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Birds of Homa Bay County

Status and Distribution

(including Ruma National Park,
Gwasssi Hills Forest Reserve,
Mfangano and Rusinga Islands)

James E. Bradley and Victor J. Ikawa

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Preface

Homa Bay County is perhaps the least known of those bird-rich parts of Kenya that lie at low elevations and receive high annual rainfall. The remoteness of the county from the centre of national bird research and recreational interest in Nairobi, along with historic infestation of much of the area by tsetse fly, has resulted in only a partial knowledge of what bird species occur there, and where and when they can be found.

As regular visitors to the county since 2011, the need for a comprehensive review of the region's avifauna has been clear; many species occurring in the region have hitherto been undocumented. The range of microclimates and resulting habitats in the rugged valleys, hills and mountains is impressive, and it sits astride both the equator and the shores of Lake Victoria. The ingredients for local biological richness are all present, and indeed, 476 species known to have occurred in the county are tallied here, including several species of global conservation concern.

In compiling the information for this account, it is hoped that others will come to appreciate the richness found in the area, and its conservation value to Kenya. Some very productive birdwatching can be found in the protected areas of Ruma National Park and the Gwasssi Hills Forest Reserve, as well as on the shorelines of Lake Victoria, but without outside interest and support to local economies, the future for wildlife in all these important conservation areas is tenuous.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we would like to thank the many people of Homa Bay County we have met on our visits, and who have always been so eager to help in any situation, be it providing a patch of ground for a tent, sharing knowledge of the maze of trails in the Gwasssi Hills, or running a flat tyre into town to a compressor, we have been warmly received on each visit, for which we are very grateful.

At the Kenya Forest Service offices in Mbita and Magunga, we have received very helpful assistance from Jonah Mbabu and Elijah Oyugi; we are grateful for the services of KFS rangers in the Gwasssi Hills, in particular Francis Eluto, Robert Oyugi and Paul Wamjala. The support of the National Museums of Kenya for some field work in 2014–2015, and Peter Njoroge in particular, is greatly appreciated.

In contributing to our dataset, we are grateful to Jean Agutu, Marto Wanjohi, Jennifer Oduori, Pete Steward, Tom Sipul and Ouma Olouko for forwarding some important records to us personally, as well as for permission to use their photographs. Similarly, for accompanying us in the field and/or also offering their photographs, we thank David Bradley, Simon Carter, Dominic Chesire, Tyler Davis, Jason Fidorra, David Guarnieri, Nathan Hentze, Titus Imboma, Yvonne Muhingi and Ibrahim Ohingo. Several others also assisted greatly in this project by way of providing help with identification of photographs and audio

material. For this we would like to thank Brian Finch, Graeme Backhurst, Dick Forsman, Stratton Hatfield and Don Turner. For a very helpful review of our work we would like to thank Don Turner, and for taking on the editing we are most grateful to Graeme Backhurst.

Lastly, we are grateful for the use of online databases and bio-inventory repositories including eBird, iNaturalist, the Global Biodiversity Information Facility and Kenya Bird Map.

General description of the study area

Geography

The area covered by this text includes all of Homa Bay County west of $34^{\circ} 50' E$, totaling 3095 km^2 (Fig. 1). Due to mapping constraints, a small finger of land extending east from $34^{\circ} 50' E$ towards the town of Sondu which covers approximately 60 km^2 is not included. As a whole, the county is geologically diverse, and encompasses a wide variety of terrain, altitudes and habitats. While only a brief review of the geology of the region is presented here, see McCall (1958) and Allsop & Baldry (1972) for more detailed accounts, and the gazetteer (Appendix A) for a list of locations referenced in the text.

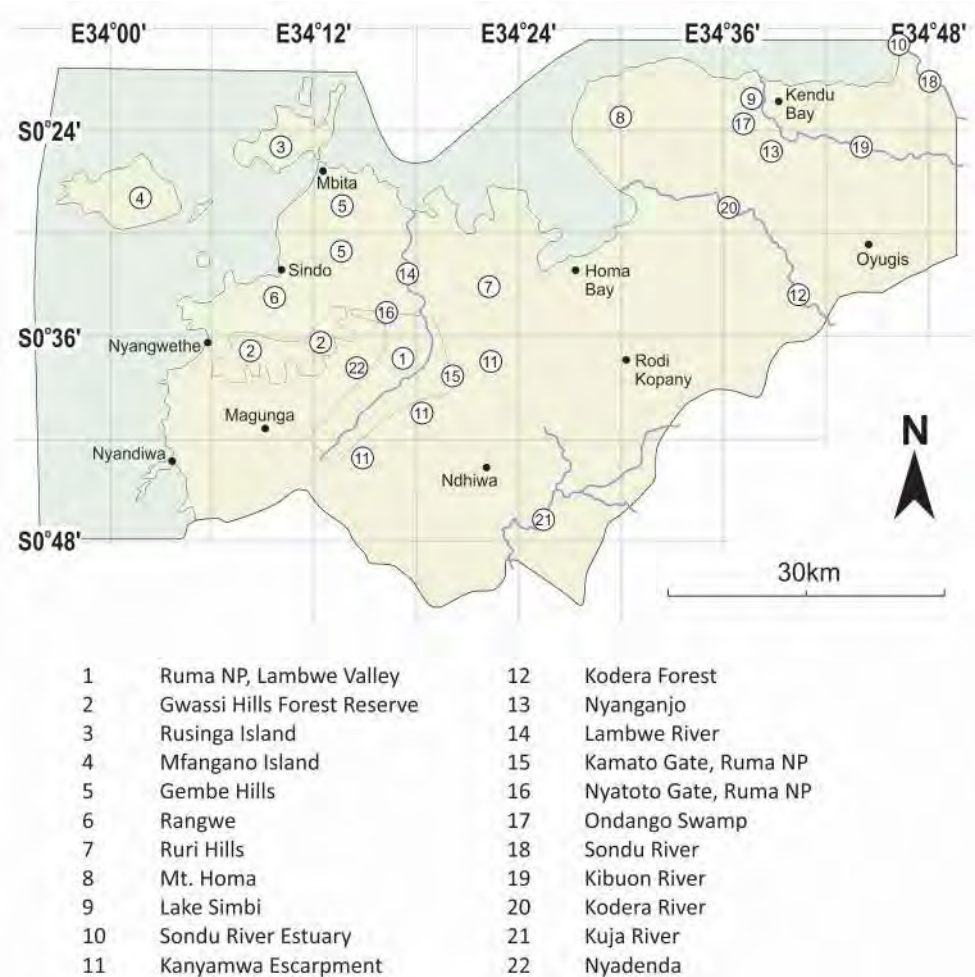


Figure 1. Map of Homa Bay County showing some prominent land features and locations referenced in the text.

The eastern regions of the county, approximately 1600 m at their highest, are situated in relatively flat lands to the west of the central Kenya highlands, and are drained primarily by the southward flowing Kuja River in the southeast at 1260–1350 m. Westwards from here, the terrain rises gently before being abruptly interrupted by the steep westward facing escarpment fault line at Kanyamwa, dropping from an average of 1600 m down to the lowlands of the Lambwe Valley at around 1200 m. The Kanyamwa Escarpment extends over 20 km from northeast to southwest and forms the eastern edge of the lake basin lowlands, and the Lambwe Valley has itself been submerged beneath the waters of Lake Victoria in the geologic past (McCall 1958). Further to the west, and extending into Lake Victoria, lie the remnants of the Mt Kisingiri crater, a 13-km wide caldera with early Miocene origins (Allsop & Baldry 1972). Three massifs make up this volcano: 1) the Gwasssi Hills, forming the southern crater rim and reaching an altitude of almost 2250 m; they are bisected by numerous steep valleys and ravines, especially on the inside crater walls; 2) the northern crater rim, comprising the Gembe Hills, reach almost 1900 m and are characterized by similarly steep terrain, and 3) Rangwe, which forms a central volcanic cone within the crater and reaches 1750 m. All three highlands result in impressive altitudinal gradients from their summits to 1140 m at adjacent lakeshores (Fig. 2).

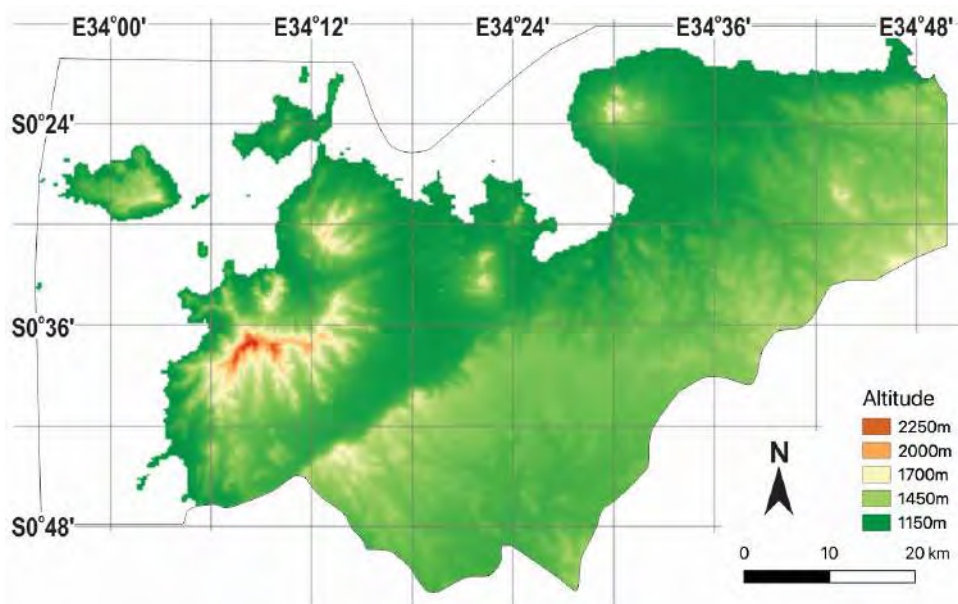


Figure 2. Digital elevation model of Homa Bay County, showing the sharp transition from the uplands of the Gwasssi Hills to the surrounding lowlands of the Lake Victoria basin.

At the northern end of the Lambwe Valley, and immediately to the west of Homa Bay are the lower lying carbonitic cones of the Ruri Hills and to the north of Homa Bay, the steep and rugged Mt Homa, which reaches almost 1750 m. Additional prominent land features are two large islands in Lake Victoria: Rusinga Island is separated from the adjacent mainland by a very narrow channel and can be considered a near-shore island in a biogeographical context. Mfangano Island, by contrast, lies approximately 9 km offshore and is characterized by greater ecological isolation.

Climate

Rainfall across the county varies considerably; being wettest in the south-east and gradually becoming drier to the north and northwest (Fig. 3). Rainfall varies monthly through the year with peaks in March–May (long

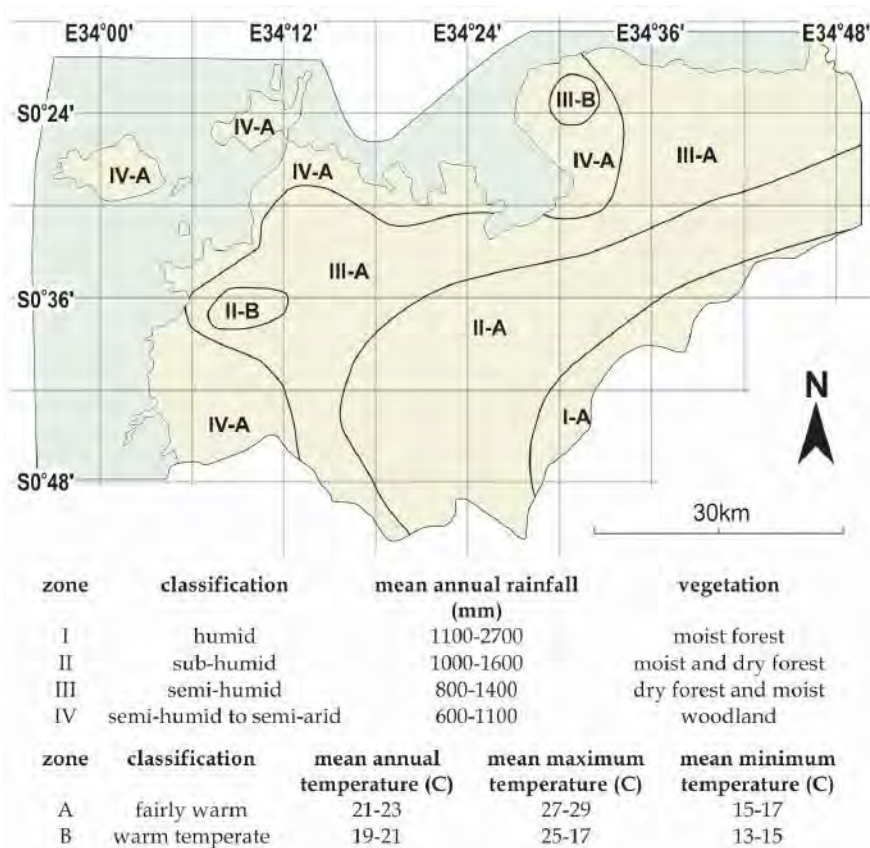


Figure 3. Map of Homa Bay County showing a broad spatial characterization of annual rainfall and temperature across the region (adapted from Sombroek *et al.* 1980).

rains) and November–December (short rains). In the far west, the high terrain of the Gwasssi Hills comprises an isolated area of higher rainfall amid drier lowlands and it also receives a considerable amount of additional moisture in the form of mist from the nearby lake evaporation. The Gwasssi highlands are also marginally cooler than the remainder of the county, being described as “warm temperate” versus “fairly warm” (Sombroek *et. al.* 1980). Such mean annual temperatures range from 19–21°C, compared with 21–23°C respectively. Throughout the region there are peaks in monthly temperatures in February and October, with July and December being marginally cooler.

Vegetation and habitats

Much of the region is dominated by semi-humid vegetation communities ranging from scrub and thicket to moist grassland, riverine and hillside woodlands, and forest. Lakeshore areas are locally humid and typically comprise grazing pastures or lightly wooded farmland backing onto narrow marshes and reed swamps, or open water. Broadly, three main habitat types underpin the richness of the avifauna in the county, and can be classed as follows:

1) **Grasslands:** This habitat is largely restricted to 1500–1800 m in the Gembe Hills and 1200–1300 m in the Lambwe Valley, and a sizeable extent is protected within Ruma National Park (Fig. 4). This habitat is mostly open, with short to tall grasses and scattered trees: *Acacia drepanolobium*, *Acacia seyal* and *Balanites aegyptiaca* on heavy clay soils in the Lambwe Valley, with *Combretum* sp., *Erythrina abyssinica* and *Cussonia holstii* on gravelly soils in the Gembe Hills. In addition to these areas, small pockets of heavily grazed pasture along lake shorelines comprise an additional grassland habitat for some species.

2) **Wetlands:** These comprise open muddy or rocky shorelines, shallow flooded grasslands, low lying streams, swamps and marshes, and some artificial dams (Fig. 5). Most wetland habitat that is productive for birds is found in the north of the county from Mbita eastwards and along some of the more sheltered shorelines in the vicinity of Kendu Bay and Homa Bay, including the Sondu River Estuary where narrow strips of *Papyrus* swamp line the shore. These small patches are subject to being blown away by the wind but where they persist, they form a key habitat for several regionally important species. As in many areas of Kenya, wetlands in the county are under extreme threat from encroachment, pollution and draining. The felling and conversion of *Papyrus* swamp in particular, is of concern.

3) **Forest:** Remnants of this once extensive habitat now survive in only a few very small patches in the steepest parts of the Gwasssi Hills. Prior to near-complete removal of primary forest there from 2000–2021, these vegetation communities varied considerably in character depending on altitude, slope gradient and aspect (Fig. 6). On high ridges above 2000 m, a cool, mossy montane forest dominated by *Ficus thonningii*, *Croton macrostachyus* and *Celtis africana* was unique in southwest Kenya, while in valleys and on steep slopes below 2000 m, and extending locally as low as 1450 m, a sub-montane forest type dominated by *Teclea nobilis*, *Polyschias fulva* and *Prunus africana* also comprised important forest habitat. Meanwhile in lower terrain, small areas of riparian forest, dominated by *Ficus* sp. and *Albizia* sp. is different again. The latter may be found at 1200–1400 m along some drainages flowing into the Lambwe Valley from the Kanyamwa Escarpment, with some of these areas protected within Ruma NP. As of the completion of this account, however, almost all (>99 %) forested habitat on the Gwasssi Hills has been felled or heavily damaged, and many of the forest-dependent bird species there are now almost certainly lost from the county.

Further to these diverse habitat types are three additional habitats which variably comprise an ecotone (woodlands), are patchily distributed (rocky habitats) or involve modified terrain (farmland) as follows:

4) **Woodlands:** In parts of the Lambwe Valley, the foothills of the Gwasssi and Gembe Hills, and again in river valleys in the vicinity of Kendu Bay, woodlands comprise an important additional habitat in the county. These may be *Acacia* dominant, as in the vicinity of the Lambwe Valley and around the edges of Lake Victoria, or more mixed in character and comprised of *Combretum*, *Ficus*, *Terminalia* and *Cussonia*, as is typical of sloping terrain in the vicinity of the Kisingiri massif. Woodlands typically form between 1200 m and 1600 m and may or may not include some thicket and bush habitat.

5) **Rocky habitats:** Very locally within the county are cliffs, aggregations of large granite boulders and slabs, or simply patches of un-vegetated stony or gravelly ground on slopes. Whether at high or low elevations, a suite of species can be closely associated with one or more of these rocky habitats.

6) **Farmland:** Farmland covers at least 50 per cent of the county but varies considerably. While some land is farmed intensively, and predominantly with a commercial sugarcane crop as in the southeast of the county, other

land is farmed less intensively, with mixed subsistence crops set among rough and unmanaged ground, or garden trees and hedgerows. A variety of adaptable generalist species can make such habitats bird rich despite the diminished vegetation communities.



Figure 4. Grassland habitat with scattered trees at 1600 m in the Gembe Hills (a) and at 1250 m in the Lambwe Valley at Ruma NP (b). Such habitat supports numerous specialist bird species including Swamp Nightjar *Caprimulgus natalensis*, Blue Swallow *Hirundo atrocaerulea*, Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis*, Fan-tailed Grassbird *Catriscus brevirostris* and Quailfinch *Ortygospiza atricollis*.



Figure 5. Wetlands in the county vary considerably from cluttered marsh with *Papyrus* stands at the Sondu River Estuary (top) to short pasture and shallow shorelines at the crater-formed Lake Simbi (bottom). Some characteristic species of wetlands in the region include African Open-billed Stork *Anastomus lamelligerus*, Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*, Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor*, Long-toed Lapwing *Vanellus crassirostris* and Carruthers's Cisticola *Cisticola carruthersi*.



Figure 6. Floristically diverse and humid, closed-canopy forest at the head of a small valley at 2000 m (top), and tangled understory habitat on a ridgeline at 2100 m (bottom) in the Gwasssi Hills. Such habitat (now almost completely destroyed) is crucial to the survival of numerous forest-dependent species in the county such as Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher *Trochocercus cyanomelas*, Slender-billed Greenbul *Stelgidillas gracilirostris*, Grey Apalis *Apalis cinerea*, Grey-winged Robin-Chat *Cossypha polioptera* and Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra olivacea*.

Ornithology in Homa Bay County

A brief history of ornithological exploration in the county

The richness of the avifauna in Homa Bay County has not been appreciated until recently. Unlike other hot and wet regions of Kenya, where collecting and field observations have been historically more extensive, Homa Bay County has been largely overlooked. Confined mostly to the limits of square 60A of the *Kenya Bird Atlas*, the region was assessed as only 51–75% known in the mid 1980s (Lewis & Pomeroy 1989).

Historical specimen data from the region include small collections made in the Kendu Bay region in 1918 by collectors working for V. G. L. van Someren (van Someren 1922), and now held in a number of international museums. This was followed by a few specimens (primarily raptors) collected by G. Bell, L. S. B. Leakey and D. G. MacInnes between Kendu Bay and Rusinga Island, as well as at Gendia, from 1932 to 1941 (Leaky 1943). Subsequently, small series of birds were collected by P. L. Britton in the early 1960s, again along the lake shorelines from Homa Bay west to Rusinga Island (Britton & Harper 1969). In sum, however, these collections amount to no more than 160 birds.

These efforts were followed by field observations at many of these localities into the 1970s and 1980s, including at Homa Bay and Ruma National Park (120 km²), which was gazetted in 1964. Some observations from this period began appearing in the literature in the mid 1980s, and by the late 1990s much of the lowlands of the county had been covered reasonably well (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996). A preliminary account of the avifauna of the Gwasssi Hills Forest Reserve (48.4 km²) was published in 2015 (Bradley *et al.* 2015) followed by a subsequent paper documenting some new species distributions (Bradley 2018), and to date, there is no published literature on the birds of Rusinga or Mfangano Islands.

The avifauna and conservation today

Four hundred and seventy-six species are accepted here as having occurred in Homa Bay County (to September 2022), with one additional species treated as unidentified and a further six treated as unconfirmed. Breeding, or attempted breeding, has been recorded in 103 species (any nesting stage reported, from nest building to independent juveniles). The birds recorded in the county represent 84 families and no fewer than five distinct ecological biomes (Bennun & Njoroge 1999): Afrotropical Highlands (18 species), Somali-Maasai Savanna (eight species), Lake Victoria Basin (eight species), Sudan and Guinea Savanna (two species), and Guinea-Congo Forests (two species). Particularly well represented groups

include the nightjars (seven species), bushrikes (12 species), bulbuls (nine species), sunbirds (15 species), weavers (18 species) and Estrildid finches (22 species).

Human population densities are high throughout the county, and particularly so in lakeshore areas, where the larger urban centres of Kendu Bay, Homa Bay and Mbita are located. As such, the majority of land outside of the protected areas of Ruma NP and the Gwasssi Hills FR has been cleared and is actively farmed. Exceptions include the steeper and rockier slopes of the Gwasssi and Gembe Hills, Rangwe, the Ruri Hills, Mount Homa, parts of Mfangano Island, as well as some low-lying and waterlogged grassland at the south end of the Lambwe Valley.

Of the 476 species identified in the county, nine are considered regionally threatened (Bennun & Njoroge 1999), while 11 are considered globally threatened (IUCN 2022; Table 1). One hundred and fifty-four species have been recorded in the Gwasssi Hills Forest Reserve, and 260 in Ruma National Park, with these two protected areas combined supporting 69 per cent (330 of 476) of the species identified in the county. Almost ten per cent (46 of 476) of the species identified in the county have been reported from only these protected areas, highlighting their importance for the regional avifauna. While wildlife protection is well enforced in Ruma NP,

Global assessment (IUCN 2022)		Regional assessment (Bennun & Njoroge 1999)	
Species	Threat level	Species	Threat level
Grey Crowned Crane	EN	African Darter	VU
Malagasy Pond Heron	EN	Great Egret	VU
Secretarybird	EN	Saddle-billed Stork	VU
Bateleur	EN	Banded Snake Eagle	VU
Beaudouin's Snake Eagle	VU	Ayres's Hawk Eagle	VU
Hooded Vulture	CR	Crowned Eagle	VU
Martial Eagle	EN	Martial Eagle	VU
Tawny Eagle	VU	African Skimmer	VU
Steppe Eagle	EN	Least Honeyguide	VU
Blue Swallow	VU		
Papyrus Yellow Warbler	VU		

Table 1. List of globally and regionally threatened species recorded in Homa Bay County. CR: Critically endangered, EN: Endangered, VU: Vulnerable

forest destruction has been severe in the Gwassi Hills FR, despite its protected status. Fifty-one species occurring there are wholly forest-dependent (21 specialists and 30 generalists), and continuing habitat loss since 2010 represents one of the most significant conservation threats facing birds in the county.

Sources of Information

Almost 13 100 records have been reviewed and mapped in this text, with 8725 of these made by the authors and a further 3470 gathered from the online database eBird (eBird 2021). The remaining observations mapped here (880 in total) include small numbers of records from specimen collections, published literature (primarily *Scopus* and *Kenya Birds* species reports), the Kenya Bird Map project (www.kenyabirdmap.adu.org.za), the Kenya Birds Net (<https://groups.google.com/g/kenyabirdsnet>) regional sightings forum, as well as records submitted to us in person. Breeding data are also derived from these sources.

In drafting a final species list, we have tried to apply a rigorous and consistent approach to the assessment of reports and the inclusion or exclusion of records. This is always a challenging aspect, and while we hope to have been correct throughout, any errors are entirely our own. Taxonomy and nomenclature follow Gill & Donsker (2019), and observations are included up to the end of September 2022.

Interpreting the Species Accounts

Species accounts accompanying the maps include a brief account of the abundance, extent of occurrence and seasonality of the species in the county, as well as references (**Ref**) to the sources of the information in some cases. Accounts may also include breeding reports (**Br**), the catalogue numbers of media (**Med**) archived online or specimen material (**Sm**) in museums. Some accounts may include additional comments related to aspects we felt to be noteworthy (**Com**).

Maps:

For spatial reference, a 6 × 6-minute grid of coordinates overlays each map of the county, while outlines are also shown for the Gwassi Hills Forest Reserve and Ruma National Park (grey lines). The towns of Kendu Bay, Homa Bay, Oyugis, Mbita and Magunga are shown with black dots and the main roads in between with fine black lines.

The maps depict individual species records from unique site visits with a solid, circular red dot/marker (up to three per site). An open-coloured

circle with a number indicates the number of additional records within a more loosely defined area for which precise locations for the records are not known. This may apply generally to areas such as Ruma National Park, Rusinga or Mfangano Islands. For example, two red markers and an encircled “3” in Ruma NP would imply two records of known location in the park and three additional records with precise locations unknown.

Effort

It must be noted that field observation across the county has not been spatially balanced as would be the case in a standardized effort bird atlas. Although more effort has been focused on the better-preserved habitats in the west and north of the county (vs. the more intensively farmed areas in the east and south), we have attempted to visit as many parts of the county as possible, and as such we consider that there can now be very few resident or regularly occurring species that are overlooked and remain undetected. An approximation of the survey effort in the county that is represented here can be appreciated from a map combining the observations of five common species (Fig. 7).

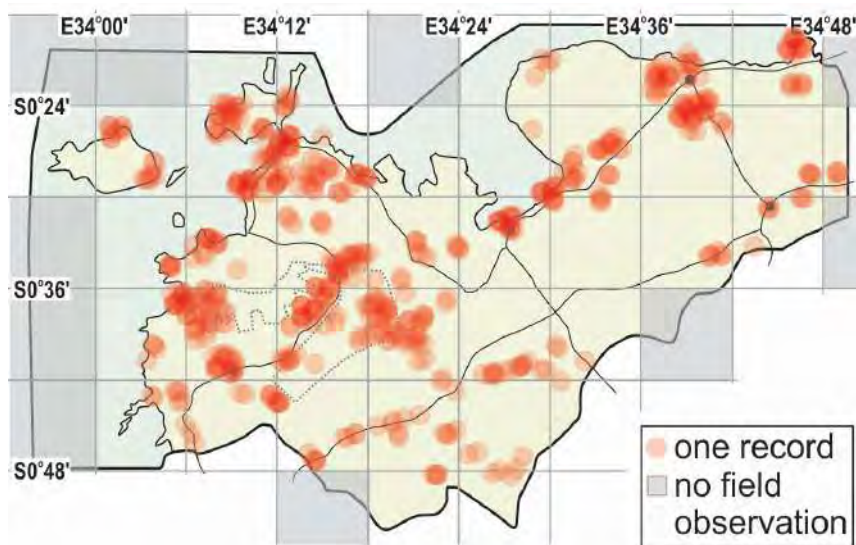


Figure 7. An approximation of the distribution of survey effort across Homa Bay County by way of mapping observations of five commonly encountered species, Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta*, Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*, Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus*, Black-headed Gonolek *Laniarius erythrogaster* and Dark-capped Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*.

Terminology and abbreviations:

Aspects of species occurrence provided are described under the following general terms:

Resident: the species is present year-round.

Seasonal Visitor: the species visits the county at well-defined times of year.

Visitor: the species visits the county erratically with as yet, no clearly defined seasonality.

Passage Migrant: the species is present in the county only briefly in a transitory nature.

Widespread: the species occurs over ~41 per cent or more of the county

Local: the species occurs over ~11–40 per cent of the county.

Very Local: the species occurs over < 10 per cent of the county.

Common to Abundant: should be encountered on any visit within the habitat and range of the species.

Uncommon to Fairly Common: should be encountered within two to five visits within the habitat and range of the species.

Rare to Scarce: not to be expected without six or more visits within the habitat and range of the species.

Acronyms used include the following:

AMNH: American Museum of Natural History, New York City

FMNH: Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago

WFVZ: Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, Camarillo, California

iNat #: Catalogue number at iNaturalist (<https://www.inaturalist.org>)

ML#: Catalogue number at the Macaulay Library
(<http://www.macaulaylibrary.org>)

XC #: Catalogue number at Xenocanto
(<http://www.xeno-canto.org>)

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White-faced Whistling Duck

Dendrocygna viduata



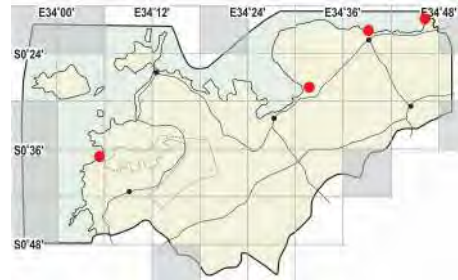
Local but fairly common seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1250 m, recorded from Oct–May. **Com:** Presence is concentrated in the marshy lowlands of the northeast near Kendu Bay and at the Sondu River Estuary, with a December high count of 65 birds at the latter site. Birds wander occasionally to the Lambwe Valley and Rusinga Island.

Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*



Very local and scarce presumed seasonal visitor, with three Apr–May records from 1140 m at the Sondu River Estuary. **Med:** ML #435756891

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis gambensis*



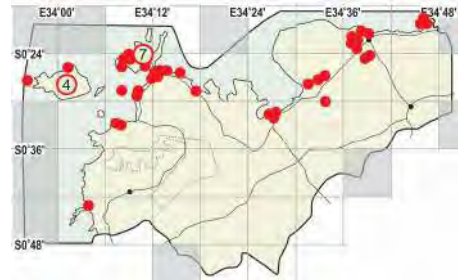
Widespread but scarce presumed seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1150 m, recorded from October to February. **Com:** Most records come from the marshy northeast lowlands.

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*



Two records: small groups of birds at two nearby sites at 1140 m in the God Ndonyo area on 23 Feb 2022. **Ref:** eBird; J. Agutu

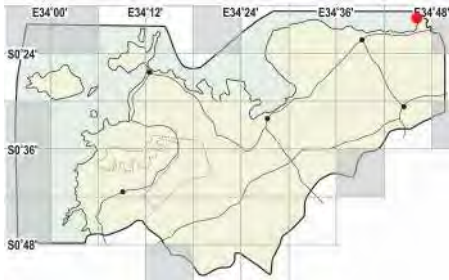
Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1250 m. **Com:** Presence is strongly concentrated along the Winam Gulf (absent from the Lambwe Valley for example) and gentle shorelines of both large islands, being scarce along

steeper shorelines southwards. There is a January high count of 135 birds from Rusinga Island. **Ref:** eBird; Nature Kenya

African Pygmy Goose *Nettapus auritus*



One record: 12 Feb 1995 at 1140 m at the Sondu River Estuary. **Com:** This species requires very clean water with abundant water lilies. The location of this record at the outflow of a river into otherwise unsuitable habitat is therefore unsurprising. **Ref:** Nasirwa *et al.* 1995

Garganey *Spatula querquedula*



One record: five birds on 12 Feb 1995 at 1140 m at the Sondu River Estuary. **Ref:** Nasirwa *et al.* 1995

Hottentot Teal *Spatula hottentota*



One record: a single bird on 1 Aug 2017 at 1140 m at Ondango Swamp. **Med:** ML #449774151 **Ref:** J. Agutu pers. comm.

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*



Two records at 1140 m: on 15 Jan 1989 on Rusinga Island and 5 Oct 2000 at Mbita. **Ref:** eBird; K. Groenendijk, Nature Kenya

Southern Pochard *Netta erythrophthalma*



One record: 500 or more birds on 21 Feb 1991 at 1150 m at Lake Simbi. **Ref:** eBird; V. Salo

Numididae: Guineafowl

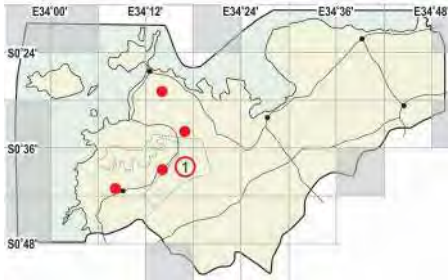
Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris reichenowi*



Locally common resident from 1200 to 1400 m. **Br:** $\frac{3}{4}$ grown young in November. **Com:** This species clearly benefits from the protection afforded by Ruma NP; it was likely extirpated from the Mbita area by the late 1990s in concert with the sudden and rapid human population expansion there.

Phasianidae: Pheasants and Allies

Coqui Francolin *Peliperdix coqui hubbardi*



Local and uncommon resident from 1200 to 1500 m. **Com:** Presence is scattered around the eastern half of Kisingiri Volcano from the Gembe to the Gwassi foothills, extending very locally into the Lambwe Valley and western areas of Ruma NP. The favoured habitat here is moderately grassed and bushed stony ground in gently sloping terrain, and not open grasslands (as in the Lambwe Val-

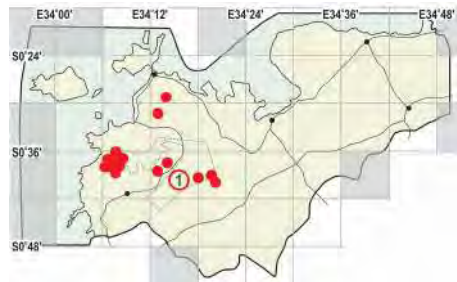
ley) as might be inferred from habitat use in the nearby Maasai Mara.

Crested Francolin *Dendroperdix sephaena grantii*



One record: on 12 Oct 1988 at 1140 m on Rusinga Island. **Com:** This species has likely been extirpated from the county. **Ref:** eBird; K. Groenendijk

Scaly Francolin *Pternistis squamatus schuetti*



Local but fairly common resident from 1250 to 2250 m. **Com:** Thick cover on the steeply sloping terrain of the Kanyamwa Escarpment, Gembe and Gwassi Hills, is vital to the conservation of this forest species in the county.

Red-necked Spurfowl *Pternistis afer cranchii*



Local but abundant resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Br:** ¼ grown young in late November; ½ grown young in January; ¾ grown young in late February. **Com:** Presence is strongly concentrated in the wet grasslands of the Lambwe Valley and immediate adjacent areas, as well as the low alluvial valleys of the northern Gembe Hills.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*



One record: at least three singing birds at 1250 m at Nyadenda on 29 Sep 2022. **Com:** A March report from Rusinga Island is not supported by documentation, and birds in the county have not been assigned to subspecies.

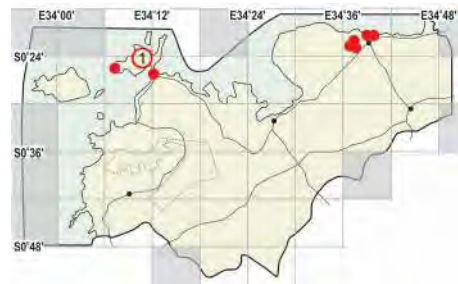
Harlequin Quail *Coturnix delegorguei delegorguei*



Very local and uncommon seasonal visitor from 1200 to 1300 m, with records from late May to mid Dec.

Podicipedidae: Grebes

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis capensis*



Very local but sometimes fairly common resident from 1140 to 1150 m. **Com:** Most records come from the Kendu Bay area, and Lake Simbi in particular, with occasional birds wandering to Rusinga Island. There is a February high count of 97 birds at Lake Simbi. **Ref:** Nasirwa *et al.* 1995

Phoenicopteridae: Flamingos

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*



Very local and uncommon visitor at 1150 m, with records in Feb, Apr–May and Aug. **Com:** Distribution is entirely confined to Lake Simbi near Kendu Bay, where there is an April high count of 100 birds. Reported breeding at this site, however, requires confirmation.

