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BIRDS OF BULATURA OASES, BORNO STATE

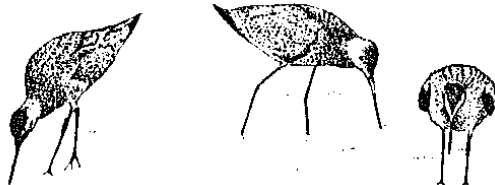
by P. Hall

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The Bulatura Oases lie 65 km to the north of Gashua in Borno State, Nigeria. They extend over a wide area of typical Sahelian savanna with scattered Acacia raddiana and Commiphora africana, but there has been extensive destruction of the vegetation and the sand-dune systems are unstable. In these arid surroundings the oases are exceptionally rich ecologically, with at least three retaining water throughout the dry season. All of the oases have deep potash deposits and this forms an important export from the area to the south. A belt of Dum Palms Hyphaene encircles all of the oases, and around the shores cassava, okra, sweet potatoes and onions are grown. The birdlife of the area is particularly rich and amongst the many interesting species recorded, Cape Wigeon Anas capensis, Hottentot Teal A. hottentota, Three-banded Plover Charadrius tricollaris and Avocet Recurvirostra avosetta are particularly interesting. Only four visits have been possible : in March and September of 1973, December 1975 and February 1976. The full list of species recorded follows below, scientific nomenclature following White (1960-65) and English names following Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1970-73).

- Podiceps ruficollis Little Grebe 4 in Sep., 8 in Dec., 8 in Feb.
Ardeola ibis Cattle Egret Small numbers on all visits, with a maximum of 35 in Sep.
Egretta alba Great White Egret Only recorded in Feb., when 6 present.
Ardea melanocephala Black-headed Heron Small numbers in Sep., Dec., and Feb. with a maximum of 20 in Dec.
Ciconia abdimi Abdim's Stork Small numbers in Sep. only.
Threskiornis aethiopia Sacred Ibis 30 in Dec., 7 in Feb.
Plegadis falcinellus Glossy Ibis A few in Sep. and Dec., up to 4 in Mar.
Alopochen aegyptiaca Egyptian Goose 4 in Dec., 6 in Feb.
Anas capensis Cape Wigeon 20 in Sep., 50 in Dec., 10 in Feb.
Anas acuta Pintail Only recorded in Dec., with 18 present.
Anas hottentota Hottentot Teal A few in Sep., Feb. and Mar., with a maximum of 8 in Feb.
Anas querquedula Garganey 3 in Sep., 1 in Mar.
Anas clypeata Shoveler Only present in Dec., when 40 recorded.
Gyps bengalensis White-backed Vulture 1 in Sep., the only record.
Neophron monachus Hooded Vulture A few in Sep., Feb., and Mar.
Melierax metabates Dark Chanting Goshawk A few in Sep. and Mar.
Milvus migrans Kite A few in Sep. and Mar. only.
Limnocorax flavirostra Black Crake 1 recorded in Dec.

