



**West African Ornithological Society
Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest
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THREE-BANDED PLOVER Charadrius tricollaris AT LAKE CHAD.

The Three-banded Plover Charadrius tricollaris (called Afroxyechus tr collaris by Bannerman, 1953, Birds of West and Equatorial Africa, 1:394) has been recorded only four times in West Africa. Specimens have been collected near Marua in northern Cameroon (Bannerman op. cit.) and twice near Jos in Central Nigeria (Sharland, 1964, Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 1(2):4), and two were well seen near Malam'fatori on the Nigerian shore of Lake Chad (Button, Fry, Hopson & Hopson, 1966, Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 3(10):42). There is a sight record from as far west as Accra in Ghana (Bannerman op. cit.) which requires confirmation.

On 16th May, 1968, A.J.H. and J.H. had excellent views of a single Charadrius tricollaris on the shore of Lake Chad near Malam'fatori (ca. 13° 37'N, 13° 20'E). R.J.D. found this bird in the same area on 21st May, and was able to confirm the identification as it is a species he knows well from Central Africa. It was not seen subsequently.

In East, Central and Southern Africa this species is a common bird of dams, lakes, rivers, streams and puddles, feeding along muddy or sandy edges. It is generally sedentary, merely moving to nearby dams or pools in woodland when water levels rise. The four Nigerian records and the one from Cameroon are for May, August, September and November.

R. J. Dowsett, A.J.Hopson and Jane Hopson.

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WHISKERED TERNS Chlidonias hybrida SUMMERING AT LAKE CHAD.

Bannerman (1953, Birds of West and Equatorial Africa, 1:475), using the name Chlidonias leucopareia, considers the Whiskered Tern Chlidonias hybrida to be a scarce Palearctic migrant to West Africa. Elgood, Sharland & Ward (1966, Ibis 108:103) give as the only Nigerian records birds seen at Lake Chad in April and near Zaria in May. Fry (1965, Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 2(6):40) mentions what is presumably this same Zaria record, though attributed to a different observer. Hopson (1965, Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 1(4):13) saw six at Malam'fatori, Lake Chad in April 1963, and subsequent observations there have shown it to be occasional in spring (March-June) and autumn (September 1966), as many as fifteen being seen in a day (Ash, Ferguson-Lees & Fry, 1967, Ibis 109:484; Hopson, unpublished). In 1968 the Lake Chad Ornithological Expedition and I saw up to eleven on several days between 10th April and 11th May.

It would be reasonable to assume that all these birds are of Palearctic origin and merely on passage, were it not that in the summer of 1968 I have seen C. hybrida in breeding dress in two areas on Lake Chad. During voyages in the Federal Fisheries Service cabin cruiser "El Kanemi" I saw a party of four on 15th July near Bargaron (ca. 13° 25'N, 14° 05'E) and on 31st July and 1st August a single bird and a party of three near Kidri Island (ca. 13° 39'N, 14° 08'E). Both these localities are in Tchad territory. In both these areas there is suitable habitat for breeding on reed islands. Although Palearctic C. hybrida may summer in the area - as presumably are the moderate numbers of White-winged Black Tern Chlidonias leucoptera present (mostly in non-breeding dress) - there may nevertheless be a breeding population on Lake Chad.

R. J. Dowsett.

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WHIMBREL Numenius phaeopus AT LAKE CHAD.

At about 10.00 hours on 20th August, 1968, a single Whimbrel Numenius phaeopus flew over me, calling, on the Nigerian shore of Lake Chad at Malam'fatori (ca. 13° 37'N, 13° 20'E). Soon after I was able to watch it at a pool on the sand beach at about 30 yards range. The sharply decurved bill and distinctive head pattern were well seen. Later I showed the bird to R. H. Parker and he kindly shot it for me. It weighed 295 gms. and had a wing length of 247mm. The remiges and retrices were only slightly worn. Mr. Parker prepared a study skin; on dissection it proved to be a male with very little body fat. The specimen is now in the Zoology Museum of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Elgood, Sharland & Ward (1966, Ibis 108:102) consider this an abundant Palearctic visitor to the coast of Nigeria, mostly October to March, but give no inland records. Bannerman (1953, Birds of West and Equatorial Africa, 1:435) mentions large numbers in August in the inundation zone of the Niger. Moreau (1967, Ibis 109:251) considers that these Niger records "raise a suspicion that some Whimbrels may cross

the desert between the Mediterranean and the great bend of the Niger, but there is no intermediate record". In Africa south of the equator the Whimbrel is generally rare inland.

