

## East African Rarities Committee Report for 2018

David Fisher (Chairman) and Nigel Hunter (Secretary) on behalf of the EARC

The East African Rarities Committee assesses records of new and very rare birds occurring in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. This includes up to the fifth record of any species from each of the five countries. Sightings of species for which there are fewer than five records for a country should be submitted to the EARC Secretary, Nigel Hunter, P.O. Box 24803, Karen 00502, Nairobi, Kenya; Email: nigelhunter@timbale.org. Please contact the Secretary to obtain clarification of whether a record requires a submission and for guidance on what details to include in the submission. Past records of rare species are also sought in order to bring the EARC database up to date. Nomenclature follows the forthcoming *Checklist of the Birds of Kenya* 5th edition (Bird Committee EANHS, in prep.) unless stated otherwise. Since the Committee's last report published in 2018 (*Scopus* 38(2): 25–29) the following records have been accepted:

### **Archer's Francolin *Scleroptila gutturalis***

Fourth record for Uganda. One bird well seen and two more heard in Kidepo Valley National Park on 12 July 2016. Sound recording obtained and submitted as part of the record (Michael Mills and Julian Francis). Placement of five species in *Scleroptila* (formerly in *Francolinus*) follows the recommendations of Bloomer & Crowe (1998) and Crowe *et al.* (1992, 2006b), and later followed by Dickinson & Remsen (2013), and del Hoyo & Collar (2014).

Archer's Francolin was formally known as *Francolinus levalliantoides archeri*, but with *gutturalis* taking precedence over *levalliantoides*, treatment of East African birds as Archer's Francolin *Scleroptila gutturalis* follows Turner & Pearson (2015).

### **Crested Francolin *Dendroperdix sephaena***

First, second and third records for Rwanda. The first one was seen and photographed in Akagera National Park adjacent to Lake Gishanju on 18 July 2017 (Gaël Vande weghe). The second and third records were seen and photographed some 2 kms apart in Akagera National Park north of Kirara Plain on 28 October 2017 (Jes Gruner).

### **Striped Crake *Amaurornis marginalis***

Fifth record for Uganda. Two birds were well seen and photographed at Lake Mburu National Park on 26 June 2018 (Brian Finch, Paul Tamwenya, Cecilia Verkley, Kathy Brown, Alan and Sandra Woodward, Bob and Katy Zappala).

### **White-crowned Plover (Lapwing) *Vanellus albiceps***

Third and fourth records for Uganda. A single bird was seen along the northern bank of the River Nile in Murchison Falls National Park on 1 August 2017 with a detailed description provided (Tertius Gous, Peter and Kate Edmonds, Nigel and Di Hardcastle, and Ben Yokel). The second observation was again of a single bird, seen and photographed along the bank of the River Nile in Murchison Falls National Park on 12 July 2018 (Michael Mills, Nick Fordyce, Ken Petersen, John Lobel, Les Holliwell, and Janet Donnan).

**Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa***

Second record for Rwanda. Approximately 100 birds were seen and photographed in Bugesera District, Gashora Sector, near the bridge separating Bugesera and Ngoma Districts, at about 20km from the tarmac road (Claudien Nsabagasani, Daniel and Joan Pennington). The only previous record for Rwanda dates back to 1988.

**Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos***

Second record for Tanzania. A single bird seen and photographed at 'Hippo Pool' in Lake Manyara National Park on 20 November 2017 (Zul Bhatia).



**Figure 1.** Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* (photo: Zul Bhatia).



**Figure 2.** Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* (photo: Marie-Paule Schaijjes).

**Black Stork *Ciconia nigra***

Third record for Rwanda. A single bird was seen at Kayonza in Akagera National Park on 22 March 2015; a detailed description was provided (James Hogg and Jes Gruner).

**Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus***

Third record for Tanzania. Two birds were seen and photographed at Gol Kopjes, Serengeti National Park on 2 February 2018 (Marie-Paule Schaijjes, Donna Duggan and Moody–Tanzanian guide).

**Hemprich's Hornbill *Lophoceros hemprichii***

Second and third records for Uganda. The first sighting was of two birds observed and the bird's voice recorded near Kidepo National Park on 13 July 2016 (Michael Mills and Julian Francis). The second sighting was again of two birds observed and photographed a few kilometres south of Karenga, Kotido District on 28 January 2018 (Szabolcs Kókay, Norbert Ferenczi, Péter Jakab, and Gergely Szabó).