- Gallinula chloropus Moorhen Small numbers in Dec., Feb. and Mar. with a maximum of 15 in Feb.
- Porphyrio porphyrio Purple Gallinule A pair with 2 young seen in Feb.
- Balearica pavonina Crowned Crane 1 in Sep. and 2 in Dec.
- Vanellus spinosus Spur-winged Plover Recorded on all visits with a maximum of 100 in Dec.
- Charadrius hiaticula Ringed Plover 1 in Feb.
- Charadrius dubius Little Ringed Plover 2 in Sep., 2 in Feb.
- Charadrius pecuarius Kittlitz's Sand Plover 20 in Dec., 4 in Feb.
- Charadrius tricollaris Three-banded Plover Present on all visits with 2 in Sep., 8 in Dec., 6 in Feb. and 1 in Mar.
- Charadrius alexandrinus Kentish Plover 2 in Dec.
- Numenius arquata Curlew 1 in Dec., 1 in Feb.
- Limosa limosa Black-tailed Godwit 2 in Dec.
- Tringa stagnatilis Marsh Sandpiper 1 in Dec., 1 in Feb.
- Tringa glareola Wood Sandpiper Present in Sep., Dec. and Feb. with a maximum of 20 in Sep.
- Tringa totanus Redshank 1 in Mar.
- Tringa erythropus Spotted Redshank 1 in Dec.
- Calidris ferruginea Curlew-Sandpiper 1 in Dec., 2 in Feb.
- Calidris minuta Little Stint Present on all visits with a maximum of 120 in Feb.
- Philomachus pugnax Ruff Present on all visits with up to 300 in Dec., Feb. and Mar.
- Himantopus himantopus Black-winged Stilt Present on all visits with a maximum of 80 in Dec.
- Recurvirostra avosetta Avocet Present on all visits with 45 in Sep., 180 in Dec., 150 in Feb. and 30 in Mar.
- Larus cirrhocephalus Grey-headed Gull 1 in Sep.
- Sterna leucoptera White-winged Black Tern 10 in Dec., 3 in Feb.
- Columba guinea Speckled Pigeon A few in Sep.
- Streptopelia decipiens Mourning Dove A few in all months
- Streptopelia vinacea Vinaceous Dove Small numbers recorded only in Feb.
- Streptopelia roseogrisea Pink-headed Dove Only in Feb.; a few.
- Streptopelia senegalensis Laughing Dove A few recorded on all visits.
- Oena capensis Namaqua Dove A few in Sep., Dec. and Feb.



- Centropus senegalensis Senegal Coucal 1 in Dec.
Apus affinis Little Swift Only recorded in Sep., when frequent.
Cypsiurus parvus Palm Swift Small numbers seen on all visits.
Merops orientalis Little Green Bee-eater 1 in Sep. only.
Merops albicollis White-throated Bee-eater Only in Sep.; 4 birds.
Merops pusillus Little Bee-eater A few on all visits.
Coracias abyssinica Abyssinian Roller 3-4 in Sep., Dec. and Feb.
Upupa epops Hoopoe 1 in Feb.
Phoeniculus purpureus Green Wood-Hoopoe 2 in Sep.
Tockus nasutus Grey Hornbill Small numbers in Sep. only.
Mesopicos goertae Grey Woodpecker 1 in Feb.
Eremopteryx leucotis Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark A few in Sep. only.
Galerida cristata Crested Lark A few on all visits.
Riparia riparia Sand Martin A few in Dec. and Feb.
Hirundo aethiopia Ethiopian Swallow Frequent in Sep. and Dec.
Motacilla flava Blue-headed Wagtail Frequent in Dec., Feb. and Mar.
Motacilla alba White Wagtail 1 in Feb.
Lanius excubitor Grey Shrike 2 in Dec.
Lamprotornis chalybaeus Blue-eared Glossy Starling Small numbers present in Sep. and Feb.
Lamprotornis caudatus Long-tailed Glossy Starling A few in Sep.
Oenanthe oenanthe Wheatear Small numbers in Sep. and Feb.
Mymecocichla aethiops Ant-eater Chat A few in Sep. and Dec.
Cercotrichas podobe Black Bush-Robin 1 in Feb.
Emberiza tahapisi Cinnamon-breasted Rock Bunting A few in Sep.
Serinus leucopygius White-rumped Seed-eater A few in Feb.
Ploceus velatus Southern Masked Weaver Frequent on all visits.
Ploceus cucullatus Black-headed Village Weaver Frequent, all visits.
Euplectes orix Red Bishop Only recorded in Sep. when frequent.
Bubalornis albirostris Buffalo-Weaver A few in Sep.
Passer griseus Grey-headed Sparrow Frequent on all visits.
Passer luteus Sudan Golden Sparrow Frequent in Feb.
Pytilia melba Green-winged Pytilia 4 in Sep.
Estrilda troglodytes Black-rumped Waxbill A few in all months.
Lagonosticta senegala Red-billed Firefinch Frequent, Dec. and Feb.
Amandava subflava Zebra Waxbill 20 recorded in Feb.
Lonchura malabarica Silverbill Small numbers present in Feb.

REFERENCES

- Mackworth-Praed, C.W. & Grant, C.H.B. (1970-1973) African Handbook of Birds Ser. 3 Birds of West Central and Western Africa, 2 Vols. Longmans, London
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