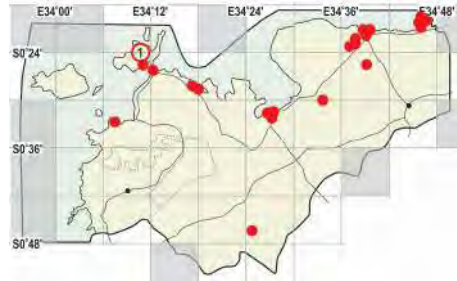
Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor*



Very local but sometimes fairly numerous visitor from 1140 to 1150 m, with records scattered throughout the year. **Com:** Presence is concentrated in the Kendu Bay area, and in particular Lake Simbi and Ondango Swamp. We have recorded an April high count of 4000 birds and there are several additional counts of more than 1500.

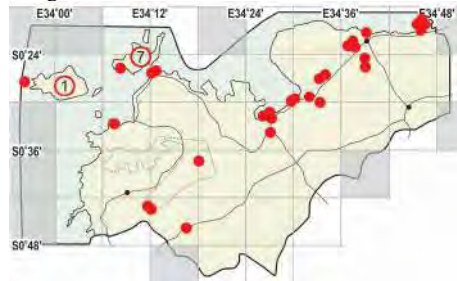
Ciconiidae: Storks

Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*



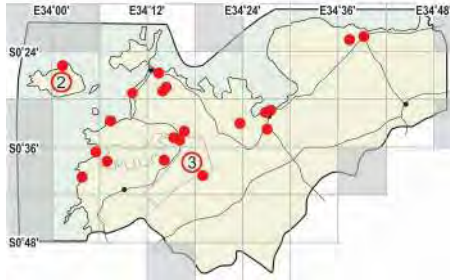
Widespread and fairly common presumed resident from 1140 to 1200 m, with records year-round but primarily in Aug–Mar. **Com:** Observations of small numbers are primarily clustered at marshy sites along shorelines of the Winam Gulf from Kendu Bay to Rusinga Island. We have recorded an April high count of 23 birds at the Sondu River Estuary, and breeding in the county, as yet undetected, seems possible.

African Openbill *Anastomus lamelligerus lamelligerus*



Widespread and fairly common presumed resident from 1140 to 1300 m, with records year-round but primarily in Aug–Mar. **Com:** This species shows a very similar pattern of seasonal occurrence to Yellow-billed Stork, though is more abundant, and also occurs in the Lambwe Valley and on Mfangano Island.

Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii*



Widespread and fairly common seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, but with aerial flocks also seen up to 2000 m. There are records in all months except for Aug and Sep and there is a peak in abundance from Oct to Mar. **Com:** More often than not this species is seen soaring on thermals in large migratory flocks near the lakeshore or over hilly terrain. The absence of records from Rusinga Island is puzzling but possibly related to very high human population densities there. There is an unseasonal June high count of 3500 birds in the Lambwe Valley.

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*



Local and scarce passage migrant at 1150–1250 m, with four Feb–Apr records. **Com:** A 1981 record involved 2000+ aerial migrants, while more recent records involved fewer than 200 birds. **Ref:** Lewis & Pearson 1981

Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*



Two records: single birds on 30 Aug 2003 at 1200 m in Ruma NP and from early Aug to late Sep 2017 at 1140 m at Ondango Swamp. **Med:** ML #449774471 **Ref:** eBird; K. Ndang'ang'a, J. Agutu pers. comm.

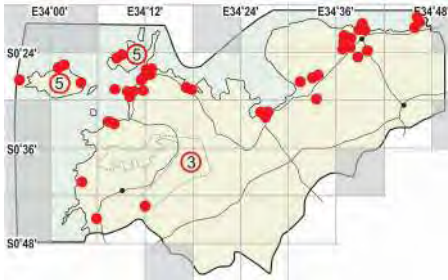
Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumenifer*



Rather local though fairly common resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Com:** Presence in the county is strongly centred around the larger towns on the shorelines of the Winam Gulf, though birds wander somewhat, including to both large islands.

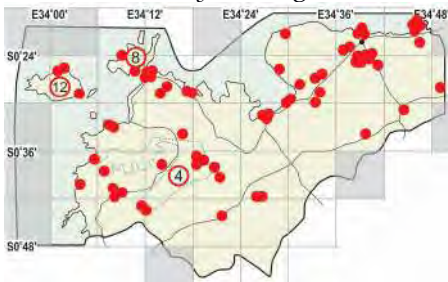
Threskiornithidae: Ibises and Spoonbills

African Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Com:** Presence is mostly along shorelines of Lake Victoria.

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1800 m. **Br:** Occupied nest in Mar.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*



Local and uncommon seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1150 m, with all records from Oct to May. **Com:** Closely tied to marshy lowlands of the Winam Gulf. We have recorded a December high count of 11 birds at Ongoro Swamp.

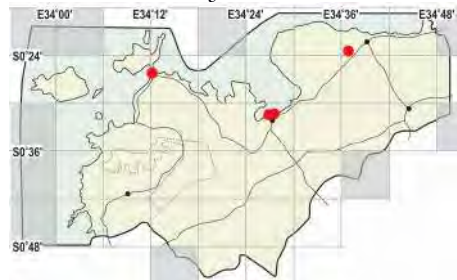
African Spoonbill *Platalea alba*



Very local and uncommon presumed resident from 1140 to 1150 m, recorded in all months except in Jun–Jul. **Com:** This species only occurs in the northeast of the county where it is present in small numbers in extensive marshes. There is a December high count of eight birds. **Ref:** eBird; J. Agutu.

Ardeidae: Herons and Bitterns

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*



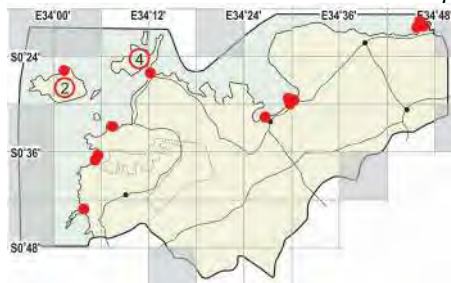
Very local and scarce presumed seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1150 m, with records in Feb–May and Oct. **Com:** This easily overlooked species may be under-reported in the county.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax nycticorax*



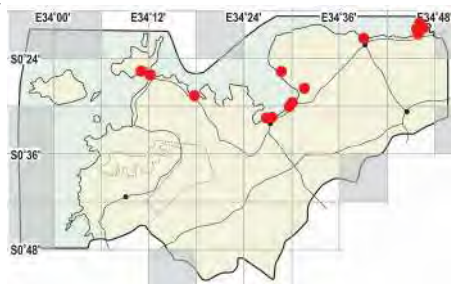
One record: two birds on 10 Apr 2022 at 1140 m at the Sondu River Estuary.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata atricapilla*



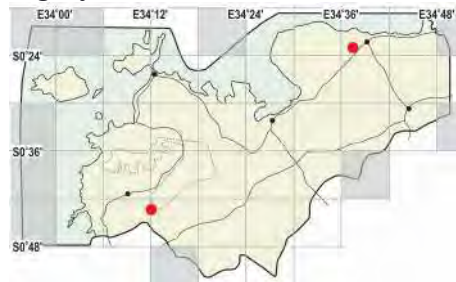
Widespread and fairly common resident at 1140 m. **Com:** A solitary species with a distribution closely tied to shorelines of Lake Victoria, including on both large islands.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*



Local and uncommon seasonal visitor at 1140 m, with records from Aug to Apr. **Com:** Closely tied to the marshy shorelines of the Winam Gulf.

Malagasy Pond Heron *Ardeola idae*



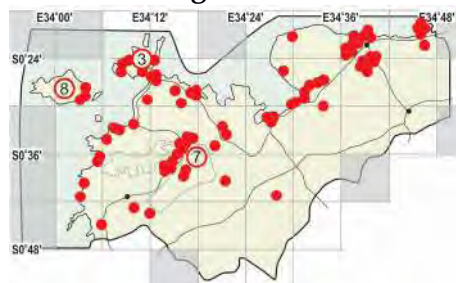
Two records: single birds on 15 May 2020 at 1140 m at Ondango Swamp (Fig. 8), and on 19 Aug 2022 at 1230 m in the upper Lambwe Valley. **Ref:** J. Agutu pers. comm.

Rufous-bellied Heron *Ardeola rufiventris*



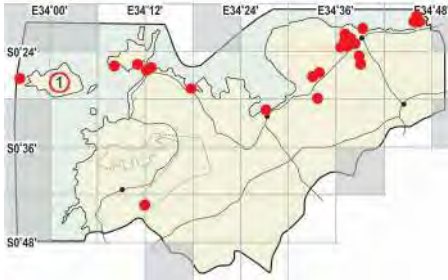
Very local and rare presumed resident at 1140 m, with three records from Ondango Swamp, in May, Aug and Nov (Fig. 8). **Ref:** J. Agutu pers. comm.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*



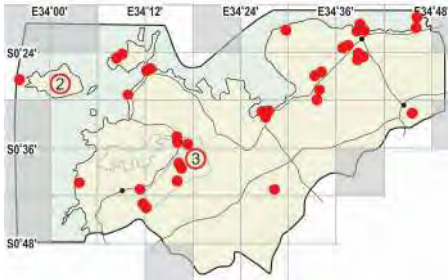
Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Com:** The limited records towards the southeast of the county may reflect genuine scarcity there.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea cinerea*



Widespread and fairly common seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1200 m, with all records in Sep–May. **Com:** The distribution of this species is closely tied to the Winam Gulf lowlands and both large islands, it being very scarce inland.

Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*



Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1500 m.

Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath*



Very local and scarce visitor at 1140–1150 m, with three records in Jan, May and Oct–Dec. **Med:** ML #449774341 **Ref:** eBird; Nature Kenya, J. Agutu pers. comm.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea purpurea*



Local and uncommon seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1150 m, with all records in Oct–Mar. **Com:** Records are tightly clustered at more extensive marshes in the vicinity of Homa Bay and at the Sondu River Estuary, with birds occasionally wandering west to Rusinga Island.

Great Egret *Ardea alba alba*



Widespread and fairly common presumed resident from 1140 to 1200 m, but being scarce or possibly absent in Nov–Dec. **Com:** The distribution of this species is closely tied to the Winam Gulf lowlands and both large islands.

Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia brachyrhyncha*



Widespread and fairly common seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1150 m, with all re-

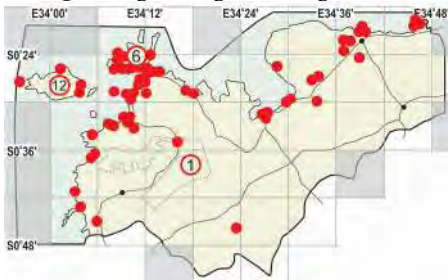
cords in Aug–Apr. **Com:** Distribution of this species in the county differs somewhat from that of the Great Egret, it being absent from both large islands, while also occurring in the Lambwe Valley and on shorelines south of the Winam Gulf.

Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca*



One record: four birds on 7 Mar 2022 at 1270 m at Kamenya Dam, 8 km south of Kendu Bay (Fig. 8). **Ref:** eBird; J. Agutu

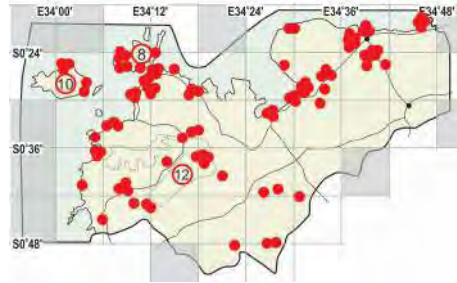
Little Egret *Egretta garzetta garzetta*



Widespread and abundant resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Com:** Closely tied to lakeshore habitats, it being particularly numerous in small towns where fish fry are dried in the open sun. Unusually for this species, birds are known to forage in very slow flight over choppy water in the manner of a tern.

Scopidae: Hamerkop

Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta umbretta*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Br:** Nest building in March. **Com:** There is a February high count of 200 birds in the Ondango Swamp area. **Ref:** J. Oduori pers. comm.

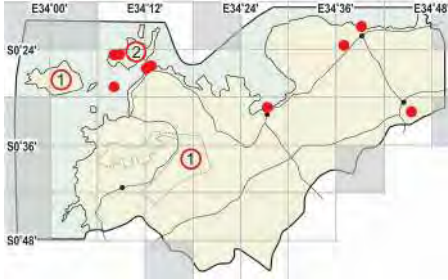
Pelecanidae: Pelicans

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*



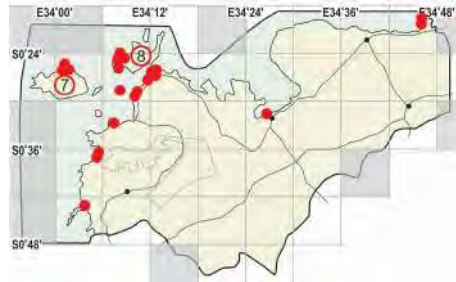
Widespread but uncommon seasonal visitor at 1140 m, with scattered records in Oct–Feb. **Com:** A December record of 20 birds is the maximum count. **Ref:** eBird; M. Wanjohi

Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens*



Widespread but uncommon resident from 1140 to 500 m. **Br:** Nesting has been recorded at Rakewa from Aug to Mar, with a colony size of approximately 250 breeding pairs in 1963. It is unknown, however, whether the colony persists today. **Ref:** Burke & Brown 1970

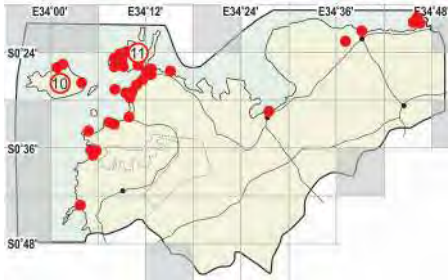
White-breasted Cormorant *Phalacrocorax lucidus*



Local but fairly common resident at 1140 m. **Com:** As with the Reed Cormorant, this species is largely absent from the Winam Gulf, preferring the clearer waters of the main lake, and shorelines of the two large islands in particular.

Phalacrocoracidae: Cormorants

Reed Cormorant *Microcarbo africanus africanus*



Somewhat local but common resident at 1140 m. **Com:** Closely tied to the main lake, and in particular the two large islands, it being largely absent from the turbid waters of the Winam Gulf, with the exception of presence at the Sondu River Estuary.

Anhingidae: Anhingas

African Darter *Anhinga rufa rufa*



Two records at 1140 m: on 5 Oct 1997 at Mbita and on 24 Feb 2000 on Rusinga Island. **Ref:** eBird; Nature Kenya, S. White.

Sagittariidae: Secretarybird

Secretarybird *Sagittarius serpentarius*



One record: a single bird on 7 Oct 2000 at 1200 m in Ruma NP. **Ref:** eBird; Nature Kenya

Pandionidae: Ospreys

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus haliaetus*



Widespread but uncommon passage migrant from 1140 to 1300 m, with eight records in Feb and Aug–Nov. **Com:** Observations tend to be concentrated along migratory funnels and dead-ends such as the Lambwe Valley and the Mbita Peninsula respectively.

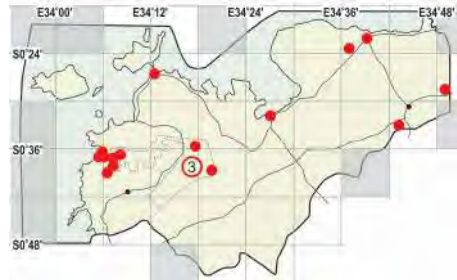
Accipitridae: Kites, Hawks and Eagles

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus caeruleus*



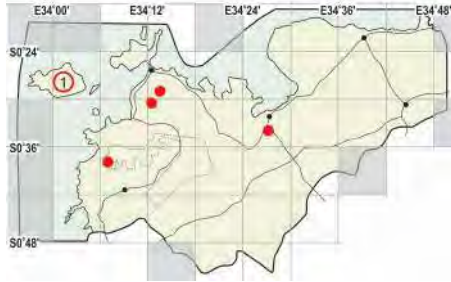
Somewhat local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Com:** Closely associated with the alluvial *Acacia*-grassland belt of the lowlands extending from the Lambwe Valley northeast to the Kendu Bay lowlands.

African Harrier-Hawk *Polyboroides typus typus*



Widespread but only locally fairly common seasonal visitor from 1140 to 2250 m, with all records in Oct–May. **Com:** Most records are from the higher ground of the Gwassu Hills, where a young juvenile has been observed in the month of November, possibly indicating local breeding.

European Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*



Local and uncommon passage migrant from 1300 to 2000 m, with records in Feb–Mar and Nov. **Com:** Presence of this species in the county appears to be concentrated on the hilly terrain of the Kis-ingiri massif.

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*



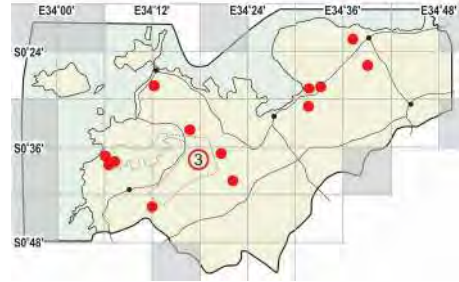
One record: a single bird on 5 Jan 1989 at 1200 m in Ruma NP. **Ref:** eBird; K. Groenendijk

Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini*



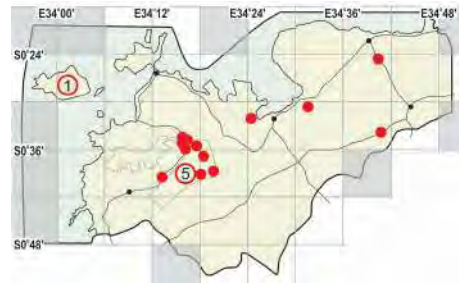
One record: a single bird present from early to mid Jan 2021 at 1200 m in Ruma NP (Fig. 9). **Ref:** M. Wanjohi pers. comm.

Black-chested Snake Eagle *Circaetus pectoralis*



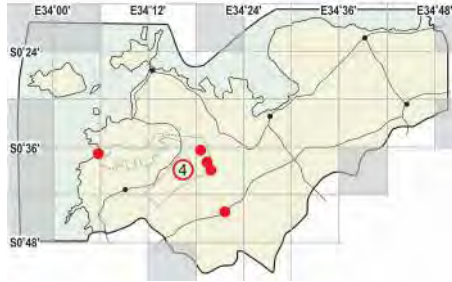
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1200 to 1700 m. **Com:** Observations of this species are concentrated around hilly terrain. Despite limited observer effort in the heavily farmed south of the county, the lack of records there probably reflects genuine absence.

Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus*



Local but fairly common seasonal visitor from 1200 to 1400 m, with records in May–Jan. **Com:** Presence is strongly concentrated on protected areas of the Lambwe Valley in Ruma NP. There is a noteworthy July high count of four migrants on Mfangano Island. **Ref:** eBird; B. Wilson.

Western Banded Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinerascens*



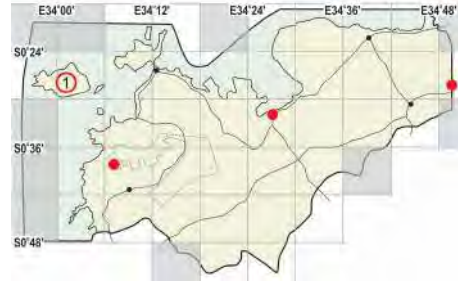
Local and uncommon presumed resident from 1140 to 1400 m, with records in Feb–Mar, Jul–Aug and Oct–Dec (Fig. 9). **Com:** Wooded areas of Ruma NP appear to comprise the stronghold for this species in the county.

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*



Very local and uncommon presumed resident from 1200 to 1300 m, but with an absence of records in Apr–Jun. **Com:** This species is entirely dependent on protected land within Ruma NP, with records elsewhere referring to wandering birds.

Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus anderssoni*



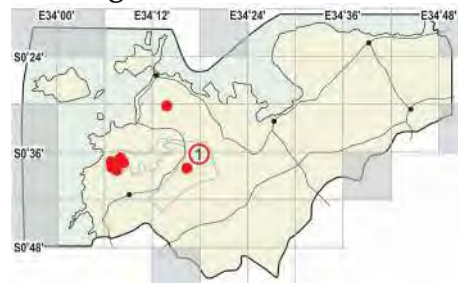
Widespread but scarce resident from 1140 to 2000 m, with a handful of scattered records in Jul, Oct and Dec.

Crowned Eagle *Stephanoaetus coronatus*



Very local and rare resident from 1800 to 2200 m. **Br:** Dependent flying young in January. **Com:** Recorded regularly from 2011 to 2015 but then not again until 2021 following a period of extensive deforestation. It is therefore likely extirpated as a breeding bird, although suitable prey remains fairly common on the western slopes of the hills and could sustain a “floating” non-breeding bird”.

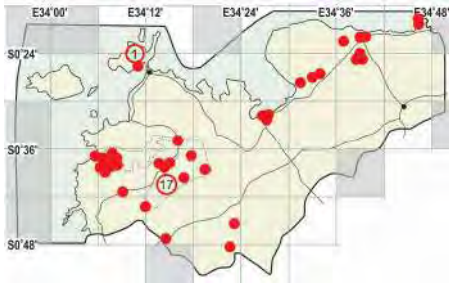
Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus*



Local and uncommon resident from 1200 to 2250 m (Fig. 9). **Br:** Dependent fledged

young in February. **Com:** Closely associated with the high ground of the Gembe and Gwassi Hills, and grasslands in Ruma NP. There has only been one observation since 2017, however, indicative of a possibly declining presence in the county.

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis*



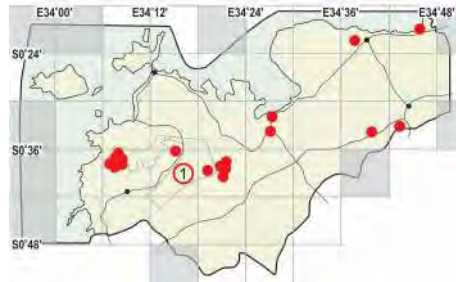
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 2200 m. **Com:** This species shows a clear avoidance of the driest parts of the northwest on the Mbita Peninsula. Two October records from adjacent Rusinga Island are therefore indicative of some local movement of this species associated with the onset of the short rains.

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Clanga pomarina*



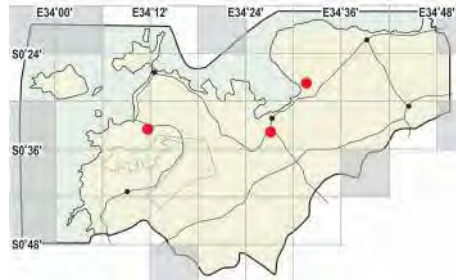
Rather local and uncommon passage migrant from 1200 to 1600 m, with records in Mar–Apr and Nov. **Com:** Single birds appear to favour lightly wooded foothill terrain, being absent at high elevations and comparatively scarce in level, lowland terrain. **Ref:** Lewis & Pearson 1981

Wahlberg's Eagle *Hieraaetus wahlbergi*



Widespread and locally fairly common seasonal visitor from 1200 to 2200 m, with all records from late Aug–Mar. **Br:** Occupied nest in February; occupied nest in October. **Com:** Most observations come from wooded and lightly forested mountainous terrain, including the Gwassi highlands and the Kanyamwa Escarpment at the Kamato Gate of Ruma NP. **Ref:** J. Agutu pers. comm.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*



Widespread but uncommon passage migrant from 1140 to 1200 m, with three scattered records in Feb–Mar. **Ref:** Lewis & Pearson 1981

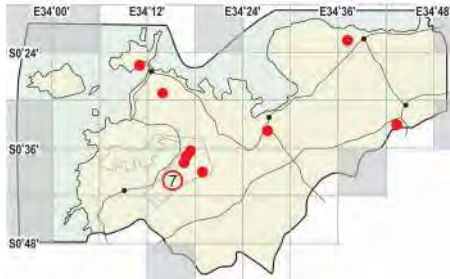
Ayres's Hawk-Eagle *Hieraaetus ayresii*



Very local and uncommon resident from 1250 to 2000 m. **Com:** Two or three pairs

persist in woodlands around the Kamato Gate of Ruma NP and in the Gwass Hills.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax rapax*



Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1550 m. **Com:** Distribution of this species is concentrated in Ruma NP, with records elsewhere probably involving birds wandering from there. It generally avoids steep terrain.

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis orientalis*



Local and uncommon passage migrant from 1140 to 1400 m, recorded in Mar and Nov. **Ref:** Lewis & Pearson 1981

African Hawk-Eagle *Aquila spilogaster*



Two records: a single bird on 21 Jul 2013 at 1200 m in Ruma NP, and three birds together (possibly two adults and a ju-

venile) on 15 Nov 2018 at 1600 m in the Gembe Hills. **Ref:** eBird; R. Vyhmeister

Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*



One record: a single bird on 15 Dec 2020 at 1140 m on Rusinga Island.

Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar aequatorius*



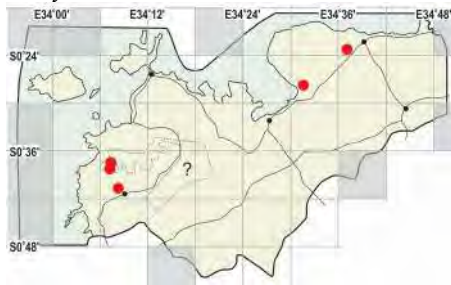
Local and uncommon resident from 1200 to 1300 m. **Com:** The distribution of this species is closely tied to *Acacia-Balanites* woodlands of the Lambwe Valley, and Ruma NP in particular. Most birds are typical, but a dark morph has been photographed on the Gembe Hills.

Dark Chanting Goshawk *Melierax metabates metabates*



Local and uncommon presumed visitor from 1200 and 1300 m, with a handful of records in Jun–Jul, Sep and Dec–Feb.

African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro sparsimfasciatus*



Very local and uncommon resident from 1200 to 2200 m. Presence in Ruma NP requires confirmation. **Com:** A record of an *Accipiter* in the Gwasssi Hills which was originally identified as Ovambo Sparrowhawk (see Bradley *et al.* 2015) has been re-identified as this species after further scrutiny of photographic evidence.

Shikra *Accipiter badius spenurus*



Local and uncommon presumed resident from 1140 to 1500 m, with records

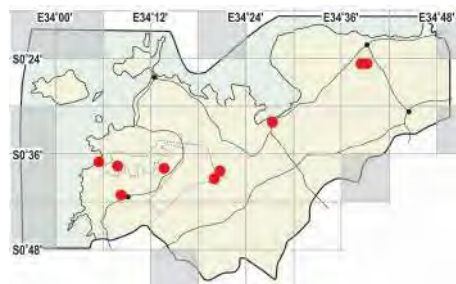
scattered throughout the year. **Br:** $\frac{3}{4}$ grown nestlings in June.

Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes*



Two records: on 29 Oct 2016 at 1140 m at Nyangwethe (juvenile; Fig. 9), and on 13 Nov 2018 at 1200 m near Homa Bay (adult). **Com:** Recent unpublished data show this species to be a regular passage migrant in foothill country in southwest Kenya.

Little Sparrowhawk *Accipiter minullus minullus*



Local and uncommon resident from 1140 to 2000 m. **Com:** Most records come from the vicinity of the Kisingiri massif and Kanyamwa Escarpment

Ovambo Sparrowhawk *Accipiter ovampensis*



One record: a dark morph adult on 20 Dec 2020 at 1200 m in Ruma NP (Fig. 9). **Com:** A previously published record of this species from the Gwasssi Hills (see Bradley *et al.* 2015) was shown to have been an African Goshawk.

Black Sparrowhawk *Accipiter melanoleucus melanoleucus*



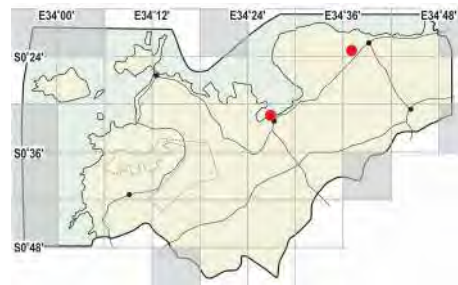
Local and uncommon resident from 1300 to 1500 m, with records scattered through the year. **Br:** Dependent juvenile in November; independent juvenile in October.

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus aeruginosus*



Local but fairly common passage migrant and seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, recorded in Oct–Mar.

African Marsh Harrier *Circus ranivorus*



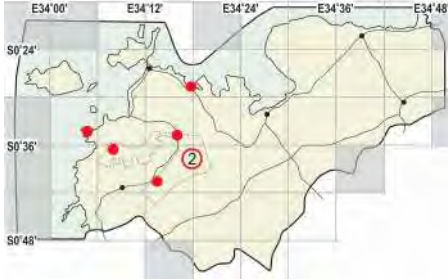
Two records at 1140 m: single birds on 2 Mar 1987 at Homa Bay and on 8 May 2021 at Ondango Swamp. **Ref:** eBird; H. Schekkerman, J. Agutu.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*



Local and uncommon passage migrant from 1200 to 1300 m, with a handful of records in Mar and Nov–Dec.

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*



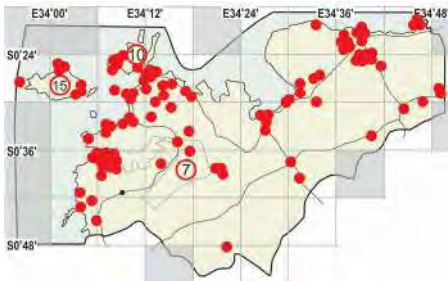
Local and uncommon passage migrant from 1200 to 2000 m, with records in Feb and Oct-Dec.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*



Status unclear. One certain record: on 28 Feb 2022 at 1140 m near Sindo. **Com:** Field observations of *Milvus* kites in Homa Bay County have in almost all cases not been identified to subspecies, and although occurrence of *M. m. migrans* is probable from Sep to Apr, work is needed to ascertain details of distribution and migration phenology. **Ref:** M. Wanjohi pers. comm.

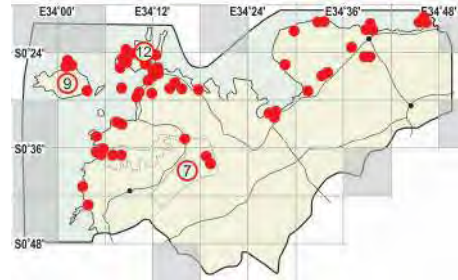
Yellow-billed Kite *Milvus aegyptius parasitus*



Widespread and abundant resident from 1140 to 2000 m. **Com:** All *Milvus* kite re-

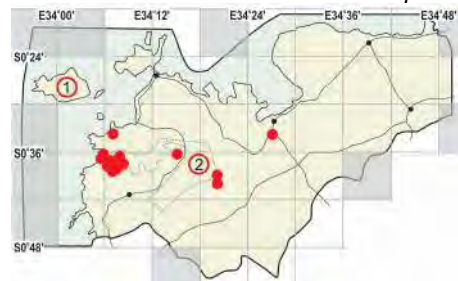
ords in the county except one are treated here, although it is likely that some observations may refer to Black Kite *Milvus migrans*.

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*



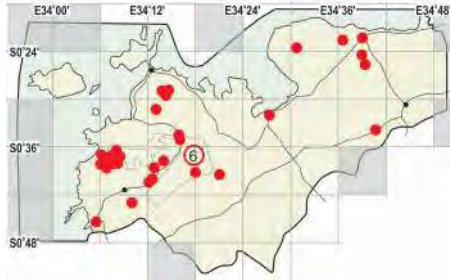
Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1500 m. **Com:** With the exception of a few open pools on the Lambwe River within Ruma NP, and the occasional bird soaring over the Gwassi highlands, distribution of this species is entirely restricted to the shorelines of Lake Victoria and nearby rice paddies.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo vulpinus*



Local but sometimes fairly common passage migrant and seasonal visitor from 1200 to 2200 m, with records from Oct to Apr. **Com:** There are high counts of 50+ birds over high ridges in the Gwassi Hills in late October, and 20+ at Homa Bay in mid-March. **Ref:** Lewis & Pearson 1986, Bradley *et al.* 2015

Augur Buzzard *Buteo augur*



Widespread and fairly common resident from 1300 to 2200 m. **Com:** The highest densities appear to be associated with hilly and mountainous terrain, and primarily in the western half of the county.

Otididae: Bustards

[White-bellied Bustard *Eupodotis senegalensis erlangeri*]

A June report from Ruma NP is not well documented. Treated here as unconfirmed.

Black-bellied Bustard *Lissotis melanogaster melanogaster*



Very local and generally uncommon resident at 1200–1300 m (Fig. 12). **Br:** Not confirmed but displaying recorded in August and November. **Com:** This species is wholly dependent on the grassland habitat protected within Ruma NP for its continued survival in the county.

Sarothruridae: Flufftails

Buff-spotted Flufftail *Sarothrura elegans elegans*



One record: a bird calling on 28 Oct 2015 at 2200 m in the Gwasssi Hills. **Ref:** Bradley 2018

Rallidae: Rails, Crakes and Coots

African Rail *Rallus caerulescens*



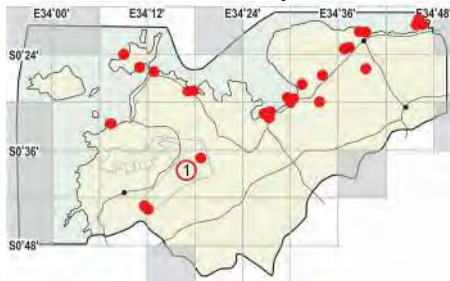
Two records: on 25 Apr 1987 at 1200 m in Ruma NP and 13 Nov 2018 at 1140 m at Ondango Swamp. **Com:** This skulking species is doubtless overlooked in the county, where there is an abundance of suitable habitat around the periphery of Lake Victoria. **Ref:** EABR 1987

African Crane *Crex egregia*



One record: two birds on 25 Apr 1987 at 1200 m in Ruma NP. **Com:** This species likely occurs more regularly than this single record suggests. **Ref:** EABR 1987

Black Crane *Amaurornis flavirostra*



Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Com:** Presence is mostly restricted to the marshy shores of the Winam Gulf but for small numbers along the Lambwe River, both inside and outside Ruma NP.

African Swampfen *Porphyrio madagascariensis*



Two records at 1140 m: on 12 Feb 1995 at the Sondu River Estuary and 1 Aug 2017 at Ondango Swamp. **Br:** Dependent fledged young in August. **Med:** ML

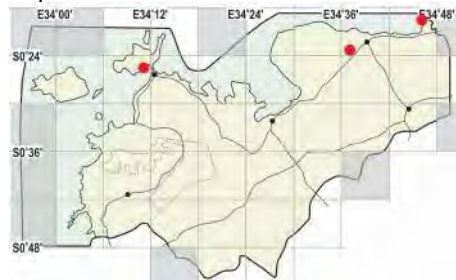
#449774281 **Ref:** Nasirwa *et al.* 1995, J. Agutu pers. comm.

Allen's Gallinule *Porphyrio alleni*



One record: 2 Mar 1987 at 1140 m at Homa Bay. **Ref:** eBird; H. Schekkerman

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus chloropus*



Local and scarce presumed resident at 1140 m, with three scattered records in Feb, May and Oct. **Ref:** Nasirwa *et al.* 1995

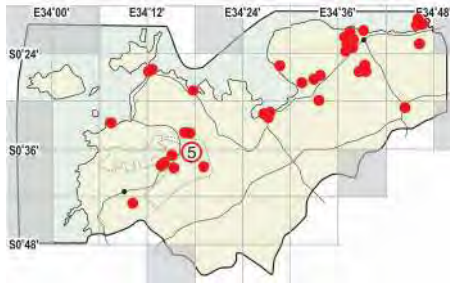
Red-knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata*



Two records at 1140 m: on 3 Aug 2017 at Ondango Swamp and 9 May 2020 on Mfangano Island. **Med:** ML #449973301 **Ref:** eBird; A. Karstad, J. Agutu pers. comm.

