Kenya Birds

the bird supplement of the *EANHS Bulletin*

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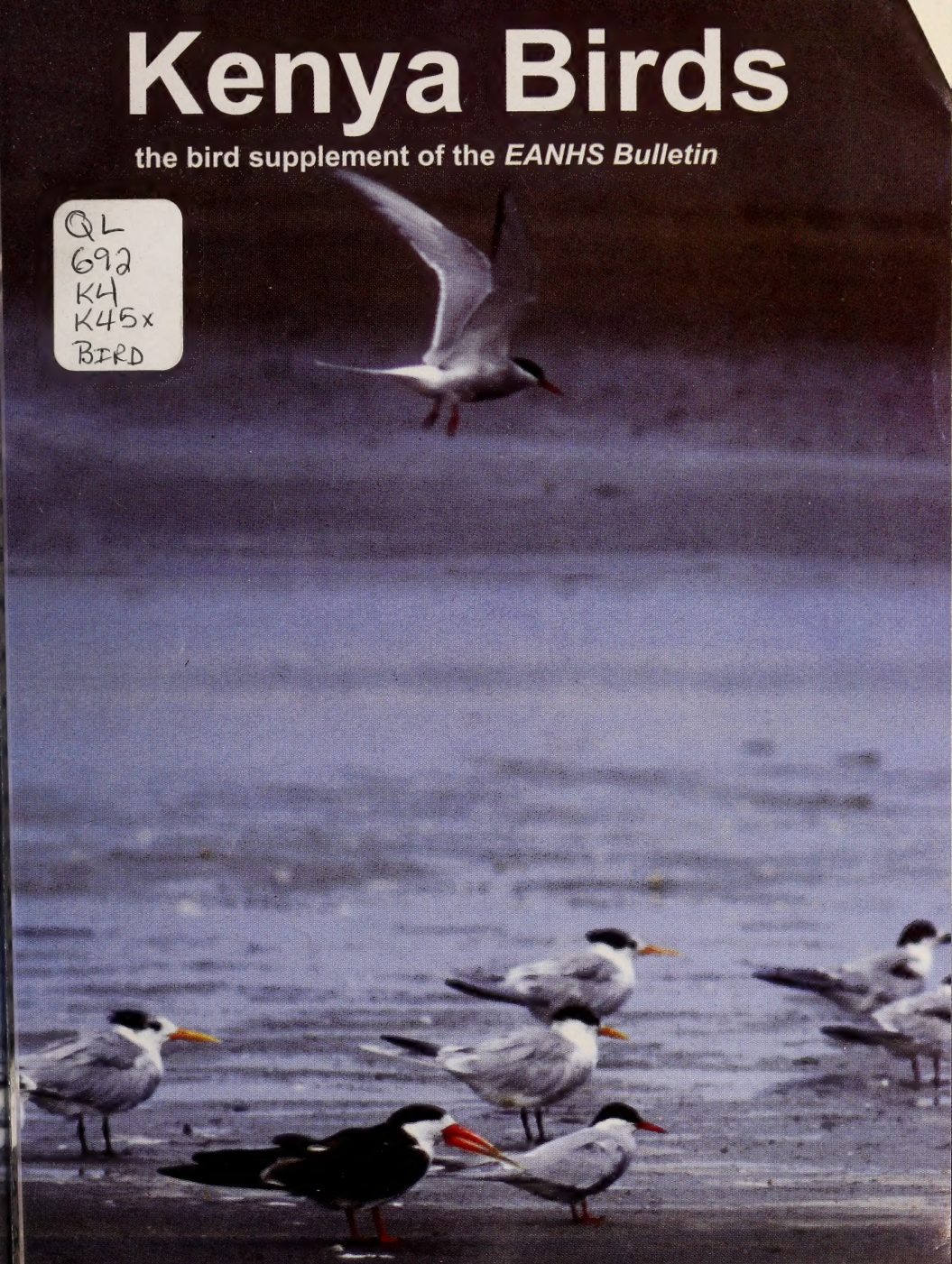

Volume 10: 1 & 2 • 2002 May 2003 ISSN 1023-3679

Recent Records

from top to bottom

Pectoral Sandpiper Calidris melanotos, *a rare migrant from Siberia, was photographed by* Brian Finch. *Brian and Richard and Ann Bishop found the bird at Athi Basin Dam, Nairobi N.P., on 7 April 2002. Note the sharp "cut-off" of colour on the breast.*

Immature ***Eurasian Griffon Vulture*** Gyps fulvus, *photographed by* Itai Shanni *at the "vulture pool", Nairobi N.P. on 5 March 2003. Note the uniform buff-brown upper-wing coverts and pale tips to the dark secondary upper-wing coverts.*

Red-footed Booby, Sula sula, *brown morph, was found 23 November 2002 on the beach at Watamu, and nursed back to health by Sanda Ash. In December,* Colin Jackson *measured, ringed, and photographed the bird and set it free.*

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On the cover: an Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* photographed by Jan Bisschop on 6 July 2002 at the Sabaki River mouth north of Malindi. This record, if approved by the Rarities Committee, is the first Arctic Tern for East Africa! Top photo caught the tern in flight. Bottom photo shows the Arctic Tern resting near an African Skimmer, Greater Crested (Swift) Terns (at left and at the back), Lesser Crested Tern (behind the Arctic Tern) and Common Terns (with black bills). Thanks to Jan Bisschop. For more details on this record see page 19.

