



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



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been extensively damaged by the weavers. The planting was a Maize/Cotton Gossypium sp. mix, the rows of maize being $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet apart interspersed with cotton, and 3 feet apart along the rows. Freshly killed trees emerged from the crop area and in these about 30 weavers nests were scattered.

A quick assesment of damage was made by scoring the cobs along several short rows as shown below. No attemp was made to pick a particularly bad patch.

% Damage per Cob	No. of Cobs	% of Cobs
0	101	55
1 - 25	17	9.2
26 - 50	16	8.6
51 - 75	18	9.7
76 - 99	11	5.9
100	21	11.3
	<u>184</u>	

The actual damage was probably somowhat worse than these figures suggest as among the undamaged cobs were many which had not developed sufficiently to attract the attentions of the weavers. Further, the farmer did not harvest the remnants of his crop until about the 25th July. leaving the underdeveloped plants to continue growing and doubtless to suffer the attentions of the weavers.

Judging by the precautions often taken by farmers such damage is reasonably common. Nevertheless apart from the depredations of Black-tailed Godwit Limosa limosa on newly planted rice Oryza sativa paddy (Roux, 1959, Terre et Vie 106 :315-321) and the notorious activities of the Red-billed Quelea Quelea quelea little seems to have been recorded of the economic importance of birds in West Africa.

Frank Walsh.

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BREEDING BIOLOGY OF THE OLIVACEOUS

WARBLER Hippolias pallida laononi.

Observations were made of a nest of the Olivaceous Warbler Hippolias pallida laononi at Malam'fatori ($13^{\circ}37'N.$, $13^{\circ}20'E.$) on the Nigerian shore of Lake Chad. The nest was about 6 feet up in a small neem tree at the porch of my house. It was usually examined twice daily, at about 10.00 and 16.00 hours. I am grateful to Malam Ali Kaganmi for keeping records during my absence.

The first egg was laid about 48 hours after the nest was complete, on 2nd June 1968. The second egg, which completed the clutch, was laid about 24 hours after the first, on 3rd June. The fresh egg weighed 1.50 grms., or 16% of the average body weight of an adult at Malam'fatori.

(9 gms., sample 99). The egg is rather large for the size of the bird.

The nest was examined on 28 occasions during the incubation period, and on only four of these was an adult sitting, This is perhaps not surprising in such a warm climate. Both eggs hatched on 16th June, the incubation period of the first being 13 days 22 hours + 21 hours. The incubation period for H. p. elaeica in south-east Europe is said to be 13 days (Witherby et al. 1943. Handook of British Birds, 2 :67).

The young were fed by both parents. Both young left the nest on 29th June, after a nestling period of 13-14 days. The nestling period of H. p. pallida in Egypt is said to be probably 15 days (Witherby et al., op.cit.). The fledglings were rather dark brown compared with the very pale adults.

R. J. Dowsett.

INTERNATIONAL WILDFOWL RESEARCH BUREAU.

The results of the 1968/69 duck census were duly incorporated in the newsletter of the International Wildfowl Research Bureau.

Volunteers are needed to count ducks in the 1969/70 season. Will anyone willing to do this please contact me as soon as possible. If anyone from southern Nigeria is contemplating a tour of Sokoto or Maiduguri in December or January and is willing to count ducks, I can let them have details of lakes in these areas.

In Europe, where pressure on the wetlands is very severe, surveys are being undertaken in order to provide information for conservation measures. In Nigeria the destruction of natural habitats is also proceeding at a rapid rate and is accentuated by a falling water-table. I hope that the Governments of the new States will take steps to conserve and study the resources of the 'fadamma' of Northern Nigeria.

R. E. Sharland.

RINGS.

I am holding a large quantity of rings purchased by R.J.Dowsett for use on Lake Chad. Mr. Dowsett is anxious to be paid for them so I intend to return them to the B.T.O. when an opportunity occurs. With the present import restrictions it is unlikely that anyone will be allowed to import rings. If anyone wishes to buy any of these will they please contact me.

R. E. Sharland.

WANTED: R.J.Dowsett, P.O.Box 12, Monze, Zambia, would like to buy pre-Nos. 13/14 Of the Bulletin.