Gruidae: Cranes

Grey Crowned Crane *Balearica regulorum gibbericeps*



Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1500 m. **Br:** ½ grown young in March. **Com:** Marsh habitat between Kendu Bay and Homa Bay as well as swampy ground in the Lambwe Valley, support most of the local population. There is a Feb high count of 498 birds at the Olala Rice Fields and a period of lower reporting frequency in Apr–Aug. **Ref:** eBird; B. Marv

Turnicidae: Buttonquails

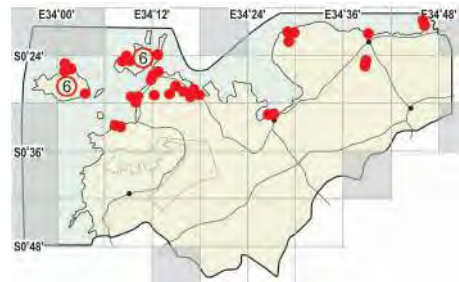
Common Buttonquail *Turnix sylvaticus lepurana*



Very local and scarce presumed seasonal visitor from 1200 to 1300 m, with a handful of records in Oct–Nov.

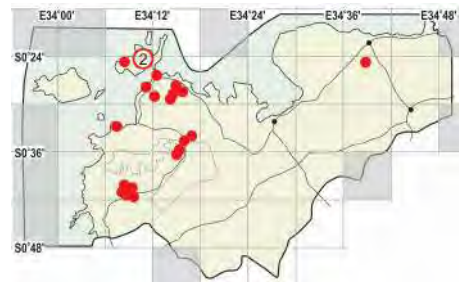
Burhinidae: Stone-curlews and Thick-knees

Water Thick-knee *Burhinus vermiculatus vermiculatus*



Local but common resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Br:** Incubating in May. **Com:** This species is fond of rocky shoreline areas of the Winam Gulf, and immediately adjacent, alluvial lowland areas, in particular in the dry northwest.

Spotted Thick-knee *Burhinus capensis capensis*



Local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Br:** Dependent juveniles in September. **Com:** Unlike the previous species, this thick-knee is not tied to water, instead favouring stony ground inland. Apparent absence from Mfangano Island is probably real.

Recurvirostridae: Stilts and Avocets

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*



Local but fairly common presumed resident from 1140 to 1200 m, which is reported only infrequently from Jun to Sep. **Com:** Closely tied to the marshy shorelines of the Winam Gulf, though it is also present on both large islands. There is a Feb high count of 300 birds at Lake Simbi. **Ref:** eBird; V. Salo

Charadriidae: Plovers and Lapwings

Long-toed Lapwing *Vanellus crassirostris crassirostris*



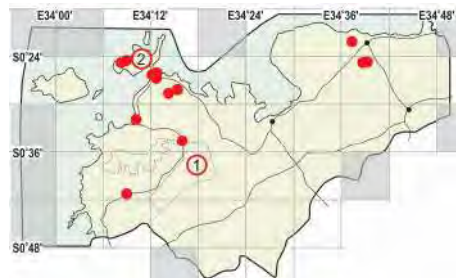
Local and uncommon presumed seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1150 m, recorded in Jul-Aug and Nov-Apr. **Com:** Closely tied to the marshy shorelines of the northeast lowlands at the Sondu River Estuary and near Homa Bay. A record from Mfangano Island presumably involved a wandering bird.

Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus*



Local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 1200 m. **Com:** The distribution of this species is largely restricted to shorelines of the Winam Gulf and it is inexplicably scarce on the two large islands.

Crowned Lapwing *Vanellus coronatus coronatus*



Local and generally uncommon resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Com:** Most records are from the driest part of the county in the northwest near Rusinga Island and Mbita.

African Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus senegallus lateralis*



Local and rare visitor (?) from 1200 to 1350 m, with two records in Jun and one in Nov. **Med:** ML # 125638651

Brown-chested Lapwing *Vanellus superciliosus*



One record: on 10 Sep 1977 at 1140 m at Kendu Bay. **Com:** This record fits well with a pattern of scarce Jul–Oct presence from Busia District in west Kenya south to the Grumeti River Valley in north-central Tanzania. **Ref:** Britton 1980

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula tundrae*



Local but fairly common passage migrant and seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1200 m, with records from late Sep to mid Apr. **Com:** The range of this species is largely confined to the northeast lowlands of the Winam Gulf, as well as both large islands. We have recorded an April high count of 21 birds at the Sondu River Estuary.

[Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius curonicus*]

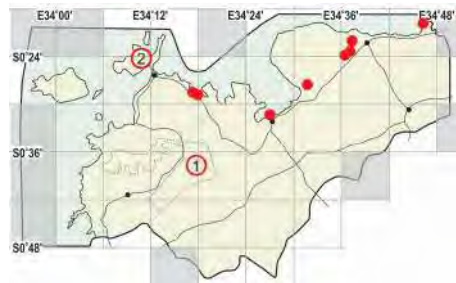
A Dec report from the Kendu Bay area is not well documented. Treated here as unconfirmed.

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius*



Local and uncommon resident from 1140 to 1200 m. **Com:** Presence in the north-east of the county is concentrated at the saline alluvial deposits that surround Mount Homa, and at the Sondu River Estuary.

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris tricollaris*



Local and generally uncommon seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1200 m, with all records in Oct–May. **Com:** The apparent absence of this species from the county in Jun–Sep is supported by data from elsewhere in the eastern Lake Victoria basin and appears to be real.

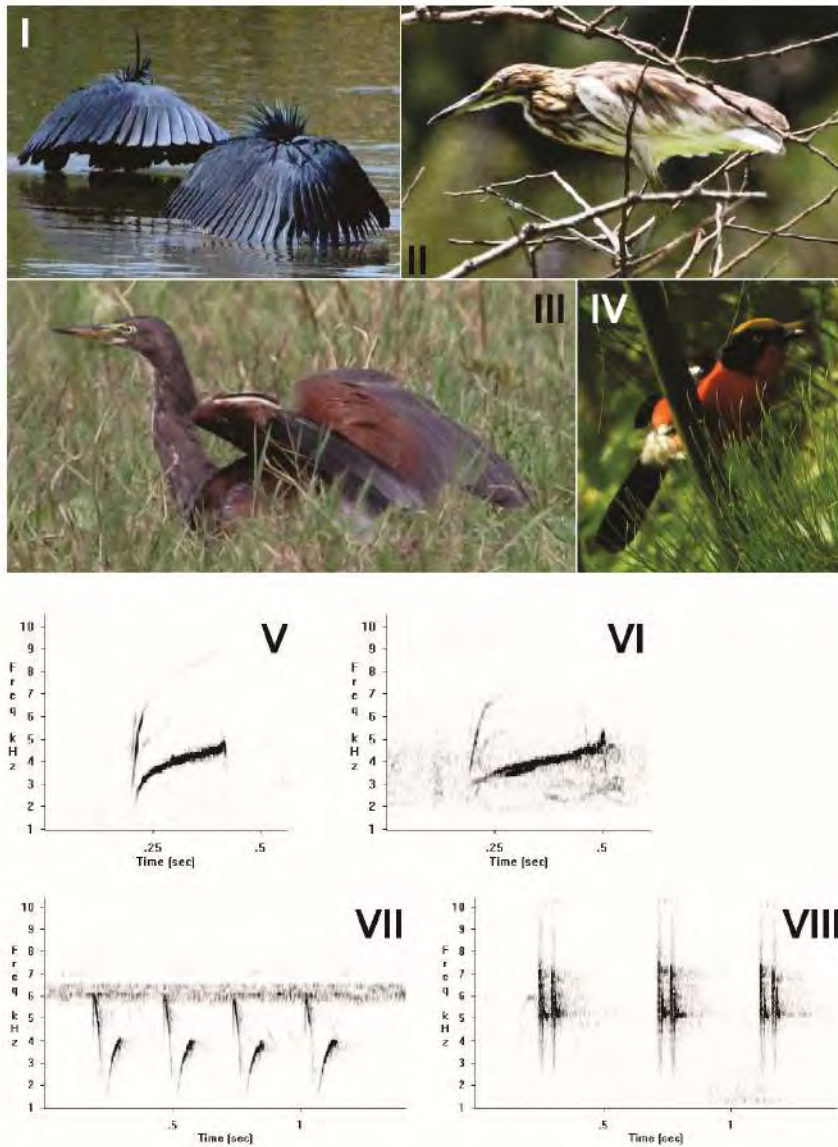


Figure 8. Extensive marsh and swamp habitats are largely confined to the northeast of the county in the vicinity of Kendu Bay with smaller wetlands scattered elsewhere. Several uncommon piscivorous species of these habitats include Black Heron *Egretta ardesiaca* (I: Kamenya Dam; Jeam Agutu), Malagasy Pond Heron *Ardeola idae* (II: Lambwe River; Victor Ikawa) and Rufous-bellied Heron *Ardeola rufiventris* (III: Ondango Swamp; Jason Fidorra), while the regionally endemic Papyrus Gonolek *Laniarius mufumbiri* is also locally present (IV: Sondu Estuary; Victor Ikawa). Also shown are calls of two forms of Winding Cisticola *Cisticola marginatus* in the county: taxon *suahelicus* at Nairobi (V: ML #14391; Myles North) and the Lambwe Valley (VI: James Bradley), and taxon *nyanzae* at Siaya County (VII: James Bradley) and Mbita (VIII: James Bradley).

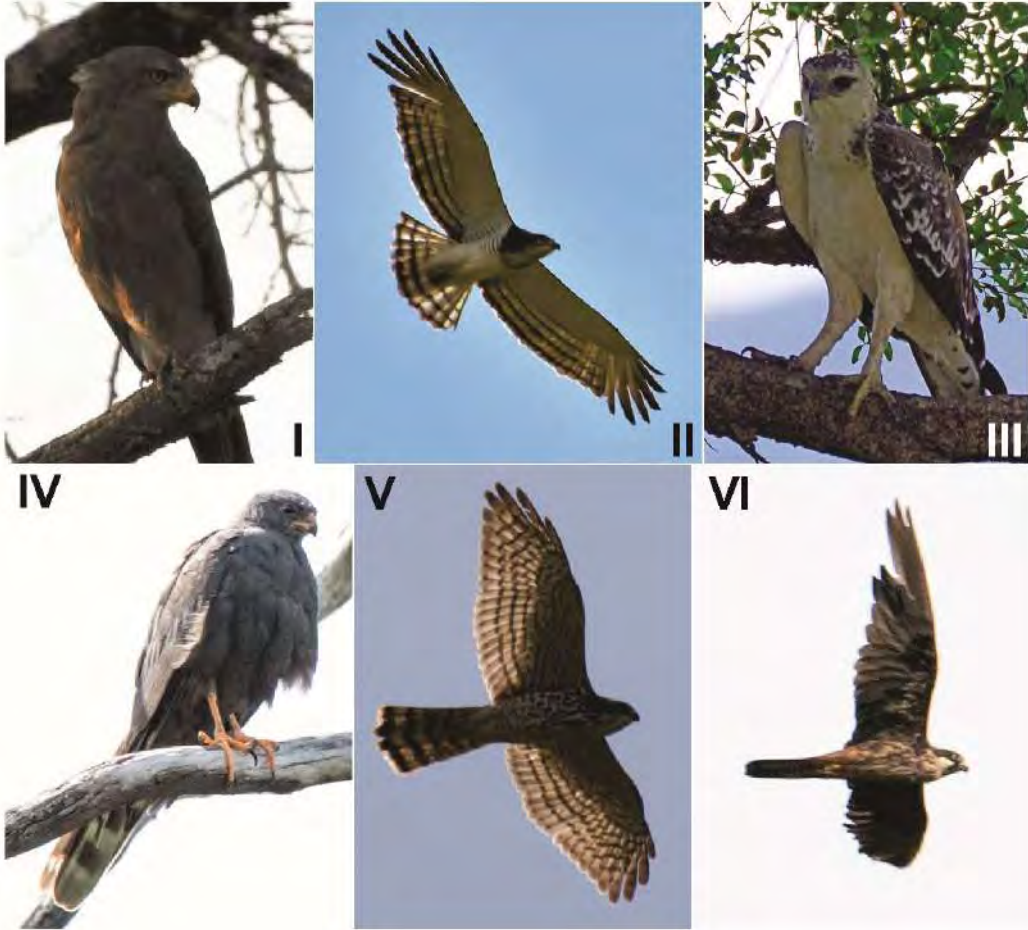


Figure 9. Some charismatic and uncommon birds of prey are well represented in the county. These include Western Banded Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinerascens* (I: Ruma NP; Victor Ikawa), Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini* (II: Ruma NP; Marto Wanjohi), Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus* (III: Ruma NP; Mike Loomis (iNaturalist #19295758)), Ovambo Sparrowhawk *Accipiter ovampensis* (IV: Ruma NP; Peter Steward), Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes* (V: Nyangwethe; Simon Carter) and Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora* (VI: Gwasssi Hills; Peter Steward).

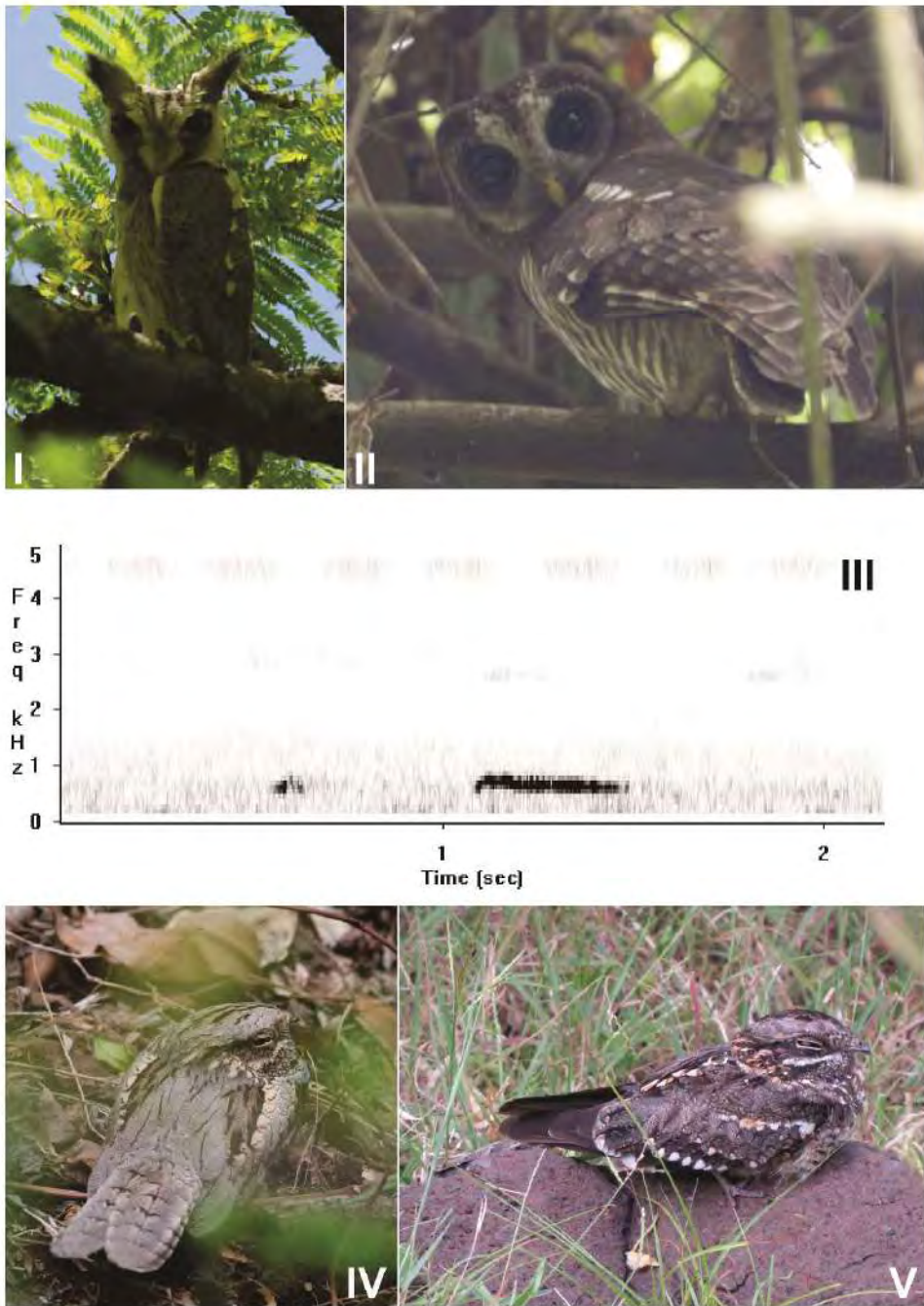
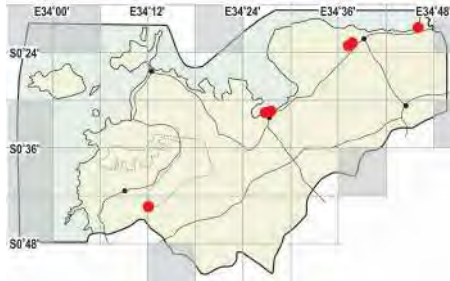


Figure 10. Owls and nightjars are well represented in the county and undoubtedly overlooked. Less common species include Northern White-faced Owl *Ptilopsis leucotis* (I: Kendu Bay; Victor Ikawa, and III: Kendu Bay; Jeam Agutu), African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii* (II: Gwasssi Hills; Victor Ikawa), Eurasian Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* (IV: Gwasssi Hills; Simon Carter) and Square-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus fossii* (V: near Mbita; James Bradley).

Rostratulidae: Painted-snipes

Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*



Very local and uncommon seasonal visitor at 1140 m, with a handful of dry season records in Feb–Mar and Aug–Sep.

Jacanidae: Jacanas

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*



Fairly widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1200 m. **Com:** Present at most marshes of the Winam Gulf lowlands, though largely absent from both of the two large islands.

Scolopacidae: Sandpipers and Snipes

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa limosa*



One record: 4 Sep 1977 at 1140 m near Kendu Bay. **Com:** The observation was made at a seasonal lake, likely Ondango Swamp. **Ref:** EABR 1977

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*



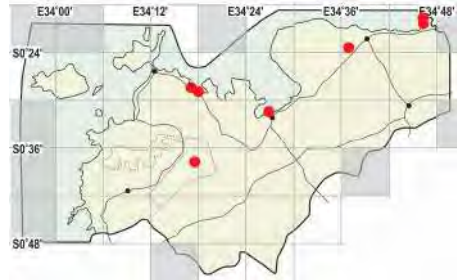
Local but fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant from 1140 to 1200 m, recorded from late Aug to early May. **Com:** The range of this species is closely tied to the Ondango Swamp and the Sondu River Estuary in the northeast of the county.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*



Very local and uncommon passage migrant from 1140 to 1300 m, with three records in Mar–Apr. **Med:** ML #428512981

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*



Widespread but uncommon seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, recorded from mid Nov to mid Apr.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*



One record: 11 Feb 1979 at 1140 m at Kendu Bay. **Ref:** EABR 1979

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*



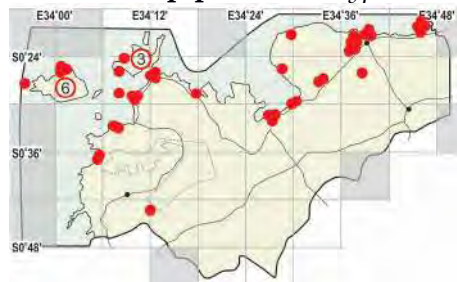
One record: 30 Sep 1975 at 1140 m near Kendu Bay. **Ref:** EANHS Ornithological Subcommittee 1977

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*



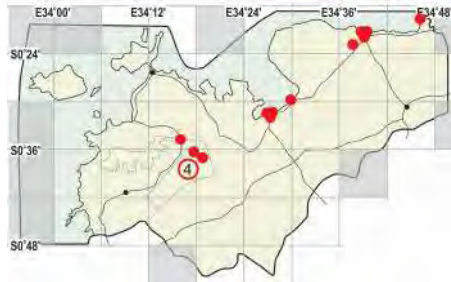
Locally fairly common seasonal visitor and passage migrant from 1140 to 1200 m, recorded from late Aug to mid Apr. **Com:** All records come from the lakeshore and/or immediately peripheral sites, with no marked presence inland. There is a February high count of 43 birds at Lake Simbi. **Ref:** Nasirwa *et al.* 1995

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*



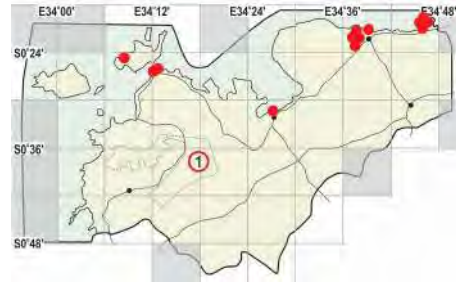
Widespread and common seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, recorded from mid Aug to early May. **Com:** This species is present along all lake shorelines, on both islands, and locally, inland as well.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*



Local and generally uncommon seasonal visitor and passage migrant from 1140 to 1300 m, recorded from early Aug to late Mar.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*



Somewhat local but fairly common seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, with records from late Aug to late Mar.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*



Rather local and uncommon seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1200 m, with records from early Oct to mid Apr. **Com:** The distribution of this species is closely tied to Ondango Swamp and the Sondu River Estuary in the northeast of the county, with sporadic wandering birds elsewhere.

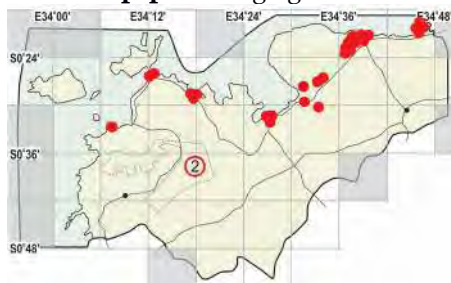
Glareolidae: Pratincoles and Coursers

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*



Very local but sometimes numerous presumed seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1200 m, with three Dec-Feb records. **Br:** Not confirmed but a flock of 120 adults with independent juveniles at the Sondu River Estuary on 16 Dec 2021 indicates possible local breeding. **Com:** Presence is closely tied to the Sondu River Estuary and northeast lowlands near Nyangweso, where there is a February high count of 500 birds. **Med:** ML #396350051 **Ref:** J. Oduori pers. comm.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*



Widespread and common seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, with records from late Aug to early May.

Madagascar Pratincole *Glareola ocularis*



One record: a flock of 'hundreds' at 1140 m at Kendu Bay on 21-22 Aug 1920. **Com:** Some authors have expressed doubt about this record, although we see no reason that the account should be inaccurate. **Ref:** Lewis & Pomeroy 1989

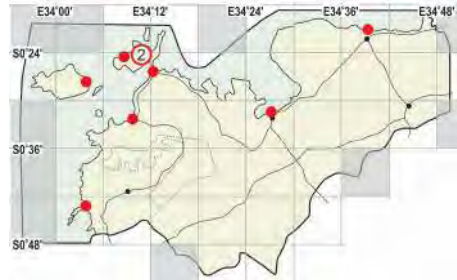
Laridae: Gulls, Terns and Skimmers

African Skimmer *Rynchops flavirostris*



Very local and uncommon presumed seasonal visitor at 1140 m, with three records in Dec-Jan. **Com:** Presence appears to be confined to the Sondu River Estuary, and we have recorded a January high count of 25 birds. **Med:** ML #396350071.

Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus poiocephalus*



Widespread but uncommon visitor at 1140 m, with scattered wet season records in Apr-Jun and Oct-Jan.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus fuscus*



Widespread but uncommon passage migrant at 1140 m, recorded in Feb-Jun and Sep-Oct. **Com:** Unlike many waterbirds in the county, the distribution of this species appears to be more closely tied to the main lake vs. the Winam Gulf.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica nilotica*



Somewhat local but fairly common seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1200 m, recorded from late Aug to late Mar. **Com:**

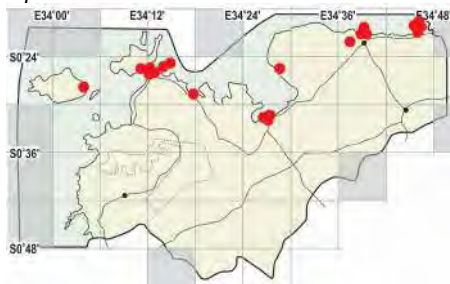
Most records come from the Rusinga Island area and the northeast lowlands near Kendu Bay.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida delalandii*



Local and uncommon seasonal visitor at 1140 m, recorded from early Oct to late Mar.

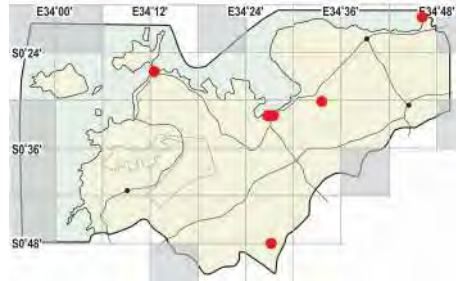
White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*



Local but sometimes abundant seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1200 m, with records from late Aug to early May. **Com:** Closely tied to the Winam Gulf, with only occasional presence on Mfangano Island. We have recorded a January high count of 5000+ birds off the northeast shores of Rusinga Island.

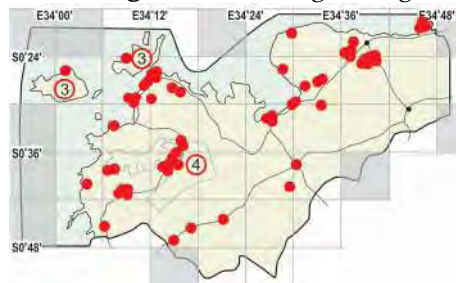
Columbidae: Pigeons and Doves

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*



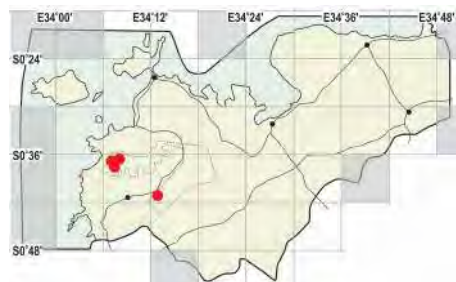
Feral birds are rather local and uncommon residents from 1140 to 1300 m. **Com:** Only rarely found away from Homa Bay.

Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea guinea*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1800 m. **Br:** Nest-building in December.

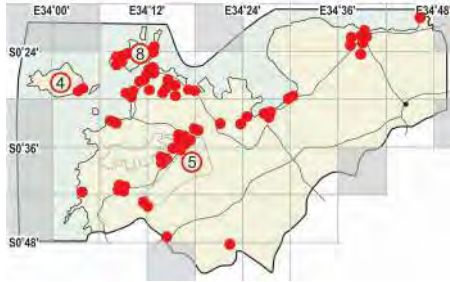
Lemon Dove *Columba larvata larvata*



Very local and scarce presumed seasonal visitor from 1300 to 2200 m, with records from Sep to Nov. **Com:** A calling bird in Ruma NP during a period of heavy rains in early November 2014 is thought to have been possibly a rare altitudinal mi-

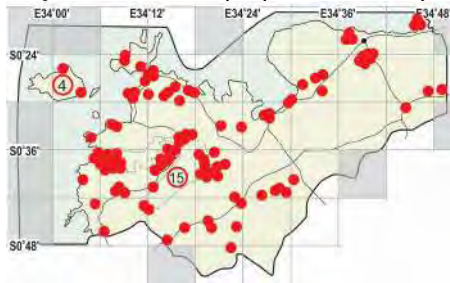
grant from the nearby Gwasssi Hills, although it may also occur more regularly there than is known. **Med:** ML # 373782911

Mourning Collared Dove *Streptopelia decipiens perspicillata*



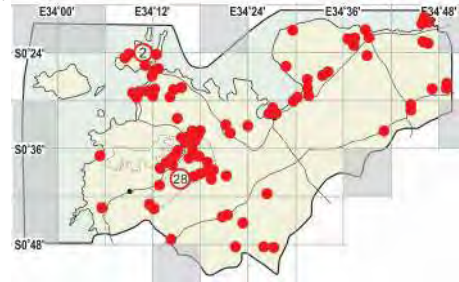
Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Br:** Occupied nests in August and September. **Com:** The distribution of this species aligns well with regions of the county characterized by lower rainfall and *Acacia*-dominated habitat.

Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*



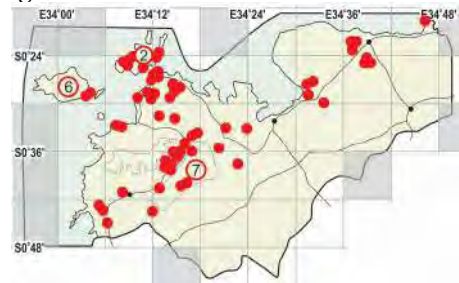
Widespread and abundant resident from 1140 to 2200 m.

Ring-necked Dove *Streptopelia capicola tropica*



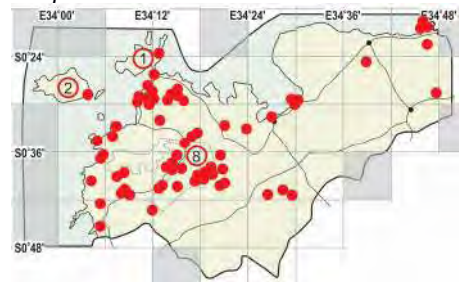
Widespread and abundant resident from 1140 to 1500 m. **Com:** This species is the only one of the common dove species in the county which is absent from Mfangano Island.

Laughing Dove *Spilopelia senegalensis senegalensis*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1400 m.

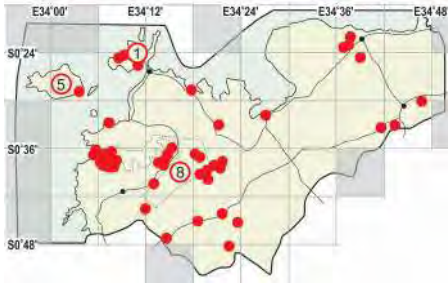
Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1600 m. **Com:** Most records are from the drier western half of the county, including both large islands, it being absent from the humid lower Kuja River Valley in the southeast. Locally,

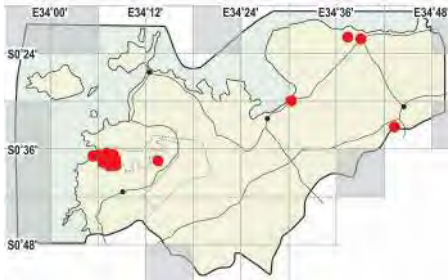
this species occurs alongside the Blue-spotted Wood Dove.

Blue-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur afer*



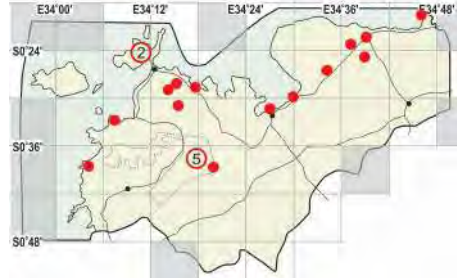
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 2100 m. **Com:** The distribution of this species, including both large islands, is more closely tied to locally humid sites than the Emerald-spotted Wood Dove, with a higher component of evergreen vegetation.

Tambourine Dove *Turtur tympanistria*



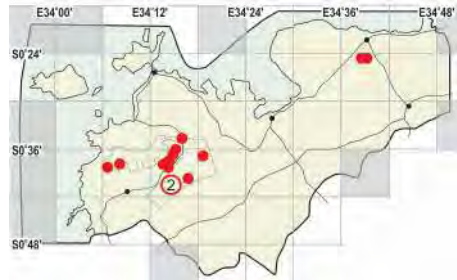
Local and generally uncommon resident from 1140 to 2200 m. **Com:** Most numerous in the Gwassi Hills, although extensive deforestation from 2014 to 2020 has resulted in population declines there.

Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis capensis*



Fairly widespread but generally uncommon, presumed resident from 1140 to 1300 m, with records scattered throughout the year but with a peak in reporting frequency in Nov-Dec. **Com:** Some local movement of this species seems likely, although records are presently too few to infer any detailed patterns in seasonal occurrence. Singing birds have been recorded in November.

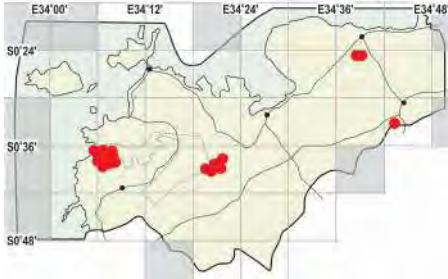
African Green Pigeon *Treron calvus gibberifrons*



Local and uncommon resident, from 1200 to 1900 m. **Br:** Nest building in December. **Com:** Closely tied to the lower slopes of the Gwassi Hills and the Lambwe Valley, where a high-water table supports the growth of *Ficus* trees. We have recorded a March high count of 50+ birds from the western Gwassi foothills and a reduction in reporting frequency from May to Sep suggests some local dispersal.

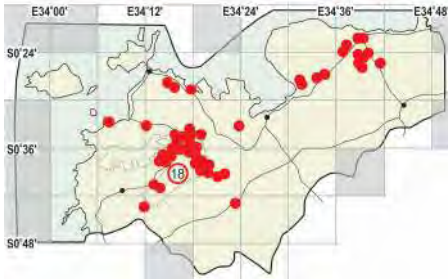
Musophagidae: Turacos

Ross's Turaco *Musophaga rossae*



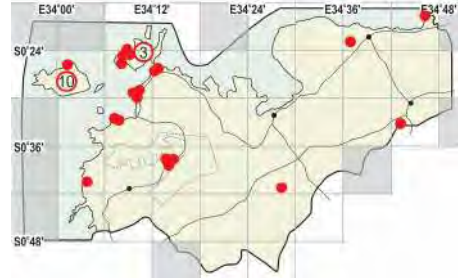
Very local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 2250 m. **Br:** Nest building in October. **Com:** Presence is primarily in the Gwassu Hills and near the Kamato Gate of Ruma NP.

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



Widely occurring but only locally common resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Com:** Bird density in Ruma NP is higher than anywhere else in Kenya by some margin, with habitat for this species presumably being optimal there.

Eastern Plantain-eater *Crinifer zonurus*



Widely occurring but only locally fairly common resident from 1140 to 1550 m. **Com:** Most numerous in the northwest of the county where it favours large semi-deciduous and evergreen trees on mostly rocky ground. Despite the narrow geographic scale covered here, there is only very limited spatial overlap between this species and the Bare-faced Go-away-bird.

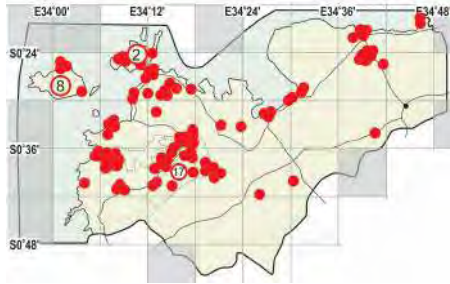
Cuculidae: Cuckoos

Blue-headed Coucal *Centropus monachus fischeri*



Very local and mostly uncommon resident at 1140 m. **Com:** Presence is closely tied to the larger swamps along the shores of the Winam Gulf, and it is only recorded with any frequency at the Sondu River Estuary.

White-browed Coucal *Centropus superciliosus loandae*



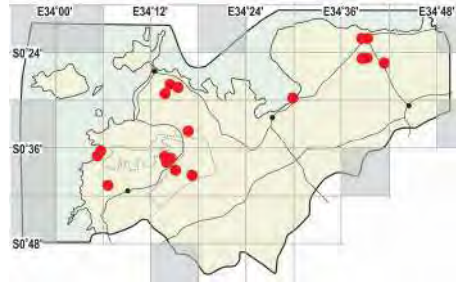
Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 2100 m. **Br:** Fledged young in July. **Com:** This species is much scarcer in the intensively farmed southeast of the county in the Kuja River Valley, than in areas elsewhere that are only farmed for subsistence.

