



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



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NOTES.BARRED WARBLER *Sylvia nisoria* AT LAKE CHAD:A SPECIES NEW TO NIGERIA.

On 17th October, 1968, I collected a first-year Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria* at Malam'fatori on the Nigerian shore of Lake Chad (ca. 13° 37' N., 13° 20' E.). The specimen is now in the Zoology Museum of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

The Barred Warbler migrates south-east from the northern Palaearctic in autumn to winter in the northern parts of east Africa, a few in the Sudan (Cave & Macdonald, 1955, Birds of Sudan) and once in Arabia (Meinertzhagen, 1954, Birds of Arabia). There are no records from anywhere in North Africa, not even Egypt (Moreau, 1961, Ibis 103a : 588), and passage seems to be around the eastern end of the Mediterranean and through Arabia and the Red Sea coast (Archer & Goodman, 1961, Birds of Somaliland : vol. 4). There seems to be no record in the Sudan west of the White Nile at about 12° N., 33° E. (Archer & Goodman, op. cit.) and the Lake Chad bird might be thought to support Moreau's suggestion that birds from Western Europe might fly direct across the Sahara to East Africa. It occurred at Malam'fatori at a time of extremely strong north-east winds and may have been blown off-course from the eastern Mediterranean. However, this seems unlikely as Lake Chad is more than 1,200 miles from the most westerly record in the Sudan and even further from the eastern Mediterranean. Some western birds may therefore fly diagonally across the Sahara, although the weight of the Lake Chad bird at 21.3 grms. was similar to those of first-year autumn passage migrants in Scotland (Williamson, 1964, The Genus *Sylvia*) and does not suggest a long non-stop flight.

This occurrence will also be discussed in detail in the Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club.

R. J. Dowsett.

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DUNLIN *Calidris alpina* AT LAKE CHAD.

The Dunlin *Calidris (Erolia) alpina* winters mainly on the coasts of southern Europe and North Africa, south down the west coast to Senegal and the Gambia (Heim de Balsac & Mayaud, 1962, Oiseaux du Nord-Ouest de l'Afrique), with one sight record from Lagos on the coast of Nigeria (Elgood, Sharland & Ward, 1966, Ibis 108 : 101). On the east coast of Africa it winters along the Red Sea to North Somaliland, rarely to Kenya, Zanzibar and Uganda (White, 1965, Revised Check-list African Non-Passerine Birds, Lusaka : 131), and inland also in the Sudan (Cave & Macdonald, 1955, Birds of Sudan). It occurs uncommonly as far west as Darfur (Moreau, 1967, Ibis, 109 : 237), perhaps birds from the Nile, but Moreau gives no records suggestive of trans-Saharan crossing. It is therefore surprising that a Dunlin was present at Malam'fatori on the Nigerian shore of Lake Chad (ca. 13° 37' N., 13° 20' E.) on 6th September, 1968.

I found this bird feeding on a sand beach at 16.45 hours, and subsequently had excellent views at 50 yards range, on and off for about 30 minutes. It was with Curlew Sandpipers *Calidris ferruginea* (= *Erolia testacea* of Bannerman, 1953, Birds of West & Equatorial Africa) and Little Stints *Calidris (Erolia) minuta*, and attracted attention on account of its extremely dark plumage. It was in almost full breeding dress, with the whole of the belly and lower breast very black and only slightly mottled with paler feathers. It was smaller than the Curlew Sandpipers, shorter legged and with a shorter slightly decurved bill. In flight the dark tail and rump with white sides were well seen. The bill and legs appeared black. An unsuccessful attempt was made to shoot it with a .22 rifle, and it was not seen again. However, its extremely dark upper parts seemed typical of the nominate race, which I know well from the British Isles.

R. J. Dowsett.

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