



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



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June and July totals are much lower than that of August. These records strongly suggest trans-Saharan migration, the alternative of a journey up the Senegal river and down the Niger being almost ruled out by the date. Roux (1959, *La terre et La Vie*, 106 (4) : 315-321) states that most wader species are represented in the lower Senegal valley by late August or early September. A journey from the coast up the Niger (over four hundred miles) is most unlikely.

That these birds are passing through is clearly indicated by the fact that from about 19:00 hours on the 14th August until the morning of the 16th there was complete overcast at Kainji with a great deal of rain. On the 15th a Redshank *Tringa totanus*, the first record for the area, was seen together with a Greenshank *Glottis nebularius*, a Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*, several Common Sandpipers, three Grey Pratincoles *Galachrysis cinerea*, and a Temminck's Courser *Cursorius temminckii*. This was only the second wet season record of the pratincoles and the first of a courser. By the afternoon of the 17th August only a reduced number of Common Sandpipers remained. Heavy overcast and rain also occurred on the nights of the 17th and 22nd of August. The other point of interest is that, by contrast, the Little Stint *Actinia minuta* (presumably the same bird) should have lingered for four days at the sewage lagoon.

Frank Walsh.

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#### GREY PLOVERS INLAND IN NIGERIA.

Moreau (1967, *Ibis* 109 : 232-259) lists waders for which evidence of trans-Saharan migration is available. He does not mention Grey Plover *Squatarola squatarola*. Grey Plovers were noted on a muddy island in the Niger river at Bussa (10° 15' N., 4° 33' E.) on seven visits between about 26th October, 1967, and 11th January, 1968. On four occasions a pair of birds were present, on the others only a single bird. By January the island was fairly dry and had been planted with assorted local crops.

Grey Plovers have been reported from Lake Chad by Hopson (1964, *Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc.* 1(4):7-15), and by Moorhouse (1968, *Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc.* 5(17) :13-15) from near Kumasi, but have not been reported elsewhere inland in West Africa. The Niger valley record taken with the others cited strongly suggests that the Grey Plover may well be included in the list of trans-Saharan migrants.

Frank Walsh.

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#### INLAND RECORDS OF GULLS.

Hitherto the only published record of Lesser Black-backed Gulls *Larus fuscus* inland in West Africa seems to be from Lake Chad where Hopson (1964, *Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc.* 1(4):7-15) regarded them as frequent from October to April. During the 1967/68 dry season immature *fuscus* were seen on three occasions on the river Niger.

- 3. x. 67 - A second year bird in good condition was seen settled on the water at Libate (10° 12' N., 4° 33' E.). on the canoe's approach the bird rose and flew off strongly downstream until out of sight.
- 5. i. 68 - Two immature birds were seen circling about high over the confluence of the Oli and Niger rivers (9° 46' N., 4° 38' E.).
- 11. i. 68 - At 09.00 hours a single immature bird was seen flying steadily downstream at a height of about 50 feet at Garafini (10° 2' N., 4° 35' E.).

Taken with the Chad record these sightings suggest that at least some members of this species may undergo trans-Saharan migration.

The Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* has also been reported from Lake Chad and there is a record from the Upper Niger, Elgood et al. (1966, *Ibis* 108 :84-116). *L. ridibundus* has twice been positively identified on the Niger at the southern tip of Fogo Island (10° 15' N., 4° 33' E.). In each case a pair of birds were involved. On the first occasion 28th December, 1967, the birds were in winter plumage but on the second, the 15th April, 1968, both birds were in full breeding plumage. In addition to these, seven other sightings of gulls were made in the same area, and

from Kainji, between the above dates by the writer or Mr. J.S. Anderson. None of these sightings exclude the Grey-headed Gull Larus cirrocephalus of which three pairs in breeding plumage were seen on 26th April, 1968.

Elgood et al. (op.cit.) suggest that with its recent expansion in Europe L. ridibundus may appear more frequently inland in West Africa. The above records suggest that this may be the case and that the lake now forming above Kainji may become a regular wintering place for gulls.

Frank Walsh.

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EARLY ARRIVAL OF EUROPEAN SWIFTS IN NIGERIA.

Most of the reports of European Swifts Micropus apus in the Bulletin refer to the spring migration. At Kainji there were no records during the autumns of 1965 to 1967, in the springs 1966 and 1967 sightings were numerous. Bannerman (1953, Birds of West & Equatorial Africa, Vol. 1) mentions that M. apus reaches Sierra Leone in July and has been seen in southern Nigeria by late August. In the Bulletin only Hopson and Fry give August records. Hopson (1964, Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 1(4):7-15) gives it as common in August at Malamfatori, Lake Chad and Fry (1965, Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 2(7):68-79) records a heavy passage in the Zaria area on 22nd August, 1965. Consequently it seems worth noting that on 3rd August, 1968, in the late evening nine M. apus were seen wheeling above the newly forming lake at Kainji just to the north of the concrete dam at Kainji. No other species of swift were present but swallows were quite numerous, they were mostly Hirundo aethiops but a few Hirundo rufula and Riparia paludicola were also seen. There were no M. apus on the morning or evening of the 4th August and none have been seen since.

Frank Walsh.

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INTERNATIONAL WILDFOWL RESEARCH BUREAU

MID-WINTER CENSUS 1968/69.

I have heard from the Wildfowl Trust that the date for the next Wildfowl census is 12th January, 1969.

I shall be grateful if anybody who can assist in this would please contact me giving the areas which they might be able to visit.

If any ornithologist from southern Nigeria is interested in visiting northern Nigeria in December or January and can count duck and waders on this date or any other date will he please also contact me,

R. E. Sharland,  
P. O. Box. 791,  
Kano,  
N. Nigeria.

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ADDITIONS TO LOCAL AVIFAUNA - ZARIA.

An African Hobby Falco cuvieri was seen on 5th November, 1967 at Maska Fish Farm, 38 miles north east of Zaria. My only other record for this bird in Nigeria is from the flood plain of the River Rima, just north of Sokoto, on 3rd August, 1968.

I have several records of the Gold Coast Spine-tailed Swift Chaetura ussheri from the Zaria area this year. On each occasion one or two birds were seen in company with Little African Swifts Collettoptera affinis, and I suspect that their presence is often overlooked. My records from Zaria are as follows:- N.T.C. Farm, Samaru, 17th March and 11th April, 1968; Maska Fish Farm, 23th July, 1968; and in addition I have records from Ikoyi, Lagos, 19th March, 1966; Lake Matu, Bakura, 19th November, 1966; Dan Gora, 50 miles north of Zaria, 28th May, 1967; and Gombe, 28th December, 1967. This swift is evidently widely, although locally, distributed.

A Blue-bellied Roller Coracias cyanogaster was seen in the top of a tall