**Figure 3.** Hemprich's Hornbill *Lophoceros hemprichii* (photo: Szabolcs Kókay *et al.*).



**Figure 4.** Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* (photo: Pascal Deo Munezero).

### **Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator***

New for Rwanda. A single bird was seen and photographed by the roadside very near Lake Ruhondo, Northern Province on 20 April 2017 (Pascal Deo Munezero).

### **Grey-chinned Sunbird *Anthreptes rectirostris***

New for Tanzania. A pair was located along a track in Minziro Forest Nature Reserve and photographed on 19 July 2016 (Florence and Per Holman). Other records do exist for this species from Minziro, but they have not been submitted to the EARC. It probably exists at quite low densities throughout the Minziro area, especially at the forest edge. Further details of this species in Tanzania are provided in Baker & Baker (2019).



**Figure 5.** Grey-chinned Sunbird *Anthreptes rectirostris* (photo: Florence Holman).



**Figure 6.** Little Green Sunbird *Anthreptes seimundi* (photo: Neil Baker).

### **Little Green Sunbird *Anthreptes seimundi***

New for Tanzania. At least three birds were seen and photographed along an abandoned track in the western edge of Minziro Forest Nature Reserve on 27 January 2018 (Neil Baker). A bird thought to be this species was netted in July 1987, but no photographs were taken. However, this species is known to occur in Malibigambo Forest (Uganda), which is contiguous with Minziro. Therefore, this species is probably a low-density resident of Minziro. Further details of this species in Tanzania are provided in Baker (2019).

**Steel-blue Whydah *Vidua hypocherina***

Fourth record for Uganda. One adult male in full breeding plumage was seen in Kidepo Valley National Park on 12 July 2016 with a description provided (Michael Mills and Julian Francis).

**Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica rufula***

Third record for Kenya of the subspecies *C. d. rufula*. A single bird was seen and well photographed at Valley Dam on Loldaiga Hills Ranch (southern Laikipia County) on 6 November 2018 with a detailed description provided (Brian Finch, Per Aronsson, Paul Benson, Tom Butynski, Yvonne de Jong, Nigel and Julia Hunter).



**Figure 7.** Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica rufula* (photo: Per Aronsson).



**Figure 8.** South African Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon spilodera* (photo: Tyler Davis).

**South African Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon spilodera***

Second record for Kenya. A single bird was seen and photographed in the Mara Triangle, Maasai Mara National Reserve on 21 June 2018 (Tyler Davis).

**Ansorge's Greenbul *Eurillas ansorgei***

Second to at least the fifth records for Uganda. Many birds were seen and voice recorded between August 2005 and July 2018 on at least ten occasions at The Neck and Buhoma in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (Michael Mills). Clearly this species is common at Bwindi Impenetrable NP and should no longer be considered a rarity.

**Southern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis pammelaina***

Second record for Uganda. A single bird seen and photographed in Lake Mburu National Park on 25 June 2018 (Brian Finch, Paul Tamwenya, Cecilia Verkley, Kathy Brown, Alan and Sandra Woodward, Bob and Katy Zappala).

**Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti***

Fourth record for Kenya. A single bird was seen and photographed at Lake Turkana Wind Power site, Marsabit County on 8 February 2018 (Sidney Shema and Peter Njoroge). Further details of this record are provided in Shema & Njoroge (2018).

The following records were rejected because the details provided were insufficient to establish the identification with certainty:

**Black-winged Pratincole** *Glareola nordmanni* at Lake Gaharawa, Bugersera District, Rwanda on 14 October 2014.

**Dusky Indigobird** *Vidua funerea* at Pian Upe Game Reserve, Karamoja, Uganda on 7 August 2018. Establishing the occurrence in Uganda of Dusky Indigobird and Cameroon Indigobird *Vidua camerunensis* is proving to be difficult. Purple Indigobird *Vidua purpurascens* also remains a possibility.

**White-throated Swallow** *Hirundo albigularis* at Lake Masek, northwestern Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania on 27 February 2018.

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