



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



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LITTLE GULL AT TARKWA, LAGOS:

A SPECIES NEW TO NIGERIA.

Following a night of violent squalls from the south-west, I found an obviously tired Little Gull Larus minutus on lighthouse Beach, Tarkwa on 19th January 1969. On the ground it looked remarkably like a worn Black Tern Chlidonias nigra but in flight, the familiar black zig-zag across the wings, black tipped tail and head cap left no doubt as to its identity. Unfortunately it went straight out to sea and I was unable to get a full description.

However, on 25th January, I found it again associating with C. nigra around the eastern break water. Like them, it was tame allowing observation at a few feet. Its plumage was extremely worn and it appeared to be in arrested moult, perhaps in reaction to a rough passage to Nigeria. A fully grey mantle and white central tail feathers indicated that it was a sub-adult rather than a 1st winter bird. The bird reappeared on 9th and 16th February and was clearly regaining its health by the last date as new feathers were showing on the wings.

Confusion of this species with Kittiwake Rissa tridactyla or Sabine's Gull Xema sabini is possible but both these can be ruled out on size alone, not to mention the black head cap. The record is the first for Nigeria and apparently the most southerly (and easterly) in West Africa. Normal winter distribution does not extend beyond Morocco (Etcheocopar, R.D. and Hue, 1967 The Birds of North Africa, London: Oliver & Boyd).

D. I. M. Wallace.

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HERRING GULLS AT TARKWA, LAGOS:

A SPECIES NEW TO NIGERIA.

The flock of migrant and/or wintering Lesser Black-backed Gulls Larus fuscus that feeds in the Lagos harbour and roosts on lighthouse Beach, Tarkwa is well known. During the 1968/69 winter, I was able to approach it closely on most of my thirty visits to Tarkwa. On 2nd February 1969, I noticed among its 200 members three gulls which appeared rather bigger and paler mantled than the rest. One I soon lost in the throng but two remained visible up to and during the flocks departure which occurred when I was still about 50 yards away. With the sun well to the side, the birds were well lit and through 9 x 35 glasses, I was able to see the flight pattern of the birds and make a comparison with that of the others. This confirmed the slightly larger size and distinctly paler mantle and upper wing plumage. In addition the white mirror area on the wing tips