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BIRD NOTES FROM REPUBLIC du TOGO

by

Netta Robinson

Ranging over a period of one year, regular observations in the lagoon area of Lome commenced in October 1970, one month after arriving in Togo, and continued once and often twice and thrice weekly until 21st September 1971 with the exception of June when no visits to the area were made and only one visit recorded in August. A sojourn in U.K. between September 1971 and January 1972 intervened. Since watching resumed, several species not previously recorded have been added to the list and are attached.

A description of the habitat of the area will be included in some notes on a roost of Pied Kingfisher Ceryle rudis currently in preparation.

Lome (06° 07' N., 01° 13' E), experiences the dry coastal savanna type climate and conditions of the scrub and grasslands which extend eastwards from Accra. Annual rainfall averages 29 inches. Baobabs Adansonia digitata occur with frequency and extend inland almost to Palime, 121 km N.W. of Lome where, near to the mountains, the environment becomes Equatorial with an annual approximate rainfall of 59 inches.

Nomenclature follows White C.M.N. (1960-65) A Revised Checklist of African Birds.

Long-tailed Shag Phalacrocorax africanus: 30/3 one bird.

Pelican thought to be Pelecanus rufescens: 13/11 one bird.

Grey Heron Ardea cinerea: First recording of this species made on an evening visit to lagoon on 20th May. One bird. On 28th May, two birds present.

African Great White Heron Egretta alba: Observed 19/11, 22/1, 9/2, 11/3, 17/3, 25/3, 13/4, 22/4, 20/5, 26/5. On dates following 11/3 all birds were seen to have yellow bills.

Little Egret Egretta garzetta garzetta: 13/11, 19/11, 23/11, 17/12, 22/1, 13/2, 6/3, 11/3, 17/3, 25/3, 13/4, 19/4, 22/4, 13/5, 9/2.

West African Reef Heron Egretta garzetta gularis: 19/4, 22/4, 13/5.

Squacco Heron Ardeola ralloides: 28/11, 1/12, 17/12, 22/1, 9/2, 13/2, 6/3, 11/3, 17/3, 25/3, 30/3, 13/4, 19/4, 22/4, 30/4, 14/5, 15/5, 20/5, 28/5, 31/7, 7/9, 21/9. A Heron often seen in flocks of up to forty birds flying up and down stream at sundown, the strongest movement is eastwards. Present throughout the year.

African Green-backed Heron Butorides striatus: 12/10, 22/4, the bird on the last date was extricated from a fish trap. It was lamed but was able to fly and swim to a small islet in the lagoon. Further observations: 15/5, 28/5 a pair, 3/7, 7/9, 21/9.

Red-necked Little Bittern Ixobrychus minutus: 13/5, 6/7, 19/7, 22/7, 23/7, 31/7.

African Dwarf Bittern Ixobrychus sturmi: 30/3, 19/4, 22/4.

White-faced Duck Dendrocygna viduata: 22/4 eleven birds counted. Seen only with absolute certainty on this one date.

Black-shouldered Kite Elanus caeruleus: 3/7.

Black Kite Milvus migrans: Present throughout the dry season.

African Crake Crex egregia: In April a captive bird seen.

Black Crake Limnocolax flavirostra: 23/11, 28/11, 1/12, 17/12, 22/1, 25/3, 13/4, 19/4, 22/4, 30/4, 13/5, 14/5, 20/5, 28/5, 3/7, 22/7, 7/9. Seen to be nest building in March.

Purple Gallinule Porphyrio porphyrio: 23/11 only one positive sighting although this species was thought to be glimpsed quite frequently passing through the long reed grasses of the sudd.

Lesser Gallinule Porphyrio alleni: 20/5

African Moorhen Gallinula chloropus: 13/4, 19/4, 30/4, 13/5, 15/5, 20/5, 3/7, 6/7, 19/7.

Lesser Moorhen Gallinula angulata: 20/5, 28/5.

