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Scaly-fronted Weaver Sporopipes frontalis (4); present in small numbers from August, last noted 2nd October.

### RINGING OF ETHIOPIAN SPECIES.

During the autumn period 2,127 birds of 62 Ethiopian species were ringed. There have been no recoveries. The total number of birds of all species (Palae-arctic and Ethiopian) ringed from March to October was 11,305 of 126 species.

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### PALAEARCTIC MIGRANTS IN WEST LAGOS:

NOVEMBER 1968 to MAY 1969.

D. I. M. Wallace.

### INTRODUCTION

I arrived in Nigeria on 29th October 1968 and within a week commenced regular observations on the birds in the Apapa and the Iganmu/Ijora areas of Lagos and in the area known as Tarkwa Bay west of the lagoon mouth. Since my knowledge of Ethiopian birds stems from the eastern side of the continent, I need to be more certain of diagnosis in certain indigenous groups before attempting any general paper and therefore the following notes refer only to Palae-arctic migrants.

### HABITAT DESCRIPTIONS

- A. Apapa - a small area of house gardens (Badagry Road), ca.200 yards of creek and, overlooked, a large expanse of mangrove and other creek vegetation. Almost daily records.
- I. Iganmu/Ijora -terminal lagoon (slacks) and relict swamps interspersed by roads and buildings, only partially sampled due to difficulty of passage. Several records weekly.
- T. Tarkwa Bay -bathing beach, its breakwaters, open shore to the west (1½ miles), open bushy/grassy dunes immediately inland, Palmgroves and other semicultivation inland of last to mangrove surround of creeks. 38 visits in the seven months.

### LIST OF SPECIES

Honey Buzzard Pernis ptilorhynchus: A, 14th December, T, 3 moving east then north,

28th December; 1 moving west, 27th April.

Marsh Harrier Circus aeruginosus: I, 17th February.

Ringed Plover Charadrius hiaticula: A, 3 on 14th February: I, up to 5 in December, 45 in late February 70 in March and 30 in April: T, present 24th November, up to 5 between 19th January and 9th February, 15 on 23rd and 29th March, 2 on 19th April.

Little Ringed Plover Charadrius dubius: I, 16th February.

Grey Plover Charadrius squatarola: T, up to 3 in all months (absent 19th January to 9th February) last on 3rd May.

Oyster Catcher Haematopus ostralegus: T, 17th November. Only the 5th record for Nigeria and the first outside the Niger Delta (Smith, 1966).

Snipe Capella gallinago: A, up to 3 on four dates from 6th November to 1st January, I, 3rd February.

Great Snipe Capella modia: A, 6, 6th December.

Curlew Sandpiper Calidris (Erolia) ferruginea: A, 28th January; I, up to 3 in February, up to 30, March, 2 on 10th April.

Little and Temminck's Stint Calidris minuta and C. temminckii: I, up to 10 in all months from December to 10th April. T, one minuta, 19th April. Both species identified certainly in late February when latter outnumbered former.

Sanderling Calidris (Crocethia) alba: T, monthly maxima: 250 November, 100 December, 80 January, - February, 100 March, 60 April 18 May. Mostly 1st winter birds, with little sign of moult even in last two months.

Turnstone Arenaria interpres: T, 3 on 16th February.

Ruff Philomachus pugnax: I, up to 5 on 5th and 20th November.

Common Sandpiper Tringa hypoleucos: maxima by month:

	A.	I.	T.
Nov.	75	5	1
Dec.	35	5	3
Jan.	18	5	8
Feb.	35	5	4
Mar.	35	15	5
Apr.	25	10	5
May.	2	-	-

The only widespread Palearctic wader.

Wood Sandpiper Tringa glareola: A, 20 on 17th November, up to 10 occasionally December to April; I, up to 35 November to February, 375 March, 15 April.; T, only one once.

Green Sandpiper Tringa ochropus: A, 12th January.

Lesser Yellow Legs Tringa flavipes: I, 15th and 16th February and 10th and 18th March. The first record for Nigeria and Africa (see separate note p.58).

