



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



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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 & Hille (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