



**West African Ornithological Society
Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest
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THE STATUS OF CAPE WIGEON *Anas capensis*, THREE-BANDED PLOVER *Charadrius tricollaris* AND AVOCET *Recurvirostra avocetta* IN NIGERIA - Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1970-73, African Handbook of Birds) give the range of the Cape Wigeon in West Africa as from Nigeria and the Central African Republic to the southern Congo, and its general distribution as from Cameroun and central Abyssinia to South Africa. They say it is not particularly common anywhere. Bannerman (1953, Birds of West and Equatorial Africa) recorded it as having been shot on Lake Chad. Apart from those there are no recent records in Nigeria, although Hopson (1965, Bull. Nigerian Orn. Soc. 1(1): 7-15) recorded 80 on Lake Chad near Nguigni in Niger in December 1964, and a few were seen at Baga Sola on the eastern side of the lake in December 1969 (Fry 1970, Bull. Nigerian Orn. Soc. 7 (25/26: 7-24). I have several records of this duck, mostly from a series of potash oases near Bulatura in the extreme north of Borno State in September, December and February (see pp. 35-37), and also from Minetti and Dowoshiram on the south-eastern shore of Lake Chad in November. Records so far suggest a dry-season movement to the north.

The Three-banded Plover is a common species of southern and eastern Africa, but Elgood (1965, Bull. Nigerian Orn. Soc. 1(1):13-25) recorded it as only a rare visitor to Nigeria. Previous records have been in May, August, September, November and December (Sharland 1969, Bull. Nigerian Orn. Soc. 6(21): 32), all in the north of Nigeria, and its exact status has so far been indeterminable. I have seen up to five together in all months from August to February at boreholes on the south-western shore of Lake Chad (Hall, in press) and at the Bulatura oases on all four of my visits there. Outwith these areas I have a record of one at Lake Alo (near Maiduguri) in June and one near Serti in the south of Gongola State in November. These records suggest a strong northerly movement during the dry season.

Previous records suggest that the Avocet is only a rare visitor to Nigeria, but my records suggest a change of its status. I have records in all months except May, July and August over the whole of the north of Borno State from around Maiduguri (54 at Lake Alo in June), Bulatura oases (up to 180 in December and 45 in September, 150 in February and 30 in March), Minetti borehole (3 in November), Gajibo in eastern Dikwa (2 in November), Malamfatori (up to six in January), Gashua (7 in February), and Malambari on the south-western shore of Lake Chad (11 in February). Elgood, Sharland & Ward (1966, Ibis 108: 84-116) suggested that the increased frequency of records in West Africa as a whole is probably linked with the recent recolonisation of parts of Europe by the species.

The Cape Wigeon, Three-banded Plover and Avocet are all primarily birds of shallow, brackish lakes, and their distribution in Nigeria reflects that. The lack of records of any of these species from southern Nigeria suggests a north-westerly movement into Nigeria during the dry season, and it is my opinion that all three species are non-breeding dry season migrants from their breeding ranges in the east and south of Africa.