Black Coucal *Centropus grillii*



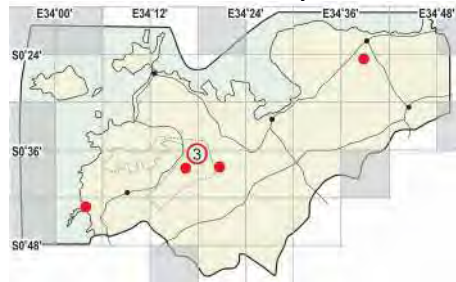
Very local and scarce presumed resident from 1200 to 1300 m, recorded in Jun and Oct to Nov (Fig. 12). **Br:** Dependent juvenile in November. **Com:** This species is entirely dependent on the protected grasslands of Ruma NP.

Levaillant's Cuckoo *Clamator levaillantii*



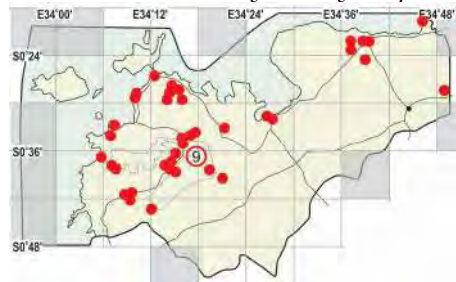
Widespread and sometimes fairly common seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1600 m, recorded from Oct to Jul. **Br:** Dependent juveniles (host: Arrow-marked Babbler) in June, July and October.

Jacobin Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus*



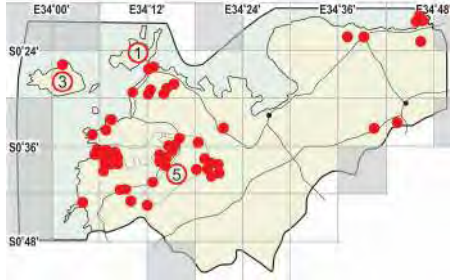
Local and uncommon seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, with records in Mar, May to Jun, Sep and Nov. **Br:** Dependent fledged young in September. **Ref:** J. Agutu pers. comm.

Diederik Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius*



Widespread and fairly common resident and seasonal visitor from 1140 to 2000 m, year-round, though with peaks in abundance in Mar and Nov.

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas*



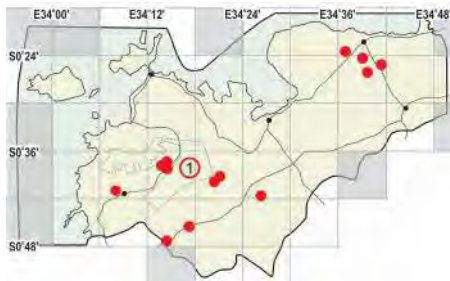
Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 2200 m. **Br:** Eggs in June (host Marico Sunbird); dependent juvenile in August.

African Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus*



Very local and uncommon presumed resident from 1140 to 2200 m. **Br:** Independent juvenile in February. **Com:** Though formerly not uncommon in the Gwassu Hills, the frequency of reports has declined noticeably since 2015 alongside extensive deforestation.

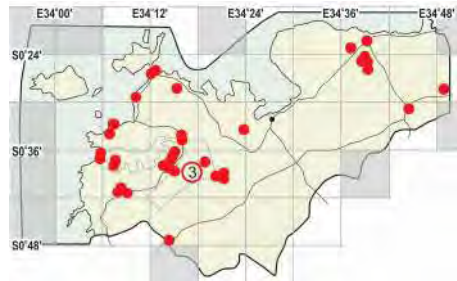
Black Cuckoo *Cuculus clamosus*



Rather local and uncommon seasonal visitor from 1200 to 1400 m, recorded in Feb to Aug. **Com:** All birds assigned to subspecies have been of the nominate

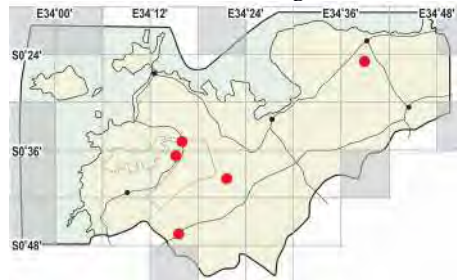
form, although *C. c. gabonensis* could feasibly occur.

Red-chested Cuckoo *Cuculus solitarius*



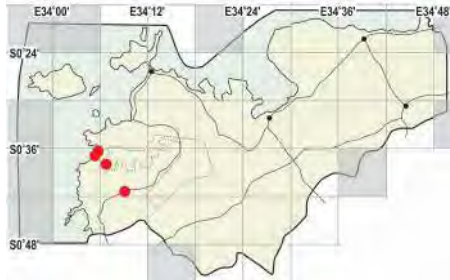
Widespread and fairly common resident and/or seasonal visitor from 1140 to 2000 m, recorded year-round but with a peak in abundance from Feb to May. **Br:** Dependent juveniles in June and July (hosts: Dark-capped Bulbul and White-browed Robin-Chat).

African Cuckoo *Cuculus gularis*



Widespread but scarce passage migrant from 1200 to 1400 m, with a handful of scattered records in Jan, Mar and Jun.

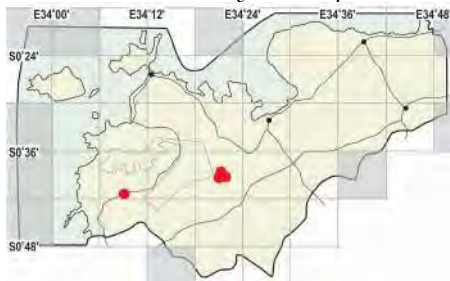
Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus canorus*



Very local and uncommon passage migrant from 1140 to 1900 m, with records in Mar and Oct–Nov. **Com:** Presence of this species in the county appears to be closely tied to the wooded and forested areas of the Gwasssi Hills.

Tytonidae: Barn Owls

Western Barn Owl *Tyto alba poensis*



Very local and scarce resident from 1200 to 1300 m. **Com:** There are resident pairs in Magunga and near the Kamato Gate to Ruma NP, though it is doubtless overlooked elsewhere.

Strigidae: Owls

African Scops Owl *Otus senegalensis*



One record: a family found roosting on 30 Apr 2021 at 1140 m at Ondango Swamp. **Br:** Dependent fledged young in April. **Com:** This species is probably overlooked and under-reported in the county.

Northern White-faced Owl *Ptilopsis leucotis*

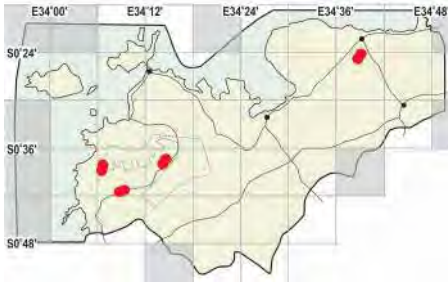


Very local and scarce resident at 1250 m. **Com:** Birds in the Lambwe Valley (green markers) may involve this species or possibly Southern White-faced Owl, but song of resident birds recorded at Kendu Bay is readily identifiable as *P. leucotis* (Fig. 10). **Ref:** J. Agutu pers. comm.

[Southern White-faced Owl *Ptilopsis granti*]

Zimmerman *et al.* (1996) referred birds in the Lambwe Valley to southern *P. granti*. However, given the presence of *leucotis* in the region, as verified by voice, we treat the present species as unconfirmed pending an audio recording.

Spotted Eagle-Owl *Bubo africanus africanus*



Very local and uncommon resident from 1300 to 1900 m. **Com:** Presence of this species appears to be centred around the southern and eastern slopes of the Gwasssi Hills though it may well be more numerous in the county than these few records suggest.

Verreaux's Eagle-Owl *Bubo lacteus*



Local and uncommon resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Br:** Occupied nest in August. **Com:** A pair resident in riparian woods at Nyangwethe comprises the only currently known territory in the county.

African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii*



Very local and uncommon resident from 1300 to 2200 m (Fig. 10). **Com:** Distribution of this species is closely tied to rem-

nant forest habitat on the Gwasssi Hills and near the Kamato Gate of Ruma NP.

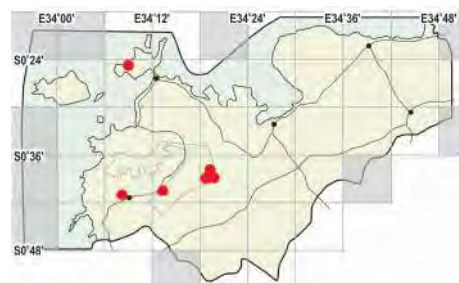
Caprimulgidae: Nightjars

European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*



One record: a roosting bird on 28 Oct 2016 at 1500 m in the Gwasssi Hills (Fig. 10). **Com:** The bird observed was identified as *C. e. uniwini* (G. Backhurst pers. comm.) but other subspecies may also occur.

Swamp Nightjar *Caprimulgus natalensis natalensis*



Local and uncommon resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Com:** Presence of this species in the county is closely tied to the swampy grasslands protected within Ruma NP. **Med:** ML #455722391 **Ref:** Bradley 2018

Plain Nightjar *Caprimulgus inornatus*



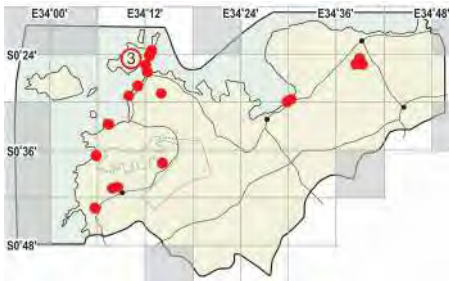
One record: a single bird on 25 Dec 2020 at 1140 m on Mfangano Island. **Med:** ML #291023621

Freckled Nightjar *Caprimulgus tristigma tristigma*



Two records: calling birds at 1450 m in the Gembe Hills on 27 Nov 2017 and on 14 Nov 2018. **Com:** Suitable habitat elsewhere in the county has not been surveyed and this species may well be overlooked. **Med:** XC #395924 **Ref:** Bradley 2018

Slender-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus clarus*



Somewhat local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Br:** Eggs in November. **Com:** This is the most numerous nightjar in the county, and par-

ticularly so in the drier areas around Mbita. **Ref:** J. Agutu pers. comm.

Square-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus fossii*



One certain record: a bird found on the same roost on 5 and 8 Mar 2021 at 1250 m on the northern slopes of the Gembe Hills (Fig. 10). **Com:** This species may be overlooked in the county, with unverified reports from Rusinga Island.

Pennant-winged Nightjar *Caprimulgus vexillarius*



One record: a bird collected on 30 Aug 1918 at 1150 m at Kendu Bay. **Ref:** van Someren 1922, FMNH #194498

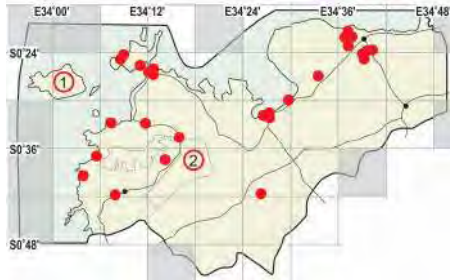
Apodidae: Swifts

Scarce Swift *Schoutedenapus myoptilus*



Two records: pairs at 1600 and 2000 m in the Gwassi Hills on 23 Feb 2012 and 18 Mar 2022. **Com:** This species may breed in the Gwassi Hills; birds observed in March 2022 were patrolling a tall cliff face. Meanwhile, swifts thought to be possibly this species were observed on the Gwassi Hills in January 2011.

African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus*



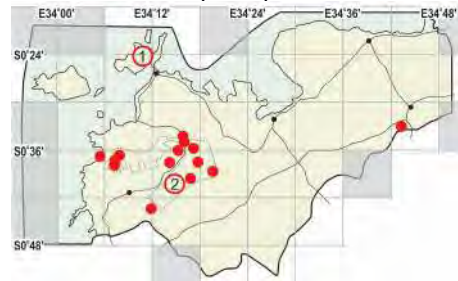
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Com:** Most records of this species are from inland sites with comparatively few from lake shorelines.

Mottled Swift *Tachymarptis aequatorialis aequatorialis*



One record: a single bird with other swifts on 28 Oct 2015 at 2250 m in the Gwassi Hills.

Common Swift *Apus apus*



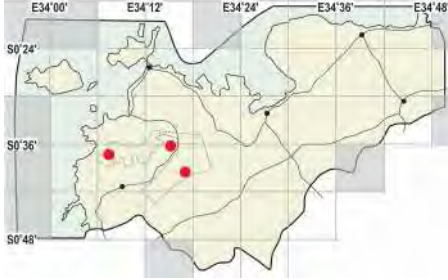
Local but common passage migrant from 1200 to 2200 m, recorded in Jan and Sep to Nov. **Com:** The distribution of this species is closely tied to the high ridges of the Gwassi Hills and the low grasslands of Ruma NP. A report of thousands of swifts at the latter site in August also probably refers to this species.

Nyanza Swift *Apus niansae niansae*



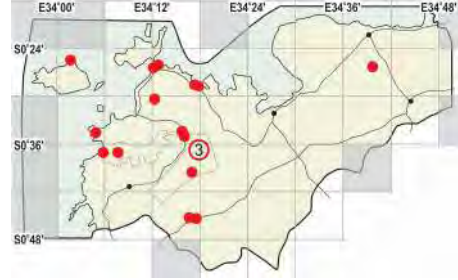
One satisfactory record: many birds on 9 Sep 1993 at 1140 m at Remba Island. **Ref:** Anon 1994

African Black Swift *Apus barbatus roehli*



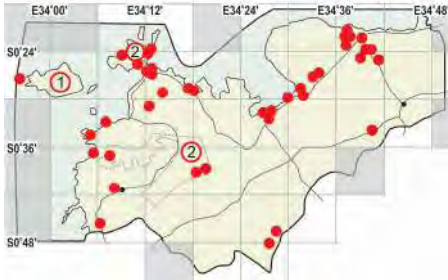
Local and scarce visitor from 1300 to 2200 m, with two records in Mar and one in Nov. **Com:** The identity of birds concerning all three of these records was verified by voice as well as appearance.

White-rumped Swift *Apus caffer*



Fairly widespread but uncommon seasonal visitor from 1140 to 2100 m, recorded from Oct to Jun. **Br:** An occupied nest in a culvert in March

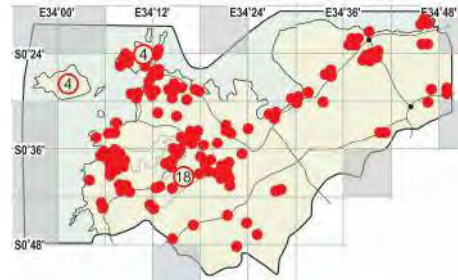
Little Swift *Apus affinis*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 2000 m. **Br:** Occupied nest in March. **Com:** Most records of this species are below 1500 m.

Coliidae: Mousebirds

Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus*



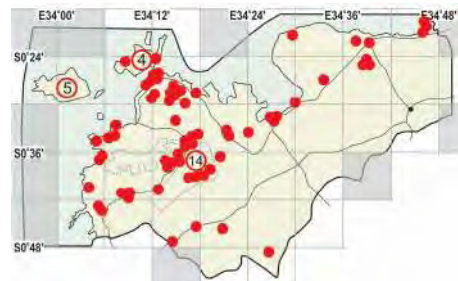
Widespread and abundant resident from 1140 to 2250 m.

Horus Swift *Apus horus horus*



Two records: single birds on 20 Feb 2012 at 1800 m in the Gembe Hills, and 14 Nov 2018 at 1200 m on Rusinga Island. **Med:** ML #138550741

Blue-naped Mousebird *Urocolius macrourus*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Br:** Nest building in March; dependent young in November.

Trogonidae: Trogons

Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina*



Very local and uncommon resident from 1800 to 2250 m. **Br:** Independent juvenile in October. **Com:** This species was common prior to extensive deforestation in the Gwasssi Hills from 2014 to 2020.

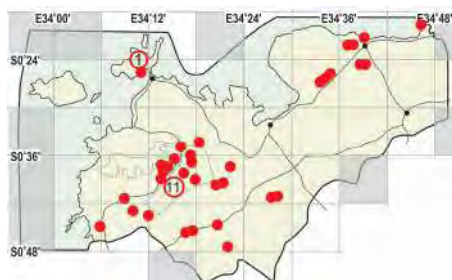
Coraciidae: Rollers

Purple Roller *Coracias naevius naevius*



One record: a single bird on 15 Dec 2021 at 1200 m on the north side of Mt Homa. **Med:** ML #396152771

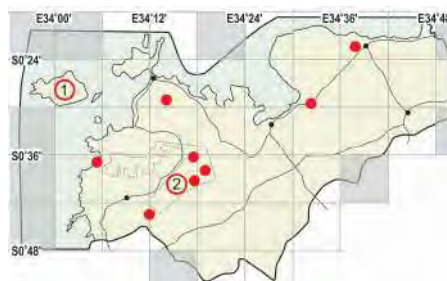
Lilac-breasted Roller *Coracias caudatus caudatus*



Fairly widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Com:** This species is distributed primarily in the lowlands

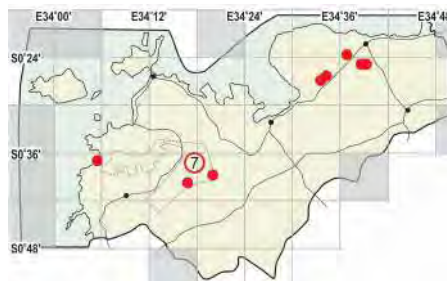
of the Lambwe Valley and Kendu Bay area and it appears to avoid the drier and more rugged parts of the west near Mbita and Sindu. It is only a wanderer to Rusinga Island, for example, with just two October records.

European Roller *Coracias garrulus garrulus*



Widespread and fairly common passage migrant from 1140 to 1400 m, with all records in Mar and late Oct to late Nov.

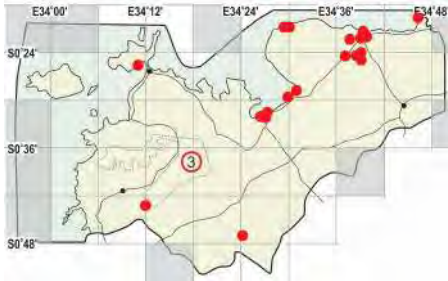
Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*



Rather local and generally uncommon seasonal visitor and passage migrant from 1140 to 1300 m, with records in May to Jan. **Com:** Birds from two populations appear to be represented in the county. Those birds occurring in May (and possibly Jul-Sep) are nominate migrants from the south, and we have recorded a May high count of 19 birds in Ruma NP. Meanwhile, birds present from Oct to Jan are *E. g. suahelicus*, and probably originate from north of the county.

Alcedinidae: Kingfishers

Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala leucocephala*



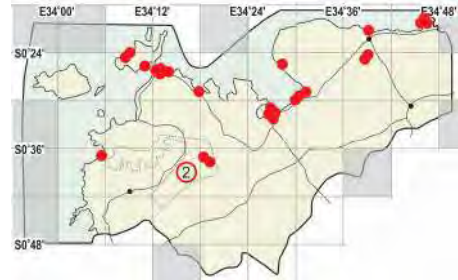
Widely occurring but only locally fairly common resident and passage migrant from 1140 to 1300 m, with records in most months but a decrease in reporting frequency in Jan–Feb and Jun–Jul. **Com:** The distribution of this species is concentrated in the more extensive lakeside lowlands of the northeast from Homa Bay to Kendu Bay, it being scarce elsewhere. Records from Ruma NP and Rusinga Island, where not resident, suggest some local movement in Oct–Dec.

Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti chelicuti*



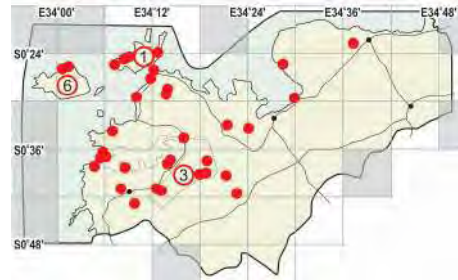
Very local and uncommon resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Com:** The distribution of this species is closely tied to the protected *Acacia* woodlands of Ruma NP.

Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis senegalensis*



Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Com:** Absence from intensively farmed areas of the southeast is probably real.

African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ispidina picta picta*



Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1500 m. **Com:** The absence of this species from the intensively farmed southeast in the Kuja River Valley is certainly related to a scarcity of suitable thicket habitat in that area.

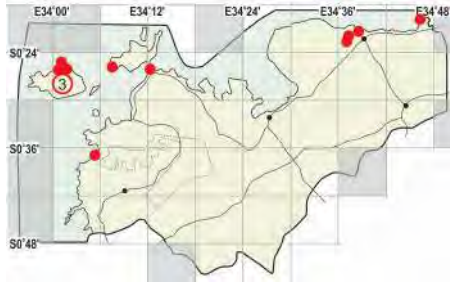
Malachite Kingfisher *Corythornis cristatus galeritus*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1200 m. **Com:** This species is more numerous along shorelines of the

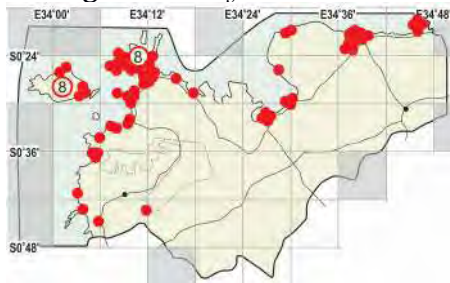
main lake and around both large islands than it is in the Winam Gulf; most records from the northeast lowlands are at inland water bodies.

Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle maxima maxima*



Rather local and uncommon resident from 1140 to 1200 m. **Com:** As with several other piscivorous species (e.g., Reed Cormorant, Malachite Kingfisher), this species is more often reported from the clearer waters of the main lake and both large islands than it is from the Winam Gulf. Records from the northeast come primarily from the Sondu River Estuary and Lake Simbi, while the population stronghold is probably on Mfangano Island.

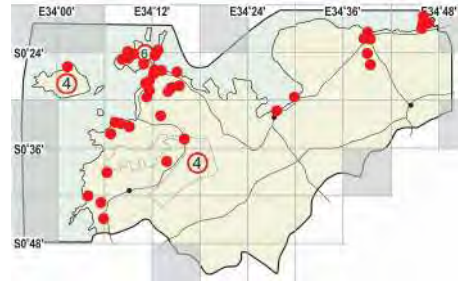
Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis rudis*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Br:** Occupied nests in February, March and October.

Meropidae: Bee-eaters

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus meridionalis*



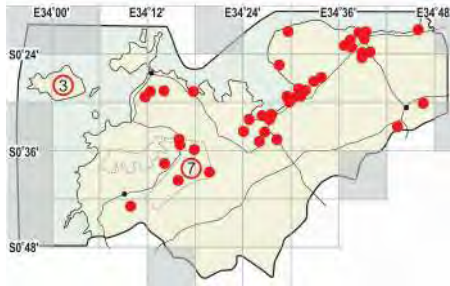
Fairly widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1800 m. **Br:** Independent juvenile in February; dependent juvenile in March; occupied nest in October. **Com:** The distribution of this species is closely tied to drier areas in the west of the county, although it is locally common in the lowlands of the northeast as well.

Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater *Merops oreobates*



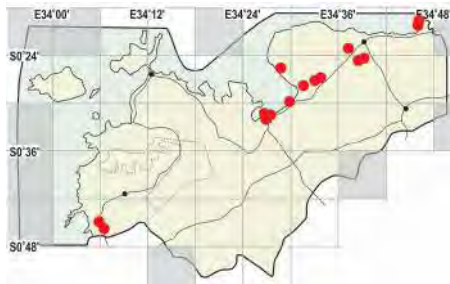
Very local and scarce presumed resident from 1900 to 2100 m, with records in Aug and Nov. **Com:** Pairs are thinly spread in forest edge habitat adjacent to very steep slopes and cliffs in the Gwassi Hills. **Med:** ML #366901441 **Ref:** Bradley *et al.* 2015

White-throated Bee-eater *Merops albicollis*



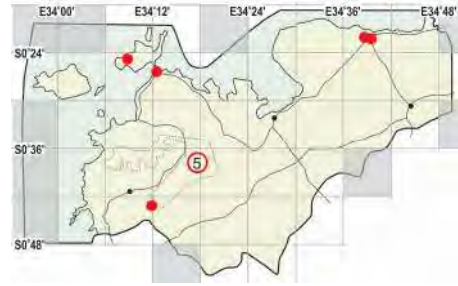
Widespread resident from 1140 to 1550 m but with a peak in abundance from Nov to Mar. **Com:** Densities of this species are highest in the most humid parts of the lowlands near Homa Bay and Kendu Bay.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus*



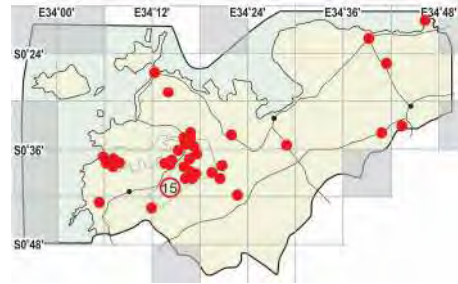
Local but fairly common seasonal visitor and passage migrant from 1140 to 1200 m, with records from early Oct to early May. **Com:** The range of this species is closely tied to humid lowlands near the lake, hence its presence in the northeast near Kendu Bay and Homa Bay but not the northwest near Mbita and Rusinga Island.

Olive Bee-eater *Merops superciliosus superciliosus*



Widespread but uncommon seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, recorded from early May to Sep. **Com:** The distribution of this species in the county is largely distinct, both spatially and temporally, from the Blue-cheeked Bee-eater.

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*



Widespread and common seasonal visitor and passage migrant from 1140 to 1600 m, recorded from Sep to Apr. **Com:** This species avoids lakeshore areas as preferred by the Blue-cheeked Bee-eater, instead preferring bushy grasslands inland.

Upupidae: Hoopoes

African Hoopoe *Upupa africana*



Very local and scarce passage migrant from 1140 to 1250 m, with three records in Feb, Mar and May. An Oct record of a Hoopoe (green marker) is not identified to species. **Com:** The Feb–May dates at western lakeshore sites suggest that these birds may have been northbound migrants originating from areas south of Kenya.

Phoeniculidae: Wood Hoopoes

Green Wood Hoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus marwitzi*



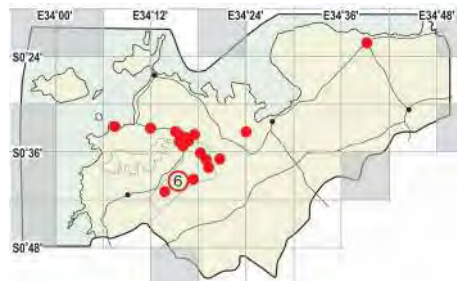
Very local and rather uncommon resident from 1200 to 1300 m. **Com:** This species is apparently restricted to *Acacia-Balanites* woodland in the Ruma NP area of the Lambwe Valley, and in a small area near Kendu Bay.

Common Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas schalowi*



Very local and scarce resident from 1250 to 1500 m. **Com:** Use of *Acacia* habitat in this region is unknown (although *Acacia abyssinica* is used elsewhere in the west Kenya range), effectively separating it ecologically from the following species.

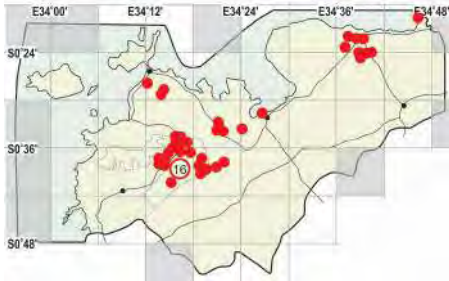
Abyssinian Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus minor cabanisi*



Local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Com:** This species is closely tied to *Acacia seyal* and *Acacia drepanolobium* stands in the Lambwe Valley, and Ruma NP in particular.

Bucerotidae: Hornbills

African Grey Hornbill *Lophoceros nasutus nasutus*



Rather local but common resident from 1140 to 1500 m. **Com:** Presence of this species in the county is concentrated on well-wooded areas in the Lambwe Valley, the Ruri Hills, and near Kendu Bay. It clearly avoids heavily modified areas and is largely restricted to hilly terrain outside of protected areas.

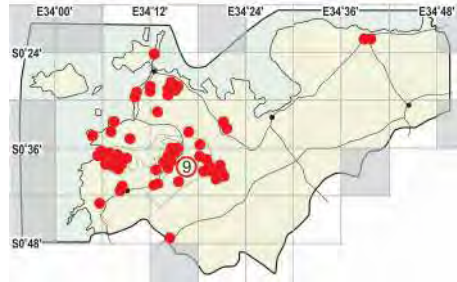
Lybiidae: African Barbets

Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus jacksoni*



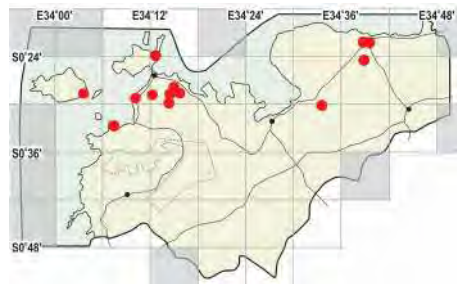
Very local but fairly common resident from 1200 to 2200 m (Fig. 17). **Br:** A bird visiting a cavity in December may have been nesting. **Com:** Reported regularly from the Gwasssi Hills but only very infrequently elsewhere.

Red-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus pusillus affinis*



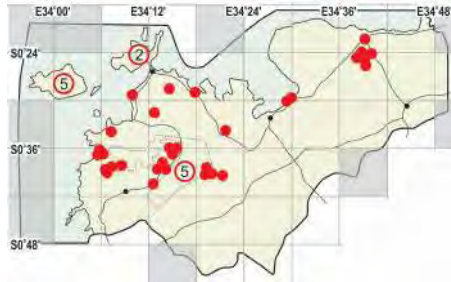
Rather local but common resident from 1140 to 1700 m, occasionally ranging to 2100 m. **Com:** This species is almost wholly confined to the western half of the county, and it is only a wanderer to the islands with one record from Rusinga Island.

Red-fronted Barbet *Tricholaema diademata massaica*



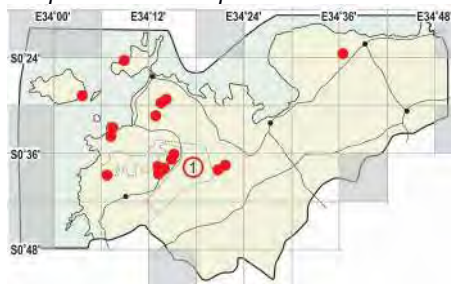
Local and uncommon resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Br:** Mating in November. **Com:** This species stays largely separate from the following species where they overlap by way of habitat choice. It is closely tied to *Acacia* woodland in hilly terrain.

Spot-flanked Barbet *Tricholaema lacrymosa radcliffei*



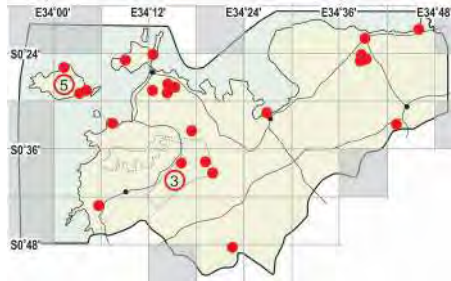
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1900 m. **Com:** Largely absent from *Acacia* dominant habitat favoured by the Red-fronted Barbet, and while present at the lakeshore in some locations, this species is mostly found inland.

White-headed Barbet *Lybius leucocephalus leucocephalus*



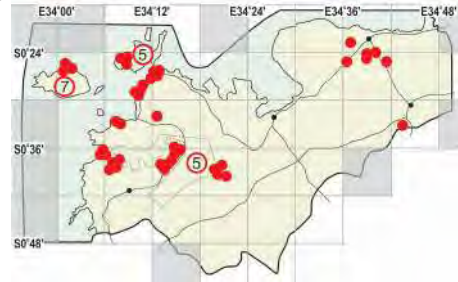
Rather local and uncommon resident from 1140 to 1900 m. **Br:** Occupied nest in March. **Ref:** M. Wanjohi pers. comm.

Black-billed Barbet *Lybius guifsobalito*



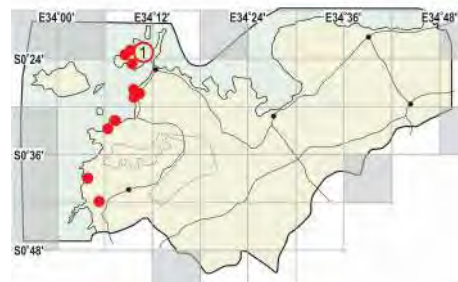
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1550 m.

Double-toothed Barbet *Lybius bidentatus aequatorialis*



Local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 2200 m. **Br:** Occupied nest in June.

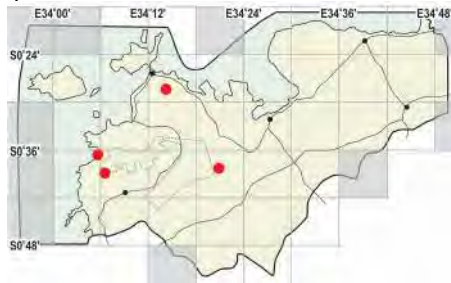
D'Arnaud's Barbet *Trachyphonus darnaudii usambiro*



Local and uncommon resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Br:** Mating in March. **Com:** The distribution of this species in the county is strictly western, where it favours mixed *Acacia-Euphorbia* woodlands and nearby scrub, along drier stretches of the lakeshore.

Indicatoridae: Honeyguides

Pallid Honeyguide *Indicator meliphilus meliphilus*



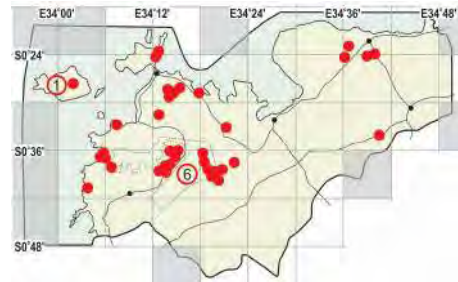
Local and scarce presumed resident from 1140 to 1750 m. **Com:** This species favours dense woodlands in foothill terrain and along streams. **Ref:** Bradley 2018

Least Honeyguide *Indicator exilis pachyrhynchus*



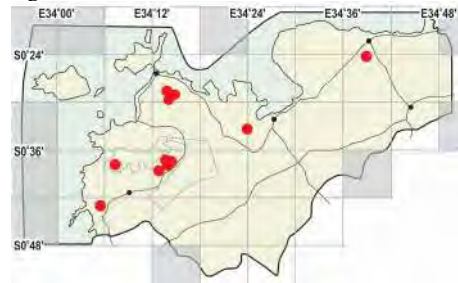
Two records: single birds between 1900 and 2200 m on the Gwassi Hills on 2 Nov 2014 and 28 Oct 2015. **Com:** This species is doubtless highly threatened by forest loss and may possibly already be extirpated from the county. **Ref:** Bradley *et al.* 2015

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor teitensis*



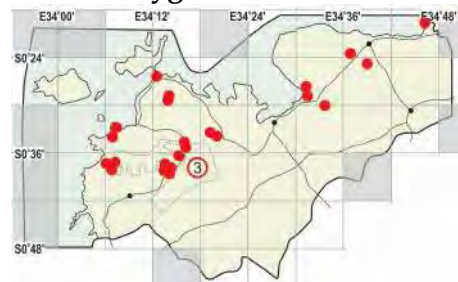
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1600 m.

Scaly-throated Honeyguide *Indicator variegatus*



Local and uncommon resident from 1200 to 2000 m.

Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator*



Rather local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 2000 m.

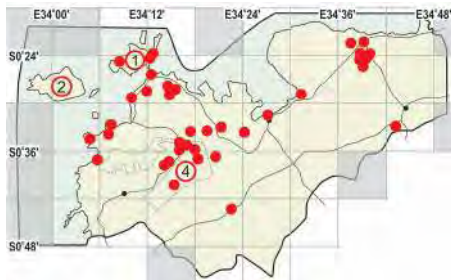
Picidae: Woodpeckers

Red-throated Wryneck *Jynx ruficollis ruficollis*



One record of known location: a single bird at 1200 m at Nyanganjo near Kendu Bay, dated only to the year 2020. **Com:** This species is also reported to occur in this same general area in literature accounts. **Ref:** Moore 1984, J. Agutu pers. comm.