Lily Trotter Actophilornis africanus: 23/11, 28/11, 1/12, 17/12, 22/1, 13/2, 9/2, 6/3, 11/3, 17/3, 25/3, 30/3, 13/4, 19/4, 22/4, 30/4, 13/5, 14/5, 15/5, 20/5, 28/5, 3/7, 6/7, 19/7, 22/7, 23/7, 31/7, 7/9, 21/9.

Ringed Plover Charadrius hiaticula: 21/10, 28/10, 4/11, 9/11, 19/11, 23/11, 28/11, 1/12, 17/12, 22/1, 9/2, 13/2, 6/3, 11/3, 17/3, 25/3, 30/3, 13/4, 19/4, 22/4, 30/4, 13/5, 14/5, 15/5, 20/5, 28/5.

Black-winged Stilt Himantopus himantopus: 12/10, 21/10, 28/10, 4/11, 9/11, 13/11, 19/11, 23/11, 28/11, 1/12, 22/1, 9/2, 13/2, 6/3, 11/3, 17/3, 25/3, 30/3, 13/4, 19/4, 22/4, 13/5, 14/5, 15/5, 20/5, 28/5, 7/9, two birds seen on last date. Between November and May numbers of birds present in the area at all times. 15/5 records twenty-four

birds after which the numbers declined further. 21/9 a few birds.

Little Stint Calidris minuta: 23/11, 28/11, 1/12, 17/12, 22/1, 9/2, 13/2, 6/3, 11/3, 17/3, 25/3, 30/3, 13/4, 19/4, on the last date the birds were seen to be gathering in small flocks; 22/4 a few birds, 30/4 a few birds, 13/5, 14/5, on the last two dates the few birds still to be seen were observed to be assuming summer plumage; 15/5 between twenty-five to thirty birds present; 20/5, 28/5 a few birds noted on the last two dates.

Terek Sandpiper Tringa Terek: 21/10, one bird, 4/11 one bird, 9/11 one bird, 19/3 one bird, 25/3 one bird, 30/3 one bird, 13/5 five birds, 21/9 one bird,

Common Sandpiper Tringa hypoleucos: 12/10, 4/11, 9/11, 13/11, 23/11, 1/12, 11/3, 13/4, 19/4, 21/9, Not a plentiful species at the lagoon. Seen occasionally on the beach.

Wood Sandpiper Tringa glareola: Sandpiper most commonly seen at the lagoon. 12/10, 21/10, 28/10, 4/11, 9/11, 13/11, 19/11, 23/11, 28/11, 1/12, 17/12, 22/1, 9/2, 13/2, 6/3, 11/3, 17/3, 25/3, 30/3, 13/4, 19/4, 22/4, 30/4, 13/5, 14/5, one bird only was recorded on the last date, 15/5 four birds seen, 7/9 a few birds, 21/9 a few birds.

Common Redshank Tringa totanus: 9/11, 13/11, 19/11, 23/11, 28/11, on the last three dates numbers of birds in parties were to be seen; 1/12, 17/12, a few single birds seen, 6/3, 11/3, on the last two dates the birds were gathering in groups of approximately twelve; 17/3 upward of fifty birds in a group with a few lone birds here and there; 19/3 one bird recorded on the last date; 25/3 two birds; 30/3 one bird.

Greenshank Tringa nebularia: 21/10, 28/10, 4/11, 9/11, 23/11, 28/11, 1/12, 6/3, 11/3, 17/3, 25/3, 19/4, 22/4, 7/9. A species which was not present in numbers, six or seven birds being the most observed on a visit and more often two or three.

Marsh Sandpiper Tringa stagnatilis: 21/10, 28/10, 4/11, 9/11, 23/11, 28/11, 1/12, 17/12, 22/1, 9/2, 13/2, 6/3, 11/3, 17/3, 25/3, 30/3, 19/4, 30/4, one bird seen on the last date; 13/5 two birds, 14/5 one bird, 28/5 one bird.

Common Tern Sterna hirundo: 12/10, 28/10, 23/11, In October 1970 a Common Tern was recovered from the beach at Lome with a ring bearing the number A.359797, Museum Zoology, HMI, Finland. Details were sent to the Museum by H.E., the British Ambassador resident in Togo at that time. On record also is a chick ringed in Northumberland in 1963 and recovered in Lome on 2/12/67.

