



West African Ornithological Society
Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest
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OBSERVATIONS ON THE ROOSTING OF YELLOW
WAGTAILS *Budytes flavus* IN IBADAN.

Interest in this subject was stimulated by observation of a regular evening movement of Yellow Wagtails over our compound on Jerico Reservation. Details of this movement were noted on 28th January, 1969, and are given below:-

Estimated number of birds flying
overhead in consecutive five
minute periods.

Local time (hr)	No. of Birds
18.20	90
18.25	117
18.30	138
18.35	108
18.40	36
18.45	36

The movement lasted only 28 minutes, but during this time about 525 birds flew overhead. Flock size varied from 2 to about 60, and averaged about 20 birds. From the direction of flight it seemed that the birds might be flying to Moor Plantation, a large agricultural research area about three miles west of Ibadan. This was confirmed on 29th January by a visit to the Federal Department of Agricultural Research, where an estimated 2-3,000 birds were seen wheeling around and temporarily settling on fields of newly ploughed earth or short grass. Eventually, at sunset, the birds moved into a clump of tall grass (about 7' high), perhaps 400 square yards in area and beside a small stream.

On 4th February the roosting sight was visited again, but the birds had moved. The new roosting site was found the next day, about half a mile due west of the old site. The reason for the move was not clear, as the site had not been damaged in any way. The new roost was also in tall grass, but was less compact than before. The grass was in bands about twelve feet wide, alternating with strips of cultivated land about thirty feet wide. The roost spread across at least two of these grass bands. There was no water nearby. The new site was visited several times until 15th February for ringing purposes. Each time the birds settled on newly ploughed or grassy land near to the roost before finally moving to the tall grass at sunset.

On 20th February the birds flying over our compound were counted again, but this time only about 125 birds were seen. An explanation for this drop in numbers was provided the next day by J.H.Elgood and R.W.Ashford, who reported a roost of about a thousand birds in a patch of tall grass (identified as *Pennisetum purpureum* by D.P.Stanfield) on Ibadan University Farm, about seven miles north-east of their previous roosting site. By 4th March this roosting site had been destroyed by grazing cattle and, on 6th March, the second Moor Plantation roosting site was also found to have been destroyed, this time by burning.

J. Broadbent.