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Not a good way to increase biodiversity!

Luca Borghesio
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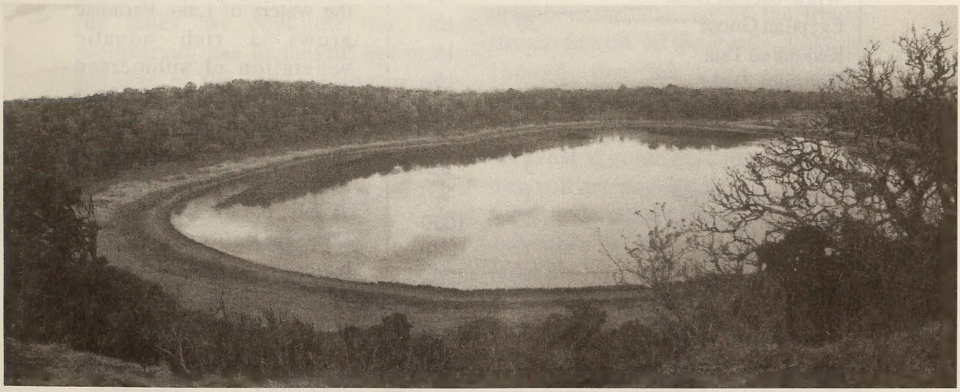
We all know that the world's biodiversity is threatened. Species are being lost at an increasing rate, and there is an extremely high need to find out ways to allow a more peaceful coexistence between man and the other living species. Therefore, one could think it is a very good news that in some places biodiversity is actually increasing... but is it really so? There is a very interesting story from Marsabit Forest Reserve, in northern Kenya. But let me start from the beginning.

Marsabit Forest Reserve is a lovely place. Although northern Kenya is generally very dry or even desertic, Mount Marsabit receives enough rainfall to allow the growth of a true forest, which clads the slopes of this ancient volcano, and covers an area of about 110 km^2. Forest birds, of course, make up the most part of the avifauna, and include some interesting species, such as Green-backed Twinspot and Sharpe's Starling.

In addition, the forest has the peculiarity of hosting a large number of waterbirds that live on two small lakes in the middle of the craters of the extinct volcano. Lake Paradise (a well-chosen name!) is about 1 km in diameter, in the middle of the forest, while Sokorte Dika is smaller, perhaps one-quarter the size of Lake Paradise, and is located in the northern part of the area. Apart from

Lake Paradise by Rafi Kfir



their sizes, the two lakes are very similar, with a rounded shape, shallow waters and wide expanses of mudflats around the shores. The *Bird Atlas of Kenya* lists 55 waterbird species as being present in the two lakes, including the rare Maccoa Duck, White-backed Duck, Southern Pochard and several Palaearctic migrants. In March 2000 I visited Marsabit forest for several days, and had a chance to do some waterbird counts, which are summarised in the table below.

Species	Sokorte Dika 9-10 March 2000	Lake Paradise 4-8 March 2000
Little Grebe	2	200
Pink-backed Pelican	1	-
Long-tailed Cormorant	-	1
African Darter	1	-
Grey Heron	7	1
Black-headed Heron	1	5
Hamerkop	-	2
African Open-billed Stork	-	22
Yellow-billed Stork	6	-
Sacred Ibis	6	20
African Spoonbill	3	-
White-faced Whistling Duck	-	15
White-backed Duck	-	50
Egyptian Goose	20	15
Red-billed Teal	-	15
Hottentot Teal	-	15
Southern Pochard	-	200
Maccoa Duck	-	5
Black Kite	3	5
African Fish Eagle	1	2
Red-knobbed Coot	-	1000
Black-winged Stilt	-	100
Spur-winged Plover	-	20
Wood Sandpiper	-	1
Common Sandpiper	1	-
TOTAL	**52**	**1694**

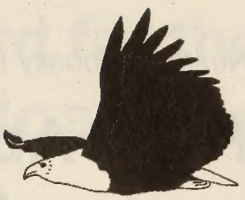
Going through the table, one can't help being struck by the differences in the avifauna in the two lakes. Even keeping into account that Sokorte Dika is much smaller, it is clear that it has much fewer birds than Lake Paradise (based on size, one would expect that about 400 waterbirds should be there, not 52 only!). Moreover, the small lake has some bird species (Pink-backed Pelican, African Darter, Yellow-billed Stork, African Spoonbill, Common Sandpiper) that were not seen at Lake Paradise, and also many more Grey Herons seem to live at Sokorte than at Lake Paradise. In contrast, several species of ducks and the Red-Knobbed Coot are abundant at Lake Paradise, but seemingly absent at Sokorte Dika. Summing up, it seems that Sokorte is populated by a few large, mostly piscivorous birds, while Lake Paradise teems with many herbivorous or insectivorous species. Why?

