

Notes and Reviews

Some comments on Banks's review of the Checklist of the Birds of Borneo. — I would like to comment on some of the controversial items to which Banks refers (1961, *Bull. Raffles Mus.*, 26: 201-202) in his review of my Checklist of the Birds of Borneo (1957, *Sarawak Mus. Journ.*, 7: 523-818).

"The Bintulu Mallard (43) has a green speculum, and is probably the Australian Mallard, *Anas superciliosa*." The skin was sent to Mr. J. D. Macdonald of the Bird Room, British Museum (Natural History) who has kindly examined it and reports (in a letter dated 11th May 1961): "There is no question about it being anything other than a female Pintail, *Anas acuta*. It is a perfect match with specimens here. There is a trace of green in the speculum, which is usually a bronze-brown, but this is a slight leaning towards the male characteristic—no more I would imagine than a rather hirsute lip on a human female."

"The Sibiu Tufted Duck (49) may have come from the Sultan of Johore's lake." In 1959 there was quite an invasion of this species to the Kra swamp area near Kota Belud in North Borneo. Mr. P. F. Burgess, Deputy Conservator of Forests, sent down two specimens, which are now in the Sarawak Museum, and reported that numbers had been shot by natives. This suggests that the Tufted Duck may be rather more common as a winter visitor than the formal records indicate. There is no reason to suspect that any or all of them come from the Sultan of Johore's lake.

"There is no mention of the possible appearance of the nominate race of the Marsh Harrier (72) . . ." *Circus aeruginosus aeruginosus* is recorded by Chasen for the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra, like the Shikra (*Accipiter badius poliopsis*). One could compile quite a list of birds whose appearance in Borneo is not beyond the bounds of possibility.

"The Grey Plover (109) is purely a shore bird, and not 'partial to lawns'." It is dangerous to make dogmatic statements about birds. I have seen Grey Plover on the smooth lawn of the War Memorial Cemetery on Labuan Island. I agree that the Golden Plover is the species typically seen on lawns.

"Many waders in pre-war times, at least, were passage migrants — they were not taken or recorded in December or January." We have January or February records for nearly all the waders now. Mr. Banks claims that Swinhoe's Snipe was not taken or recorded in December or January, but he himself shot one at Kuching on 16th December.

"The migration described for the House Swift (245) is more characteristic of the Pacific Swift, as yet not known from Borneo." Mr. Banks who himself described this migration (on 11th December 1925 at Bintulu) did not suggest, when he published his note, that the birds were *Apus pacificus*, but the idea had occurred to me recently that they may well have been of that species. Observers should be on the look out for this bird.

The review contains some interesting information, and it is unfortunate that it appeared too late for this information to be incorporated in my book on the Birds of Borneo published in December 1960. — B. E. SMYTHIES, *Forest Office, Kuching, Sarawak*, 20th May, 1961.