R. J. Dowsett.

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TEREK SANDPIPERS *Xenus cinereus* AT LAKE CHAD.

At 08.10 hours on 21st August, 1968, R.J.D. noticed a Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* on a sand beach on the Nigerian shore of Lake Chad at Malam'fatori (ca. 13°37'N., 13°20'E.). He pointed it out to R.H.P. who, after quite a long chase, shot it. The specimen is now in the Zoology Museum of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

In the field the long up-turned bill, dark fore-edge to the wing and bright orange legs were distinctive, and in flight it showed a narrow white trailing edge to the wing. It was in completely fresh plumage with no trace of moult, and on dissection proved to be a female with very little body fat. It weighed 61grms with a wing length 138mm.

Then at 09.45 hours on 26th August R.J.D. saw another Terek Sandpiper at a pool in the same place. He had excellent views of it down to 25 yards. It frequently ran very fast, for no apparent reason, with its head held low and straight out in front of it. It often bobbed like a Common Sandpiper *Tringa (Actitis) hypoleucos*, and its flight was rather stiff-winged like that species. Its call was "to'li, to'li" or a quiet titter rather reminiscent of that of a Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*. This bird was seen daily to 29th, being netted and ringed on this latter date. It had a wing length of 133mm. and weighed 61.5grms. Its tail was quite heavily worn, but there was only slight wear to the remiges and no sign of body moult. It was browner above than the specimen collected on 21st, with the black markings on the scapulars less extensive, and was presumed to be a bird of the year.

While this bird was being removed from the net on 29th August a second bird was heard to fly over calling. The distinctive wing markings were seen as it landed further up the shore, but it could not be found again. However, on 31st two unringed Terek Sandpipers were seen together in the same place. Both seemed to be first-year birds. Excellent views were had of both birds on 1st September, and both were still present early on the 2nd, but were very wild and called a good deal. As well as the common flight call, a titter, a disturbed bird would often utter a charming and distinctive liquid "tu, tu, tu" from the ground. Later on the 2nd, only one could be found, and neither remained on the 3rd. Thus at least four different birds appeared at Malam'fatori, and the species may well be a regular on passage at Lake Chad in very small numbers.

The only previous West African records are apparently two sightings near Lagos on the coast of Nigeria in October 1947 and October 1948 (Elgood, Sharland & Ward, 1966, Ibis. 108:101). Etcheopar & Hile (1967, Birds of North Africa :247) mention two occurrences in Tunisia. The species winters in large numbers on the eastern coast of Africa, and there are a few records of birds on autumn passage inland.

R.J.Dowsett & R.H.Parker.

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SANDERLINGS INLAND IN NIGERIA.

Bannerman (1953, Birds of West & Equatorial Africa Vol. 1) states that the Sanderling *Claidris (Crocethia) alba* is a common Palaearctic migrant to the coast of West Africa but he only gives one inland record for Nigeria unsupported by details. Elgood, Sharland & Ward (1966, Ibis. 108 :101) do not accept this record. Moreau (1967, Ibis. 109 : 249) follows Elgood et al. and states that "a record in the desert 80km. south of Jalo on 14th May, which seems to denote passage from the south is unaccountable." Thus the only published inland record for West Africa seems to be that of Moorhouse (1968, Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 5(17) : 14) who saw one or two birds at Kumasi in Ghana, about one hundred miles inland.

On 1st November, 1967, F.W. had good close views of two birds out of a party of four Sanderlings at Kainji in a wet sandy stream bed. It was possible to compare these directly for size with five Little Ringed Plovers *Charadrius dubius*, and the completely white breasts quite without greyish marks were noted as were the black 'shoulder marks'. The two birds not observed as closely had a rather speckled appearance of birds not in full winter dress. Inconclusive flight views were obtained