Rodshank Tringa totanus: A, up to 50 on 5th, 6th and 20th November, 1 28th January and 17th February. The last a very grey "eastern" morph, quite distinct from west European birds.

Spotted Redshank Tringa erythropus: A, 20th November, 4 on 15th April; I, 2, 28th. January, 58, 15th February but only one by the 17th, up to 30 from 10th to 18th March.

Greenshank Tringa nebularia: A, up to 5 daily in all months except May; I, up to 5 in all months up to April; T, 19th January, 16th February, 3 on 19th April. Clearly widespread.

Marsh Sandpiper Tringa stagnatilis: I, up to 30 from the end of January to 10th April.

Curlew Numenius arquata: I, 15th February; T, 19th April.

Whimbrel Numenius phaeopus: A, daily, usually under 10 but 75 on 5th and 200 on 15th November, 20 on 6th November and 8th December, 65 on 11th April and up to 45 in May; I, up to 5 in all months; T, up to 10 on the shore in all months, also a striking movement of 126 east or up the lagoon mouth on 19th January (following a night of S.W. rain). Very interestingly, the voice of this species appears considerably modified in winter in Nigeria. The "seven-whistle" is slurred and is frequently preceded by yelling curlew-like notes.

Arctic Skua Stercorarius parasiticus: T, 3rd November, injured adult (dark phase) 26th February to 2nd March.

Pomarine Skua Stercorarius pomarinus: T, 17th November, 28th December and 16th February. An unidentified skua on 18th January.

Herring Gull Larus argentatus: T, 2 on 2nd and 9th, and single birds on 16th and 27th February, 2nd and 23rd March. The first records for Nigeria (see separate note p. 59).

Lesser Black-backed Gull Larus fuscus: T, (and harbour), monthly mean counts: Nov. 200 (% adult 90), Dec. 300 (80), Jan. 245 (70), Feb. 90 (90), Mar. 70, Apr. 30, May 6.. Some typical fuscus morphs apparent.

Black-headed Gull Larus ridibundus: T, 1 or 2, 28th December, 19th January, 22nd February. All sub-adult.

Little Gull Larus minutus: T, sub-adult, 19th January to 16th February. The first record for Nigeria (see separate note p. 59).

Common/Arctic Tern Sterna hirundo/naevura: T, the extreme difficulty of distinguishing these species confuses their records: up to 23 indeterminate birds in November and December, up to 10 in February and 30 in later months; I, 2, 17th February and up to 25 in April and May.

Common Tern Sterna hirundo: T, up to 5 in early January and from 26th January to the end of February, up to 15 from then to early April and up to 4 in May.

Arctic Tern Sterna naevura: T, up to 40 from 28th December to 23rd February (peak on 26th January), up to 11 from 2nd March to 27th May (no obvious peak).

Roscate Tern Sterna dougallii: T, first seen on 29th December, thereafter a steady arrival of up to 70 by 11th January, then a fall away to under 5 in February, up to 7 in March, 17 on 19th April and up to 4 in May. Of the 70 on 11th and 12th January, 5 bore rings. Of these 3 also bore black colour rings and had therefore come from a breeding colony in S.W. Ireland (per B.T.O.). I, 2 on 4th May.

Little Tern Sterna albifrons: T, 11th January and 19th April (with Roscates).

Sandwich Tern Sterna sandvicensis: T, up to 80 from November to February, but under 10 in late Feb., up to 50 from March to April and up to 22 in May. Two colour ringed birds had come from either Northumberland and or Aberdeen (per B.F.O.).

Black Tern Chlidonias nigra: A, singly on four dates, November and December, 2 on 3rd March. I, up to 20 in all months. T, monthly maxima: Nov. 600, Dec. 180, Jan. 800, Feb. 1,000, Mar. 1,200, Apr. 600, May. 350, mostly at lagoon mouth but all up to two miles inland.

White-winged Black Tern Chlidonias leucoptera: A, 16th November. T, adults on 19th April and 18th May.

Whiskered Tern Chlidonias hybrida: I, 2 on 5th November and 15th February.