One explanation came to mind when I inspected the two lakes more closely. In the waters of Lake Paradise grows a rich aquatic vegetation of submersed plants, which appear to host an abundant invertebrate fauna. On the contrary, at Sokorte, no water plants were visible, but the shores of the lake were covered by hundreds of dead fish. I am not an expert on African fishes, but to me they looked like small-sized stunted Nile

Tilapia *Oreochromis niloticus*. The park rangers said that these fish had been introduced some years before into the lake, by an unknown person who, reportedly, had brought them from Lake Turkana.

Nile Tilapia is an omnivore, but mostly vegetarian, and is known to become a pest where it is introduced, as it is able to reproduce very quickly and can have a large negative impact on freshwater ecosystems. Judging from the size of the dead fish that I could observe, it seems likely that the waters of the lake were overcrowded with tilapias that had eaten off almost all the available food. Now, the evidence seems to suggest that the tilapia had a strong impact on the ecosystem of the lake. They could have destroyed the aquatic vegetation, and probably also much reduced the invertebrate fauna. This in turn might have caused the disappearance of the ducks and the coots that ate plants and invertebrates, and these birds have been replaced by piscivorous species, such as herons, pelicans and darters.

Now, what is the essence of the story? Well, if we simply look at the total number of bird species living on the lakes, we conclude that the biodiversity has increased, not only because of the introduction of the tilapia, but also because two of the waterbirds that now frequent Sokorte Dika, namely Pink-backed Pelican and African Darter, were not listed in the



Bird Atlas of Kenya. These species were probably not present there up to the recent past, but have now colonised the lake because of the new food resource.

But, is this biodiversity increase a positive outcome? Not so much. True, African Darter is considered a rare species in Kenya, but both it and Pink-backed Pelican were represented at Sokorte by only single individuals, not by a true breeding population. Sokorte seems just to be a place frequented by erratic, passer-by birds, and cannot be considered an important area for these waterbirds. Moreover, it is very likely that before the introduction of the fish the lake was frequented by a much larger bird population, similar to the one still living at Lake Paradise, which comprises considerable numbers of other rare species, especially Maccoa and White-backed Duck.

The small numerical increase of piscivorous birds has been much more than counterbalanced by the likely strong demise of the ducks. Luckily enough, the fish have not been introduced in the larger of the two lakes, so, much of the bird life is still there, but what if some enterprising young man will one day decide to bring some fish even into Lake Paradise? The park authorities in charge of the protection of the Reserve should be informed about this possibility, and should carefully watch that this does not happen.

Hamerkop by Nani Croze

Reference: Lewis, A.D. & Pomeroy, D.E., 1989. *A bird atlas of Kenya*. Rotterdam: Balkema.

Nests of globally threatened species

First Aberdare Cisticola nest and eggs in moorland

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The Aberdare Cisticola is a globally endangered species, living only in the moist highland grasslands of the Aberdare mountains, Molo and Mau Narok, and nowhere else on Earth. It is one of the many members of the Cisticola genus, small warblers of grassland and bush. Until recently, the nest was undescribed.

We stumbled upon a nest in early 2000, when we were working on the Aberdare Cisticola project (regarding the bird's altitudinal distribution in the Aberdare central moorlands and the effects of fire). On 10 April, we noted an Aberdare Cisticola carrying nesting material, and traced it to the nest site with binoculars. We could see the birds indefatigably put what was later discovered as the final touches on nest building. The two birds were putting a lining in the interior of the nest. A closer look revealed that the lining material was the cotton-like seed-head of the thistle *Carduus chamaecephalus* – a low herb of the alpine moorlands.

The nest was a flimsy ball with a side entrance near the top, approximately 4 cm in diameter. The outer portion of the nest was woven from the soft grass tussocks (*Deschampsia flexuosa*) and sandwiched in grass approximately 30 cm off the ground. The artistically woven entrance was facing away from the direction of the wind. This probably is an adaptation meant to counter draught and the heavy wind that blows incessantly for the better part of the day. The predominant vegetation at the nest site and vicinity included tough grass tussocks and *Alchemilla argyrophylla* herbs – a typical moorland habitat.

On peeping in the nest, two eggs were found; light blue in colour, oval shaped, approximately 20 mm long. This may be an indication that the birds continue lining the nest while simultaneously incubating. By the time of our departure on 13th April 2000 the eggs had not yet hatched. Photos and nest records were submitted to the Ornithology Department of the National Museums of Kenya.

