



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



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this species in Nigeria. My only record in Kano is of a bird ringed on 31st October, 1964. I am not able to say that they do not occur at other times, because I do not keep nets out continuously in bush after the middle of November. V.W.Smith kept nets out continuously in Vom throughout the winters of 1964 and 1965 and his records are as follows :

1 , 26.iii.64  
 1 , 16.xi.64  
 1 , 17.xi.64  
 5 from 14.iii.65 to 29.iii.65

I have heard the song of Scops Owls occasionally in Kano and Kaduna in both the dry season and the wet season. The description of the song of the European race is very similar to that of the African one. Elgood et al. (1966, *Ibis* 108 : 84-116) suggest that the European Scops Owl does not call in its winter quarters. On 26th March, 1966, I camped out for the night in fairly well-wooded country (mainly Mitragyna) near seasonal lakes near Hadejia. During the night Scops Owls called continually and four or five could be heard at the same time. I have not heard Scops Owls in the Hadejia area before. In view of the similarity of dates of the Vom records and this one, the birds may have been of the European race. R.E.Sharland

Crested Lark Feeding on Ant-Lion Larvae. On 15th April, 1966, I watched a juvenile but full-sized Crested Lark Galerida cristata intently exploring a patch of hard red lateritic ground at Ahmadu Bello, University, Zaria. There were only a few clumps of grasses, and in places the surface was a bit sandier. The lark concentrated its attentions on these places, and it could easily be seen through binoculars that it systematically moved from one conical depression made by ant-lion (Neuroptera) larvae to another. It made a quick stab with the beak at the centre of each depression, and often swallowing movements followed. Walking rapidly and pecking from side to side as it encountered the depressions, the lark looked rather hen-like.

After a while, having satisfied myself that the bird was in fact eating the larvae, I scared it off and inspected the area. I counted 82 depressions, of which 38, just under half, showed signs of having been pecked at. Of these, I dug the fine loose sand out of eleven and did not find any larvae; however the larvae are often difficult to unearth. Four of the depressions which had not been touched by the lark were then dug up, and live larvae found in three of them.

Although the depressions made by the larvae of ant-lions are very common in sandy ground in savanna, I have never before observed any birds preying on the insects, and it seems likely that this individual lark, like tits opening milk-bottles in Britain, had hit upon a new source of food, and was successfully exploiting it. C.H.Fry