Great Spotted Cuckoo Clamator glandarius: T, 17th November.

Swift Apus apus: A, 100 on 30th March. T, 2 on 12th and 19th January, 105 30th March, 200 19th April. Larger numbers made visible by rain.

Pallid Swift Apus pallidus: T, 5th January and 19th April.

Yellow Wagtail Motacilla flava: A, Nov-Feb daily, both in gardens and on roost movements (W-E), usually under 100 but 500 on 24th February, predominantly f.f but 3 f.flavissima and 1 f.thunbergi in January and February, up to 150 in March but thereafter few to 3rd May, mainly f.thunbergi. I, up to 10 in all months except May. T, up to 50, November to December, under 15 in January and February, very few later and none after mid-April.

Tree Pipit Anthus trivialis: T, 27th February.

Spotted Flycatcher Muscicapa striata L A, 24th November. T, 19th January.

Whinchat Saxicola rubetra: I, 15th February. T, 30th March.

Nightingale Luscinia megarhynchos: T, up to 5 (in sub-song later full song), January to 23rd February.

Olivaceous Warbler Hippolias milida: A, 24th November.

Icterine Warbler Hippolias icterina: T, 2nd February (in sub-song)

Melodious Warbler Hippolias polyglotta: A, at least 3, 11th to 19th and 30th January, 26th and 27th February (frequent song).

Garden Warbler Sylvia borin: T, up to 10, 12th January to 2nd March (silent).

Willow Warbler Phylloscopus trochilus: A, up to 6 from November to 15th March almost daily (frequent song). T, three only.

Chiffchaff Phylloscopus colybita: A, 19th January.

Wood Warbler Phylloscopus sibilatrix: A, 15th December, 18th January and 2 on 10th April (in song).

Swallow Hirundo rustica: A, up to 75 (roosting) November, then small numbers until 100 (after rain) on 19th January, then small numbers again until end of April. I, up to 10 in all months. T, up to 5 on six dates only up to 27th April.

Woodchat Lanius senator badius: I, 1 or 2 during late February and again in April. T, 5 dates between 28th December and 9th February.

## DISCUSSION.

It is clear from the migrant samples listed above that the western areas of the Lagos complex supports a considerable population of Palaearctic migrants during the Northern winter, Pettitt (1967, 1968) and Heighan (1968 a & b) record further recent evidence of this, at least for non-passerines, in their recent observations on Tarkwa Beach and Victoria Island (east of my study areas). What is not substantiated however is the sizeable and continued presence of a standard profile of wintering species and it looks as if much shifting is indulged in by most species. Arrivals from the North (waders in November) or due to offshore winds (particularly terns), weather movements (whimbrel, swallows) habitat change exploitation (drying marshes in January and February onwards) are all sunk in the above analysis.

With regard to the individual observations, separate notes detail the occurrences of the three species new to Nigeria and many of the others add considerably to the record of Palaearctic migrants in S.W. Nigeria. The Honey Buzzards and Marsh Harrier are apparently the first for that region. It is confirmed that the Curlew is an extreme rarity compared to the Whimbrel, cf. Bannerman (1953) and Heighan (1968 b). The records of Temminck's Stint are apparently the first for the southern coast. The numbers of Spotted Redshanks are unprecedented. The high number of Roseate Terns is without precedent; most recoveries of S.W. Irish birds are usually further west (D. Cabot. in litt.). The birds associated little with other terns, usually joining Black Terns both to feed and roost. The primarily maritime ecology of the Black Tern in winter (Dowsett, 1968) is supported by these observations. Small parties could be seen feeding at least one mile offshore in February. The Whiskered Terns are apparently the first for S. Nigeria but the Ijora/Iganu swamp complex is ideal habitat for this species. The records of Pallid Swift, the Olivaceous and Icterine Warblers and Chiffchaff provide the most southerly occurrences in Nigeria for those species (Bannerman 1953, Pettitt 1968). All the Woodhoopoes seen lacked any white on the primaries and are for this reason awarded the relevant trinomial.

Associated movements of Ethiopian species were noted simultaneously on several occasions. Details of these will be published in due course.

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