

East African Rarities Committee Report for 2020

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. Membership of the committee in 2020 comprised David Fisher (Chairman), Neil Baker, Nik Borrow, Brian Finch, Colin Jackson, Johnnie Kamugisha, David Moyer, Nigel Redman, Itai Shanni, Roger Skeen, Terry Stevenson, Don Turner and Washington Wachira. During 2020, the committee assessed records of 22 taxa, of which 15 species and three subspecies were unanimously accepted. Two records were rejected and two other records have been put on hold requiring further investigation.

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: nigelhunter74@gmail.com. Lists of species with fewer than five records for each country and the EARC rarity form are available as downloads from the EARC website (www.eararities.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 *Checklist of the Birds of Kenya* 5th edition (Bird Committee 2019) unless stated otherwise.

On a more somber note, and with great sadness, we mark the passing of EARC Chairman David Fisher on 22 May 2021. David was instrumental in establishing the EARC, and enjoyed a lengthy career sharing his passion for birds with other ornithologists and birders around the world. His collection of bird recordings at the British Library of Sound is widely renowned, and East Africa always held a special place in David's heart. He will be sorely missed by many.

A. Species accepted

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Fifth record for Uganda. Four birds seen and photographed at Queen Elizabeth National Park (Kasenyi track) on 28 November 2019 (J. Meyrav, P. Nanyombi, A. Boon, R. Trigou, A. Sebastian and D. Calderon).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Fourth record for Rwanda. A single bird was seen and photographed at Lake Hago, Akagera National Park on 20 November 2016 (M. Ortner). Submitted by Gaël Vandeweghe.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

First record for Uganda. A single bird seen and photographed at Uganda Wildlife Education Centre, Entebbe on 6 and 7 December 2019 (Fig. 1; J. Meyrav and C. Finnger).



Figure 1. Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* (photo: Jonathan Meyrav).



Figure 2. Black-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda troglodytes* (photo: Rita Souza).

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Third record for Kenya. A single bird seen and photographed offshore from Watamu village, Kilifi County on 19 May 2020 (C. Jackson and R. Nussbaumer).

Fan-tailed Raven *Corvus rhipidurus*

First record for Rwanda. A single bird was seen and photographed near a local market, Musanze Town, Musanze District from 12 July 2020 and still present as of 2 August 2020 (J. Dufitumukiza, O. Rukundo and twelve other observers).

Golden-naped Weaver *Ploceus aureonucha*

Second substantiated record for Uganda and the East African region. Two birds seen and photographed at Semliki National Park on 14 January 2020 (Fig. 3 & 4; C. Kwesiga and J. Selby). More detailed information in regard to this record can be found in Selby *et al.* (2021).



Figures 3 and 4. Golden-naped Weaver *Ploceus aureonucha* (photos: Jake Selby).

Black-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda troglodytes*

Third record for Tanzania. Five birds were seen and photographed at Speke Bay Lodge, Lamadai, Lake Victoria on 30 December 2012 (Fig. 2; R. Souza, C. Schipper, F. Olmos and E. Rottenberg).

Eastern Paradise Whydah *Vidua paradisaea*

Fourth record for Rwanda. A single male seen and photographed at Gasumbashyamba, Akagera National Park on 9 January 2020 (G. Vande weghe).

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Third record for Rwanda. A single bird seen and photographed at Lake Nyirakigugu on 18 January 2019 (E. Kayiranga). Submitted by Gaël Vande weghe.

Dusky Lark *Pinarocorys nigricans*

Second record for Rwanda. A single bird was seen and photographed at Uwasenkoko Swamp, Nyungwe National Park on 26 June 2019 (A. Scott Kennedy, G. Vande weghe and P. Holmen).

South African Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon spilodera*

Third record for Kenya. A single bird seen and photographed at Aruba Lodge, Tsavo East National Park on 6 July 2020 (Fig. 5; R. Nussbaumer, A. Nussbaumer and M. Djambi).



Figure 5. South African Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon spilodera* (photo: Raphaël Nussbaumer). **Figure 6.** Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis* (photo: Richard Webber).

Ethiopian Swallow *Hirundo aethiopica*

First substantiated record for Tanzania. At least two birds were seen and photographed on the electricity line on the Fish Eagle Point Road, Mkinga, north of Tanga on 6 June 2020 (T. Schoch). For further background to this species' rarity status see Baker (2020).

Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis*

Fourth record for Uganda. A single male seen and photographed at Bigodi Swamp, Uganda on 11 March 2018 (Fig. 6; J. Webber, R. Webber, C. Webber, B. Webber, J. Mirembe and D. Mirembe).

Common Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis*

Second record for Rwanda. A single bird seen and photographed at Rwisirabo, Akagera National Park on 30 November 2019 (G. Vande weghe).

Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata*

Second record for Uganda. A single bird seen and photographed at Kasenye Lake Retreat, Lake George shoreline (Kasese District) on 10 November 2020 (D. Yekutieli).

B. Subspecies accepted

Bare-faced Go-away-bird *Corythaixoides personatus personatus*

Third record for Kenya of the nominate subspecies (which is sometimes considered to be a separate species: Brown-faced Go-away-bird). Eight birds seen together with photographic evidence obtained plus two more birds heard nearby on 21 August 2020 near Uran village, close to the Ethiopian border, about 50 km west of Moyale (T. Stevenson, J. Macleod, A. Roberts and C. Roberts).

Golden-tailed Woodpecker *Campethera abingoni suahelica*

First documented record from Taveta (overlooked specimen—located in the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, #95335), and second documented record (photo: B. Finch 2020, see Fig. 7) from Nairobi of *C. s. suahelica* as the subspecies occurring east of the Rift Valley in Kenya. Scattered records between these two locations are therefore presumed to be this subspecies.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica rufula*

Fourth record for Kenya. A single bird was mist-netted and photographed at Ngulia Safari Lodge, Tsavo West National Park on 18 November 2019 (M. Cade, P. Jones, I. Kirton and C. Jackson).



Figure 7. Golden-tailed Woodpecker *Campethera abingoni suahelica* (photo: Brian Finch).

C. Species rejected

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

Red Knot *Calidris canutus* at Kazinga Channel, Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda on 11 October 2019.

Green-throated Sunbird *Chalcomitra rubescens* at forest edge, Ruhondo wetland, Rwanda on 4 July 2016.

References

- BAKER N.E. 2020. Does the Ethiopian Swallow *Hirundo aethiopica* occur in Tanzania? *Scopus* 40(2): 84–87.
- BIRD COMMITTEE, NATURE KENYA. 2019. *Checklist of the Birds of Kenya*. Fifth Edition. Nairobi: Nature Kenya (EANHS).
- SELBY, J., KWESIGA, C. & FISHPOOL, L.D.C. 2021. Golden-naped Weaver *Ploceus aureonucha*: Second record for Uganda and first field photographs. *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* 28(1): 68-70.

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