Nubian Woodpecker *Campethera nubica nubica*



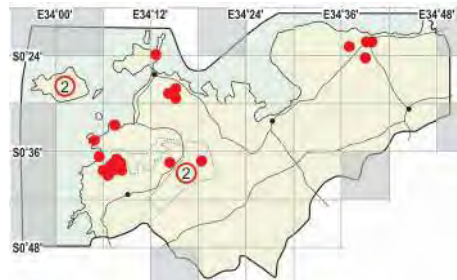
Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1550 m. **Com:** The distribution of this species includes both large islands, although it is largely absent from the intensively farmed lowlands of the southeast.

Green-backed Woodpecker *Campethera cailliautii nyansae*



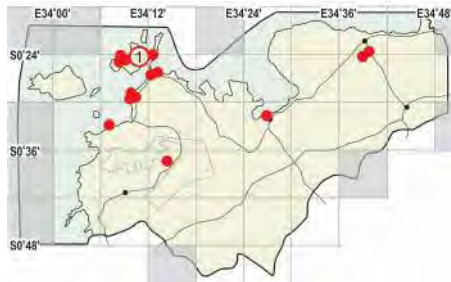
Two records: single birds on 28 Nov 2017 at 1350 m in the Gembe Hills and 7 Apr 2022 at 1200 m at Nyanganjo near Kendu Bay (Fig. 13). **Com:** Both records of this species come from riparian thicket with scattered larger trees. The April observation involved a drumming male and coincided with a regional invasion of Army Worm *Spodoptera* sp.

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens massaicus*



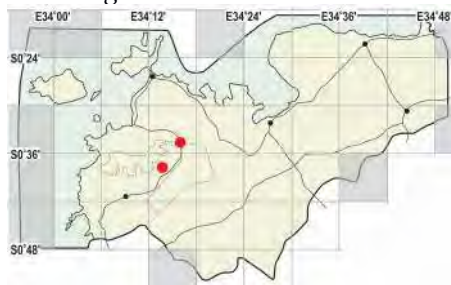
Widely occurring but only locally fairly common resident from 1140 to 2250 m. **Com:** This species favours fairly dense woodland, and it is very scarce on the two large islands.

African Grey Woodpecker *Dendropicos goertae centralis*



Rather local and generally uncommon resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Com:** This species favours the driest parts of the county in the northwest, including Rusinga Island.

Brown-backed Woodpecker *Dendropicos obsoletus ingens*



Two records: single birds on the 25 Nov 2017 at 1250 m at the Nyatoto Gate of Ruma NP, and 26 Nov 2017 at 1400 m in the nearby lower Gwassu foothills (Fig. 13). **Med:** ML #76600261 **Ref:** Bradley 2018

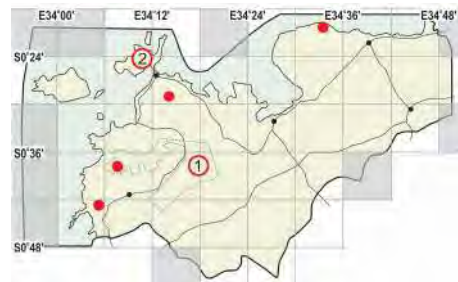
Falconidae: Falcons

Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*



One record: several migrants grounded after heavy rain on 30 Oct 2015 at 1300 m at Magunga.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*



Widespread but uncommon presumed passage migrant from 1140 to 2000 m, with a few scattered records in Jan-Mar and Oct-Nov. **COMM.** All records are presumed to refer to the nominate subspecies based on specimen designations, although resident *F. t. rufescens* may also occur.

Grey Kestrel *Falco ardosiaceus*



Local and scarce presumed resident from 1140 to 1400 m, with records in

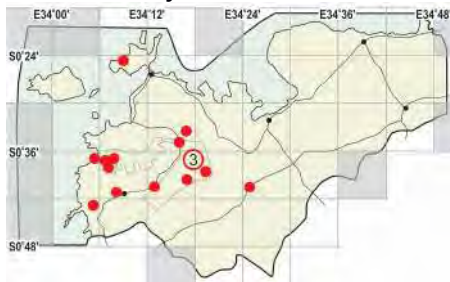
Jan-Feb, May, Aug and Oct-Nov. **Br:** Mating in August.

Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonorae*



One record: an adult at 1800 m in the Gwass Hills on 19 Dec 2021 (Fig. 9).

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo subbuteo*



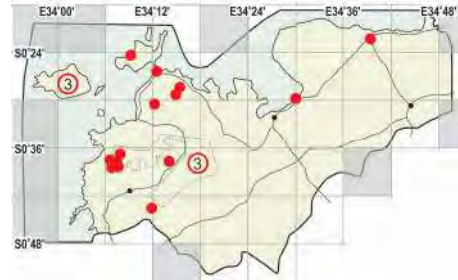
Local but fairly common passage migrant from 1140 to 2200 m, with records in Oct-Dec and Feb-Mar. **Com:** The distribution of this species is closely tied to hilly and mountainous terrain, it being absent from the more level ground in the eastern half of the county.

African Hobby *Falco cuvierii*



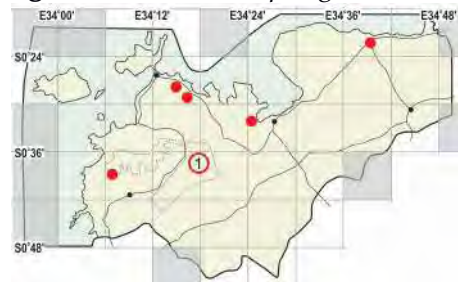
Widespread but scarce visitor from 1140 to 1550 m, with four scattered records in Feb, May, Sep and Nov. **Med:** ML #137938691

Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus biarmicus*



Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 2200 m. **Br:** No confirmed records but observers near a cliff face in the Gembe Hills in February 2012 were mobbed incessantly by an adult male, strongly suggestive of a nearby active nest. **Com:** There are territorial pairs of this species in both the Gembe and Gwass Hills, while Mfangano Island has much suitable cliff habitat for nesting birds.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*



Widespread but scarce presumed visitor from 1140 to 2100 m, with scattered records in Aug and Nov-Mar. **Com:** A January individual was of the migratory subspecies *callidus*, and dates suggest that most records probably refer to that taxon.

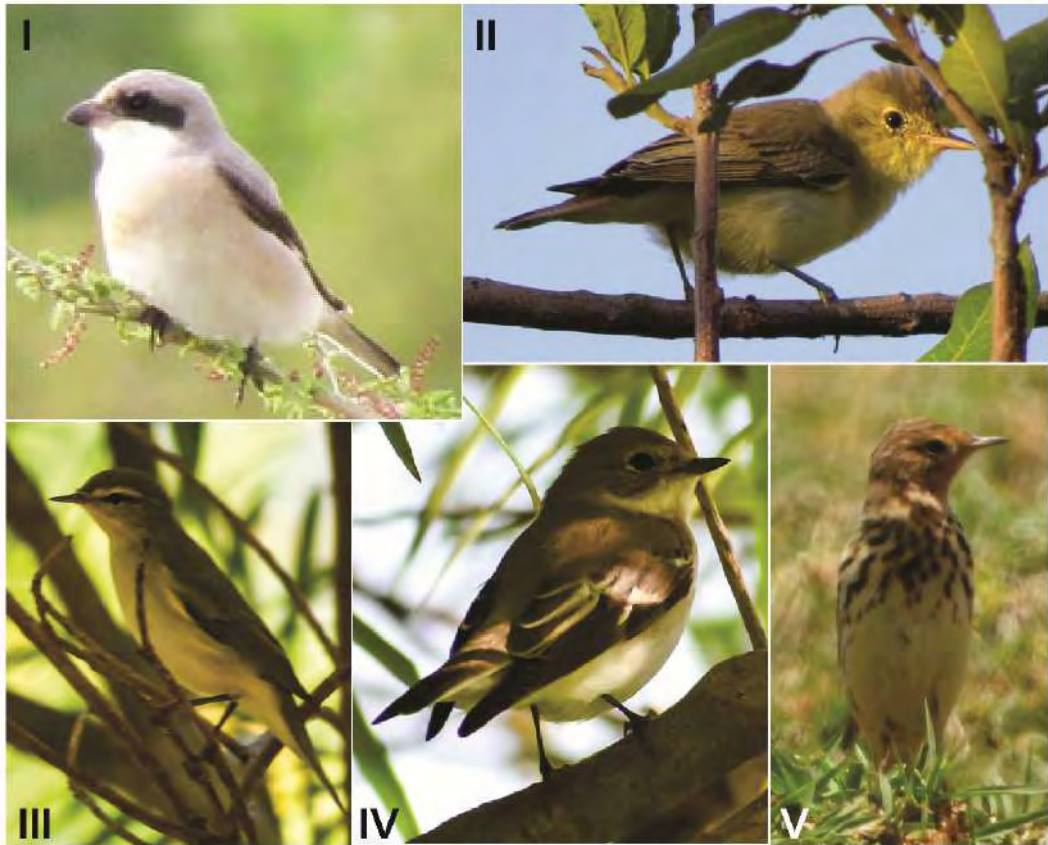


Figure 11. Migrant passerines from temperate latitudes are present seasonally in the county, albeit mostly in small numbers. Some examples of less common species include Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* (I: Ragwe Point; James Bradley), Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina* (II: near Mbita; James Bradley), Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* (III: near Sindo; Marto Wanjohi), Semicollared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata* (IV: near Sindo; Marto Wanjohi) and Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* (V: Sondu River Estuary; Victor Ikawa).



Figure 12. Extensive grasslands, both on the Gembe Hills and in Ruma NP, comprise important habitat for a range of species that have very limited distributions in Homa Bay County. Some regularly encountered species (all from Ruma NP) include Black-bellied Bustard *Lissotis melangosater* (I; Jason Fidorra), Black Coucal *Centropus grillii* (II; James Bradley), Rufous-chested Swallow *Cecropis semifura* (III; David Bradley), Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys* (IV; James Bradley) and Shelley's Sparrow *Passer shelleyi* (V; Nathan Hentze).



Figure 13. Woodland habitat may be found on hillsides, at the forest edge or along streams and rivers, but it is a very patchy habitat type within the county. As such, some woodland species are very local and uncommon, including Brown-backed Woodpecker *Dendropicos obsoleteus* (I: Gwasssi foothills; David Guarnieri), Green-backed Woodpecker *Campethera cailliautii* (II: Nyanganjo; Jeam Agutu), Western Black-headed Batis *Batis erlangeri* (III: Gembe Hills; Jason Fidorra), Miombo Wren Warbler *Calmonastes undosus* (IV: Gwasssi foothills; James Bradley) and Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus nigricollis* (V: near Kamato Gate, Ruma NP; James Bradley).

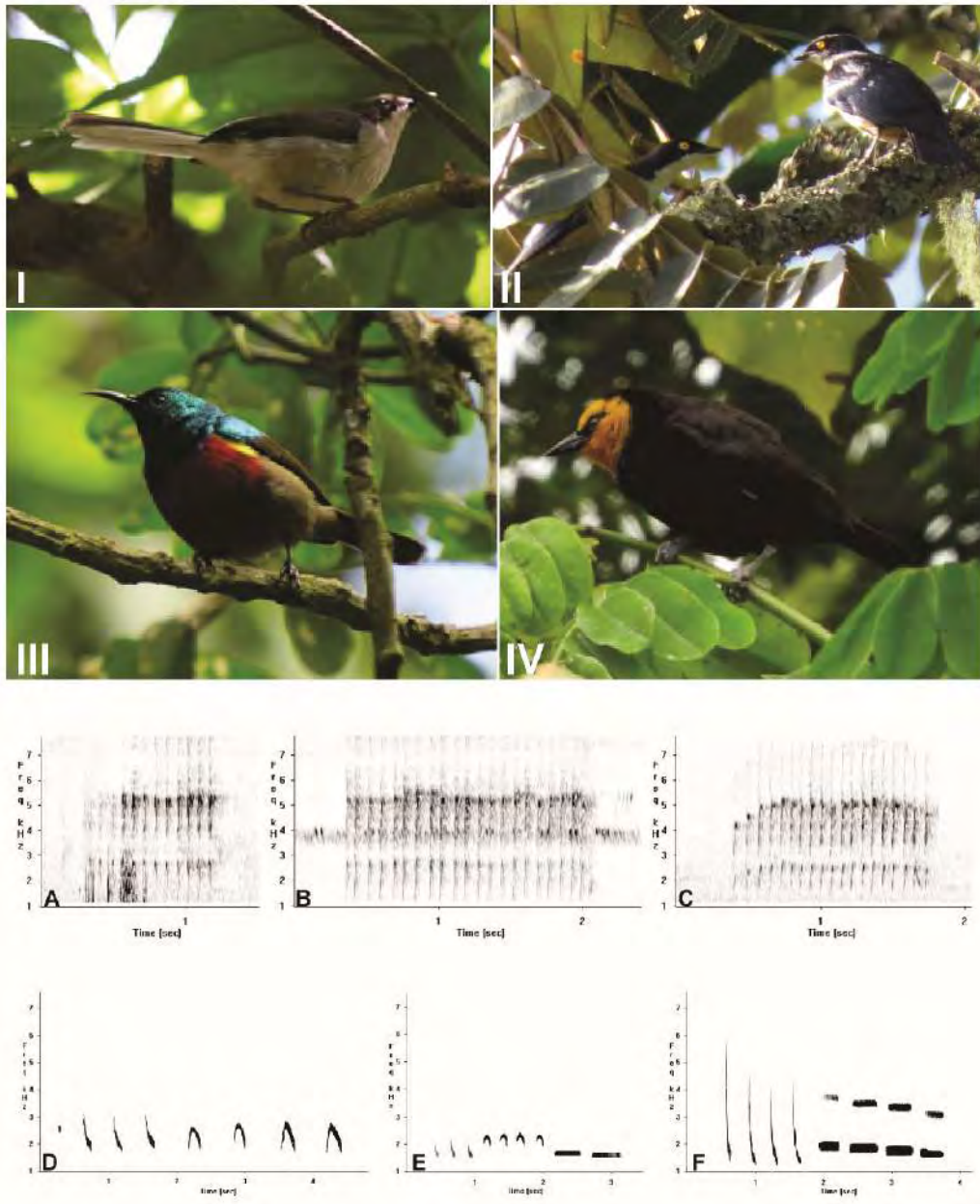


Figure 14. Several species typical of forest habitat, and which are found only in the remnant forests of the Gwasssi Hills, include Grey Apalis *Apalis cinerea* (I; David Bradley), Sharpe's Starling *Poeoptera sharpii* (II; James Bradley), Northern Double-collared Sunbird *Cinnyris reichenowi* (III; James Bradley) and Black-billed Weaver *Ploceus melanogaster* (IV; Victor Ikawa). Also present in the Gwasssi Hills forests is Yellow-lored Bristlebill *Bleda notatus*, documented here by both its call (A: ML #296260081; David Bradley) and song (D: ML #321852161; James Bradley), and compared with the call (B: ML #107722; Carolyn McBride, & C: XC #64976; Eric Eggenkamp) and song (E: ML #107807; Carolyn McBride, & F: ML #45755; David Moyer) from forests along the Lake Victoria shoreline in Uganda and Tanzania.

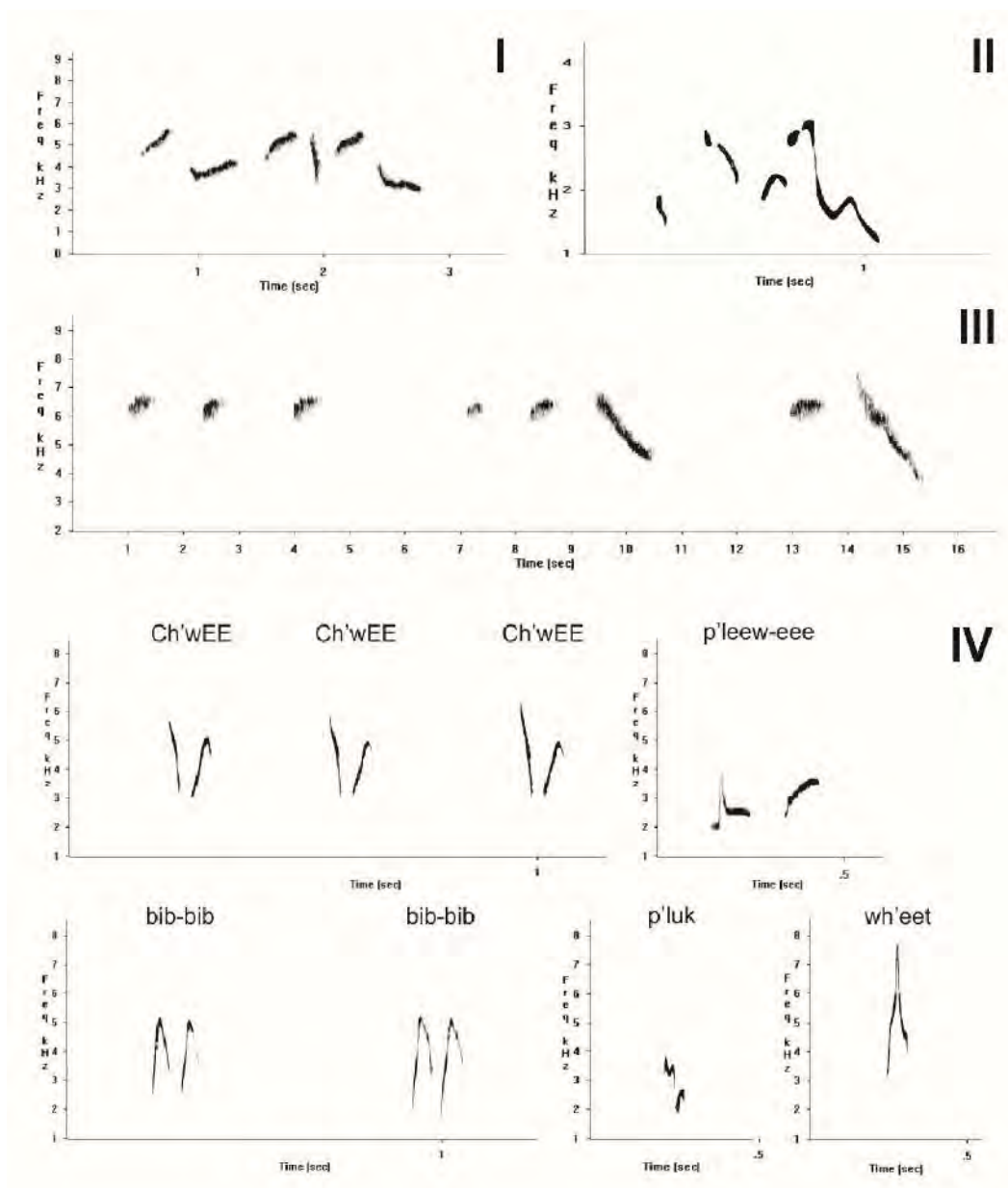
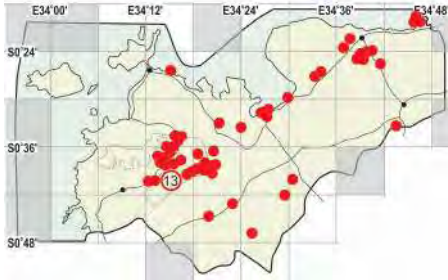


Figure 15. Forest birds which are shy are often more easily detected by their voice. Examples from the Gwassu Hills (all recorded by James Bradley) include White-browed Crombec *Sylvietta leucophrys* (I: ML #335090971), African Hill Babbler *Sylvia abyssinica* (II: XC #316046) and Grey Cuckooshrike *Cebalopyris caesi* (III: XC #313513). While voice is also usually helpful in identifying species which are cryptic in appearance, such as Cisticolas, this has not been the case for an unidentified form found very locally in the west of Homa Bay County (IV: XC #323309).

Psittacidae: African and New World Parrots

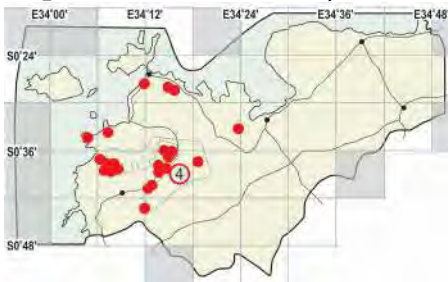
Meyer's Parrot *Poicephalus meyeri saturatus*



Fairly widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1550 m. **Br:** Nest preparation in August. **Com:** The distribution of this species is closely tied to moist lowlands, showing clear avoidance of the driest areas of the west. The protected woodlands of the Lambwe Valley in Ruma NP support a healthy population, with up to 12 birds observed in a flock.

Platysteiridae: Wattle-eyes and Batises

Chinspot Batis *Batis molitor puella*



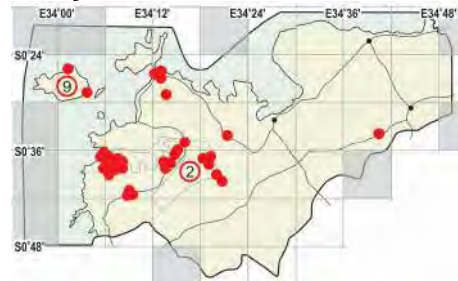
Local but fairly common resident from 1200 to 2000 m. **Br:** Dependent fledged young in March. **Com:** The distribution of this species is closely tied to the wooded slopes of the Kisingiri massif.

Western Black-headed Batis *Batis erlangeri erlangeri*



Very local and uncommon resident from 1200 to 1400 m (Fig. 13). **Com:** This species inhabits shorter and bushier woodlands than the previous species, including mixed *Terminalia* - *Combretum* associations with patches of thicket, in foothill terrain on north-facing slopes.

Brown-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira cyanea nyansae*



Rather local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 2250 m. **Com:** While fairly common on Mfangano Island, which supports abundant thick cover, this species is apparently absent from the drier and more barren Rusinga Island.

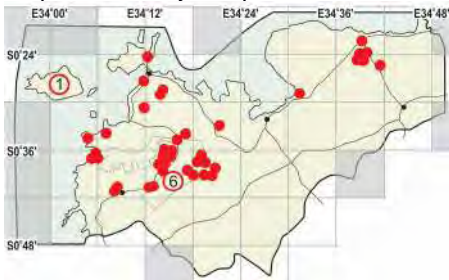
Malaconotidae: Bushshrikes

Black-fronted Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus nigrifrons nigrifrons*



One record: a yellow morph bird at 2100 m in the Gwassi Hills on 21 Feb 2012. **Com:** This species is almost certainly extirpated from the county owing to extensive forest loss in the Gwassi Hills. **Ref:** Bradley *et al.* 2015

Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus sulfurepectus similis*



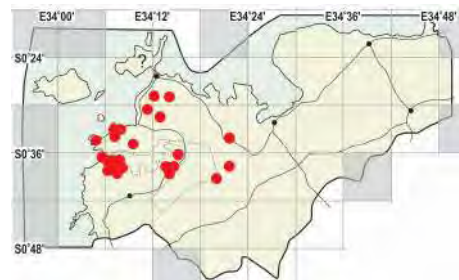
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1500 m. **Br:** Independent juvenile in June. **Com:** This species requires mature woodland and bush habitat, hence its absence from the heavily farmed southeast of the county.

Marsh Tchagra *Bocagia minuta minuta*



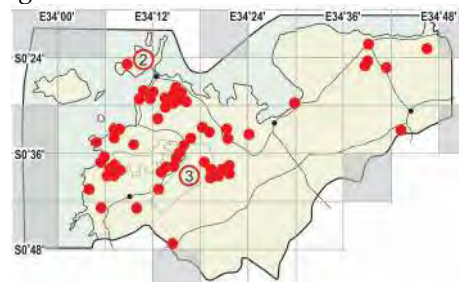
Very local and scarce presumed resident from 1200 to 1900 m. **Com:** In the Gwassi Hills this species occurs on steep slopes with tall and dense herbaceous growth. **Ref:** Jackson 1997

Brown-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis emini*



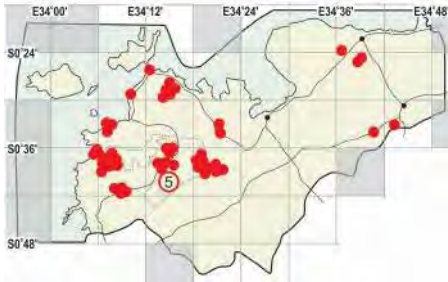
Local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 2250 m. **Com:** This species is closely tied to the scrub and thicket covered slopes of the Kisingiri massif. Its presence on Rusinga Island requires confirmation.

Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus armenus*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1900 m.

Black-backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla hamatus*



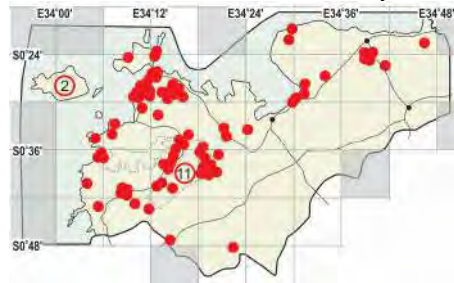
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 2200 m. **Com:** The distribution of this species is predominantly centred on wooded areas of the Kisingiri massif and Lambwe Valley. It overlaps very locally with the following species near Kendu Bay.

Northern Puffback *Dryoscopus gambensis malzacii*



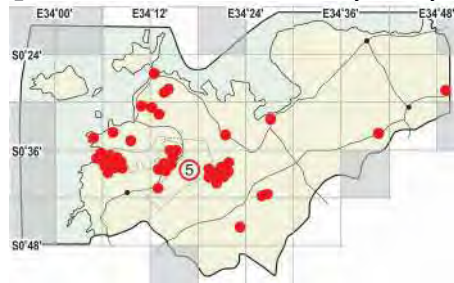
Two records: birds at 1300 m near Kendu Bay on 28 Nov 2013 and 8 May 2021. **Com:** This species' distribution in the county comprises the westernmost extent of its Kenyan range south of the Equator. **Ref:** eBird; M. Woodruff, J. Agutu pers. comm.

Slate-colored Boubou *Laniarius funebris*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Br:** Dependent fledged young in March; nest building in November.

Tropical Boubou *Laniarius major major*



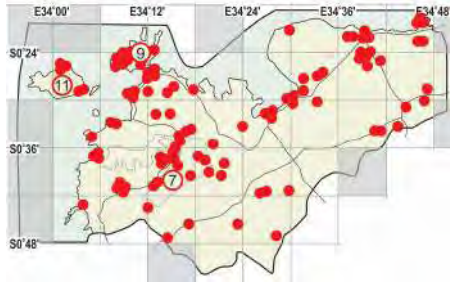
Fairly widespread and common resident from 1140 to 2250 m. **Com:** Birds in the county are vocally consistent with birds elsewhere in western Kenya.

Papyrus Gonolek *Laniarius mufumbiri*



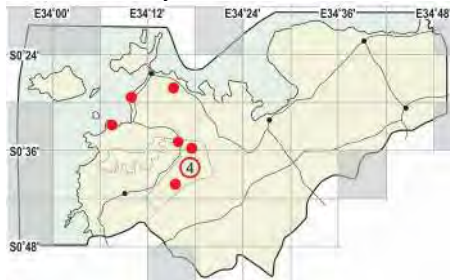
One record: on 14 May 2022 at 1140 m at the Sondu River Estuary (Fig. 8). **Com:** This species is likely resident at this infrequently visited site and has been merely overlooked.

Black-headed Gonolek *Laniarius erythrogaster*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1550 m. **Com:** This species is present in almost every patch of thicket in the county.

Brubru *Nilaus afer massaicus*



Local and uncommon resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Com:** This species is closely tied to *Acacia* dominant woodlands.

Vangidae: Vangas and Allies

White-crested Helmetshrike *Prionops plumatus poliocephalus*



One record: Two birds on 7 Dec 2020 at 1250 m at Nyadenda.

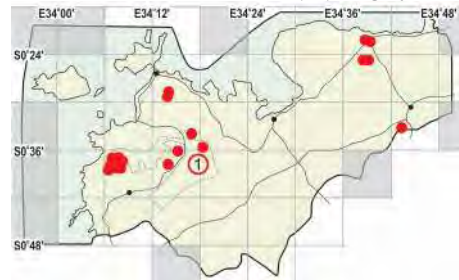
Campephagidae: Cuckooshrikes

Grey Cuckooshrike *Ceblepyris caesius*



Very local and scarce presumed resident from 1900 to 2250 m, with records in Mar and Oct (Fig. 15). **Com:** This species is doubtless highly threatened by forest loss and has not been recorded since 2017.

Black Cuckooshrike *Campephaga flava*



Local and uncommon seasonal visitor from 1250 to 2200 m, recorded from May to Nov. **Com:** Yellow-shouldered birds have been observed in September and November but are rare.

Purple-throated Cuckooshrike
Campephaga quiscalina martina



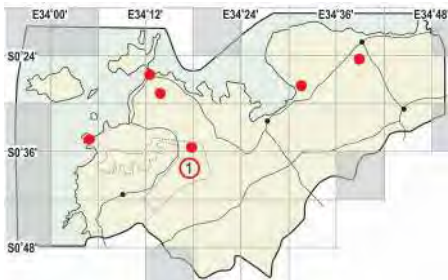
One record: on 24 Sep 1978 at 1550 m near Oyugis. **Com:** This species is unlikely to persist in the region due to extensive deforestation. **Ref:** eBird; P. Rasmussen

Laniidae: Shrikes

[Northern White-crowned Shrike
Eurocephalus ruppelli]

A May report from the Lambwe Valley is not well documented. Treated here as unconfirmed.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*



Widespread but uncommon passage migrant from 1140 to 1300 m, with records in from early Oct to late Nov and late Feb to early May.

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus isabellinus*



Local and uncommon seasonal visitor, with three mid Nov records. **Com:** Several records of birds are identified only to this species or Red-tailed Shrike (green markers), and the status of each of these species may need to be revised. **Med:** ML #388013141

Red-tailed Shrike *Lanius phoenicuroides*



One record: on 25 Mar 2022 at 1140 m at the Sondu River Estuary. **Med:** ML #428513211

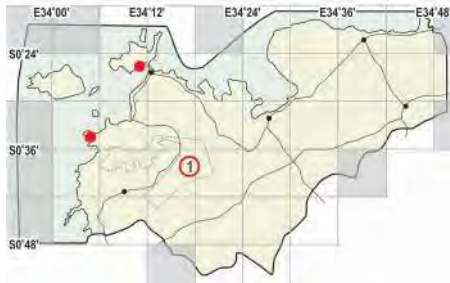
Mackinnon's Shrike *Lanius mackinnoni*



One record: on 20 Oct 1978 at 1550 m near Oyugis. **Com:** This species may be extirpated from the county with all forest habitat cleared at this location since

the time of observation. **Ref:** eBird; P. Rasmussen

Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*



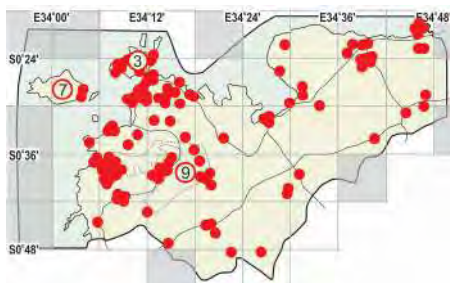
Local and scarce passage migrant from 1140 to 1300 m, with three scattered records in the west of the county in mid to late Oct (Fig. 11).

Grey-backed Fiscal *Lanius excubitoroides intercedens*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Com:** This species is closely tied to *Acacia* habitat.

Northern Fiscal *Lanius humeralis humeralis*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 2200 m. **Br:** Dependent juveniles in January, August and December.

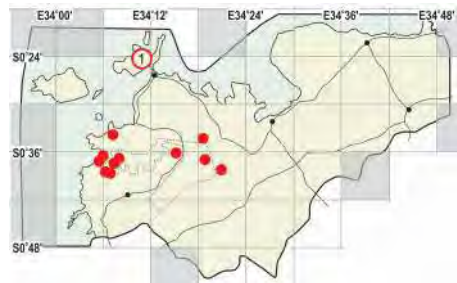
Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*



One record: a single bird on 30 Jan 2021 at 1200 m at Nyangweso. **Ref:** J. Oduori pers. comm.

Oriolidae: Orioles

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*



Local but fairly common passage migrant from 1140 to 2200 m, with records in Feb–Mar and Oct–Nov.

African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus auratus*



Very local and scarce passage migrant from 1200 to 1550 m, with three records from early Aug to late Sep. **Com:** It seems possible that these birds are austral migrants returning south after

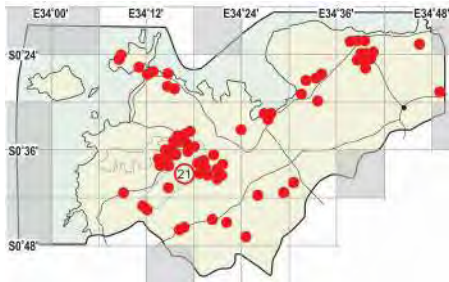
spending their non-breeding season in East Africa.

[**African Black-headed Oriole** *Oriolus larvatus rolleti*]

February and November reports from various locations including, both large islands, are not well documented, and we have never encountered this species in the county ourselves. Treated here as unconfirmed.

Dicruridae: Drongos

Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis adsimilis*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1500 m. **Br:** Independent juveniles in March and October.

Monarchidae: Monarchs

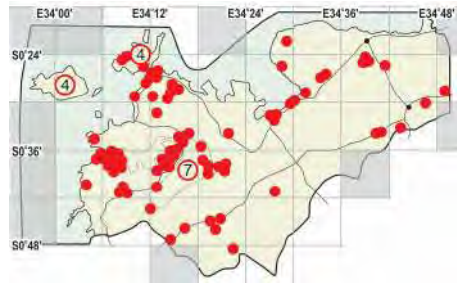
Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher *Trochocercus cyanomelas*



Very local and scarce resident from 2000 to 2250 m. **Com:** Birds are presumably *T. c. vivax*, although this needs confirmation. This very shy species is surely

threatened by forest loss in the Gwassi Hills, although it was present in mid-2021. The voice of birds here is quite distinct from that of birds in eastern Kenya referable to *T. c. bivittatus*, in being softer and less abrasive. Song is typically characterized by a series of “tik-tik-tik” sewing machine-like notes, while pure bell notes are at a higher frequency of 3100 kHz as opposed to the lower notes of eastern birds at 1500 kHz. **Med:** ML #367540401, #291336001, #367538071 & #290815281

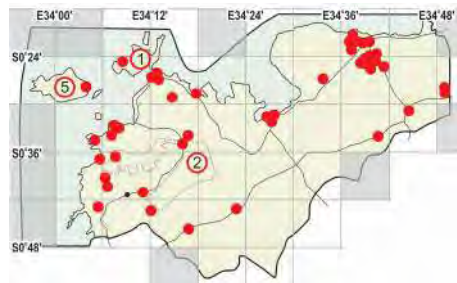
African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis suahelica*



Widespread and common resident and seasonal visitor from 1140 to 2250 m, with records year-round and a peak in abundance from Oct to Mar. **Br:** Occupied nest in March.

Corvidae: Crows

Pied Crow *Corvus albus*



Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1800 m. **Com:** Most records come from lakeshore towns and the two

large islands and numbers in the county appear to have increased over the period 2011–2022.

Stenostiridae: Fairy Flycatchers

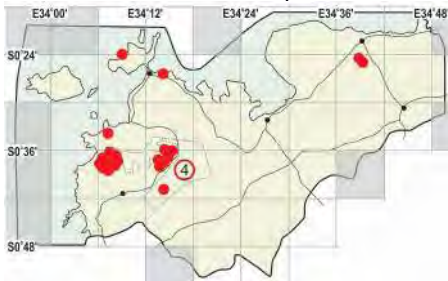
African Blue Flycatcher *Elminia longicauda teresita*



Very local and scarce presumed resident from 1140 to 2200 m. **Com:** This species is very thinly spread on the Gwasssi Hills, along the lake shoreline near the Gembe Hills and on Mfangano Island.

