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FURTHER NOTES ON BORGU BIRDS

BY

Frank Walsh

A fairly comprehensive account of birds recorded in Borgu has previously appeared in the Bulletin Wells and Walsh (1969, Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 6 (21): 1-25, and 6 (23): 63-93). Certain additional information was gathered in 1969 and is reported herein.

SPECIES NOT PREVIOUSLY REPORTED FROM BORGU

African Dwarf Bittern, Ixobrychus sturmi. Identified at two small marshes in the Kainji area on 27th June, 31st August, and 18th, 20th, and 28th October 1969. Probably a wet season visitor.

Peregrine Falcon, Falco peregrinus. A single bird seen attacking poultry at New Bussa on 29th October 1969.

White-throated Francolin, Francolinus albogularis. Probably a local resident in the Borgu Game Reserve, positively identified during April to August inclusive.

Caspian Tern, Sterna tachegrava. A pair below the Kainji Dam spillway on 12th and 13th November 1969. These birds were originally noted by Dr. C.H. Fry on the 12th November, Fry (Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 7 (25/26): 7-23). They were not present subsequently. See also Walsh (1969, Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 6 (23): 105-106), for a report of a Caspian Tern on the Niger north of the Borgu area.

Redpate Grass Warbler, Cisticola ruficeps. Sight records and several netted during June to October inclusive 1969, in degraded Savanna (Sub-Sudan) at New Bussa.

Red-headed Quelea, Quelea erythroptera. The records listed below were all obtained in 1969.

4 males, 3 females at Kontagora river bridge on the Kainji-Mokwa road on 27th June.

Several of both sexes netted at Kainji on 8th August.

3 males at Kaiama dam on 5th September.

5 males at Agwarra dam 16th July.

All four localities were visited in previous wet seasons without Queleas being recorded. It is noteworthy that Fry (1965, Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 2 (5): 9-17), reported that Q. erythroptera was common at Shika Fadama in the wet season 1959 according to P. Ward, but had not been seen subsequently. The Robinsons (1966, Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 3 (9): 11-12), recorded a single male in June at Ilesha. This suggests that Q. erythroptera is a wandering or eruptive species. However, in Borgu, the 1969 records may have arisen as a result of the birds losing their preferred habitats, owing to the formation of the lake (Foge Island may have been suitable over thousands of acres).

My only other record of this species is of a pair at the foot of Igbetti Rock on 5th July 1968.

In addition to the above six species, the Little Green Bulbul, Andropadus virens, White-browed Forest Flycatcher, Fraseria cinerascens, Collared Sunbird, Anthreptes collaris and Olive Sunbird, Nectarinia olivacea were seen in the Shaffini Swamp Forest during 1969 and will be dealt with in a separate paper.

#### SPECIES PREVIOUSLY REPORTED FROM BORGU - SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Pintail, Anas acuta. One at New Bussa sewage lagoon 2nd November 1969. This species was also recorded in the previous two years, suggesting that a few always penetrate into central Borgu.

Black-winged Pratincole, Glareola nordmanni. Dowsett (1968, Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc. 5 (20): 95), reporting this species from Lake Chad has discussed its status in West Africa. The Borgu records add spectacularly to the other data so it seems worthwhile to elaborate on the previous brief entry in the Checklist. Flocks definitely of this species (black underwing coverts carefully checked in many individuals) were seen on the Niger river in the Shagunnu area as follows:

200 on 17th January 1967

80 on 1st February 1967

150 on 16th February 1967

Also a flock of ca. 200 on 8th December 1966 were probably this species. 800-1,000 West African Pratincole, Glareola pratincola were present in the same area on 15th December 1966 and in smaller numbers subsequently until early May (at least), and led to initial confusion. Hence the flocks seen in January and February 1967 were very carefully examined. At no time were the two species associated together in mixed flocks.

D. Wells, at that time working independently and unbeknown to me, had similar experience on the same stretch of river, and recorded G. nordmanni on several occasions until 10th April 1967.

Between December 1967 and April 1968 I made ten visits to the area during which I recorded G. pratincola in flocks up to 1,000 strong but in spite of very careful examination, at close quarters, of many individuals, no further G. nordmanni were detected.

From the Borgu observations it seems possible that the migration pattern of G. nordmanni summarised by Dowsett (op. cit.) may not be the whole story and that this species may prove to 'winter' somewhere in the inundation zone of the Niger river, coming further south in exceptional seasons.

Speckled Pigeon, Columba guinea. Prior to the formation of the lake this species had not been seen in the Kainji area, though common in northern Borgu. It was seen occasionally from October 1968 and appeared to have established itself at New Bussa by November 1969.

Sedge Warbler, Acrocephalus schoenobaenus. Since Elgood et al. (1966, Ibis 108: 84-116) reported, it has become clear that the Sedge Warbler is a much more common and widespread visitor to West Africa. It has previously been reported from Borgu in the spring of 1968 Wells and Walsh (op. cit.). Additional records are given below.

Several on Niger river banks between Yelwa-Sakace (north of Borgu) on 5th December 1968.

Several on patches of sudd in the Foge area of the lake on 26th December 1968.

2, possibly more, on lakeside vegetation, Kainji 1st March 1969.

3 or more in hedge bordering the Niger Club, New Bussa throughout April 1969.

Singles at the New Bussa sewage lagoon on 7th and 22nd April, and on the exceptionally late date of 31st May 1969.

1 at Kainji dams site 2nd May 1969.

2 at Sanchita (near Pategi) on the Niger 29th April 1969 (south of Borgu).

It seems likely that some birds were wintering in the Foge Island area of the Lake and also on the marshy river banks north of Yelwa. There was also clearly a sizeable movement through the area in April with stragglers in May.

Quail Finch, Ortygospiza atricollis. This species was first detected on 10th February 1969. It was subsequently seen or heard on almost every visit to the Kainji dams site until my final visit on 11th October 1969. It was also seen flying over the New Bussa sewage lagoon during July to September and at Agwarra dam in February, June and July. Although it may have been overlooked previously it seems more likely that the formation of the lake caused changes in its distribution pattern in the area.

Localities mentioned in these notes are shown on maps in Wells and Walsh (op. cit.).

#### NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN WETLAND CONSERVATION

BY

Roy H. Parker

It was with considerable gratification that I read recently a report on the International Conference on the Conservation of Wetlands and Waterfowl held in Iran on February 3rd, 1971.