Roseate Tern Sterna dougallii: Birds ringed as chicks of this species were recovered at Lome on five dates known to me between 1967 and 1969 by H.E., the British Ambassador. All the birds had been ringed in Ireland.

Common Noddy Anous stolidus: 29/1/71. This bird was found at the water's edge on the beach at Lome. It was injured and unable to fly, and was subsequently sent to me by the British Embassy but was dead when it arrived. The bird was in moult, it had a broken right wing and was very thin.

Senegal Dove Streptopelia senegalensis: A frequent species everywhere

Long-tailed Parrakeet Psittacula purpureus: 19/11 a number of birds observed in flight over the lagoon travelling from south to north.

Guinea Wood-Hoopoe Phoeniculus purpureus: 11/3 four birds in flight.

Pied Kingfisher Ceryle rudis: 12/10, 21/10, 28/10, 4/11, 9/11, 13/11, 19/11, 23/11, 28/11, 1/12, 17/12, 22/1, 9/2, 6/3, 11/3, 17/3, 25/3, 30/3, 19/4, 22/4, 30/4, 13/5, 14/5, 20/5, 28/5, 3/7, 6/7, 19/7, 23/7, 31/7, 22/8, 7/9, 21/9. A communal roost and what appears to be a nest site of this species occurs in the face of the sandstone escarpment which backs the lagoon. An attempt to put on record an account of the activities of these kingfishers at the roost site is being made.

Malachite Kingfisher Alcedo cristata: 28/10, 23/11, 11/3, 17/3, 25/3, 13/4, 19/4, 22/4, 13/5, 3/7, 31/7.

Yellow Wagtail Motacilla flava: 21/10 one bird, 4/11 one bird, 23/11 one bird, 28/11 one bird, 1/12 two or three birds, 6/3 one bird, 17/3 one bird.

Yellow-throated Long-Claw Macronyx croceus: 13/11, 19/11, 23/11, 17/12, 9/2, 17/3, 25/3, 30/3, 13/4, 13/5, 15/5, 3/7, 19/7, 31/7, 21/9.

Cisticolas present in the area consistently amongst the sedge and coarse grasses. The specific names of the birds observed have not been established.

West African Fiscal Shrike Lanius collaris: 19/11, 22/1, 9/2, 13/2, 13/4, 30/4, 14/5, 6/7, 23/7, 31/7.

Woodchat Lanius senator: 6/7 a single bird.

Long-tailed Shrike Corvinella corvina: 22/1 six birds in flight.

Copper Sunbird Nectarinia cuprea: 6/7.

Village Weaver Ploceus cucullatus: Present in the area all year.

Orange Bishop Euploctes orix: 6/7, 19/7, 23/7.

Bronze Mannikin Lonchura cucullata: Dates not recorded but seen frequently.

Additional species observed in 1972.

Purple Heron Ardea purpurea: First sighting of this species at the lagoon. One bird observed on dates given: 28/1, 19/2.

African Hobby Falco cuvieri: 8/1 my first recording of this species although probably often in the area.

Ruff Philomachus pugnax: 7/2 two birds present. First positive recording of this species although it was thought to have been seen last year.

Terek Sandpiper Tringa terek: 19/2 three birds 25/2 one bird. Included as no record of this species in February 1971.

Didric Cuckoo Chrysococcyx caprius: 19/2. An often heard species but owing to possible call confusion with Chrysococcyx klaas I did not include it in the 1971 list.

Senegal Coucal Centropus senegalensis: Seen 11/1 although probably a more frequent species in the area than my records show.

White-throated Bee-Eater Merops albicollis: 19/2 two birds. Not observed in the lagoon area previously although present in some numbers during the dry season about 10km north of Lome.

Striped Grass-Warbler Cisticola natalensis: 19/2, probably more frequent than my records show.

Great Reed Warbler Acrocephalus arundinaceus: 19/2.

Mosque Swallow Hirundo senegalensis: 25/2.

Brown-crowned Tchagra Tchagra australis: 11/2 a pair observed.