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BIRD RECORDS FROM GHANA IN 1967 AND 1968/69.

Part 1. Southern Ghana.

by

R.W.W.Sutton.

INTRODUCTION.

In 1967, I spent six weeks (July-September) in the southern half of Ghana. The first part of these notes concerns records from that period. From September 1968 till July 1969, I was teaching at Tumu, in the Upper Region of Ghana (87 miles West of the regional capital Bolgatanga, 9 miles south of the Upper Volta border). The second part of these notes concerns records from Tumu and certain other localities in the northern part of Ghana. An Atlas showing Ghana will help in finding the various localities.

CHECK-LIST OF BIRDS RECORDED IN THE SOUTHERN HALF OF GHANA, 1967.

Reference here may be made to records from Ghana of 1964 published by me in Bull.Niger.Orn.Soc. 1965, 2 (7 & 8). Some of the localities referred to here were also visited in 1964, especially Denu and Tarkwa. Scientific nomenclature follows White, C.M.N. (1960-65) Check List of African Birds. Lusaka, Zambia.

Little Bittern Ixobrychus minutus: Common in the marshes at Denu, Volta Region, in August.

Dwarf Bittern Ixobrychus sturmi: Recorded in fair numbers at Denu in July and August.

Hadada Bostrychia hagedash: 1 near Tarkwa, W.Region, 12/8. A forest record.

Pygmy Goose Nettion auritus: 2 at Denu, 5/8.

Long-crested Hawk Eagle Lophætus occipitalis: 1 over a field near Cape St. Paul, Volta Region (near Keta), 22/8.

Ahanta Francolin Francolinus ahantensis: 4 on the edge of the Ofin Headwaters Forest Reserve near Mampong Asante (ca. 35 miles N.E. of Kumasi), 7/9.

Black-bellied Bustard Eupodotis melanogaster: 1 on an area of rocky 'pavement' near Kwahu Tafo (east of Mpraeso), 5/9.

White-fronted Sand Plover Charadrius marginatus: 8 at Kedzi near Keta, 4/8.

Sanderling Calidris alba: c.10 at Kedzi, 4/8. c.25 at Cape St. Paul, 22/8.

Caspian Tern Sterna tschegrava: 3 at Kedzi, 4/8.

Common Tern Sterna hirundo: 12+ at Cape St.Paul, with juveniles, 22/8.

Sandwich Tern Sterna sandvicensis: 2 at Cape St. Paul, 22/8.

Little Tern Sterna albifrons: 3 at Kedzi, 4/8.

Damara Tern Sterna balaenarum: c30 at Kedzi, 4/8. c40 at Cape St. Paul, 22/8. There are, so far as I know, no previous records of this species west of the Lagos area: it appears to be the first for Ghana.

Black Tern Sterna nigra: 1+ at Cape St. Paul, 22/8.

Watching from Cape St. Paul, which is easily accessible by road from the village of Wee, would at the right season, produce many records of sea and shore birds.

Tambourine Dove Turtur tympanistria: Recorded at Lolobi (Hohoe), Volta Region, 31/7

Brown-necked Parrot Poicephalus robustus: c.15 in Ofin H.F.R. Mampong Asante, 7/9. This is a forest record of a supposedly savanna species.

Giant Plantain-eater Corythacola cristata: 3+ near Tarkwa, 12/8. Recorded from the same locality in 1964.

Yellowbill Geothochares aereus: Recorded at Lolobi (Hohoe), 1/8.

Blue-bellied Roller Coracias cyanogaster: 1 near Ho, Volta Region, 24/8.

Blue-throated Roller Eurystomus gularis: 1 near Kwahu Tafo, 5/9.

Black Bee-eater Merops gularis: 2 near Dixcove, W. Region, 16/8.

Piping Hornbill Bycanistes fistulata: 5 at Tarkwa 13/8. 4 in Chirimfa Forest Reserve, 18 miles N.E. of Mampong Asante, 8/9.

Black Dwarf Hornbill Tockus hartlaubi: 1 in Chirimfa F.R., Mampong Asante, 8/9. This is said by Bannerman (1953) to be a rare and little-known species. This bird was sitting on a dead branch, making flights after an insect like a huge flycatcher.

White-crested Hornbill Tropicranus albocristatus: 1 near Tarkwa, 13/8.

Speckled Tinker Bird Pogoniulus scolopaceus: Recorded at Dixcove, 16/8.

Yellow-billed Barbet Trachyphonus purpuratus: 1 near Tarkwa, 14/8.

Melancholy Woodpecker Dendropicos lugubris: 1 near Kwahu Tafo, 5/9.

Rufous-rumped Bush Lark Mirafra nigricans: 1 at Denu, 5/8. This is an unusual record of a species that is considered by Bannerman to be an inhabitant of the areas north of the forest regions.

Yellow-throated Long-claw Macronyx croceus: A pair near Kwahu Tafo, 5/9.

White-bearded Bulbul Crinifer calurus: 1 near Tarkwa, 14/8.