It would appear that the position of the nest is precarious, exposing the contents to dangers of animal trampling in view of the large mammal concentration in the moorlands. However, learning about the breeding ecology of this endangered species depends on more nest records.

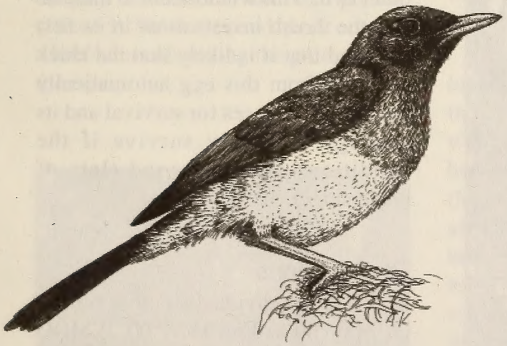
A Breeding Record for the Taita Thrush, Ngangao Forest, Taita Hills

Daina Samba, Bernard Amakobe, Maxwell Chovu
<dainasophie@yahoo.com>

The Taita Hills forest fragments are home to three globally threatened bird species – the Taita Thrush *Turdus helleri* and Taita Apalis *Apalis (thoracica) fuscigularis*, both critically endangered; and the Taita White-eye *Zosterops (poliogaster) silvanus*, endangered. These forests have been the subject of extensive ornithological research, including work on the ecology of the Taita Thrush, the Taita Apalis, the Taita White-eye and the White-starred Robin. Notwithstanding the extensive effort involving ringing, radio telemetry and behavioural work, the nests of the Taita Thrush have been very hard to find.

I was in Ngangao as part of my initial field survey of the rather elusive Taita Apalis, funded by the Wellcome Trust, at the start of fieldwork to assess its population size and the kind of habitat it requires. Bernard Amakobe and Max Chovu were carrying out fieldwork on the ecology of the White-starred Robin, part of Mwangi Githiru's project that looks at how a more common species copes with the effects of forest fragmentation.

In December 2000 we were first alerted to the presence of a nest when Max noticed that a thrush would always be seen flying away when passing a certain point along one of the footpaths inside Ngangao forest. Investigation revealed that there was a nest 6m up a tree just adjacent to the path. The thrush sitting on the nest was very nervous and would fly from the nest at the sound of voices or when someone approached the nest while on the forest path. We borrowed a (very) makeshift ladder and proceeded to investigate. (*See photo 1, next page*)



Taita Thrush by Andrew Kamiti

Nest Description

The nest was situated in moderately disturbed vegetation. It was a cup-shaped nest built in a three-way fork on a *Tabernaemontana stapfiana* tree, approximately 6m above the ground. The tree trunk was covered up to 60 percent by a big-leaved climber (*Culcasia sp.*) which provided perfect camouflage for the nest. (*Photo 2*)

The entire outer layer of the nest was composed of moss, of which 95% was still green. The framework was a mixture of skeletal leaves and small fine flexible twigs and leaf veins. Instead of the outer layer being nicely finished off to a circular shape, the moss was left to hang down loose, thus making the nest even more difficult to spot. The inner layer was composed of small flexible twigs and fine-textured skeletal leaves and was brown in colour, contrasting sharply with the green outer layer. The dimensions of the nest were: Outer diameter, 14.5-15 cm; inner diameter, 8.5 cm; depth, 4.3 cm.

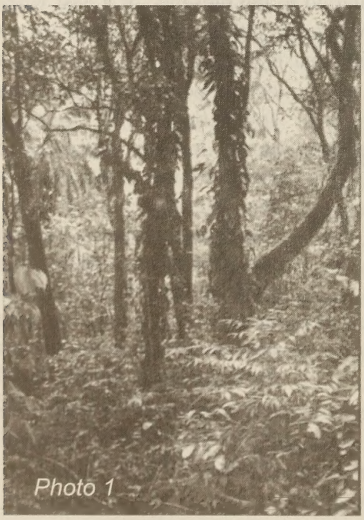


Photo 1

Photo 2

Eggs

The nest contained three eggs, of a deep light blue colour, with rufous-brownish spots that were more concentrated on the broader end of the oval shaped egg. Egg sizes were:

Egg No.	1	2	3
Length	29.3	29.1	32.7
Width	21.4	21.9	22.0

These measurements show that one egg (no. 3) was clearly much larger than the other two. This would seem to indicate that the thrush invests more in its first egg, and that it is likely that the chick hatching from this egg automatically has greater chances for survival and its siblings will only survive if the conditions are very good (lots of conjecture!)

Observations

Both adults individually colour ringed, on 24.05.00 and on 18.12.00, WMOO and WMGG, and so easy to identify.

In the Taita Hills, all birds caught are fitted with a combination of the usual metal ring that has a unique number, and three colour bands – two rings on each leg. This gives each bird a unique colour code that allows researchers to identify the bird if it is spotted with binoculars. The codes are read top to bottom, from the left leg to the right leg.