Paridae: Tits

White-bellied Tit *Melaniparus albiventris*



Rather local but fairly common resident from 1200 to 2200 m. **Com:** Numbers of this species have declined noticeably in the higher Gwasssi Hills in concert with extensive deforestation.

Remizidae: Penduline Tits

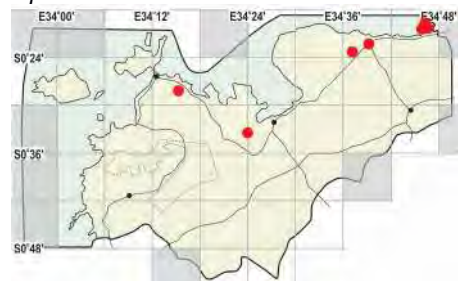
Grey Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus caroli*



Very local and rare presumed resident at 1200–1300 m, recorded in May, Jun and Sep. **Com:** Specimens from Kendu Bay are referable to *A. c. sylviella*, with rich rust-coloured underparts and a dark grey upperside washed olive-brown. Birds in Ruma NP have not been assigned to subspecies but the form *A. c. roccatii* may possibly occur in the evergreen bushland along the Lambwe River. **Sm:** FMNH #199059 **Ref:** Jackson 1997

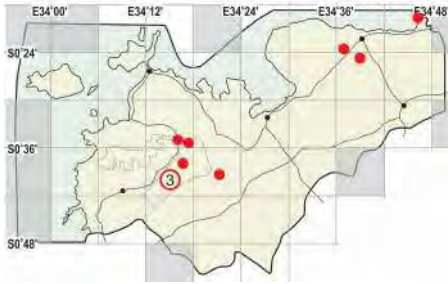
Alaudidae: Larks

Fischer's Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix leucopareia*



Local and uncommon presumed resident from 1140 to 1200 m. **Com:** Short, heavily grazed pastures along the lake shore comprise the preferred habitat for this species, and it is curiously absent from Ruma NP.

Rufous-naped Lark *Mirafra africana tropicalis*



Local and uncommon resident from 1140 to 1300 m.

Flappet Lark *Mirafra rufocinnamomea kawirodensis*



Local but fairly common resident from 1200 to 1700 m. **Com:** Extensive grassland habitat in Ruma NP and on the Gembe Hills comprises the main population centres for this species in the county.

Pycnonotidae: Bulbuls

Olive-breasted Greenbul *Arizelocichla kikuyuensis*



Two records: a bird detected only by voice at 2200 m in the Gwasssi Hills on 28

and 29 Oct 2015. **Com:** This species has only ever been found on the highest ridge in the Gwasssi Hills, under a relatively open canopy in high humidity, moss-laden cloud forest. This area, comprising no more than 4 km², had been completely cleared of trees by 2020, and it would seem possible that the species no longer survives in the county.

Slender-billed Greenbul *Stelgidillas gracilirostris gracilirostris*



Very local and scarce resident from 1900 to 2200 m. **Com:** This species has not been detected in the Gwasssi Hills since 2017 and could possibly be extirpated from the county owing to extensive deforestation.

Little Greenbul *Eurillas virens virens*



Very local and rare resident from 1140 to 1900 m. **Com:** Historic records from the Kendu Bay area, and more recently from the Gwasssi Hills, mark the only presence of this species in the county.

Plain Greenbul *Eurillas curvirostris curvirostris*



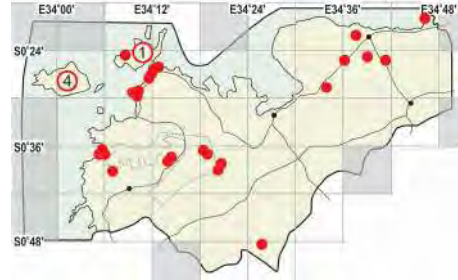
Two records: single birds on 19 Jan 2011 and on 23 Feb 2012 at 2100 m in the Gwassi Hills. **Com:** The ridgeline forest where observations were made was cleared by 2016, and the forest interior habitat represented there no longer exists on the Gwassi Hills. It is almost certainly extirpated from the county. **Med:** XC #313950 **Ref:** Bradley *et al.* 2015

Yellow-whiskered Greenbul *Eurillas latirostris latirostris*



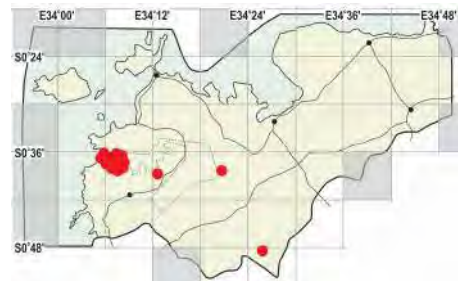
Very local but fairly common resident from 1600 to 2250 m. **Br:** Juvenile in May. **Com:** This species persists in good numbers in the Gwassi Hills despite extensive deforestation, surviving in a mosaic of cleared ground and well-established secondary growth. **Med:** ML #379768561

Yellow-throated Leaflove *Atimastillas flavicollis flavigula*



Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1800 m. **Br:** Occupied nest in October. **Com:** Little suitable habitat remains in the heavily farmed Kuja River Valley in the southeast of the county.

Cabanis's Greenbul *Phyllastrephus cabanisi sucosus*



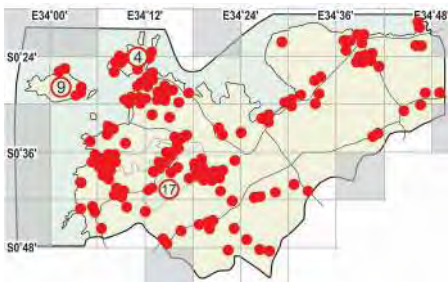
Local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 2200 m. **Com:** Though still fairly common, numbers in the Gwassi Hills have declined noticeably since 2011 in concert with deforestation. Birds in the Lambwe Forest at the edge of Ruma NP in November 2018 may have represented individuals displaced from the Gwassi Hills, while no forest habitat survives in the Kuja River Valley at Pala.

Yellow-lored Bristlebill *Bleda notatus*



Very local and scarce resident from 1900 to 2200 m, recorded on several occasions between 2011 and 2015. **Com:** The calls and song of birds on the Gwasssi Hills, match closely with those of birds in Uganda and northwest Tanzania on the opposite shores of Lake Victoria, leaving no doubt as to their taxonomic affinities (Fig. 14). With no clear sighting of the birds, however, we are unable to assign them to a subspecies on the basis of recordings alone. Birds (detected most recently in October 2015) have been encountered with mixed flocks in thick understory beneath a closed canopy forest, including at ant swarms (abundant across the hills), when detected by way of a fast and abrasive rattle. This species is unknown elsewhere in Kenya. **Med:** XC #315762, #316058 & #313986

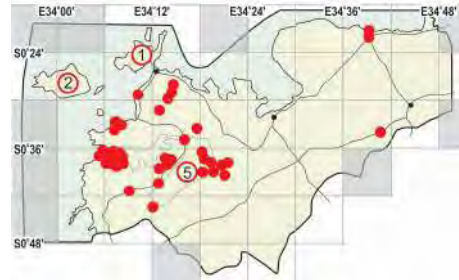
Dark-capped Bulbul *Pycnonotus tricolor tricolor*



Widespread and abundant resident from 1140 to 2250 m. **Br:** Nestlings in June; occupied nest in July; nest building in November.

Hirundinidae: Swallows and Martins

White-headed Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne albiceps albiceps*



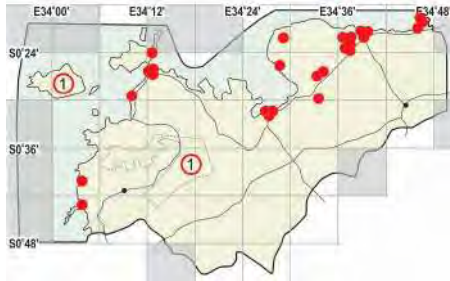
Widely occurring but only locally common resident from 1140 to 2200 m. **Br:** Independent fledged young in June. **Com:** Mostly tied to the hilly terrain of the Kisingiri massif, and it is uncommon on both large islands.

Black Saw-wing *Psalidoprocne pristopectera massaicus*



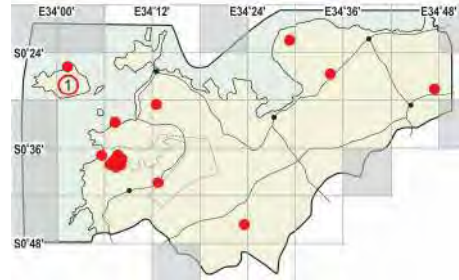
One record: a single bird on 19 Jan 2011 at 2000 m in the Gwasssi Hills. **Ref:** Bradley *et al.* 2015

Plain Martin *Riparia paludicola ducis*



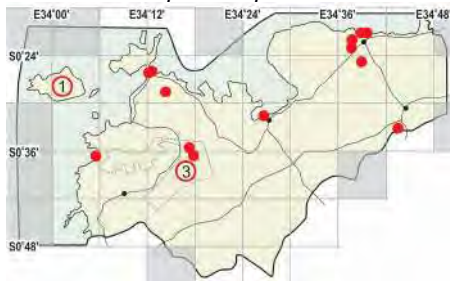
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Br:** Incubating in June; occupied nest in July. **Com:** Predominantly found in the Winam Gulf lowlands near Kendu Bay and Homa Bay but present in smaller numbers across other lakeshore areas including both large islands.

Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula rufigula*



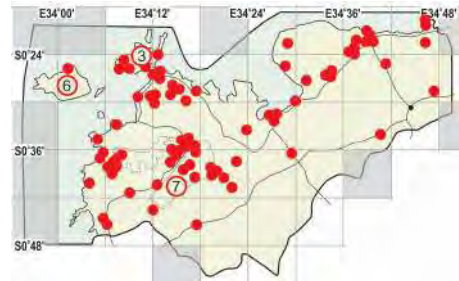
Widely occurring but only locally fairly common resident from 1140 to 2200 m, with records in most months but a decrease in reporting frequency in Apr to Jun. **Com:** Closely tied to rocky terrain and mostly present in the western half of the county.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*



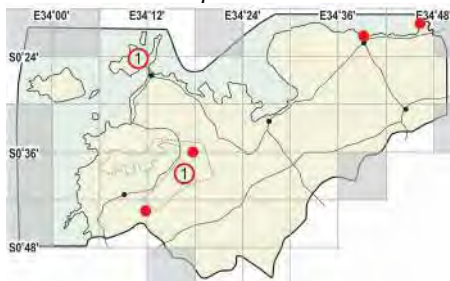
Widespread and sometimes common seasonal visitor and passage migrant from 1140 to 1550 m, recorded from late Aug to early May.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica rustica*



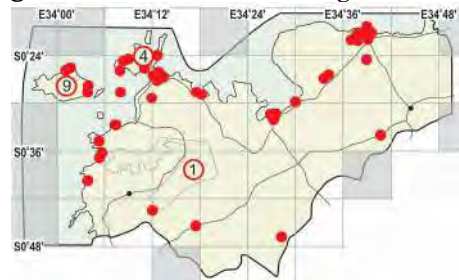
Widespread and abundant seasonal visitor from 1140 to 2200 m, recorded from mid Aug to early May.

Banded Martin *Riparia cincta suahelica*



Local and uncommon visitor at 1140 to 1300 m, with a handful of scattered records in Jan–Mar and Oct–Nov.

Angola Swallow *Hirundo angolensis*



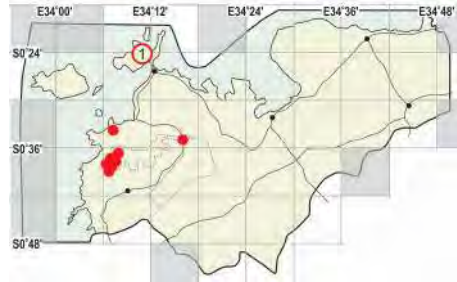
Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Br:** Nest building in November. **Com:** This species is more closely tied to lakeshore areas than the Barn Swallow.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii smithii*



Widespread but generally uncommon resident from 1140 to 1550 m. **Br:** Incubating in June. **Com:** Most records are from the vicinity of wetlands and streams in the lowlands of the Kendu Bay – Homa Bay area.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum urbicum*



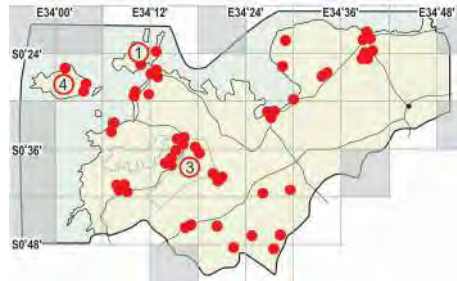
Local and generally uncommon passage migrant from 1200 to 1800 m, recorded in Mar and Oct-Nov. **Com:** This species favours woodland and forest edge habitats in foothill and upland terrain, transiting lower elevations in poor weather.

Blue Swallow *Hirundo atrocaerulea*



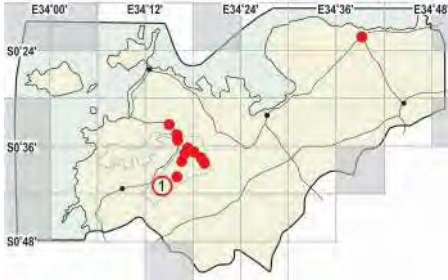
Very local and uncommon seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, recorded from Jul-Oct and Dec. **Com:** There are high counts of 50 birds in 2000 and 43 in 2012. The December record in 2020, which was documented with a photograph, comprises the first austral winter record for Kenya. **Ref:** James 2002, Ogoma 2013

Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica unitatus*



Widespread and fairly common presumed resident from 1140 to 1400 m, recorded year round but with a decrease in reporting frequency in Jul to Sep. **Br:** Nest building in March; occupied nest in March.

Rufous-chested Swallow *Cecropis semirufa emini*



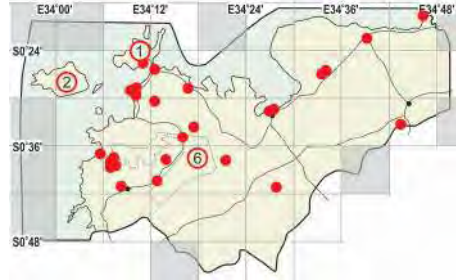
Very local and uncommon presumed seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, with records from Nov–Jun (Fig. 12). **Br:** Nest building in March and April; eggs in June. **Com:** The Mar–Jun breeding period and absence of records from Jul to Oct is suggestive of post-breeding dispersal away from the county. **Ref:** Lewis 1982

Mosque Swallow *Cecropis senegalensis*



Local and scarce visitor from 1140–1300 m, with three records in Feb and May. **Com:** Poorly known in the county and possibly overlooked.

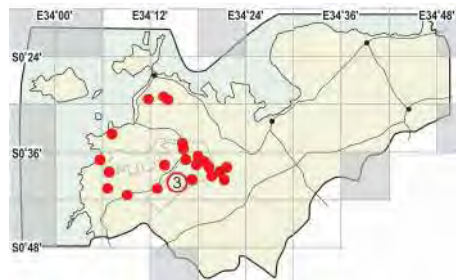
Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica gordonii*



Widespread and fairly common presumed seasonal visitor from 1140 to 2000 m, recorded year round but with 85% of records in Oct–Mar and no breeding record.

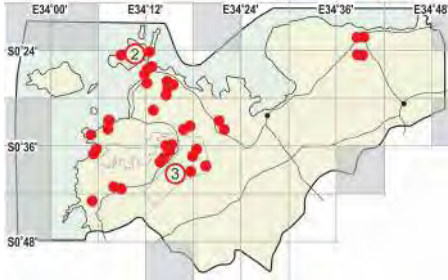
Macrospheidae: Crombecs and African Warblers

Moustached Grass Warbler *Melocichla mentalis mentalis*



Local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 1900 m. **Com:** Presence in the county is closely tied to springs and groundwater seepage around the Kisingiri massif and Kanyamwa Escarpment, where tall grass cover and rank herbage remains green year-round.

Red-faced Crombec *Sylvietta whytii jacksoni*



Somewhat local but common resident from 1140 to 1500 m. **Com:** Presence in the county is closely tied to drier areas of the west, especially where *Acacia* is abundant, although it is absent from Mfangano Island.

White-browed Crombec *Sylvietta leucophrys leucophrys*



Very local and rare resident from 2000 to 2250 m. **Com:** Several records from 2014 to 2021 on the well-surveyed high ridges of the Gwassi Hills suggest a population of fewer than a handful of pairs remain in the county. A notable song dialect used by birds here (Fig. 15) is familiar to the authors from only the southwest Mau Forest but is well described by Dowsett-Lemaire (1990), in reference to the usual trilling song, as being “a less stereotyped and more continuous song of 3–5 s with the timbre of a *Zosterops*”. **Med:** ML #335090971 & #335095291

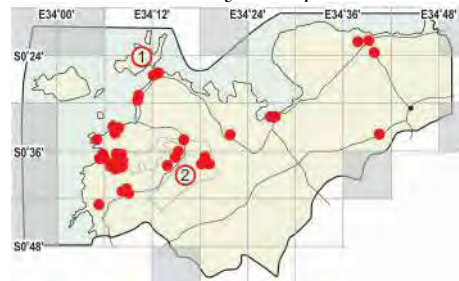
Phylloscopidae: Leaf Warblers and Allies

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*



One record: on 4 Mar 2022 at 1140 m near Sindo (Fig. 11). **Ref:** M. Wanjohi pers. comm.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*



Widespread and common seasonal visitor and passage migrant from 1140 to 2200 m, recorded from late Oct to mid Apr. **Com:** Most winter (Dec–Feb) records come from the higher (>1800 m) wooded and forested slopes of the Gwassi Hills, although it is present more widely during migration (Mar–Apr and Oct–Nov). Birds in the county have not been assigned to subspecies.

Brown Woodland Warbler *Phylloscopus umbrovirens*



Two records: single birds at 2000–2250 m in the Gwassi Hills on 28 and 29 Oct 2015. **Com:** This species is doubtless highly threatened by forest loss at its only known site, and may possibly be extirpated from the county. **Med:** XC #319249 **Ref:** Bradley 2018

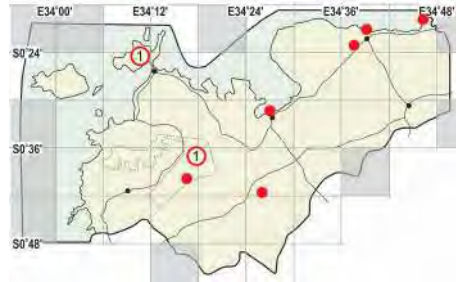
Acrocephalidae: Reed Warblers and Allies

Greater Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus rufescens ansorgei*



Local but fairly common resident at 1140 m. **Com:** This species is closely tied to the papyrus swamps of the Winam Gulf and is most abundant at the Sondu River Estuary. It may occur but be overlooked in small patches of habitat west of Homa Bay.

Lesser Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris jacksoni*



Widespread but uncommon resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Com:** Often present in small marshes and especially those not occupied by the Greater Swamp Warbler. Unlike that species, however, it occurs inland in scattered patches of suitable habitat.

Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*



One record: 2 Mar 1987 at 1140 m at Homa Bay. **Ref:** EABR 1987

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*



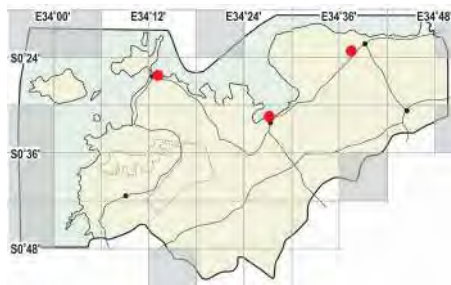
Local and uncommon presumed seasonal visitor at 1140 m, with a handful of records in Feb–Mar and Nov.

Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus fuscus*



Widespread and sometimes fairly common passage migrant from 1140 to 1300 m, recorded in Feb-Mar (when most abundant) and Nov-Dec. **Com:** Favours scrub, and in particular *Lantana* thicket. Not necessarily near water.

African Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus baeticatus cinnamomeus*



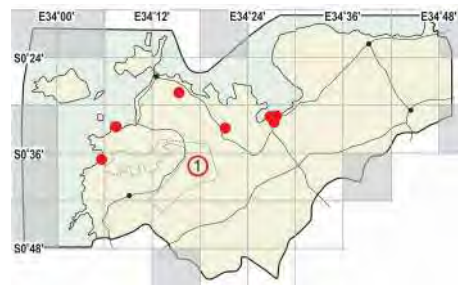
Local and scarce presumed resident at 1140 m. **Com:** Unlike the bush and thicket habitat favoured by the Eurasian Reed Warbler, this species inhabits freshwater reed beds and swamp. **Med:** XC #444775

African Yellow Warbler *Iduna natalensis massaica*



Local and scarce presumed resident from 1140 to 1500 m, with three scattered November records. **Com:** Poorly known in the county. **Ref:** Kenya Bird-map; W. Wachira

Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna pallida elaeica*



Local and uncommon passage migrant from 1140 to 1200 m, recorded in Feb-Mar and Oct-Dec. **Com:** Single birds are typically found in tall woodland trees, especially *Acacia*.

Papyrus Yellow Warbler *Calamonastides gracilirostris gracilirostris*



One record: late Dec 1985 at 1140 m at Kendu Bay. **Com:** This species may also be present in suitable habitat at the

Sondu River Estuary, and merely over-looked. Ref: EABR 1985

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*



Two records: 2 Mar 1982 at 1140 m on Rusinga Island and 5 Mar 2020 at 1200 m on the northern slopes of the Gembe Hills (Fig. 11). Ref: EABR 1982

Locustellidae: Grassbirds and Allies

Fan-tailed Grassbird *Catriscus brevirostris alexinae*



Very local and rather uncommon resident from 1200 to 1300 m. **Com:** This species is dependent on year-round tall grass and rank herbage, which is only found at groundwater seeps in the Lambwe Valley. This habitat is entirely confined within the boundaries of Ruma NP.

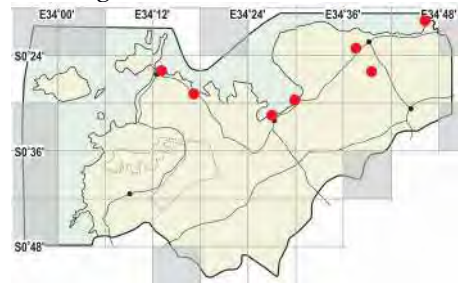
White-winged Swamp Warbler

Bradypterus carpalis



Local but fairly common resident at 1140 m. **Com:** This species is closely tied to the papyrus swamps of the Winam Gulf and is present from the Sondu River Estuary west to Waturi Point. Ref: Britton & Harper 1969

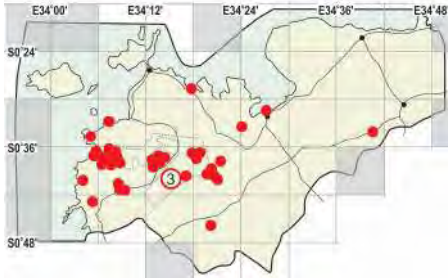
Highland Rush Warbler *Bradypterus centralis elgonensis*



Local and generally uncommon resident at 1140–1300 m. **Com:** This species avoids extensive papyrus swamp inhabited by the White-winged Swamp Warbler, favouring adjacent tall reeds.

Cisticolidae: Cisticolas and Allies

Red-faced Cisticola *Cisticola erythrops sylvia*



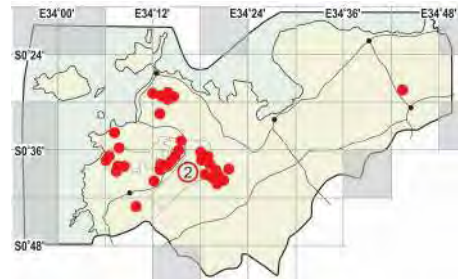
Widely occurring but only locally common resident from 1140 to 2250 m, **Com:** This species is most abundant in the Gwasssi Hills and Lambwe Valley but is absent from the much drier Gembe Hills.

Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans pictipennis*



Very local and uncommon resident from 1400 to 2000 m. **Com:** Presence of Singing Cisticola in the county is closely tied to the mid-slopes of the Gwasssi Hills, with a gap in distribution to birds near Oyugis. This species was misidentified and incorrectly reported as Chubb's Cisticola *C. chubbi* by Bradley *et al.* (2015), and that species is hereby removed from the county list.

Trilling Cisticola *Cisticola woosnami woosnami*



Rather local but fairly common resident from 1200 to 1800 m. **Com:** Records of this species come primarily from the thickly vegetated slopes of the Kisingiri massif, and parts of Ruma NP.

Rock-loving Cisticola *Cisticola emini emini*



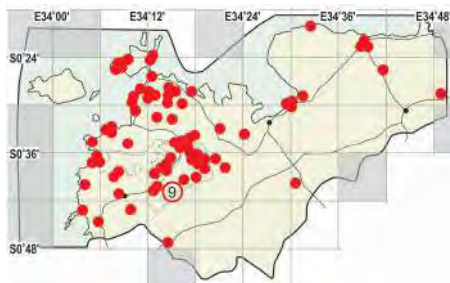
Very local and scarce resident from 1350 and 1800 m (Fig. 16). **Com:** Steep, grassed slopes on gravelly ground, open woodland around granite inselbergs, and thick bush on boulder-strewn hill-sides are all used by this species. It appears to give ground to the Trilling Cisticola where the two come into contact.

[Unknown *Cisticola* *Cisticola* sp.]



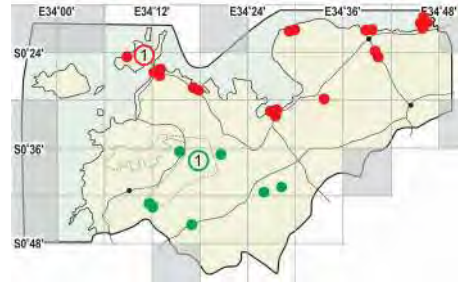
Very local and rare presumed resident at 1200 to 1250 m, with records on 10 Jan 2011 and 26 Oct 2015. **Com:** This vocal species of wooded and bushed hillsides has been recorded (Fig. 15) but has not been seen well. It was previously identified as Lynes's *Cisticola* *C. distinctus* (Bradley *et al.* 2015) but we treat it as unconfirmed here pending additional field data. A recording of its calls, which has been reviewed by a number of regional experts, is consistent with none of the known species in the county or elsewhere, and the birds remain unidentified. **Med:** XC #323309

Rattling *Cisticola* *Cisticola chiniana victoria*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1600 m. **Com:** Most records are from the far west of the county, and it appears to be scarce in the heavily farmed Kuja River Valley.

Winding *Cisticola* *Cisticola marginatus*



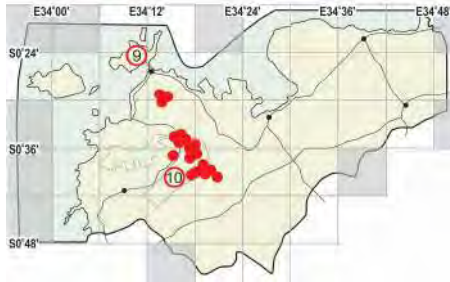
Widespread and locally common resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Com:** Two vocally and ecologically distinct forms occur in the county, which may be better regarded as two distinct species (Fig. 8). *C. m. nyansae* (red markers) is common in reeds, thicket and scrub along Winam Gulf shorelines and immediately adjacent areas (inland to Gendia), while *C. m. suahelicus* (green markers) is uncommon and restricted to tall, waterlogged grass and bush along the Lambwe and Kuja Rivers. The two forms approach each other to within 12 km at their closest.

Carruthers's *Cisticola* *Cisticola carruthersi*



Very local but fairly common resident at 1140 m. **Com:** This specialist of papyrus swamp is known from the Sondu River Estuary west to Homa Bay but may be overlooked further west of there.

Croaking Cisticola *Cisticola natalensis strangei*



Local but common resident from 1200 to 1700 m. **Com:** Now largely confined to the Gembe Hills and protected areas of the Lambwe Valley within Ruma NP, although historically it was also collected on Rusinga Island, where no suitable grassland habitat remains today.

Long-tailed Cisticola *Cisticola angusticauda*



Very local and scarce resident from 1200 to 1300 m, with three records dated to Aug and Oct. **Com:** Based on extensive survey effort in Ruma NP, this species is evidently rare there. Elsewhere in the county, the marginally higher humidity of the Kendu Bay area may be more suitable for this species. **Sm:** FMNH #199400 **Ref:** eBird; J. Agutu, Zimmerman *et al.* 1996

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis uropygialis*



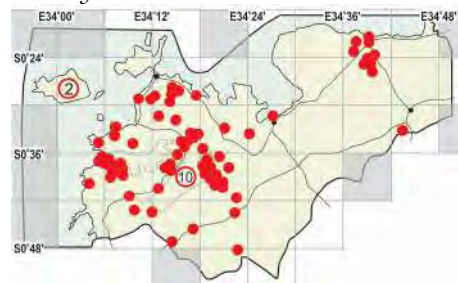
Very local and scarce resident at 1200–1300 m. **Com:** All records come from the protected grasslands of the Lambwe Valley in Ruma NP.

Black-backed Cisticola *Cisticola eximius eximius*



Two records at 1200 m: on 29 Jul 2000 and 14 Nov 2018 in Ruma NP. **Com:** Both records involved birds in non-breeding dress, showing comparatively long tails. **Med:** ML #138522061 & #138522071 **Ref:** James 2002

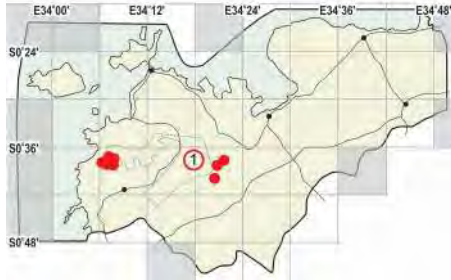
Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava melanorhyncha*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 2000 m. **Br:** Eggs in June. **Com:** Absence of this species from Rusinga

Island but presence on Mfangano Island represents an unusual distributional pattern.

White-chinned Prinia *Schistolais leucopogon reichenowi*



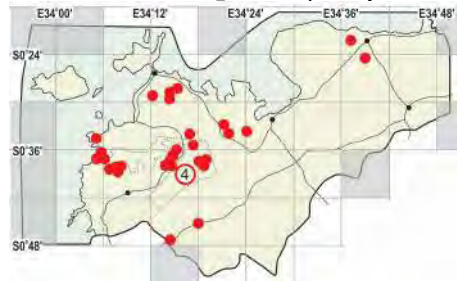
Local and uncommon resident from 1300 to 1900 m **Com:** Presence in the county is closely tied to thick vegetation along streams flowing from the Kanyamwa Escarpment, and in the Gwasssi Hills.

Buff-bellied Warbler *Phyllolais pulchella*



Local and rather uncommon resident from 1140 to 1400 m **Br:** Dependent fledged young in March. **Com:** Pairs and small family groups are closely tied to *Acacia* habitat in drier northern and western parts of the county, though they are possibly overlooked elsewhere.

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida*



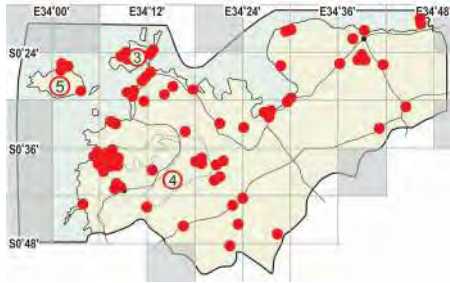
Somewhat local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 2000 m. **Com:** A range of habitat including wooded gardens and dense hillside thicket are used by this species. It is usually present in any dense *Acacia* habitat, and it is largely absent from the heavily farmed southeast of the county.

Grey Apalis *Apalis cinerea cinerea*



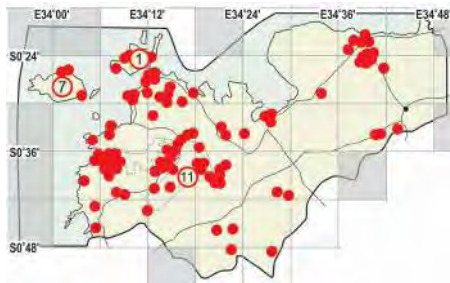
Very local but fairly common resident from 1600 to 2250 m (Fig. 14). **Br:** Dependent juveniles in late February. **Com:** This species has declined noticeably since 2015 in concert with extensive deforestation on the Gwasssi Hills. It remains present in well-developed secondary growth, but pairs are highly mobile, joining mixed flocks that rove large areas of the mountain.

Grey-capped Warbler *Eminia lepida*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 2250 m. **Com:** A song type of this species, apparently local to this area, was misidentified and incorrectly reported as Cinnamon Bracken Warbler *Bradypterus cinnamomeus* by Bradley (2018), and that species is hereby removed from the county list.

Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brevicaudata aschani*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 2250 m. **Br:** Independent juvenile ringed in late October.

Miombo Wren-Warbler *Calamonastes undosus undosus*



Very local and scarce presumed resident from 1200 to 1400 m, with three records in Mar and Nov (Fig. 13). **Com:** Birds are

thinly spread in thick, bushed woodland on east-facing slopes in the Gwasssi and Gembe foothills.

Green-backed Eremomela *Eremomela canescens canescens*



One record: a bird collected on 28 Aug 1932 at 1250 m at Gendia. **Sm:** FMNH #200178

Green-capped Eremomela *Eremomela scotops citriniceps*

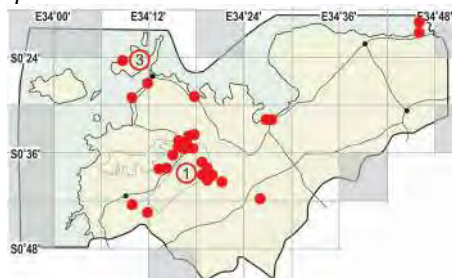


Two records: birds collected around 1200 m at Kendu Bay in September 1918 and a field observation on 26 Mar 2017 at 1250 m in the eastern Gwasssi foothills.

Med: ML #54905401 **Sm:** AMNH #599475

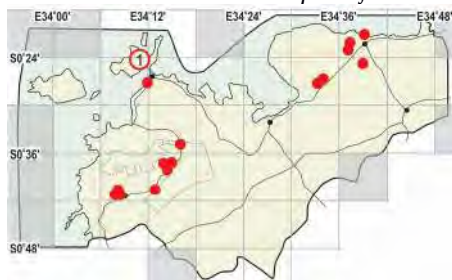
Leiothrichidae: Babblers and Allies

Black-lored Babbler *Turdoides sharpei*



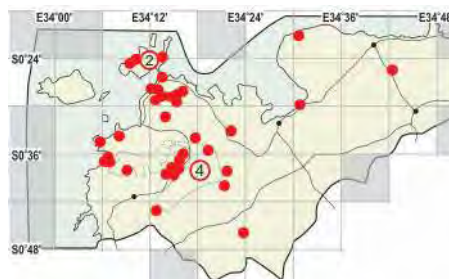
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Br:** Nest building in September. **Com:** Presence in the county is heavily concentrated on the clay soil-based *Acacia* savannas of the Lambwe Valley, but with small numbers also inhabiting areas alongside the Winam Gulf.

Brown Babbler *Turdoides plebejus cinerea*



Local and uncommon resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Br:** Feeding fledged Levailant's Cuckoo young in October. **Com:** This is the least numerous Babbler in the county, and it prefers drier areas of the west and north. It inhabits scrub and degraded bush habitat with a preference for *Acacia* thicket on rocky ground, this being avoided by the following species.

Arrow-marked Babbler *Turdoides jardineii emini*



Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1700 m. **Br:** Nest building in November. **Com:** Typically found in thick bushed and wooded habitats on slopes, and not usually in association with *Acacia*.

