

from 12-16 more or less regular longitudinal rows of oval, keeled or subtriangular tubercles; 4-6 scansors under the first toe, 6-9 under the fourth, usually all but the first and last scansors paired; ♂ with 30 (15 + 15) preano-femoral pores. Head and body length of ♂, 57 mm.; of largest ♀, 54 mm., thus exceeding East African mainland maximums but not the Malagasy record of 58 mm. for a ♀ which, like the Ascension lizards had a truncate or regenerate tail.

As these lizards usually appear grey or brown when preserved, I took the opportunity of recording the coloring in life of the ♀ with regenerated tail, taken on 13.iv.59. Above, pinkish buff, from nostril through eye to above the ear a dark sepia brown streak; crown of head blotched with brown and speckled with white; back with a vertebral series of five elongate, rectangular, brown blotches flanked dorso-laterally by an almost continuous, though less well-defined, series of brown markings; between these and the vertebral markings the white (keeled) tubercles form diamond-shaped patterns. Tail with wavy brown crossbars, the intermediate areas distinctly pinkish. Below, white, uniform, except beneath the tail which is flecked with brown and yellow (tip only regenerated).

Another ♀, but with a perfect tail, was substantially similar to the larger example but its tail was more distinctly crossbarred and brighter pink between. Below, the distal portion of the tail exhibits three distinct crossbars in addition to a black tip.

Red scale mites were present on two of the six specimens.

Previously this species was known only from coastal Kenya Colony and Tanganyika Territory; including Pemba Island (and almost certainly Zanzibar and Mafia Islands), the Seychelles and Aldabra Islands, Madagascar and Mauritius; south to Mozambique, inland to Nyasaland.

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## THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN IMPALA AND OLIVE BABOON

By

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The instances of commensalism and symbiosis in the zoological world are as many as they are varied, the acquisition of food being in most cases the main object in view, protection being another. The majority of the better known instances concern the smaller and lower forms of animal life, there be comparatively few recorded instances in which the larger and higher forms are involved.

In the Lake Manyara Game Reserve in Northern Tanganyika two of the most common species of mammals are the impala and olive baboon. Their relationship, on occasions, provides a good example of commensalism, the impala being the beneficiaries. The intermingling of herds of impala and troops of baboon can not fail to strike the more observant visitors to the Reserve and is attributable to the liking shared by both species for certain fruits and seeds.

During October the seed pods of *Acacia sieberiana* DC. are ripe and baboons cluster upon the trees where they gorge themselves upon the seeds and their pods.

Being wasteful feeders much of what they obtain falls to the ground half chewed and is eagerly consumed by the numerous impala gathered below. In January and February the fruit of *Phoenix reclinata* Jacq. are fully mature and provided the growth of the palm is not too dense, baboon clamber up and once more their wasteful feeding habits provide the patiently waiting impala with a further variation to their diet.

The association has a second and incidental benefit to the impala. The area in which this commensalistic relationship takes place is one of heavy undergrowth which, under normal circumstances, is not the preferred habitat of impala and one which they are inclined to avoid for fear of predators. This drawback, however, is negated by the baboon who are normally the first to give warning of the presence of predators. When this happens the baboons make for the topmost branches of the nearest trees and the impala flee to more open country.

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### PAINTED SNIPE OBSERVATIONS

By

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During the past few weeks I have been able to observe the habits of a female Painted Snipe, *Rostratula benghalensis* (Linnæus), a brief account of which may add to the comparatively scant recorded knowledge of this solitary and little known bird.

The Painted Snipe is of singular interest in that it is the only species occurring in the African continent of the family *Rostratulidae*, the other being found in South America. It is also unusual in its colouration, for the female is the brightly plumaged member of the pair, her chestnut head, neck and throat, white eye-stripe and belly, and green-glossed olive-brown upper parts contrasting strongly with the more sombre plumage of her mate; in addition she is larger than her partner, is believed to be polyandrous and is the dominant member in courtship, even to the extent of fighting with other females for the favours of the male—a characteristic which is shared only by a few other birds, notably the phalaropes and jacanas.

Praed and Grant (Vol. 1 p. 370) makes no mention of the Painted Snipe being a nocturnal feeder but this now seems likely from my observations. Throughout the three weeks period of study, the bird remained within the deep shade and protection of dense water-side herbage during daylight hours, occupying the same "roost"—a branch submerged in water—on the many occasions that visits were made to the site. Owing to the closely packed vegetation in which it rested, observation of the bird was difficult, the inverted black horseshoe on its chest and pronounced white eye patches being the only well-defined identifying features during the daytime.

As sunset approached, the bird was observed to indulge in a considerable amount of wing and leg stretching—a further likely indication that it roosts continuously during daylight hours—and also preening of its underparts, which had possibly become water-soiled during its roosting.

Regularly, between 18.45 hours and 19.00 hours, when the sun had gone below the hills, the bird left its shelter, showing considerable suspicion and wariness in the process. A sudden disturbance or noise caused by other feeding waders or a pair of Crowned Cranes, *Balearica regulorum gibbericeps* Reichenow, which were constantly