



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



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Finally, I would like to add that I am hoping Heinemann's will agree that bona-fide members of the Society will be able to obtain their copies of the Check-List at a favourable rate. The more help I can show I have received from members of the Society, the stronger does my case become for pressing for a preferential price for members. I shall of course give clear recognition of important data, as I have done to Tony Hopson (A.J.H.) in the sample entry.

John Elgood, 11 Parkside Avenue, Littlehampton, Sussex.

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TERN NUMBERS AT ACCRA DURING AUTUMN

L. G. Grimes.

Ringling recoveries indicate that Palaearctic terns (involving several species) move along the West African coast in Autumn, and visual evidence confirms this. However, visual counts during daylight (dawn to dusk) always yield disappointing results and the numbers of terns are far less than expected. At saltpans west of Accra the numbers recorded fluctuate but are generally well below a thousand; occasionally, however, an early morning count has yielded c 10,000 terns. At Lagos, D.I.M. Wallace (Ibis 115:559) similarly recorded few terns during daylight and found them less abundant in Autumn than in Spring.

Recent observations at the saltpans made at night and in the hour before dawn reveal that large numbers (c 30,000-50,000) of terns come in from their off-shore feeding areas to roost at the saltpans. They all invariably leave the pans for their feeding areas in the hour before dawn. These roosting flights were revealed by an air surveillance radar but it is only recently that an estimate of the numbers involved has been made.

Thus daylight counts of terns bear no relation to the actual numbers of terns present in the off-shore waters of Ghana. This is probably true for other coastal areas of West Africa but this awaits confirmation.

It is hoped that other members of the Society will take up similar night observations to confirm whether what is observed at Accra is generally true.