Sylviidae: Sylviid Babblers

African Hill Babbler *Sylvia abyssinica abyssinica*



Two records: birds at 2100–2250 m on 28 and 29 Oct 2015. **Com:** This species is doubtless highly threatened by forest loss at its only known site on the highest ridge of the Gwassi Hills, and it may possibly be extirpated from the county (Fig. 15). **Med:** XC #316046



Figure 16. Rocky habitats, like woodlands, are also patchily distributed in the county but support a number of local and uncommon species. These include Familiar Chat *Oenanthe familiaris* (I: Gwasssi foothills; James Bradley), Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis* (II: Gembe Hills; Victor Ikawa), Cinnamon-breasted Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi* (III: Gembe Hills; Jason Fidorra), Rock-loving Cisticola *Cisticola emini* (IV: Ragwe Point; James Bradley), and Little Rock Thrush *Monticola rufocinereus* (V: Gembe Hills; David Bradley).



Figure 17. Several common to fairly common species of highland areas (typically above 1500 m) may be found on the Gwassi and Gembe Hills but are scarce or absent in peripheral lowlands. These include (all from the Gwassi Hills) Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus* (I; James Bradley), White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher *Melaenornis fischeri* (II; Victor Ikawa), Yellow Bishop *Euplectes capensis* (III; Victor Ikawa), African Dusky Flycatcher *Muscicapa adusta* (IV; Victor Ikawa), Golden-winged Sunbird *Drepanorhynchus reichenowi* (V; Victor Ikawa) and Western Citril *Crithagra frontalis* (VI; James Bradley).



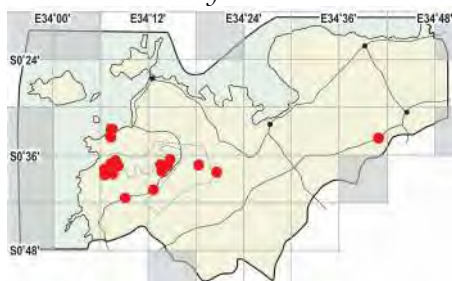
Figure 18. The waxbill and whydah families are well represented in the county. Among the less common species are Black-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda troglodytes* (I; Ruma NP, James Bradley), Cut-throat Finch *Amadina fasciata* (II; Ruma NP, Nathan Hentze), Blue-capped Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus cyanocephalus* (III; Ruma NP, Jason Fidorra), Straw-tailed Whydah *Vidua fischeri* (IV; near Sindo, James Bradley), Bar-breasted Firefinch *Lagonostica rufopicta* (V; Kuja River Valley, Victor Ikawa) and Long-tailed Paradise Whydah *Vidua paradisaea* (VI; near Mbita, James Bradley).

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*



Very local but sometimes common seasonal visitor from 1350 to 2250 m, with records from mid Oct to late Feb.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*



Rather local but fairly common passage migrant from 1140 to 2250 m, with records from late Oct to late Nov and mid Feb to late Mar.

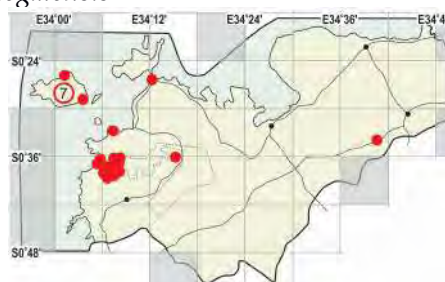
Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*



Local and scarce passage migrant from 1200 to 1300 m, with three scattered records in Apr and Nov.

Zosteropidae: White-eyes

African Yellow White-eye *Zosterops senegalensis*



Local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 2250 m. **Br:** Nest building in November. **Com:** This species is generally scarce away from the Gwass highlands and Mfangano Island.

Modulatricidae: Dapple-throat and Allies

Grey-chested Babbler *Kakamega poliothorax*



Two records: on 4 Nov 2014 and on 28 Oct 2015 from 1900 to 2200 m in the Gwass Hills. **Com:** This species is presumably very rare in the hills and highly threatened by deforestation. It may already be extirpated from the county. **Med:** XC #320723

Sturnidae: Starlings

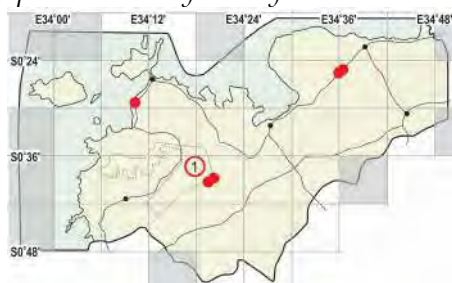
Wattled Starling *Creatophora cinerea*



Local but fairly common seasonal visitor and passage migrant from 1140 to 1300 m, with records in Feb-May and Aug-Nov. **Com:** We have recorded a November high count of 120 birds in Ruma NP.

Greater Blue-eared Starling

Lamprotornis chalybeus cyaniventris



Local and scarce seasonal visitor below 1400 m, recorded from Oct to Mar. **Med:** ML #215375521

Purple Starling *Lamprotornis purpureus amethystinus*

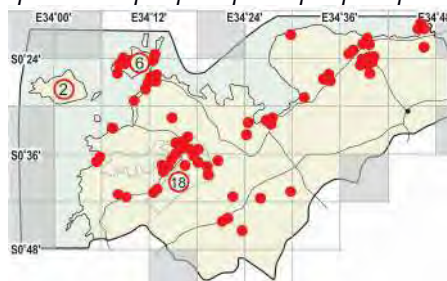


One undated record: reported from 1140 m at Nyangweso, probably during

the period from 1960 to 1980. **Ref:** Britton 1980

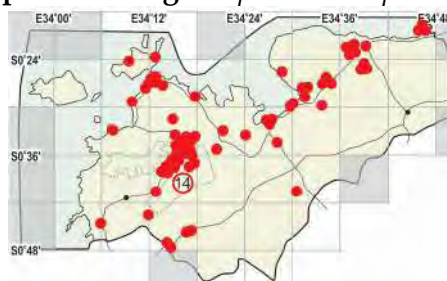
Rüppell's Starling

Lamprotornis purpuroptera purpuroptera



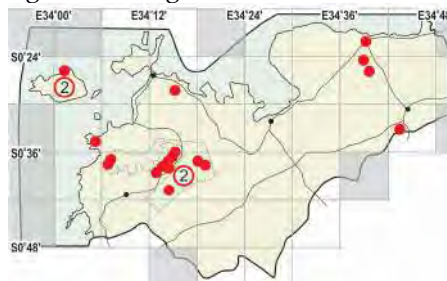
Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Br:** Nest building in November.

Superb Starling *Lamprotornis superbus*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Com:** Mostly absent from the heavily farmed southeast of the county.

Violet-backed Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster leucogaster*



Widespread and fairly common seasonal visitor and passage migrant from 1140 to 2000 m, with records from Feb to Oct,

but with a peak in abundance in Mar and few records after May.

Sharpe's Starling *Poeoptera sharpii*



Very local but fairly common resident from 1800 to 2250 m (Fig. 14). **Br:** Recently fledged young in August and September. **Com:** This species has persisted in the Gwassu Hills despite extensive deforestation since 2014. Up to 16 birds (including some displaying) were observed in March 2017, with a small flock still present in mid-2021.

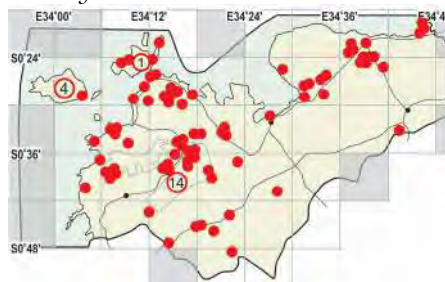
Buphagidae: Oxpeckers

Yellow-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus africanus africanus*



Local and scarce visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, with three scattered records in Mar and Oct–Nov.

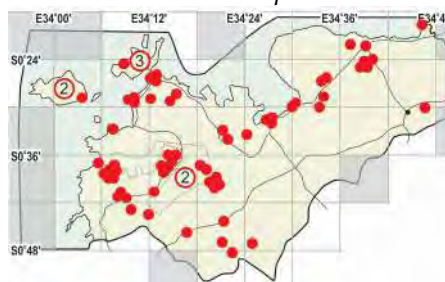
Red-billed Oxpecker *Buphagus erythrorhynchus*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1850 m.

Turdidae: Thrushes

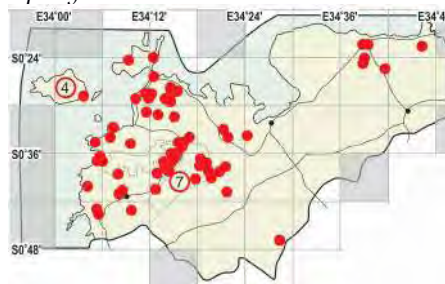
African Thrush *Turdus pelios centralis*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 2100 m.

Muscicapidae: Chats and Old World Flycatchers

White-browed Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas leucophrys zambesiana*



Widely occurring and locally common resident from 1140 to 1700 m. **Com:** Presence is centred on hilly terrain with thickets and bush in the west of the

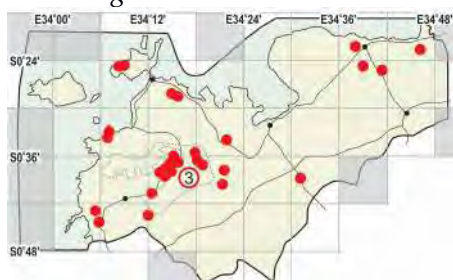
county and near Kendu Bay, being largely absent from heavily farmed ground in the southeast of the county.

White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher *Melaenornis fischeri fischeri*



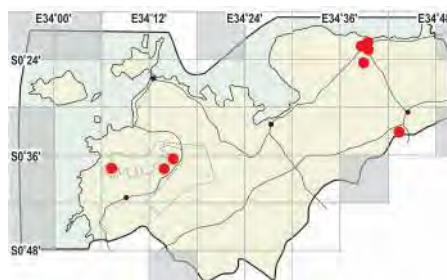
Very local but common resident from 1800 to 2250 m (Fig. 17). **Br:** Independent juveniles in April, May and November. **Com:** Reports from Ruma NP in the Lambwe Valley are not well supported.

Northern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis edolioides lugubris*



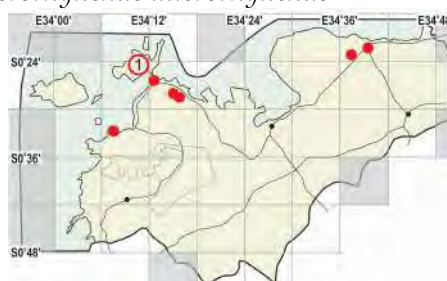
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Com:** This species requires a mix of taller trees as well as tall, thick bushes. It is absent from heavily farmed terrain but persists in well-wooded gardens.

Pale Flycatcher *Melaenornis pallidus murinus*



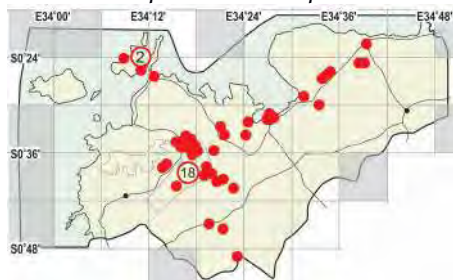
Local and uncommon resident from 1300 to 2000 m. **Com:** This woodland species is largely restricted to remnant moist woodlands in the Kendu Bay area and on the mid-slopes of the Gwassu Hills. Presence on Rusinga Island requires confirmation.

African Grey Flycatcher *Melaenornis microrhynchus microrhynchus*



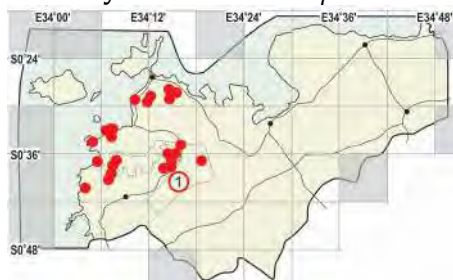
Local and uncommon resident from 1140 to 1200 m. **Com:** This species is found sparingly in association with mixed *Acacia*, *Balanites* and *Euphorbia* woodlands in the drier areas of the northwest, with small numbers also near Kendu Bay.

Silverbird *Empidonis semipartitus*



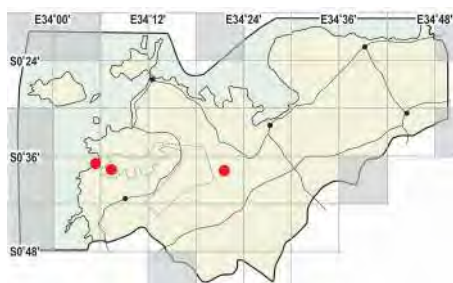
Local but common resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Br:** Nest building in November; dependent fledged young in March, September, October and November. **Com:** Closely tied to *Acacia* habitat on clay soils.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*



Local but fairly common passage migrant from 1140 to 2000 m, with records in late Oct to mid Nov and mid Feb to late Mar. **Com:** This species is closely tied to the foothill terrain of the Kisingiri massif.

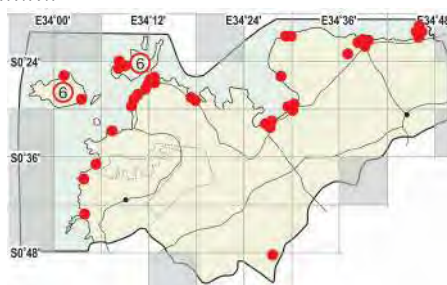
Ashy Flycatcher *Muscicapa caerulescens brevicauda*



Very local and scarce resident from 1140 to 1900 m, with three Oct–Nov records from the vicinity of the Kisingiri massif

and Kanyamwa Escarpment. **Com:** The two records from the lowlands were made in *Ficus*-rich riparian forest, while the highland record was of a bird in tall submontane evergreen forest. **Ref:** Bradley 2018

Swamp Flycatcher *Muscicapa aquatica infulata*



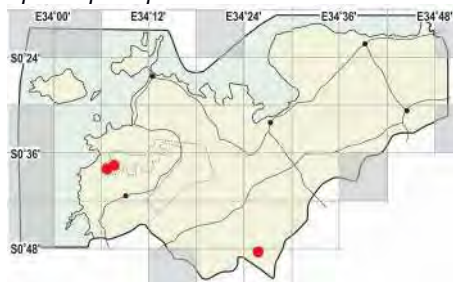
Local but common resident at 1140 m. **Br:** Nest building in July. **Com:** Within Homa Bay County this species is almost entirely restricted to lakeshore habitats and immediately adjacent wetlands.

African Dusky Flycatcher *Muscicapa adusta interposita*



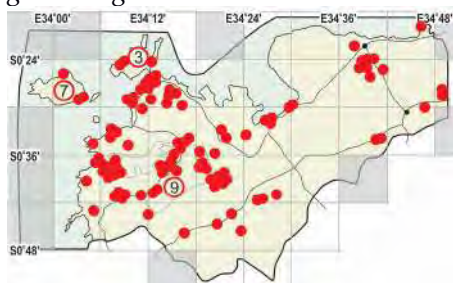
Very local and uncommon resident from 1900 to 2250 m (Fig. 17).

Grey-winged Robin-Chat *Cossypha polioptera polioptera*



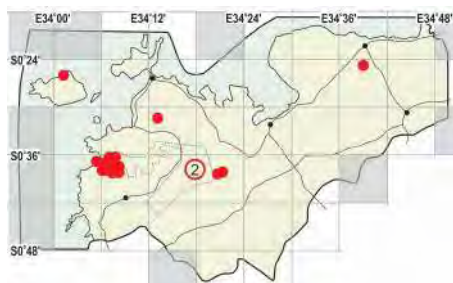
Very local and rare resident from 1300 to 2000 m. **Com:** This species is highly threatened by deforestation in the Gwassi Hills, and it has not been reported there since 2014. It is doubtless lost from Pala in the Kujia River basin, where no suitable habitat remains.

White-browed Robin-Chat *Cossypha heuglini heuglini*



Widespread and abundant resident from 1140 to 2100 m. **Br:** Occupied nest in June; dependent juvenile in August.

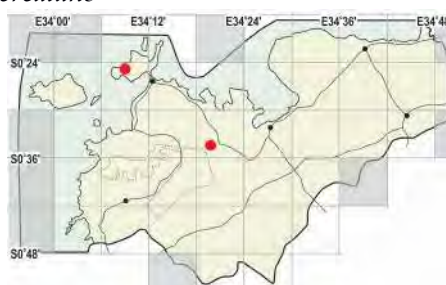
Red-capped Robin-Chat *Cossypha natalensis intensa*



Local but fairly common resident (and seasonal visitor?) from 1700 to 2200 m on the Gwassi Hills, being scarce elsewhere

down to 1140 m. **Br:** Juvenile in October. **Com:** A bird on the Gwassi Hills has been heard mimicking the call of Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx montanus* which is unknown in western Kenya but could occur on the Gwassi Hills. However, a bird on Mfangano Island in May, where apparently not resident (?), is suggestive of being a migrant from southern latitudes.

Spotted Palm Thrush *Cichladusa guttata intercalans*



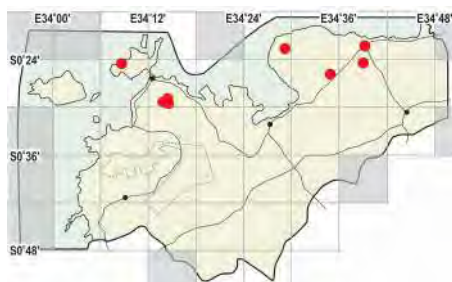
Two records: on 6 Feb 2016 at 1140 m on Rusinga Island, and on 25 Nov 2017 at 1200 m in the Lambwe Valley. **Med:** ML #46442011

Semicollared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata*



One record of two birds: a male and female at 1140 m near Sindo from 28 Feb to 4 Mar 2022 (Fig. 11). **Com:** The pair, which was well photographed, was noted to forage under the shade of *Thevetia peruviana* and *Terminalia brownii*, and the timing of the record is appropriate for northbound passage migrants. **Ref:** M. Wanjohi, pers. comm.

Common Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis*



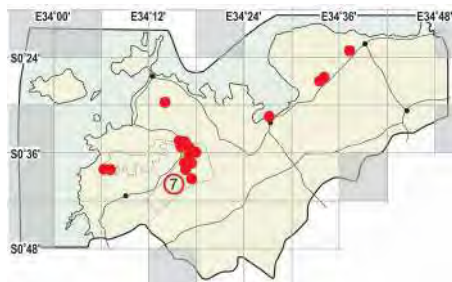
Rather local and uncommon seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1600 m, with records from mid Oct to late Jan.

Little Rock Thrush *Monticola rufocinereus rufocinereus*



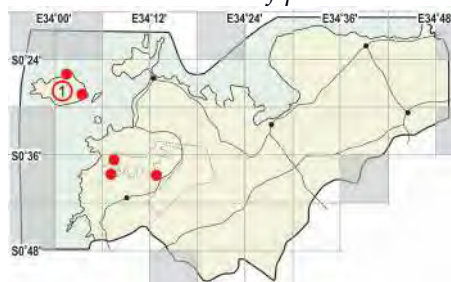
Very local and rare presumed resident from 1800 to 2000 m (Fig. 16). **Com:** Records come from steep terrain in or near woodland in the Gembe and Gwassi Hills.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*



Widespread and fairly common seasonal visitor at 1140–1900 m, recorded from late Sept to late Mar. **Com:** Most records come from the protected grasslands of Ruma NP.

Mocking Cliff Chat *Thamnolaea cinnamomeiventris subrufipennis*



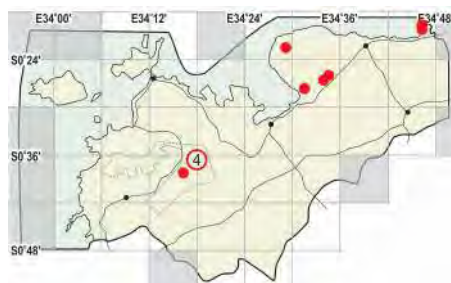
Local and scarce presumed resident from 1200 to 1900 m, with records in Mar, May, Jul, Aug and Dec. **Com:** The distribution of this species is clearly restricted by the availability of suitable habitat. It is likely to be present on unsurveyed rugged cliffs on Rangwe, the central plug of the Kisingiri Crater. **Ref:** Bradley 2018

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*



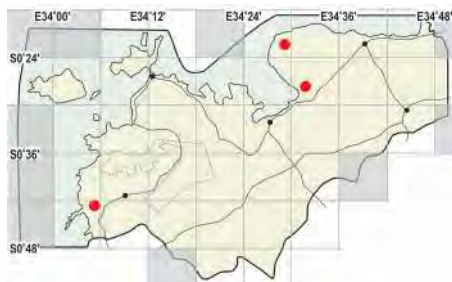
Somewhat local and uncommon passage migrant from 1140 to 1800 m, with records in Feb and Oct to Dec.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*



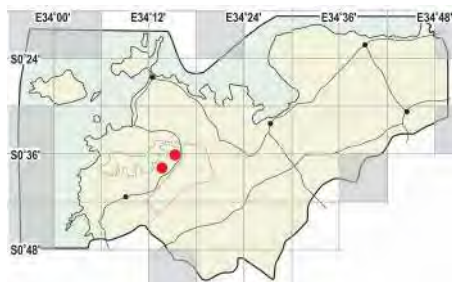
Rather local but fairly common seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, with records from early Oct to late Feb.

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka pleschanka*



Widespread but scarce passage migrant from 1140 to 1400 m, with three scattered records from late Oct to mid Dec.

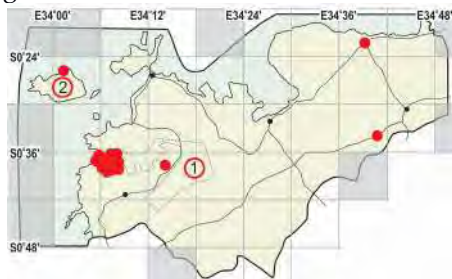
Familiar Chat *Oenanthe familiaris falkensteini*



Two records: a single bird on 6 Nov 2014 and a pair on 26 Nov 2017, at 1250 m and 1600 m, respectively, in the eastern Gwassi foothills (Fig. 16).

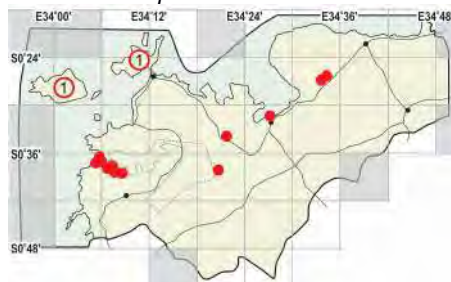
Nectariniidae: Sunbirds

Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris garguensis*



Widely occurring but only locally fairly common resident from 1140 to 2250 m. **Br:** Dependent fledged young in November.

Green-headed Sunbird *Cyanomitra verticalis viridisplendens*



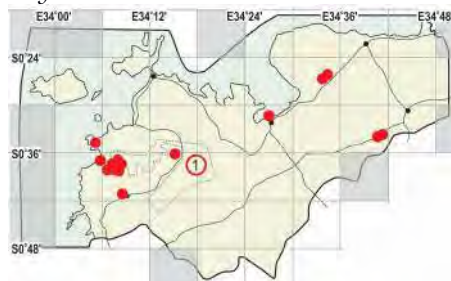
Widely occurring but only locally fairly common resident from 1140 to 1900 m. **Br:** Breeding condition female ringed in November.

Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra olivacea ragazzii*



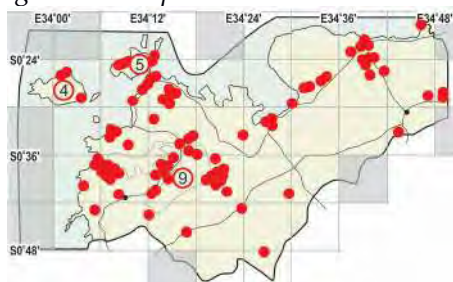
Two records: birds from 2000 to 2100 m in the Gwassi Hills on 3 and 5 Nov 2014. **Com:** This species is highly threatened by forest loss and may possibly be extirpated from the county.

Amethyst Sunbird *Chalcomitra amethystina kirkii*



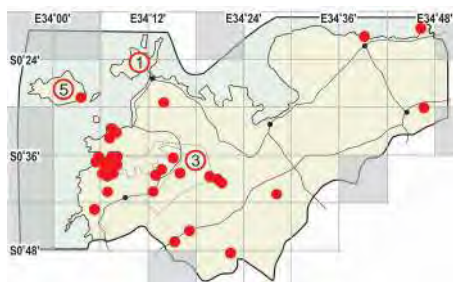
Widely occurring but only locally fairly common resident from 1140 to 2250 m. **Com:** Most numerous in the Gwassi Hills.

Scarlet-chested Sunbird *Chalcomitra senegalensis lamperti*



Widespread and abundant resident from 1140 to 2000 m. **Br:** Nest building in March; independent juvenile in March.

Bronzy Sunbird *Nectarinia kilimensis kilimensis*



Widespread and fairly common resident from 1500 to 2250 m **Com:** Presence is mostly centred on the Kisingiri massif but also includes the Lambwe Valley and both large islands.

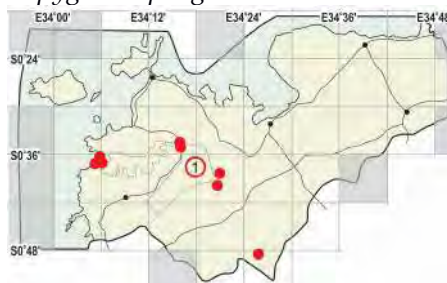
Golden-winged Sunbird *Drepanorhynchus reichenowi reichenowi*



Very local and scarce seasonal visitor from 1800 to 2200 m, with records from Mar to Sep (Fig. 17). **Com:** Very small numbers may occur annually on the highest ridges of the Gwassu Hills, espe-

cially where flowering *Leonotis* is abundant.

Olive-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris chloropygius orphogaster*



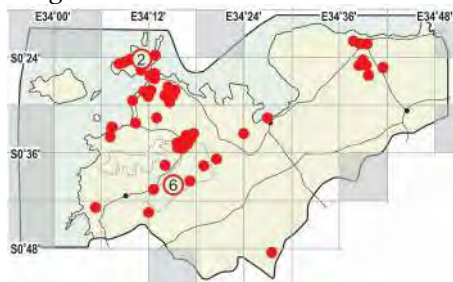
Local and uncommon resident from 1140 to 1500 m. **Br:** Occupied nest in October. **Com:** This species is replaced by the Northern Double-collared Sunbird above 1700 m.

Northern Double-collared Sunbird *Cinnyris reichenowi reichenowi*



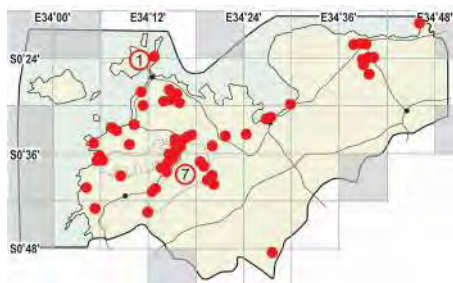
Very local but common resident from 1800 to 2250 m (Fig. 14). **Br:** Nest building in March and October. **Com:** This species remains fairly common in the Gwassu Hills despite extensive deforestation.

Beautiful Sunbird *Cinnyris pulchellus melanogastrus*



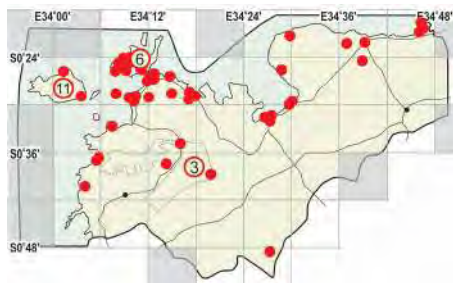
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1300 m. **Com:** Drier lowlands with abundant *Acacia* comprise the main habitat for this species, hence its primarily western distribution in the county.

Marico Sunbird *Cinnyris mariquensis suaehelicus*



Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1500 m. **Br:** Occupied nest in June; nest with young in September.

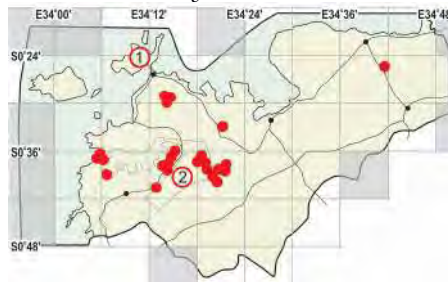
Red-chested Sunbird *Cinnyris erythrocerus*



Widely occurring and locally common resident from 1140 to 1250 m. **Br:** Occupied nest in January; nestlings in July; nest building in November. **Com:** Dis-

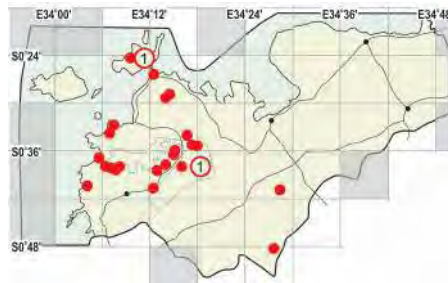
tribution is principally along the lake-shore, but birds sometimes wander inland.

Purple-banded Sunbird *Cinnyris bifasciatus microrhynchus*



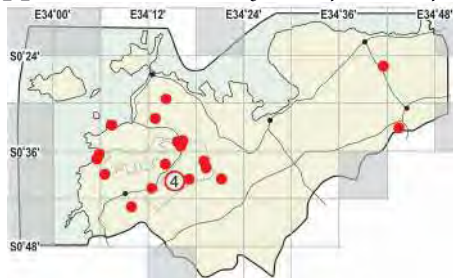
Rather local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 1800 m. **Com:** This species prefers thicker habitat than the Marico Sunbird and is typically lower in the vegetation strata, unlike the high-perching Marico.

Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus falkensteini*



Rather local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 1900 m. **Br:** Nest building in November. **Com:** This species is almost exclusively tied to the slopes of the Kisingiri massif, with a small population on Rusinga Island.

Copper Sunbird *Cinnyris cupreus cupreus*



Widespread but generally uncommon resident from 1140 to 1550 m, wandering occasionally to 1800 m on the Gwassi Hills **Com:** This species shows a clear avoidance of lakeshore habitats.

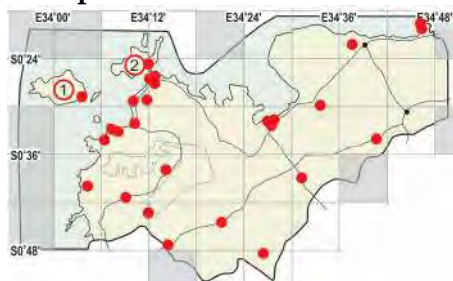
Kenya Sparrow *Passer rufocinctus*



Widespread but scarce presumed seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, recorded from Oct to Mar. **Com:** Presence in the county is poorly understood and photographic documentation is lacking.

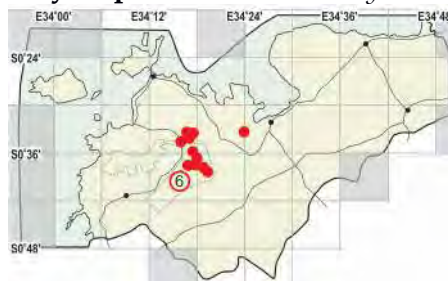
Passeridae: Old World Sparrows

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*



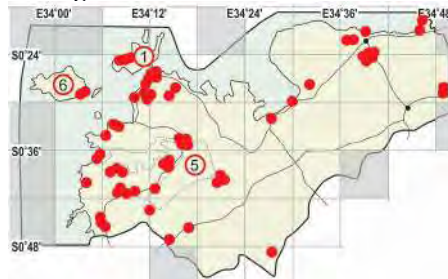
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Com:** This species was historically restricted to coastal and southeast Kenya before colonizing Nairobi in the early 1990s and spreading rapidly northwards and westwards from there. It was established in Kisumu by 2009 but first reported from Homa Bay County only as recently as 2015.

Shelley's Sparrow *Passer shelleyi*



Very local but common resident from 1200 to 1300 m (Fig. 12). **Br:** Occupied nest in March; nest building in November. **Com:** This species is very closely tied to *Acacia drepanolobium*. **Ref:** Bradley et al. 2018

Northern Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus ugandae*



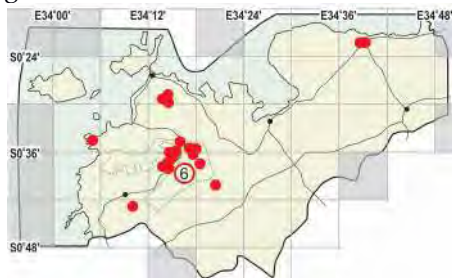
Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1800 m.

Chestnut Sparrow *Passer eminibey*



Very local and scarce presumed seasonal visitor at 1140 m in the Kendu Bay area, with three specimen records in Jun and Aug. **Sm:** AMNH #719990, FMNH #202537, WFVZ #155299

Yellow-spotted Petronia *Gymnoris pyrgita*



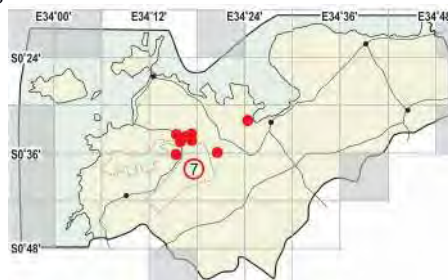
Rather local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 1400 m.

Ploceidae: Weavers and Widowbirds

[White-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis albirostris*]

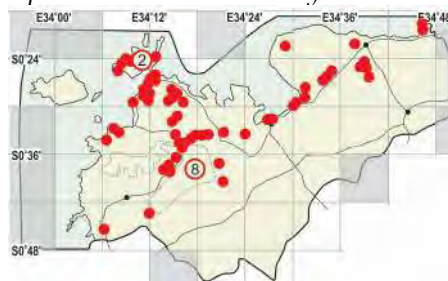
A March report from the edge of Ruma NP is not well documented. Treated here as unconfirmed.

Red-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger intermedius*



Very local and rather uncommon resident at 1200 m. **Br:** Occupied nests in March. **Com:** This species appears to be largely restricted to a 70 km² area of the mid-Lambwe Valley, and is found as much around the margins of Ruma NP as within it.

White-browed Sparrow-Weaver *Plocepasser mahali melanorhynchus*



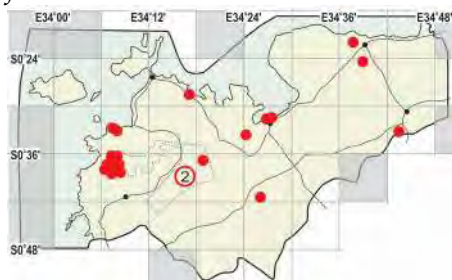
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1350 m. **Br:** Occupied nests in January, May and November. **Com:** Largely restricted to drier areas of the north and northwest; favours *Acacia*.

Speckle-fronted Weaver *Sporopipes frontalis emini*



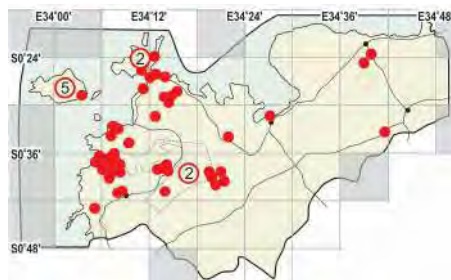
Two records: birds on 3 May 2021 at 1200 m at Nyanganjo and at 1150 m at Lake Simbi on 8 May 2021. **Br:** Occupied nests in May. **Com:** The clustering of these two records both temporally and spatially is suggestive of a small irruptive influx of this *Acacia*-loving species. **Med:** ML #336399961

Thick-billed Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons*



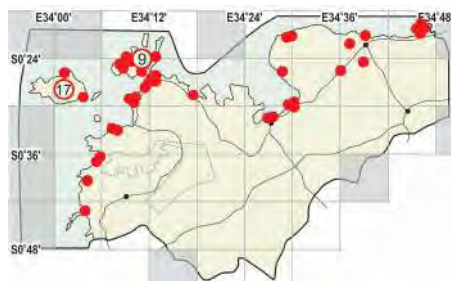
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 2200 m. **Com:** The cinnamon-headed subspecies *melanota* is present in Ruma NP and the Winam Gulf lowlands while birds near Oyugis are not assigned to subspecies. Birds above 1800 m in the Gwassi Hills are thought to be possibly the subspecies *montana*, although this requires confirmation.

