



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



**Join the WAOS and support  
the future availability of free  
pdfs on this website.**

<http://malimbus.free.fr/member.htm>

If this link does not work, please copy it to your browser and try again.  
If you want to print this pdf, we suggest you begin on the next page (2) to conserve paper.

**Devenez membre de la  
SOOA et soutenez la  
disponibilité future des pdfs  
gratuits sur ce site.**

<http://malimbus.free.fr/adhesion.htm>

Si ce lien ne fonctionne pas, veuillez le copier pour votre navigateur et réessayer.  
Si vous souhaitez imprimer ce pdf, nous vous suggérons de commencer par la page suivante  
(2) pour économiser du papier.

Mr. R. E. Moreau.

With the death of Reg Moreau on 30th May 1970 there ended an era for African ornithology, for he had been concerned with the birds of Africa for half a century. He had also taken kindly interest in the Nigerian Ornithological Society since its inception and had at the same time been a good friend and wise counsellor to not a few individual members of the Society. It is thus with a real sense of loss that we record the passing of a great personality with a most remarkable career; one of the really great ornithologists of all time.

Born on 29th May 1897, he was educated at Kingston Grammar School and, without any formal higher education, entered the Home Civil Service at the age of seventeen. Because of the arthritis that was to cause him so much trouble in later life, he was graded unfit for military service but nevertheless posted to the Army Audit Office during World War 1. In 1920, while still with Army Audit, he was moved to Cairo, where, it was hoped, a hot climate would alleviate the rheumatic condition. Although he had earlier joined the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, his knowledge of ornithology at that time was scanty. But shortly after arriving in Egypt he contracted Paratyphoid and while convalescing at Alexandria, at the time of the Autumn migration, became "bitten" by ornithology. During this period he established friendships, that were to shape his interests, with C.B. Williams (later F.R.S.) of Butterfly Migration fame, and with Michael Nichols then curator of the Giza Zoo. In 1924 he married Winifred, who not only shared his growing passion for birds, but had, as Reg himself told me, that rare gift of locating nests even in tropical environments. In 1928 he went to the Agricultural Research Station at Amani in Tanzania in the capacity of Secretary/Librarian, and it was during this period that he gained that breadth of outlook that was to characterise all his later writings. This width of interest is manifested by the fact that a lizard and a louse, as well as a warbler, have been named moreoui, while two other birds have been named winifredae after his wife. While at Amani he wrote 80 papers naming 17 birds including 4 new species and, with his wife, devoted attention to epiphytic orchids and to African Violets (St. Paulia) as well as to many aspects of animal life.

He left Amani in 1946, being invalided home with threatened blindness, and shortly after took a part-time post at the Edward Grey Institute at Oxford, where from 1947 to 1960 he edited "Ibis". It was his guiding hand that elevated that journal to being recognised as the world's leading ornithological publication and he did much to found the "scientific respectability" of ornithology by the high standards he expected of contributors. He was of the greatest personal help to the writer at this time, helping him shape his own publications in "Ibis". Early in Reg's stay at the Edward Grey Institute, the University of Oxford, recognised his unusual gifts by conferring an Honorary M.A.

Degree, a very rare procedure indeed!

From 1960 to 1965 Reg was President of the British Ornithologists Union and the recipient of many honours; the Union's Godman-Salvin Medal, the London Zoological Society's Stamford Raffles Medal and a wide range of the leading Ornithological Societies of the world recognised his merit with Honorary Membership. He remained at Oxford until 1966 and during this 20 year period was always willing to find time for a stimulating chat with any visiting ornithologist, especially if he came from Africa. It is a great pleasure to know some of one's own data were incorporated in the first of his books, "The Bird Faunas of Africa and its Islands", published in 1966. During his stay at the E.G.I. Reg published a further 70 papers and a charming small book, showing his wide interests, on Berrick Salome, the south Oxfordshire village in which he lived at this time. Latterly he was also co-operating with Mrs. Pat Hall on the "Atlas of African Birds" which, it is hoped, will be published shortly.

In 1966 failing health caused him to move to Hereford to be near to his daughter. Even so he still produced a further dozen papers and just before his death completed the manuscript for a second major book, "The Palaearctic-African Bird Migration System", to be published post-humously next year.

These facts of Reg's most remarkable career and prolific writing must be seen against the background of his really warm personality and his great courage in overcoming the shadow of indifferent health. To have known him was a privilege and an inspiration. Few can have done so much for ornithology and the Nigerian Ornithological Society has lost a good friend as well as a lucid writer on so many aspects of African bird life.

J. H. Elgood.