In this case one thrush had white over metal on the left leg, and orange over orange on the right (WMOO) and the other had white over metal on the left leg and green over green on the right (WMGG).

14.12.00 :Thrush incubating with tail held high. Easily disturbed by anyone walking along path. Flies about 50m away to the ground and forages briefly. Approaches tree with nest cautiously from nearby trees, then settles on eggs approximately ten minutes after disturbance.

17.12.00: Thrush incubating, no young visible. Flies off when disturbed by people along path. Forages about 200m from nest, then returns to nest.

19.12.00 : Three naked pulli freshly hatched. We delicately balance on the roughly hewn ladder and take photos. (*Photo 3*) We then spend about one and a half hours observing the goings-on at the nest.

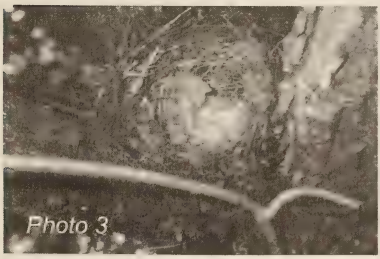


Photo 3

11:13 WMOO (the female) leaves nest for ten minutes, returns, stays for 11 minutes then leaves at 11:34. 11:36 WMGG had returned from foraging and has been perched in a bush at the foot of the tree. Shortly after his mate leaves the nest he approaches the nest, slowly hopping up the creepers covering the tree. We observe that he is carrying a full beak-load of insects and he spends some time distributing them among beaks that pop up. He then flies off.

11:46 WMOO comes back, regurgitates food for young at 11:53 and at 12:03. At 12:07 WMGG returns, perches below nest, then flies to nest. WMOO begs for food (crouches with opens beak). WMGG regurgitates, feeds WMOO then flies off

12:14 WMOO leaves nest. 12:21 WMGG under nest, food in beak, flies to branches above nest and moves around, apparently keeping lookout. 12:25 WMOO returns, feeds young from beak, begs from WMGG, feeds young from beak and settles on nest. WMGG flies to branches above nest, perches and calls/sings.

12:37 WMOO leaves nest, WMGG follows suit . 12:50 WMOO below nest, returns to nest and settles.

At this point I returned to camp for lunch and later resumed my search for the apalis. In ideal circumstances we would have liked to ring the pulli just before they fledge when their tarsus (leg) attains adult size. However, shortly after these observations were made we broke camp to return to Nairobi for a brief period, and later our field schedules made it difficult to return to the spot to check for developments.

If you visit the Taita Hills, watch out for birds with colour bands on their legs!

Short Notes

First records from the ephemeral Kijirtit Wetland near Lake Bogoria

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Under the auspices of William Kimosop, Warden, Lake Bogoria National Reserve, teams sponsored by the Earthwatch Institute as part of their Lakes of the Rift Valley programme conducted surveys on foot of the Kijirtit Wetland in April 2001 and July 2002.

Common Ostrich	Common Greenshank
Long-tailed Cormorant	Namaqua Dove
African Darter	African Mourning Dove
Cattle Egret	Ring-necked Dove
Little Egret	Laughing Dove
Common Squacco Heron	White-bellied Go-away-bird
Green-backed Heron	White-browed Coucal
Yellow-billed Egret	Speckled Mousebird
Great Egret	Giant Kingfisher
Grey Heron	Pied Kingfisher
Goliath Heron	Woodland Kingfisher
Black-headed Heron	Blue-cheeked Bee-eater
Hamerkop	White-throated Bee-eater
Sacred Ibis	Little Bee-eater
Hadada Ibis	Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater
Glossy Ibis	d'Arnaud's Barbet
African Spoonbill	Yellow Wagtail
White-faced Whistling Duck	African Grey Flycatcher
Spur-winged Goose	Northern White-crowned Shrike
Dark Chanting Goshawk	Grey-backed Fiscal
African Fish Eagle	Common Drongo
Black Crake	Rattling Cisticola
Grey Crowned Crane	Rüppell's Long-tailed Starling
African Jacana	Superb Starling
Eurasian Thick-knee	Beautiful Sunbird
Three-banded Plover	White-headed Buffalo Weaver
Long-toed Plover	White-browed Sparrow Weaver
Blacksmith Plover	Northern Masked Weaver
Spur-winged Plover	Black-headed Weaver
Crowned Plover	Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu

Kijirtit is an ephemeral wetland located between Lakes Baringo and Bogoria (00° 29.07' N, 036° 06.10' E), at 1,000m asl. The name is sometimes given as "Kitritich".

It is created by occasional flooding of the Molo and Nanyokie Rivers. Based on interviews of local people, this wetland first appeared in recent times in May 1994 due to the temporary flooding of the Ol Arabel River, and then reappeared after the El Niño rains of 1997 (W. Kimosop, pers. comm.). In 1999, it dried up completely and remained dry until February 2001

when it reappeared after heavy rains. Sixty avian species were recorded in and around the wetlands (*see table*). In addition, we were told that both crocodiles and hippos are found in this wetland as well as unidentified species of lungfish and tilapia.

