



West African Ornithological Society
Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest
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BLACK-WINGED PRATINCOLE *Glarcola nordmanni* AT LAKE CHAD.

Elgood, Sharland & Ward (1966, *Ibis*, 108:102) consider the Black-winged Pratincole *Glarcola nordmanni* an uncommon winter visitor to Nigeria, but there seems to be no evidence that it occurs other than as a rare passage migrant en route to wintering grounds in southern Africa. Bannerman (1931, *Birds of Tropical West Africa*, vol.2) records it from Togoland, Gabon and southern Cameroons and from Calabar in Nigeria. Elgood *et al.* (op.cit.) add three further Nigerian records, from Calabar, Jos and Kano, between 26th September and 3rd November.

A Black-winged Pratincole was present at Malam'fatori on the Nigerian shore of Lake Chad (ca. 13° 37'N., 13° 20'E.) on 9th and 11th September, 1968. When first seen it was alone on a sand beach, but its extremely dark upper parts, contrasting strongly with the white rump in flight, when the black underwing coverts were well seen, were most distinctive as it was watched at ranges down to 10 yards. On 11th it associated loosely with a party of six Common Pratincoles *Glareola prat-incola*, presumably the resident African race *fuelleborni* (of which Bannerman's *bowoni* is considered a synonym by White, 1965, *Rev. List. Afr. Non-Passerine Birds.*) rather than Palaearctic migrants. The Black-winged Pratincole was clearly bigger and longer-legged than these others, as well as being much blacker on the upperparts.

This species appears to have a north-east to south-west migration across Africa, being recorded from the Sudan, Uganda and northern Somaliland, and again in its main wintering area in Botswana, South-West Africa and western South Africa (White, op.cit.) In Central Africa it has been noted in Angola (White & Winterbottom, 1949, *Check List Bds. N. Rhodesia*) and the extreme west of Zambia (Irwin & Benson, 1967, *Arnoldia*, 3(8)). It is likely to occur only rarely in West Africa, and that only in the east.

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BLACK TERN *Chlidonias nigra* AT LAKE CHAD,AND ITS DISTRIBUTION IN AFRICA.

On the afternoon of the 20th September, 1968, three parties of White-winged Black Terns *Chlidonias leucoptera*, totaling 500-600 birds, were seen resting on sand beaches at Malam'fatori on the Nigerian shore of Lake Chad (ca. 13° 37'N., 13° 20'E.). Amongst these was a single Black Tern *Chlidonias nigra* in almost full breeding dress. It was almost completely black excepts for a few greyish feathers appearing amongst the wing coverts and contour feathers. Watched closely in flight the wings seemed more slender than those of *leucoptera*. The dark bill also appeared more slender.

This is the first authentic record suggestive of a trans-Saharan crossing (Moreau, 1967, *Ibis*, 109:246). Several authors have uncritically suggested that many birds cross the Sahara (e.g. Bannerman, 1953, *Bds. West & Equatorial Africa*, vol.1; Heim de Balsac & Mayaud, 1962, *Oiseaux du Nord Coast de l'Afrique*). It has been claimed that the Black Tern winters in Tropical Africa (e.g. Etchecopar & Hùe, 1967, *Bds. of N. Africa*) and even that it is mainly a fresh-water species in Africa as in the Palaearctic (Rudebeck, 1957, *S. Afr. Animal Life*, 4:473). This is all most misleading, and doubtless there has been much confusion in the past between *nigra* and *leucoptera* in non-breeding dress.

Large numbers of *nigra* winter in coastal West Africa down to northern Angola (Rudebeck, op.cit.). In East Africa it occurs both on the coast and inland, uncommonly south to Lake Victoria and northern Tanganyika (White, 1965, *Rev. List Afr. Non-Passerine Bds.*). It is undoubtedly primarily a marine species in Africa, and the huge numbers of *Chlidonias* that winter inland must nearly all be *leucoptera* (or the Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*). Of many hundreds of *Chlidonias* seen closely at Lake Chad by myself and others only one *nigra* has been identified. Other inland records in West Africa (e.g. Hutson in Bouet, 1955, *Oiseaux de l'Afrique tropicale*, 1:393) require confirmation. Moreau (op.cit.) points out that the few Saharan records are all in the north and mostly close to the northern edge, and that crossing the Sahara remains unproven.

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