Swamp Bulbul Thescolocichla leucopleurus: 3 near Tarkwa, 14/8.

Leaf-love Phyllastrephus scandens: 4 near Jasikan, Volta Region (northern part), 25/5.

- White-tailed Greenbul Baeopogon indicator: 1 near Jasikan, 25/8.
- Little Grey Bulbul Andropadus gracilis: 1 near Tarkwa, 12/8.
- Cassin's Grey Flycatcher Muscicapa cassini: 1 near Tarkwa, 13/8. Recorded from same locality in 1964.
- Black & White Flycatcher Bias musicus: A pair near Kwahu Tafo, 5/9.
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher Heliota flavigaster: 2 near Kpeve, Volta Region, 26/8.
- Chestnut-capped Flycatcher Erythrocerus mealli: 4 near Tarkwa, 14/8. 3 on Chirimfa F.R., Mampong Asante, 8/9.
- Black-headed Paradise Flycatcher Terpsiphone rufiventer: 1 near Teteman, Volta Region (near Jasikan), 2/8. 6 near Tarkwa, 13/8.
- White-bellied Crombec Sylvietta virens: 1 near Abetifi/Pepease (near Npraeso), 6/9. 3 on Chirimfa F.R., Mampong Asante, 8/9.
- European Swallow Hirundo rustica: 8, including juveniles, at Denu, 22/8; an extremely early date.
- White-throated Swallow Hirundo nigrita: Recorded near Tarkwa on a river, 12/8; recorded from the same locality in 1964.
- Square-tailed Rough-winged Swallow Psalidoprocne nitens: c.20 near Tarkwa, 12/8. Recorded from same locality in 1964.
- Long-crested Helmet Shrike Prionops plumata: c.6 near Kpeve, Volta Region, 26/8.
- Red-billed Shrike Prionops caniceps: 2+ near Jasikan, Volta Region, 25/8.
- Fiscal Shrike Lanius collaris: Recorded at Dixcove, 16/8.
- West African Nicator Nicator chloris: 1 near Abetifi/Pepease, 6/9.
- African Golden Oriole Oriolus auratus: 1 at Denu, 29/7; the only one I have ever seen in the south.
- Black-headed Oriole Oriolus brachyrhynchus: Recorded at Lolobi (Hohoe), 31/7; 1 on Ofin H.F.R., Mampong Asante, 7/9.
- Copper-tailed Glossy Starling Lamprotornis cupreocauda: 4 on Ofin H.F.R., Mampong Asante, 7/9.
- Buff-throated Sunbird Nectarinia adalberti: Recorded at Lolobi (hohoe), 1/8.
- Green Hylia Hylia prasina: 1 near Jasikan, Volta Region, 25/8.
- White-naped Black Weaver Ploceus albinucha: 1 on Ofin H.F.R., Mampong Asante, 7/9.
- Chestnut & Black Weaver Ploceus nigerrimus: c.10 near Adaklu, near Ho, Volta Region.
- Yellow-mantled Weaver Ploceus tricolor: Recorded at Lolobi (Hohoe), 1/8.

Red-headed Weaver Malimbus rubricollis: 2+ at Lolobi (Hohoe), 31/7, 2 on Ofin H.F.R. Mampong Asante, 7/9.

Blue-billed Mannikin Lonchura bicolor: 2 at Abetifi/Pepease, 6/9.

Grey-crowned Negro Finch Nigrita conicapilla: 1 near Dixcove, 16/8.

White-breasted Negro Finch Nigrita fuscaota: 2 on Ofin H.F.R., 7/9.

Blue-billed Weaver Spermophaga haematina: 1 at Dixcove, 16/8, singing from the bottom of a bush.

My thanks are due in connection with these records to many officials of the Ministry of Forestry, whose co-operation exceeded all hopes; in particular those working for the Ministry in Kumasi.

to be continued.

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BIRD RECORDS FROM NIGER AND MALI:

JULY - AUGUST 1969.

R.W.W.Sutton.

In July 1969 I left Ghana and travelled overland across the Sahara Desert to North Africa. This involved travelling through Upper Volta, Niger and Mali: I travelled from Bawku in Ghana to Niamey in Niger, then up the River Niger to Gao, then to Bourem and up to Tessalit and thence into Algeria. Such records as I have are obviously extremely superficial, but some seem of some interest. I was most surprised at the sheer numbers of birds to be seen on the southern edge of the Sahara; many species occurred further to the north than I had expected. In this part of Africa, I believe that the real dividing line between West and North African fauna consists of the great waterless waste, referred to on some maps as Tane-zrouft, that extends for at least 500 miles from the area north of Tessalit in Mali to Reggene in southern Algeria. I did not see a single bird in this area.

Nomenclature follows White, C.M.N. (1960-65) Check List of African Birds.

Grey Pelican Pelecanus rufescens: Flocks of up to 20 seen between Ansongo and Gao, Mali, 11/7 - 19/7.

Black-headed Heron Ardea melanocephala: c. 15 found breeding with Abdim's Storks at Ayorou, Niger, 13/7.