appear to be exceptionally far north for the species.

Carmine Bee-eater. *Merops nubicus*.

This is a common dry-season visitor to Borgu. There is no doubt that the birds are absent from the area during the season. First arrivals at Kainji are in early October.

First arrivals Kainji

1965	-	7.	x.
1966	-	3.	x.
1967	-	3.	x.

but nine were seen on Fogs Island just north of Bussa on 20th September, 1967.

By 19th October, 1967 at Kainji they had begun to excavate their colonies. These colonies are situated in fairly tall, vertical, sandy river banks. One colony at the time of writing is located not more than thirty yards from a small colony of Red-throated Bee-eaters *Melittophagus bullocki*.

The birds appear to disperse widely each day for feeding but return each night to the colony to roost. Each evening many pass over New Bussa heading towards the Niger colonies five miles away.

White-throated Bee-eater. *Aerops albicollis*.

This species is a notable passage migrant but also appears to be a dry season visitor in small numbers, at least in the southern part of the area. This seems to be the farthest north it has been recorded in the dry season outside the well marked passage times.

Dates of passage are as follows:-

24th and 30th October 1965 1 - 3rd May, 1966

25th and 29th October, 1966 26th April and 4th May 1967,

24th October - 8th November, 1967,

also four on 17th November.

Apart from these passage dates, the following records relate to 'wintering individuals'.

At Shaffini (Swamp Forest) $9^{\circ} 54'N$. $4^{\circ} 45'E$. a pair of birds were seen on 23rd December, 1966 and 7th January 1967, on 10th January a single bird was seen during a brief visit. This site was next visited in late February, no birds were seen. Four birds were also seen at this site on 24th December, 1967.

On the 16th December, 1966 during a canoe trip down the Niger in the Bajibo area (approximately $9^{\circ} 22'N$. - $9^{\circ} 27'N$.) half a dozen scattered pairs were seen perched in the tops of riverine trees, and feeding, at the southern most part of the journey a flock of about twenty birds was seen. Several birds were still present in the area during a visit on the 8th February.

A more remarkable record concerns a single bird on a large island in the Niger at $10^{\circ} 32'N$. $4^{\circ} 37'E$., on the 28th February, 1967. This bird was perched in an isolated clump of tall grass, the island being low and sandy, and having had all its woody vegetation cleared in connection with the reservoir works. On 28th December, 1967 at least eight birds (possibly twelve) were feeding over a patch of Fadama and Mimosapigra scrub on Foge Island opposite Shagunu.

Birds were still present on Foge Island on 8th February, 1968 when at least twelve birds were feeding over the fadama at which they were first noticed on 28th December, 1967.

At least one, possibly two parties of about ten birds were feeding at Shaffini on 11th February in the same area as the four birds seen on 24th December, 1967.

These records present a northward extension of the dry season distribution of this species.

Least Bee-eater. Melittophagus pusillus.

This species is rarely seen in parties of more than four individuals. They are much attracted to low river banks with Mimosa pigra thickets, but they are much less numerous than would be expected from the prevalence of this habitat. Nesting has not been proved but is suspected to take place in March - April and to involve solitary pairs, not colonies.

Red-throated Bee-eater. Melittophagus bullocki.

This is the most widely distributed species. Colonies may be located in the banks of quite small streams, as well as roadside drains, borrow-pits and river banks. Excavation takes place in October but young are not being fed until March - April.

Swallow-tailed Bee-eater, *Dicrocercus hirundineus*.

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This rather elusive species is by no means uncommon in the Borgu area, being found over a wide area of woodland and ex-agricultural land, it does not appear to be attracted to the vicinity of water. It has been recorded throughout the year, although subject to considerable local movement. It is usually seen singly or in pairs but parties of up to six birds are sometimes seen. It almost certainly breeds in the area but so far there is no direct evidence for this. Immature birds have been seen in July, August and September.

It feeds mainly from a fairly high perch, often the top of a dead tree is utilised. The prey catching flight is similar to that of the Red-throated Bee-eater and not at all 'swallow-like' as has been suggested by some writers.

R e f e r e n c e s.

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NOTES ON SOME PALEARCTIC MIGRANTS IN GHANA.

I. D. Moorhouse.

The following notes are taken from observations made in the Kumasi area of Ghana between October 1966 and the end of March 1967. Almost all watching was done in the company of F.R. Allison, to whom I am indebted for help in the field.

Kumasi is some 100 miles from the West African coast, and is largely surrounded by semi-deciduous forest, with some clearings and areas of dense swampland. The dry seasons roughly coincide with the time when Palearctic migrants are in the country, and consequently agricultural clearings are then mainly parched and unattractive to many birds, including waders.

Most of the notes were made at a sewerage farm on the outskirts of the city, and all the records refer to this place unless otherwise specified. The farm consisted of three large settling ponds with earthfill sides of laterite, which were devoid of vegetation, providing a most unusual habitat for the region, as well as giving the watcher extremely good views of the birds present. Because of its lack of vegetation the farm afforded the most attractive spot in the region for waders, and no species was seen in the district which was not recorded at the farm.