The authors are grateful to Stephen Lekateiya of the Lake Bogoria Conservation Education Centre, James Njoroge, and the Earthwatch volunteers for their assistance in this survey.

Oriole-Finch in the Mau Forest and Aberdares

Oriole-Finch by Andrew Kamiti

Zimmerman et al. (1996) mention that Oriole-Finch is 'inexplicably absent from the Mau forests and those of the Aberdare range'.

On 24 June 1991, in the South-west Mau Forest at Kipsaungon, a survey team from the Ornithology Department of the National Museums of Kenya captured an adult male Oriole-Finch at 09:55. It was ringed as J106807. As it was an unusual capture we also photographed the bird, and this slide remains in the Departmental collection.

This species cannot be common in the Mau forests as we did not capture it again during extensive survey work.

I can also clearly recall seeing an Oriole-Finch in one of the 'M' campsites of the Aberdares National Park salient, a few kilometres from Treetops lodge. I was a young birdwatcher and the bird was a 'lifer', so it made a considerable impression. This would have been in the late 1970s. Unfortunately my notes from that period are lost, so I cannot trace the site and date and confirm the record.

The habitat in the Aberdares salient has changed tremendously in the last 20 years, and extensive dense highland forest has given way to thicket and glades. It seems unlikely that Oriole-Finch survives here any more, but it should be looked for in other parts of the range where there is more intact forest.

Albeit that only one of these records is documented, they suggest that the puzzling biogeographic anomaly noted by Zimmerman et al. - a gap in the Oriole-Finch's distribution in the forests of the Rift Valley rim - is apparent rather than real.

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References:

Zimmerman, D.A.,Turner, D.A., Pearson, D.J. 1996. *Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania* A. & C. Black, London

Tradition, Tragedy and the Eurasian Honey Buzzard

Ancestral graveyards are a feature of every large family in parts of western Kenya. These graveyards, more often than not, contain some huge old trees that form a patch of 'forest' in some homesteads. These traditional conservation 'islands' are sacred groves that support other aspects of biodiversity. Sacred groves are specific forest patches, filled with powers beyond those of humans, home to mighty spirits that can take or give life. In the Luyia community, like many others, access to most of these groves is restricted by codes and customs to particular activities and members of a community. Such patches act as reservoir of diversity in a highly populated area such as Kakamega district. Conservation may be a side-effect of custom associated with the deities; nevertheless, sacred groves can serve as a tool and model for biodiversity conservation.

In December 2001 a tragic and unusual episode unfolded in Mugomari village, Shinyalu division of Kakamega district in Western Kenya. This involved a Eurasian Honey Buzzard, a bird that only appears there in the months just before and after Christmas. This huge bird had been seen flying around in the area by many people, including the people that were later affected by its behaviour.

On the fateful day, an old man left home for a meeting, leaving behind his wife, whom he had married before he went to fight in the second world war. This active old lady was collecting firewood near her gate when a neighbour saw a heap of bees fall from the huge fig tree (Luhyia name *Mukumu*) that signified the ancestral graveyard. Looking up, the woman saw a Honey Buzzard make the next attack on the bees' nest with its talons. It dropped another heap of bees as it flew away struggling to feast on the honeycomb held in its talons, then dropped this one too.

The woman realised that the angry fallen bees were attacking a cow that was tied next to the fig tree. She tried to rush towards the cow to release it, but she was attacked by the bees. She retreated, telling the old lady not to come in the compound. However, the old lady, upset at the thought of losing a cow, disregarded the warning and headed to where the cow was tied. Within seconds she was attacked by the swarm of bees. She tried to reach her house but in confusion missed her door, stumbled and fell. As the screamed, bees stung inside her mouth. A neighbour covered himself with a polythene sack and went to the rescue, pulling her away from the compound. The unfortunate lady was taken to hospital, but both she and the cow sadly died from the bee stings.

The villagers burned dried banana leaves to destroy what remained of the hive, because the bees were still attacking the mourners. During the funeral the Honey Buzzard hovered around, and the mourners ate the honey.

Eurasian Honey Buzzard by Andrew Kamiti

The interesting thing is that nobody blamed the bird! When later I talked to the bereaved husband, he said that had he been present he would have stopped his wife from coming in the compound when the bees attacked. He added that it was the family's mistake to have left the hive to accumulate such large honeycombs. He concurred that the bird had come to take what they had ignored and was not to be held responsible for the tragedy. Many villagers in Mugomari held a similar view.

