



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



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I had a good close view of an individual Curlew Sandpiper Erolia testacea and of a Spurwing Plover Hoplopterus spinosus. There were plenty of Black-winged Stilt Himantopus himantopus. White-winged Black Tern Chlidonias leucopterus were patrolling the water at a distance of 20 yards from the bund. I counted 12 on a bank and there were certainly many more. West African Little Tern Sterna albifrons were very numerous. Good views were obtained of a single Goliath Heron Typhon goliath. Of the Great White Heron Casmerodius albus a single specimen afforded excellent comparisons with Little Egrets Egretta garzetta and Cattle Egrets Bubulcus ibis. I saw a pair of Hadada Hagedashia hagedash which according to Bannerman are rare in Nigeria, and more than a dozen Jacana Actophilornis africanus; and several Pied Kingfishers Ceryle rudis. A donkey was covered with oxpeckers Buphagus. Bannerman states that the West African species has a heavy yellow bill with red terminal patch, but the bills of these birds looked to me all bright red like the East African variety. There were two species of swallows which (observed in flight) I thought to be Ethiopian Hirundo ethiopica and Pied-winged Hirundo leucosoma. Below the bund on the landward side were weavers, seed-eaters, canaries and sparrows in flocks but time did not permit close examination, having regard to the more exciting population on the water.

It will be interesting to see whether further study indicates that the Wurno reservoir has become an important factor governing the movements of palaeartic waders. As for the anserine population, an examination of the further shore of the reservoir, that is the shore on the side opposite to the bund, might reveal areas of marsh suitable for breeding.

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NOTES.

YELLOW-LEGGED OWLET FROM WESTERN GHANA.

The only reference I have to the Yellow-legged Owlet Glaucidium tephronotum is from Bannerman (1953, Birds of West & Equatorial Africa). He states that to date the bird had only been recorded in the Ashanti region of Ghana and that nothing is known of its habits.

While inspecting a trap line for small mammals laid in high forest, I discovered this bird with its head in a trap. Fortunately it was unharmed apart from being dazed. It was an adult specimen with an appearance corresponding exactly to Dr. Bannermans description. It was trapped between the hours of 0900 and 1500, during which time one would not expect an owl to be active. It was apparently attracted by banana bait, again unexpected

for an owl. I kept the bird for nearly two days during which time it refused all food, and I released it.

As far as I know this bird has not been recorded in the Western region of Ghana, it was in fact caught only 12 miles from the Ivory Coast border, which suggests it may also occur there. I would be most interested to hear anyone else's comments and recent sightings.

S. M. Jeffrey.

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SABINE'S AND LITTLE GULLS AT LAGOS.

Although the Sabine's Gull Xema sabinii and the Little Gull Larus minutus have been previously recorded in Nigeria only once, the months of December and January 1969/70 have brought second records of both species, and these were multiple in the case of the latter.

The first Little Gull was seen off the Federal Palace Hotel, Victoria Island on 15th December and from 20th December to 18th January, no less than five individuals (including the original but no more than three on one day) frequented the lagoon mouth and Lighthouse Beach, Tarkwa. All the birds were in sub-adult plumage, showing black in a striking 'zig-zag' on the upper wings, the crown and face and terminally on the tail. These parts contrasted with the grey of the mantle and the otherwise white plumage. One possessed a black bar on the fore-edge of the mantle. At least two appeared ill, with very abraded plumage.

The Sabine's Gull appeared on 11th January following an influx of sea-birds and waders during squally weather. It was seen in company with a Little Gull, two Black-headed Gulls Larus ridibundus and many terns Sterna spp. and Chlidonias nigra. Whilst on the ground the bird combined puzzlingly the look of a Little Gull and a Kittiwake Rissa tridactyla but when it took flight at c25 yards, I was able to see clearly a partial greyish hood (bordered basally with a dark line) and the diagnostic pattern of black, white and dark grey triangles on the wings. The mantle was also a clear dark grey and thus the bird was apparently an adult.

I have considerable experience of both the above species and in particular had seen Sabine's Gulls off Co. Kerry, Ireland only two months before the Lagos bird.

D. I. M. Wallace.

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