



**West African Ornithological Society
Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest
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MIGRATION OF SAVANNA BIRDS REVEALED BY LOCAL RECORDS

Sir,

In his letter (*Bull. Nigerian Orn. Soc.* 14: 89-92) Greig-Smith pointed out his objections to our paper 'The status of some northern Guinea Savanna birds in Mole National Park, Ghana' (*Bull. Nigerian Orn. Soc.* 14: 4-8) and the suggestions we made there about the movements of some species. Some of our suggestions were in disagreement with earlier conclusions reached by Greig-Smith (*Bull. Nigerian Orn. Soc.* 13: 3-14). Greig-Smith expressed the view that there is no objective way of deciding on the evidence presented which, if either, of the two parties is correct.

Our observations were made in the latter part of the dry season and our interpretations were restricted to that period. In Greig-Smith's paper, data were not given for the two months at the end of the dry season. He stated quite clearly that '... no censuses were undertaken during March and April'.

The point is, therefore, that we made suggestions based on observations from a period for which Greig-Smith had no data, and on which he has no basis for comment. The conclusions reached by Greig-Smith are unsubstantiated, and our suggestions must stand until they are disproved or otherwise by field observations at the appropriate time of year.

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In his letter in the Bulletin 14: 89-92 P.W. Greig-Smith has usefully drawn attention to the various difficulties in interpreting the migratory status of a bird from observations of its presence at one season and absence at another. By no means should recognition of those difficulties be allowed to deter observers from setting down their records - it is the patient accumulation of such records that may first suggest, and ultimately demonstrate, that a species is migratory. Further attempt to reconcile his observations on the status of birds in Mole in one season with those of I.R. Taylor & M.A. Macdonald in another, seven years earlier, seem unlikely to bear fruit, and correspondence on this topic is now enclosed. Ed.