Such a positive traditional attitude towards aspects of biodiversity has helped many indigenous communities to develop conservation ethics that are deeply rooted in their ways of life. Many natural areas have survived human pressure because of these ethics. Such communities have accumulated, over time, a wealth of knowledge about their immediate environment, to which they are closely entwined. It is this knowledge that, in most cases, forms the fabric of the ethics. Local communities are usually expert in matters regarding their local environment, and their expertise is required to make biodiversity conservation effective.

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Pratincole – Wader Interaction

At Sabaki River mouth, north of Malindi, on 20 August, 2000, in quite windy conditions, I watched a Collared Pratincole catching flies or other insects in a very unusual manner.

There was a strong wind blowing off the estuary and the pratincole positioned itself upwind of, and about a metre away from, a wader (usually a Curlew Sandpiper or Kittlitz's Plover). As insects were disturbed by the wader poking its beak in the sand, the pratincole caught them with a short jump into the air. The pratincole always managed to remain parallel to the wader as it worked its way along the beach.

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Odd Purple Grenadier on Mount Kulal

Purple Grenadier *Uraeginthus ianthinogaster* is a widespread estrilid in bush and thickets in Kenya. It had, however, not been described on Mt Kulal (QSD 26b). In November 1997, we observed a breeding pair building (or maybe repairing) a nest that was already holding one egg at Mt Kulal Biosphere Reserve. The nest was constructed among Aloe plants, about 0.6 m above the ground. within a KARI compound at the forest edge.

Later we ringed an adult female of the same species with a completely wrinkled brood patch. This gave us a chance to confirm its surprising appearance. The adult female had white eye patches. The bill was red and the upper mandible had a black base. This is in contrast to the usual female Purple Grenadier,which has small silvery-blue eye patches and an entirely red bill.

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Common Button-quail in Nairobi Nat'l Park

I read with interest a report by Mark Mallalieu in *Kenya Birds*, Vol. 6, No 1 & 2, page 67, of a breeding record for Common Button-quail in Nairobi National Park in the White Grass Ridge area on 16 November 1997. He noted that the only previous record was of a single bird in December 1979 (W. Harvey, 1997).

I may have been lulled into complacence by the Status and Distribution note in Zimmerman, *et.al.* (1996), "Locally common in dry and moist grassland, savanna and fallow cultivation. Recorded from all major grassland areas." But since I had not seen a Common Button-quail in my more than fifty previous trips to the park, I should have realized the unusual nature of the following sighting.

On 2nd February, 1997 Sheila Macrae and I were driving at dusk (6:30 pm) toward the main entrance from Ormanyi Dam, approaching the Impala Point observation lookout when we saw a small quail-like bird standing in the gravel road. It allowed us to approach to within two or three metres, and to study it carefully with Leica 10 X 42 binoculars. After a few minutes it ambled into the tall grass.

Combined with the breeding record later in the year, this sighting may indicate that by 1997 these beautiful, diminutive birds may have begun to re-establish themselves in the park. Have there have been additional recent sightings in the park?

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African Finfoot Breeding at Mpala Ranch, Laikipia

Early in the morning of 27 March 2002 I went to do a bit of twitching along the Ngare Nyiro River that joins the Ewaso at Mpala Research Centre. At the time, I was working for Professor Emlen at Mpala on the Laikipia Plateau. Birding along the river, I joined Keith Bensusan, the only Leeds University student who was working on birds – all the others (20+) working on mammals and in groups. Keith was looking at species diversity in two different habitats in East Africa.

I jokingly talked about how the habitat could produce an African Finfoot, and that it would be a life bird for me.

Unbelievably and suddenly, there it was! A female calmly looking at me with her unbwogable face, sitting on a nest on some branches hanging over the waters of the Ngare Nyiro River, about a metre from the bank and where I was standing. The nest was made of big leaves, about 30 cm wide, but shallow in shape. We had to take a couple of steps back so as not to disturb her, and also to allow a clear focus with the binoculars.

We then discussed how nice the male is – and there came the beautiful, NO, NO, sorry, the handsome, gorgeous male! He came swimming and boldly passing by, pretending he knew nothing about the nest. He perched on top of a rock to clean himself while watching us. Superb red feet and bill was enough that we left them alone.

I returned later with Prof. Emlen to take a photo and found the female in the water not far from the nest. We had a chance to see the two chicken-size or slightly larger eggs with reddish brown speckles or markings, concentrated on the blunt side of the egg, like a halo.

On our third visit some days later the nest was empty and looked abandoned. During the second visit we had seen a Slender-tailed Mongoose next to the hanging branches. Looking at the nature of the branch it is possible that the mongoose reached the eggs. A few weeks later the river flooded heavily and the high water had taken the whole branch and the nest. I wish the birds had radio tags to show their movements during displacing floods.

