to the rootlets, stems and grasses reported previously (Ash 1979, Vivero Pol 2002). In the northwestern highlands, Ash (1979) found that Black-headed Siskins preferred to nest lower (≤ 1 m high) than other *Serinus* such as Streaky Seedeater *S. striolatus* and Brown-rumped Seedeater *S. tristriatus,* and suggested this was due to their stronger flight and thus better ability to avoid predators. Our nests were both >1 m high, similarly positioned to those of other *Serinus* species. Branches at greater height tend to produce a denser structure, which may give better nest support, provide more concealment, and serve as shelter against heavy rain and strong winds during the wet season. But given the similarities in vegetation types, climate and topography between the two areas (northwestern and southeastern highlands) there seems no obvious reason for this nest height difference, though it may reflect a difference in potential predators or in conspecific competition for sites.

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Addisu Asefa
Bale Mountains National Park, P.O. Box 107, Goba, Bale, Ethiopia; Email: adde_bird@yahoo.com
Anouska A. Kinahan
Frankfurt Zoological Society- Bale Mountains Conservation Project, P.O. Box 165, Robe, Bale, Ethiopia

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Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*: first record for Tanzania

At 14:40 on 14 March 2005, whilst watching waders at Ngorongoro Crater Lake, my attention was drawn to a bird feeding on mud between tussocks of reed *Juncus* sp. by the lake edge. It was distinctly warmer toned, more buffy, than the bleached winter plumage Little Stints *Calidris minuta* and Curlew Sandpipers *C. ferruginea* present. The brown upperparts showed buff scaling, the white belly with a few streaks at the side

was sharply demarcated from the well streaked throat, and the rump and tail were dark. The legs appeared fairly short, green-yellow, their colour not affected by the grey-brown salt mud. The bill was relatively long and showed a drooping tip. The impression was of a bird that preferred to keep to itself, probing close to the reeds and hustling other birds, including Marsh Sandpipers *Tringa stagnatilis* and Ruffs *Philomachus pugnax*, away from its immediate vicinity. During these interactions it was noted to be slightly smaller than a Curlew Sandpiper, certainly not as tall, but distinctly larger than a Little Stint. It was identified as a Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*.

The bird was found again on the afternoon of 15 March and additional features were noted. A pale base to the bill was comparable with the green-yellow colour of the legs, but slightly duller. The centres of the scapulars were darker than the upperwing coverts. When the bird spread its wing it showed only a trace of a wing-bar. The primary feathers were reasonably fresh, suggesting that this was not a first-winter bird. Long-toed Stint *C. subminuta*, another pale-legged species, was ruled out by size, relative length of bill and legs, and general jizz (the bird never appeared attenuated). Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *C. acuminata* was eliminated by the sharply demarcated streaked breast. The bird was not visible when the site was revisited on 17 March, but was found once more in the same area of *Juncus* on 21 March.

Photographs taken on 14 March from about 6 m distance were submitted to the Tanzanian bird atlas project. This record has been accepted as a first for Tanzania by the East African Rarities Committee.

Matthew Aeberhard
16 York House, Berners St., London W1T 3LG, UK; Email: serenget@dircon.co.uk

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