



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



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Geese were scarce. White-backed Duck Thalassornis leuconotus were found at two places with a maximum of 20. In March I visited a lake near Kano which always holds a number of this interesting duck and counted over 300.

A very interesting discovery was made at Kazaure during the year. Three broods of recently hatched Hottentot Teal Anas punctata were found and a flock of 30 was counted. (see Notes page 48.).

Remaining Areas.

A few African duck were seen in the course of two counts on mining reservoirs on the Plateau. I feel that duck and geese increase in numbers on the Plateau during the rains and know that in some wet seasons there is an immigration of duck to the Kaduna area.

Three counts were made on Lake Alo near Maiduguri. A maximum of 100 Pintail and 40 Garganey were counted but no other migrant duck.

It is regretted that the Sokoto lakes could not be counted this year.

The fluctuations in numbers of duck visiting Nigeria is a subject which requires considerable research. Rainfall can vary greatly in only a few miles, deep lakes appear one season and do not appear again for many years; these occasional lakes seem to be good feeding areas for duck. Lakes vary in their vegetation and the amount of grass and water-lily coverage every year. In the Nguru area some of the lakes are farmed when they dry up and these lakes are often popular with Garganey the next dry season. Pintail spend the day on large open lakes and frequently flight at dusk to lakes mainly covered in grass which are not popular with other duck. The large herds of cattle in the Nguru area are probably another factor affecting the plant and animal life to the benefit of the duck population.

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NOTES.

PRE-BREEDING SEASON COPULATION BY

WHITE-THROATED BEE-EATERS Aerops albicollis.

Whilst bird-watching in the Botanic Gardens of Ibadan University during the late afternoon of 6th March, 1968, I saw what was clearly an early anticipation of the breeding season on the part of a pair of White-throated Bee-eaters. After a brief period of display the pair copulated for what, by bee-eaters standards, can only be described as a prolonged period. The interest of this is that it should have occurred at this date and in this locality. Although little is still known about the breeding of this species of bee-eater in Nigeria, it appears to occur during June and July (possibly August) and some 400-500 miles to the north of Ibadan near the desert edge (sahel zone) (Fry: Bull.N.O.S. 7 : 82-83). During the few days preceding this observation the behavior pattern of the bee-eaters wintering in the University grounds had begun to change. Flocks were far more restless and during the day there was a greater dispersion of birds while communal flights in the evening were composed of larger groups of birds which were far more vocal - very similar behaviour, in fact, to what I have seen at the breeding grounds of this species in the Sudan.

Antony Pettet.

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