Baglafaecht Weaver *Ploceus baglafaecht reichenowi*



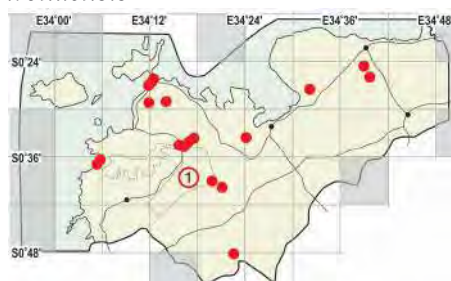
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 2250 m.

Slender-billed Weaver *Ploceus pelzelni pelzelni*



Local but common resident from 1140 to 1200 m. **Com:** Closely tied to lake shorelines but ranging inland very locally in adjacent low-lying terrain.

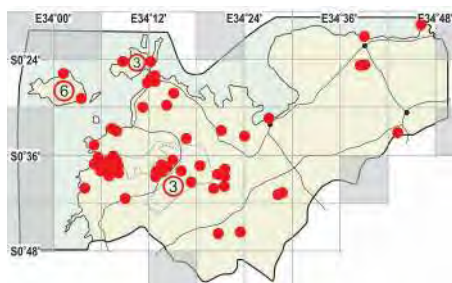
Little Weaver *Ploceus luteolus kavirondensis*



Widespread but uncommon resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Com:** This species occurs at much lower densities than the Slender-billed Weaver and their ranges overlap only very locally. The present species generally avoids lakeshore areas,

preferring *Acacia mellifera*, *A. seyal* and *Balanites aegyptiaca* woodland inland.

Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis crocatus*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 2250 m. **Br:** Nest building in November.

Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus nigricollis*



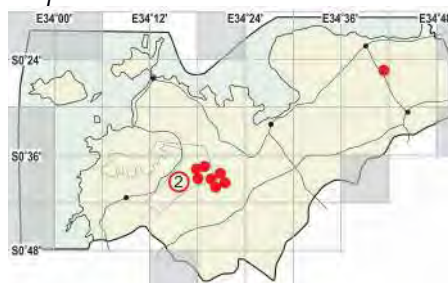
Very local and scarce resident at 1140–1400 m. **Com:** Birds inhabiting wooded streams flowing off the Kanyamwa Escarpment into Ruma NP are the sepia-backed form *nigricollis* (Fig. 13). The black-backed form *melanoxanthus* can be found in dry scrub immediately to the south of the county at Karungu, and unassigned birds on semi-arid Rusinga Island may also be referable to that taxon.

Black-billed Weaver *Ploceus melanogaster stephanophorus*



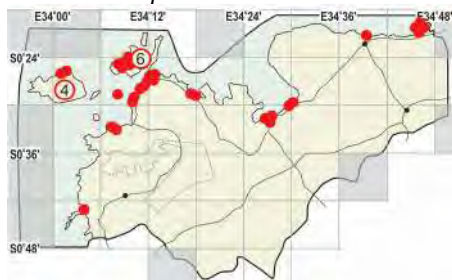
Very local and uncommon resident from 1800 to 2250 m (Fig. 14). **Com:** Numbers of this species have declined markedly in the Gwassi Hills since 2011 in concert with extensive deforestation. It remains present as of 2021 but its future on the hills is certainly in doubt. A bird observed in marginal second growth habitat with no tree canopy in 2014 was captured by an accipiter; perhaps an indicative outcome for forest birds in heavily degraded habitat.

Holub's Golden Weaver *Ploceus xanthops*



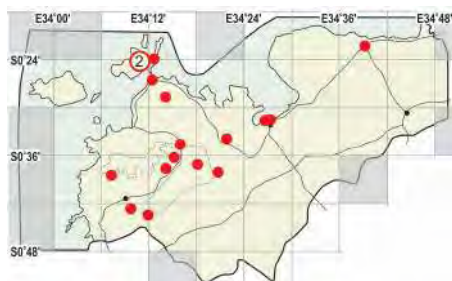
Very local and uncommon resident at 1200–1400 m. **Br:** Occupied nest in March; recently fledged young in November.

Northern Brown-throated Weaver
Ploceus castanops



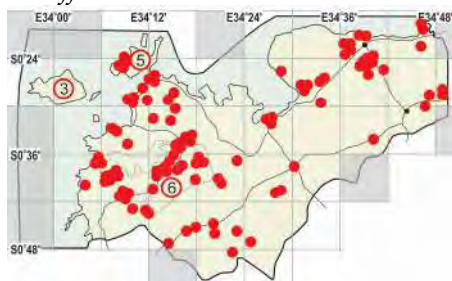
Rather local but fairly common resident at 1140 m. **Com:** Presence is closely tied to Winam Gulf shorelines, and it is particularly numerous in the Rusinga Island-Mbita area.

Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius intermedius*



Widespread but generally uncommon resident from 1140 to 1400 m, occasionally ranging higher to 1800 m. **Br:** Nest building in March and November; dependent juvenile in February.

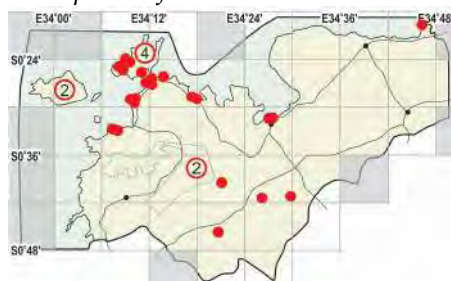
Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus bohndorffi*



Widespread and abundant resident throughout the region from 1140 to

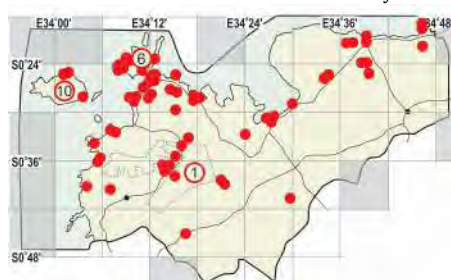
1800 m. **Br:** Nest building in November; occupied nest in March.

Black-headed Weaver *Ploceus melanocephalus fischeri*



Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1350 m. **Br:** Nest building in November. **Com:** Presence is closely tied to lake shorelines although there are scattered colonies on small dams and marshes at inland locations as well.

Golden-backed Weaver *Ploceus jacksoni*



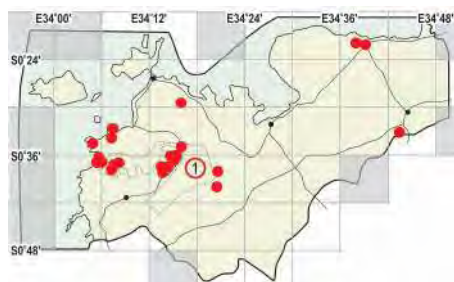
Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1500 m. **Br:** Nest building in March and November.

Compact Weaver *Pachyphantes superciliosus*



One record: on 18 Mar 1981 at 1140 m at Homa Bay. **Ref:** EABR 1981

Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps leuconotus*



Somewhat local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 2200 m. **Br:** Nest building in June. **Com:** This species has been observed opportunistically foraging at an ant swarm in dense thicket alongside *Turdoides emini*, *Cyanomitra verticalis* and *Ploceus cucullatus*. The wooded slopes of the Kisingiri massif appear to comprise the most suitable habitat.

Cardinal Quelea *Quelea cardinalis*



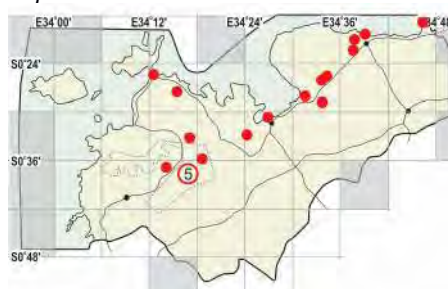
Widespread but generally uncommon seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, with records from Jun to Feb. **Com:** This species can occasionally appear in high numbers (min. 500 birds present in a small area of Ruma NP in Nov 2021) when grasses along the Lambwe River are seeding.

Red-headed Quelea *Quelea erthyrops*



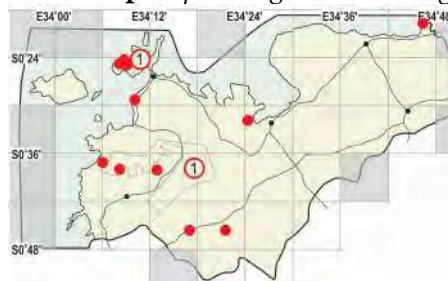
One record: on 4 May 1999 at 1140 m at Nyangweso. **Ref:** Jackson 2000

Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea aethiopica*



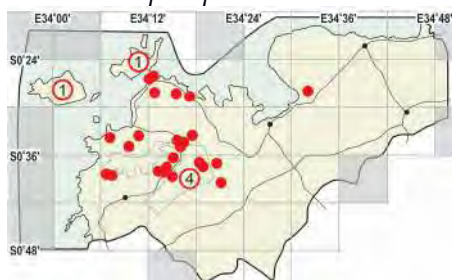
Somewhat local but fairly common presumed resident from 1140 to 1300 m, recorded year round but with a decrease in reporting frequency from Apr to Sep.

Black Bishop *Euplectes gierowii ansorgei*



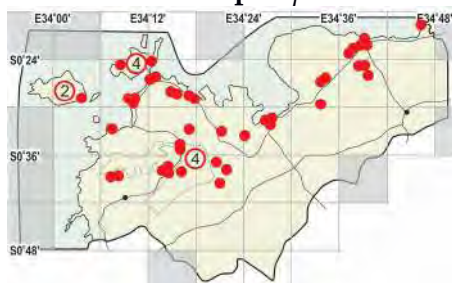
Widespread but uncommon resident from 1140 to 1800 m. **Com:** This species occurs patchily and at low densities, with no clear geographic pattern to explain its distribution. It is most reliably found on Rusinga Island.

Black-winged Bishop *Euplectes hordeaceus craspedopterus*



Rather local but common resident from 1140 to 1800 m. **Com:** Presence is strongly centred on the Kisingiri massif and Lambwe Valley. It tolerates sloping terrain to a greater extent than the Southern Red Bishop.

Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1500 m. **Com:** Typically favours flatter terrain and less thickly bushed grasslands than Black-winged Bishop.

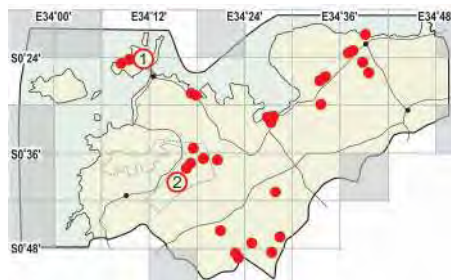
Yellow Bishop *Euplectes capensis crassirostris*



Local and uncommon resident from 1200 to 2100 m (Fig. 17). **Com:** Presence is primarily above 1500 m on the Gwassi and Gembe Hills although there are re-

ords from elsewhere nearby in May and Jun, when the species may presumably wander to lower altitudes.

Fan-tailed Widowbird *Euplectes axillaris phoeniceus*



Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1400 m.

White-winged Widowbird *Euplectes albonotatus eques*



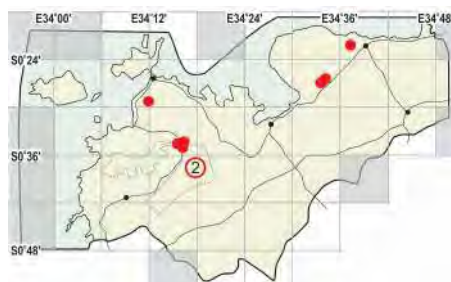
Very local and uncommon seasonal visitor from 1200 to 1300 m, with records in Mar, May, Jun, Oct and Nov. **Com:** All records are from within close proximity to the Lambwe River.

Red-collared Widowbird *Euplectes ardens suahelica*



One record: on 15 Jan 1989 at 1140 m on Rusinga Island. **Ref:** eBird; K. Groenendijk

Cut-throat Finch *Amadina fasciata alexanderi*



Local and uncommon presumed resident from 1140 to 1250 m, recorded in Jan, Mar, May, Oct and Nov (Fig. 18).

Estrildidae: Waxbills and Allies

Grey-headed Nigrita *Nigrita canicapillus*



One record: a singing bird on 4 Nov 2014 at 1900 m in the Gwasssi Hills. **Med:** ML #477779331

Green Twinspot *Mandingoa nitidula chubbi*



Very local and uncommon resident from 1800 to 2200 m. **Com:** This species has been recorded as recently as 2021 and may be somewhat resistant to extensive deforestation if thick secondary growth remains intact.

Green-winged Pytilia *Pytilia melba belli*



Local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Com:** This species is entirely restricted to the driest areas in west of the county, ranging very locally into the Lambwe Valley.

Red-headed Bluebill *Spermophaga ruficapilla ruficapilla*



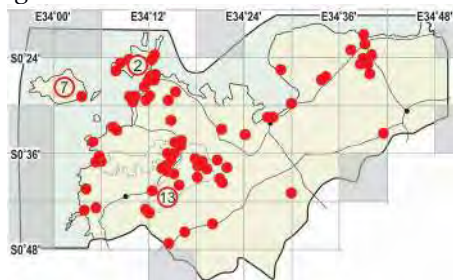
One record: an undated account from the early 1970s at 1325 m at Pala in the Kuja River basin, where no forest habitat remains today. **Ref:** Sugg & Sugg 1972

Bar-breasted Firefinch *Lagonosticta rufopicta lateritia*



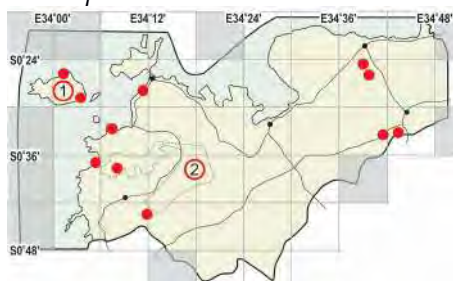
One record: three birds on 4 Jun 2022 at 1300 m on the Kuja River, approximately 3 km south of Lwanda on the Migori county border (Fig. 18). **Br:** Mating in June. **Com:** This species is undoubtedly local and scarce south of the Winam Gulf, with nearby records from only Kisii and Lolgorien.

Red-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta senegala ruberrima*



Widespread and abundant resident from 1140 to 1500 m.

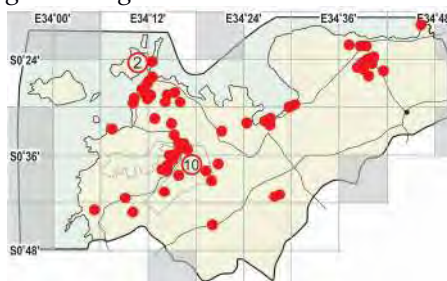
African Firefinch *Lagonosticta rubricata haematocephala*



Widespread but uncommon resident from 1140 to 1900 m. **Com:** This species is nearly always found near thick cover

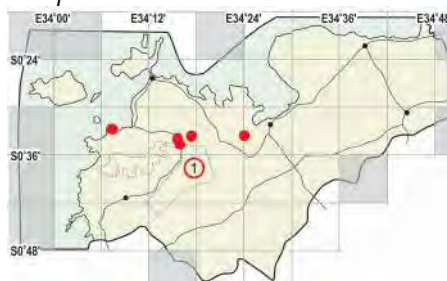
in close proximity to a freshwater source.

Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus bengalus bengalus*



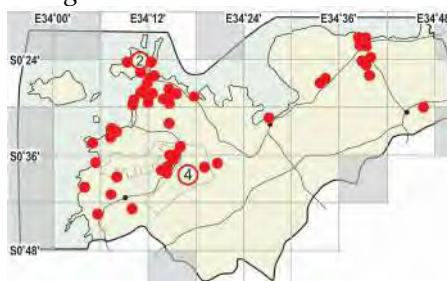
Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1400 m.

Blue-capped Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus cyanocephalus*



Very local and uncommon resident from 1140 to 1250 m (Fig. 18). **Com:** The range of this species in the county highlights those areas that receive the least amount of annual rainfall.

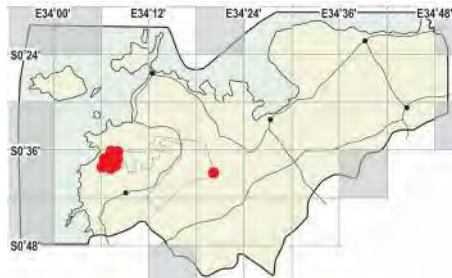
Purple Grenadier *Granatina ianthinogaster*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1600 m. **Br:** Nest building in July. **Com:** The range of this species and that

of the Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu overlap closely and the two species are often found together.

Yellow-bellied Waxbill *Coccygia quartinia kilimensis*



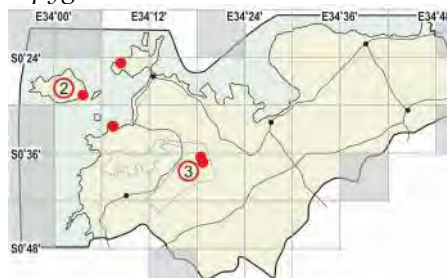
Very local and uncommon resident from 1600 to 2250 m, occasionally wandering lower to 1350 m. **Br:** Nest building in October.

Fawn-breasted Waxbill *Estrilda paludicola paludicola*



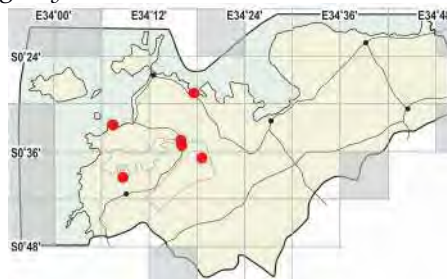
Very local and uncommon seasonal visitor at 1200 m, recorded in Jun and Nov-Dec. **Com:** Within the county this species is entirely dependent on tall grasses growing at springs and seeps, conditions which are present only in Ruma NP.

Crimson-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda rhodopyga centralis*



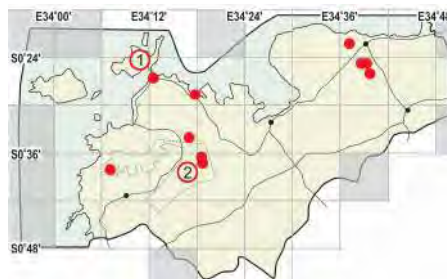
Local and uncommon seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, with wet season records in Apr-Jun and Nov-Dec. **HH:** Pairs and small groups inhabit damp grasslands and overgrown farmland, commonly near water.

Black-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda troglodytes*



Local and uncommon presumed seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1400 m, with records in Feb-Mar and Oct-Nov (Fig. 18).

Common Waxbill *Estrilda astrild adesma*



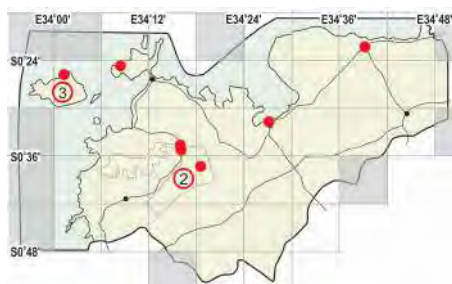
Widespread but uncommon resident from 1140 to 2000 m.

Black-crowned Waxbill *Estrilda nonnula nonnula*



Very local and rare presumed seasonal visitor from 1300 to 2200 m, with three records in Apr, Jul and Nov.

Black-faced Waxbill *Estrilda erythronotos delamerei*



Widespread but uncommon presumed seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, with records from Nov to May.

Orange-breasted Waxbill *Amandava subflava subflava*



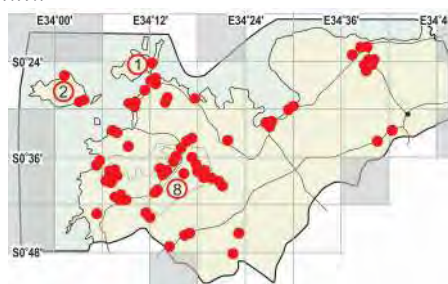
One record: five birds on 9 Oct 2021 at 1150 m at Lake Simbi. **Ref:** eBird; J. Agutu

Quailfinch *Ortygospiza atricollis muelleri*



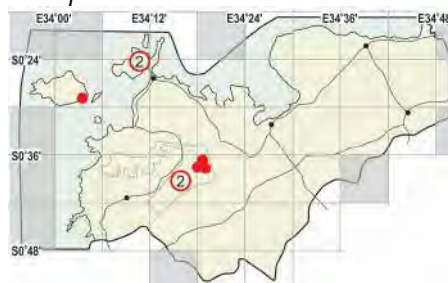
Very local and rare presumed seasonal visitor at 1200 m, with three records in Oct–Nov. **Com:** This species can be hard to detect and could be under reported.

Bronze Mannikin *Lonchura cucullata cucullata*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1900 m. **Br:** Dependent young in November.

Black-and-white Mannikin *Lonchura bicolor poensis*

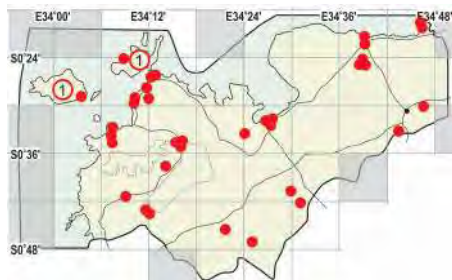


Local and uncommon presumed seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, with records in Feb–Jun and Oct–Nov. **Br:** Occupied nest in June. **Com:** Some birds observed in Ruma NP show noticeably dusky-brown upperparts, appearing in-

intermediate between *poensis* and eastern *nigriceps*.

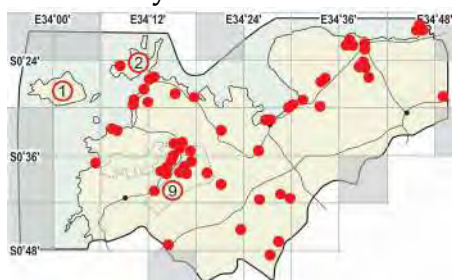
Viduidae: Indigobirds

Village Indigobird *Vidua chalybeata centralis*



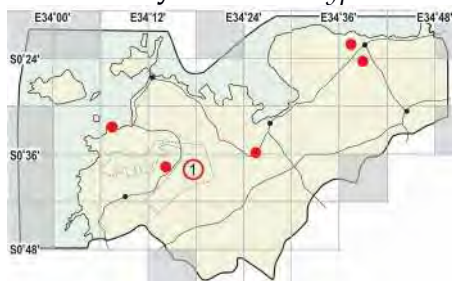
Widespread and fairly common resident from 1140 to 1550 m. **Com:** This species is typically encountered where its host species (Red-billed Firefinch) is most numerous.

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*



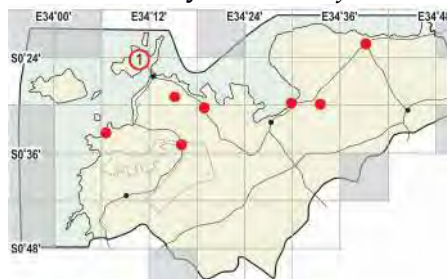
Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1400 m.

Steel-blue Whydah *Vidua hypocherina*



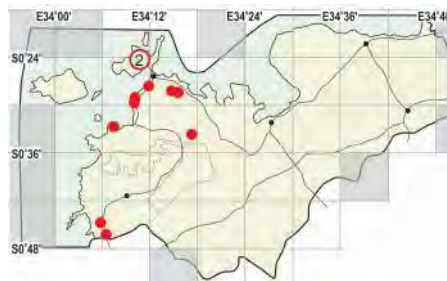
Widespread but uncommon seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1250 m, with records in Jan–Feb and May–Jun, after the rains.

Straw-tailed Whydah *Vidua fischeri*



Widespread but uncommon seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, with records in Aug and Dec–Mar (Fig. 18).

Long-tailed Paradise Whydah *Vidua paradisaea*



Rather local and generally uncommon seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1250 m, with records in Jun and Dec–Mar (Fig. 18). **Com:** Presence of this species is restricted to the driest parts of the county in the northwest near Mbita, and to the south of Magunga.

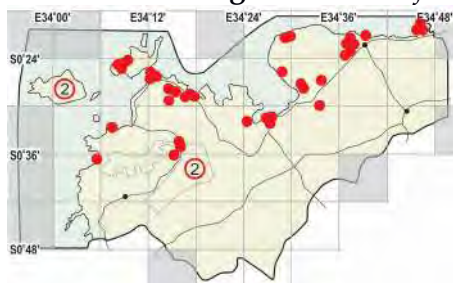
Cuckoo-finch *Anomalospiza imberbis*



One record: two birds on 13 Nov 2018 at 1200 m in Ruma NP. **Med:** ML #125560951

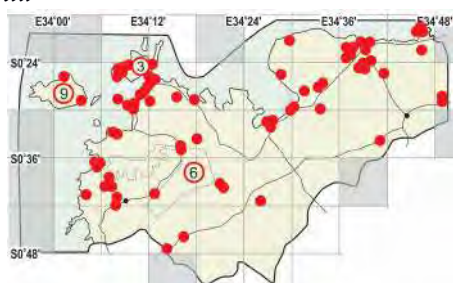
Motacillidae: Wagtails and Pipits

Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*



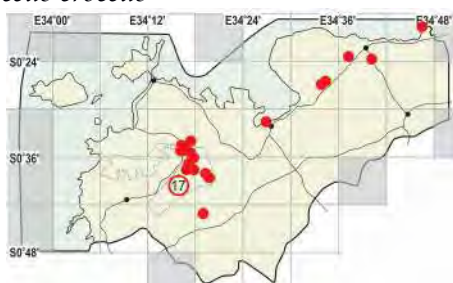
Widespread and sometimes common seasonal visitor from 1140 and 1300 m, recorded from late Sep to mid Apr. **Com:** Subspecies reported from the county include *flava*, *beema* and *lutea*.

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp vidua*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1800 m. **Br:** Fledged young in June and August; occupied nest in October.

Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus croceus*



Local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 1350 m. **Br:** Nest building in

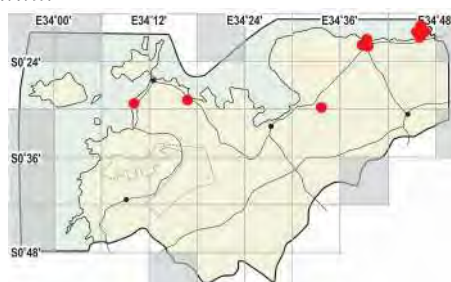
March; independent fledged young in November.

Rosy-throated Longclaw *Macronyx ameliae wintoni*



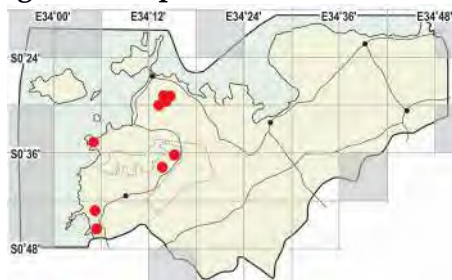
Very local and rare presumed seasonal visitor from 1140 to 1300 m, with two records near the Sondu River Estuary in Aug and Dec, and an undated literature account from Ruma NP. **Ref:** Zimmerman *et al.* 1996

African Pipit *Anthus cinnamomeus lacuum*



Local but fairly common resident from 1140 to 1200 m. **Com:** Presence is closely tied to short pasture along the shorelines of the Winam Gulf.

Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis*



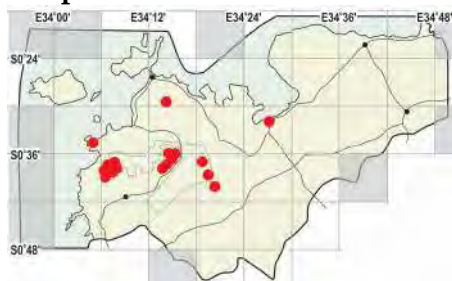
Local and uncommon resident from 1200 to 1700 m (Fig. 16). **Com:** This species favours stony, grassed hillsides and eroded gullies, which are sparsely distributed habitat types in the county.

Plain-backed Pipit *Anthus leucophrys zenkeri*



Local and generally uncommon resident from 1140 to 1500 m (Fig. 12). **Br:** Adult carrying food to young in May. **Com:** This species is most often found along the roads in Ruma NP but ranges into well-grassed rocky terrain on nearby slopes.

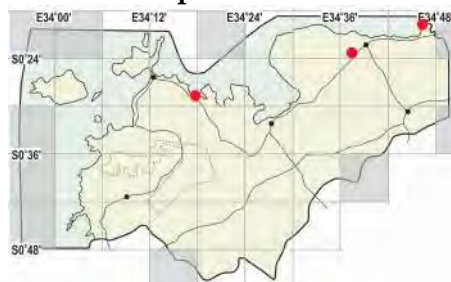
Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis trivialis*



Local but fairly common passage migrant from 1140 to 2100 m, with records in late Oct to late Nov and mid Feb to

late Mar. **Com:** Most records come from the wooded slopes of the Gwassu Hills.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*



Local and uncommon passage migrant at 1140–1150 m, with a record in mid Nov and two in mid Mar (Fig. 11).

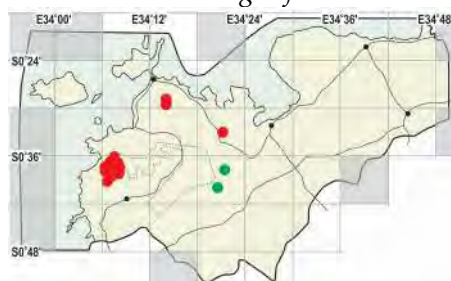
Fringillidae: Finches and Allies

African Citril *Crithagra citrinelloides kikuyuensis*



Local and uncommon presumed resident from 1300 to 1550 m. **Med:** ML #78146291

Western Citril *Crithagra frontalis*



Local but fairly common resident above from 1300 to 2250 m (Fig. 17). **Com:** Unlike birds in the east of the county,

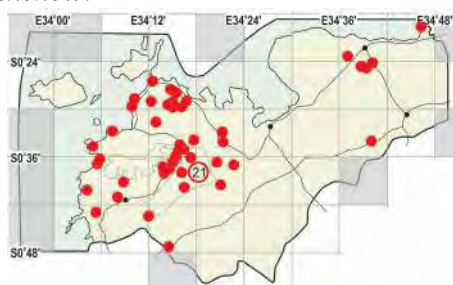
which can be referred to African Citril, birds in the west of the county consistently show full yellow foreheads consistent with the identification of this species. Some birds in the vicinity of the Kanyamwa Escarpment (green markers), however, show intermediate characters.

Papyrus Canary *Crithagra koliensis*



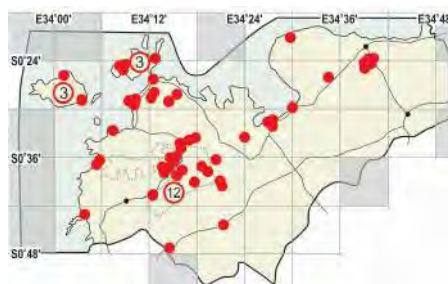
Very local and rare presumed resident at 1140 m, with records in Nov and Dec. **Com:** Reports from Mbita and Ruma NP require confirmation. **Ref:** EABR 1985, 1988

Reichenow's Seedeater *Crithagra reichenowi*



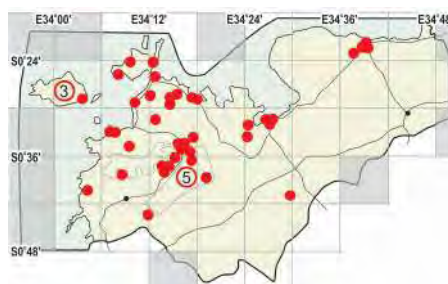
Widespread and sometimes abundant resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Br:** Eggs in March.

Yellow-fronted Canary *Crithagra mozambica barbata*



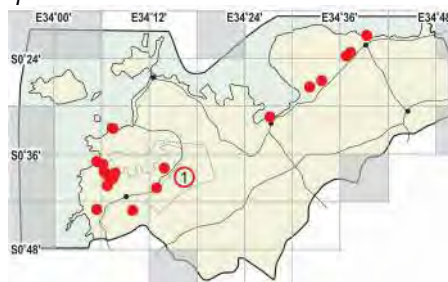
Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1400 m. **Br:** Dependent fledged young in March.

White-bellied Canary *Crithagra dorsostriata dorsostriata*



Widespread and common resident from 1140 to 1600 m. **Com:** This species overlaps widely with the Yellow-fronted Canary but is more closely tied to *Acacia*.

Brimstone Canary *Crithagra sulphurata sharpii*



Rather local and generally uncommon resident from 1140 to 1800 m **Br:** Dependent juveniles in November. **Com:** Distribution is curiously divided into two clearly defined regions: the western and southern Gwassi Hills extending

locally to proximal areas of the Lambwe Valley, and again in the lowlands near Kendu Bay. Reports from Rusinga Island require confirmation.

Emberizidae: Buntings

Cinnamon-breasted Bunting *Emberiza tahapisi tahapisi*



Very local and uncommon resident from 1250 to 1600 m (Fig. 16). **Com:** Almost exclusively tied to the driest and rockiest slopes of the Gembe and western Gwasssi foothills.

Brown-rumped Bunting *Emberiza affinis*



One record: two birds (one in song) on 27 Nov 2017 at 1200 m on Rusinga Island. **Com:** The birds were found on the side of a dry, rocky knoll with scattered *Acacia seyal*, *Balanites aegyptiaca* and *Euphorbia candelabrum* **Med:** ML #78801991, #78821591 & #442051551

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Appendix A (Gazetteer)

Gembe Hills	0°30'10"S, 34°12'58"E
Gendia	0°24'7"S, 34°39'51"E
God N'donyo	0°27'3"S, 34°30'42"E
Gwasssi Hills	0°37'1S, 34°7'59"E
Homa Bay	0°31'36"S, 34°27'19"E
Kamenya Dam	0°26'53"S, 34°39'20"E
Kanyamwa Escarpment	0°41'22"S, 34°16'43"E
Kendu Bay	0°22'7"S, 34°39'2"E
Kodera Forest	0°33'49"S, 34°40'23"E
Lake Simbi	0°22'8"S, 34°37'46"E
Magunga	0°41'21"S, 34°9'2"E
Mbita	0°25'53"S, 34°12'33"E
Mfangano Island	0°27'53"S, 34°1'5"E
Mt Homa	0°23'7"S, 34°29'27"E
North Ruri Hills	0°29'37"S, 34°23'54"E
Nyadenda	0°37'20"S, 34°15'10"E
Nyanganjo	0°25'3"S, 34°38'35"E
Nyangweso	0°26'53"S, 34°34'40"E
Nyangwethe	0°36'55"S, 34°5'40"E
Olala rice fields	0°29'11"S, 34°32'20"E
Ondango Swamp	0°23'21"S, 34°37'30"E
Ongoro Swamp	0°20'51"S, 34°29'11"E
Oyugis	0°30'28"S, 34°44'11"E
Pala	0°48'53"S, 34°26'40"E
Ragwe Point	0°34'23"S, 34°4'44"E
Rakewa	0°31'15"S, 34°45'4"E
Rangwe	0°34'6"S, 34°9'34"E
Remba Island	0°27'23"S, 33°55'57"E
River Kibuon	0°25'7"S, 34°44'24"E
River Kodera	0°28'52"S, 34°36'35"E
River Kuja	0°47'14"S, 34°24'52"E
River Lambwe	0°38'53"S, 34°16'42"E
River Lambwe Estuary	0°28'48"S, 34°17'56"E
River Sondu Estuary	0°19'11"S, 34°45'58"E
Ruma NP (Kamato Gate)	0°38'40"S, 34°20'15"E
Ruma NP (Nyatoto Gate)	0°34'27"S, 34°15'51"E
Rusinga Island	0°24'31"S, 34°10'22"E
Sindo	0°32'19"S, 34°9'57"E
South Ruri Hills	0°33'3"S, 34°22'1"E
Takawiri Island	0°28'32"S, 34°5'14"E
Waturi Point	0°27'23"S, 34°16'52"E
Winam Gulf	0°18'7"S, 34°31'49"E
Wire Hill	0°28'27"S, 34°42'43"E