

The skin at first swells slightly and irritates a little : curiously enough, in Owerri, it is recognised that if you feel you simply must scratch it is advisable to do so with a piece of bamboo, as finger nails may introduce dirt and cause crawl-crawl or other rash. How many Europeans fail to recognise this ! But to carry a bamboo scratcher about with one in places infested with sand-flies might appear a trifle *outré*. After about three days the skin becomes normal again and is marked with delicate black lines. This marking should not be confused with the black patterns simply painted on with the juice of *Randia* (Ibo "Uri").

A cigarette tin of the corms can be purchased in many markets for from a penny to threepence, according to the locality. The native names are :—Ibo, Ede-ala or Nkasi-ala, meaning "ground coco-yam" ; but at Oji it is called Odu, and at Umu-ahia, Uriede ; Efik, Mkpung-ison (which means the same as the Ibo) ; Ekwe, Oboṃa ; Kiaka, Ebenensi. Dennett, on a specimen from Benin, gives the name Ikoto.

Botanically, the plant is known as *Cyanastrum cordifolium* of Oliver, the generic name being compounded of the Greek *kyanos* "blue" and *aster* a "star", in reference to the flower, and the specific name meaning "heart leaf" in reference to its shape. It was referred to the genus *Schoenlandia* by Cornuti, and was placed in a separate family of its own by the German botanist Engler ; Hutchinson, in the latest work on the Monocotyledons (1934), puts it in the family *Tecophilaceæ*.

The Brown-chested Wattled Plover

Anomalophrys superciliosus

(*Bannerman, Vol. II., page 121 ; Bates, page 43*).

IT was in the dry season of 1931-32 that I first noticed a plover in south-eastern Ilorin Province which had a call similar to but less strident than that of the Senegal Wattled Plover (*Afribyx senegallus senegallus*), which is very common around the polo ground in Ilorin and which makes a great noise at night. This bird, since identified as the Brown-chested Wattled Plover, cannot be said to have a pleasant call, for it sounds rather like a high-pitched squeak from a rusty hinge. For a long time I never saw the bird, but heard it often as it flew about at night. I have no notes or recollection of it in the 1933-34 dry season, but that may have been because I was just back from leave and was very busy.

Then, at the beginning of January, 1934, I set out to get to know the bird, and watched the courtship and mating on two occasions. I watched

three birds, two males and one female, for about an hour on the football field in the dusk. It was interesting to note how coy the lady was as long as there were two males on the scene. At first she ran about followed by the males. All concerned kept stopping to peck the grass nervously. Occasionally, if too closely approached, she would take flight for a few yards. When after about three quarters of an hour one of the males tired of the game and flew away, the position was reversed. The remaining male ran away and began ostensibly to feed. The female followed and uttered a low call and crouched before him. The male paid no attention but walked away. The female followed and again invited him. Finally he ran around her and then mating took place. This was repeated twice during the following five minutes. On each occasion the female rose and ran off twittering. Three evenings later I saw the birds again in recently burnt orchard bush. Frequent mating took place, the initiative always being with the female. My notes say, "They are gorgeous birds with their smooth dusty brown backs, rich chestnut chest and yellow wattle, to say nothing of their jet black crowns."

I tried to find the nest last year, but without success. This year, when I came back I found them here again. During January, as I sat out at night, as many as five birds used to come walking slowly past the house in the dusk pecking something off the grass—always in the same direction. By the third week there were only three birds, and then the evening walks ceased and I noticed only two birds about—and about one particular patch of bush between my house and the school. Knowing how easy it is to scare a nesting pair away from a site I deliberately avoided walking through that particular area; unfortunately I left it too late, and going out on the 27th February to locate the nest I flushed a young bird, hatched about five days before. It was dusk when I found it, too late for photography, and I was very disappointed at having missed the nest, with all its photographic possibilities; after taking a good look at the youngster I set him down. It was only when I got up to the house and refreshed my memory with Bannerman that I realised what a chance I had given away. However, the gods were good, and two days later I caught the young bird again. The parents on each occasion had attacked me most bravely and attempted to attract me away by using the broken wing trick. On the following morning I placed the young bird underneath a perforated metal food cover a few feet from the house. Within five minutes it had established communication with its parents, and in another five one of the adult birds was beside the decoy and I had taken a couple of photographs.

The young bird, being the first juvenile record, subsequently went to the British Museum, where Mr. Bannerman kindly confirmed my identification.

J.D.C.