



West African Ornithological Society
Société d'Ornithologie de l'Ouest
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BROWN-CHESTED WATTLED PLOVER BREEDING IN NIGERIA -- Elgood (1982) records that Brown-chested Wattled Plovers (Vanellus superciliosus) are uncommon intra-African migrants to Nigeria from where they are only known to breed at one locality; eight nests being recorded by Serle at Onitsha in the period 21st January to 5th February. Urban, Fry and Keith (1986, Birds of Africa, Volume 2, Academic Press) note that the only known breeding localities for Vanellus superciliosus re within Nigeria and cite the papers of Clarke (1936, Nigerian Field, 5(2): 72-73) and Serle (1956, Bull. B.O.C. 76: 101-104) which document breeding near Ilorin and Onitsha. A third breeding locality mapped by Urban et. al. (loc cit) is in the vicinity of Enugu. Heslop (1937, Ibis, 14(1): 174-175) records the presence of Brown-chested Wattled Plovers near Okigwi from December to February with one pair, suspected of breeding, remaining through to May. More recently Dyer, Gartshore and Sharland (1986, Malimbus, 8: 2-20) recorded having observed three Brown-chested Wattled Plovers at Sanga River Forest Reserve (09°19'N, 08°18'E) in late December 1979.

We visited Sanga River Forest Reserve in February 1987 as part of a larger survey of this area backed by the Nigerian Conservation Foundation and the International Council for Bird Preservation (Wilkinson and Beecroft, 1988, ICBP Study Report No. 28). On 16th February 1987 we found three Brown-chested Wattled Plovers on suitable breeding habitat. A pair were seen copulating on an area of flat burnt ground and a single bird observed on similar terrain less than 1 km distant. This area was revisited on 20th February when a pair was quickly relocated and found to have nested. Interchange between the sitting birds was noted before we approached closer to discover the birds incubating a clutch of four eggs. We then moved on to the second site but were unable to relocate that Plover or a nest.

The confirmation of the nesting of these uncommon Plovers at Sanga River Forest Reserve reinforces the importance of this and nearby forest reserves for wildlife conservation in Nigeria.

R Wilkinson, R Beecroft, A U Ezealor, R E Sharland

R Wilkinson, North of England Zoological Society, Chester Zoo,
Upton-by-Chester, Chester, CH2 1LH.



Brown-chested Wattled Plover - Vanellus superciliosus
(Photo: R.Beecroft)