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ON THE BREEDING SEASON OF *MEROPS PERSICUS* IN WEST AFRICA - I have been able to assemble the following data for western Africa to the south of the Sahara:

In Gambia adults were entering nest-holes in early February (E. M. Cawkell & R. E. Moreau, 1963, *Ibis* 105: 169).

On the Nigerian shore of Lake Chad fledging occurred about mid-July to mid-August one year (pers. obs.) but in the second half of June in another (M. Dyer, pers. comm.); egg-laying would be about seven weeks earlier, i.e. late May to late June, and late April.

At 10°N on the R. Niger in Nigeria eggs were laid about mid May and fledging was about mid July (F. Walsh, 1966, *Bull. Niger. Orn. Soc.* 3: 74, and 1968, *idem* 5: 11).

Also on the R. Niger, at 15°N in Niger, some nests held young in early June when other pairs were pre-breeding (L. Koenig, 1953, *Z. Tierpsychol.* 10: 180).

In the central delta of the R. Niger in Mali breeding is in May and June (B. Lamarche, 1980, *Malimbus* 2: 121).

In N. Senegal nest-holes were excavated in early June and breeding was from July to September with some nestlings still in mid September (G. J. Morel & F. Roux, 1966, *Terre Vie* 1: 71).

In the eastern Sahel of Mali breeding is in July and August (B. Lamarche, *loc. cit.*); and in southern Mauretania a clutch was found in October (K. M. Guichard, 1947, *Ibis* 89: 450).

In the Palaearctic, *M. persicus* lays from March in Mesopotamia (E. C. S. Baker, 1934, *The Nidification of Birds of the Indian Empire*, Vol. III), to the second half of June in the Sind (K. R. Eates, 1939, *J. Bombay nat. hist. Soc.* 40: 757). Records from Algeria, Egypt, and the USSR are all within these limits.

*Discussion* - The early record from Gambia is best discounted, since other bee-eater species, if not *M. persicus* also, sometimes dig and occupy nest-holes months in advance of laying. In more southerly latitudes in West Africa eggs are laid in the early-wet-season months of May and June. Further north in the Sahel and southern Sahara breeding is, however, not only much later in some cases but also protracted, with egg-laying from late April/early May to late September/early October. While in the Palaearctic laying spans three months, the period of five months in West Africa is surprising (although with any one population in any one year it would probably be considerably less protracted).

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