African Finfoot
by Andrew Kamiti

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Short Notes

Hinde's Babbler by Andrew Kamiti

A Survey of Hinde's Babbler: 2000-01

Being rather thinly distributed and associated with unremarkable, scrubby habitat, the status of Hinde's Babbler *Turdoides hindei* is difficult to gauge. Historically, the species has been recorded from 40 10x10 km squares, stretching from Meru in the north, east to Nziu and Kitui, and south to Machakos. By the late 1970s, however, its range appeared to have contracted into a 'core' area around Embu (Plumb, 1979. Scopus 3(3): 61–67). Thankfully, it has since been re-found in many of its old haunts, and newly discovered at Mukurweini Valleys, Nyeri District.

Despite these discoveries the species' global range and population remain very small, and much of its scrubby habitat has recently been cleared for cultivation. To help clarify its status, the National Museums of Kenya conducted a survey of Hinde's Babblers at three sites in 1993-94, and at six sites during 2000-01. Much of this earlier work underpinned the selection of IBAs for Hinde's Babbler, which are at Machakos, Mukurweini, Kitui and Mwea Game Reserve.

The 2000-01 surveys were carried out by John Musina and Patrick Gichuki of NMK, and by Phil Shaw from Scottish Natural Heritage. In addition to the sites covered by Peter Njoroge in 1994, they made brief surveys of Mwea Game Reserve, Kitui and Meru National Park. The main aims of these surveys were: to assess the distribution and population size of Hinde's Babbler; to measure its breeding output; and to examine the relationship between abundance, group size, breeding output and habitat.

A composite estimate for the six sites surveyed during 1994-2001 suggests a minimum population of 665 birds in 157 groups, of which about 77% occurred within the 'core' areas of Mukurweini, Kianyaga and Mwea. Only about 8% of the known population were found within the two protected areas surveyed (Mwea G.R. and Meru N.P.), while about 62% occurred in or around five IBAs, as they are currently configured (Shaw et al., 2003 Bird Conservation International 13:1-12). Paradoxically, the highest densities were found at Mukurweini and Kianyaga (the most intensively cultivated sites), where up to eight birds were found per km of water course. Densities were substantially lower in the more arid areas of Machakos, Mwea G.R. and Meru N.P. Although some 70 birds were

found along the NW boundary of Meru National Park, the bulk of these occurred in partly cultivated land just outside of the park. Only 21 birds were seen inside the park, mainly around Kindani and Nyati camp sites.

Of those birds seen clearly enough to age (by eye colour), fledglings and immatures together accounted for about 16% of the sample in 2000 and 20% in 2001. Breeding output was therefore higher than in the Northern Pied Babbler (11% offspring in 2000), and comparable with that of two other African babbler species.

Full details of the 2000-01 surveys are given in NMK Ornithology Reports 40 & 42. Although these surveys have thrown some light on the species' abundance at six sites, little is known of its status elsewhere. For example, there have been no records of Hinde's Babbler at Ol Donyo Sapuk N.P. since the 1970s, or from Nziu since 1932! Its status at Thika is also unclear, following sighting of two birds near there in 1999. Reports of further sightings of Hinde's Babbler are very much appreciated!

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Osprey displaying at Watamu

Early in the morning of 25 October 2000 I watched an Osprey in display flight at Watamu. It flew southwards over the sea (above the coral reef opposite Turtle Bay Beach Club), climbing steeply and then dropping down at an angle, climbing and dropping several times. It carried a fish in its talons and continually uttered a high-pitched call. After a few minutes another Osprey, presumably female, flew out towards the male from the shore. Display activity was also seen by Annali Bamber Jones on 27 and 28 October. Discussing the sighting, Colin Jackson, an ornithologist who has been living on the Kenya coast since early 1998, told me that he had never seen Ospreys displaying on the Kenyan coast.

In the UK I contacted Roy Dennis, an expert on Ospreys based in Scotland. He informed me that the nearest breeders to Kenya are 1,500 kms to the north on the north Somalia coast and around the Gulf of Aden, and that the Ospreys seen on the East African coast are migrants, mostly from the Finnish and Russian populations. Breeding Ospreys from the northern hemisphere do not migrate as pairs and may winter hundreds of kilometres apart. The probable explanation for the observation at Watamu is that the birds were sub-adults engaged in casual courtship behaviour. He thought it unlikely to indicate an attempt at breeding in Kenya and the time of the year also suggested that they were migrants from the north.

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[*Editor's note:* Birds of Africa (1982) records cases of incipient courtship feeding by migrants along the East African coast. (Brown, L.H., Urban, E.K., and Newman, K, 1982, *The Birds of Africa*, Volume 1, Academic Press)]

An Albino Southern Black Flycatcher

Northern Black Flycatchers are normally black, as the name suggests, so it comes as a surprise when one comes across a Northern Black Flycatcher with a white head! This happened to me in September 2001, while on routine bird watching in Buyangu, part of Kakamega forest. I had wandered out to the farmlands when in front of me on a low branch of *Cuppressus lusitanica* I saw three birds, two Northern Black Flycatchers and a third, unfamiliar flycatcher.

This bird had a white head and neck, save for a small portion of the crown that was black. All the behavioral aspects and other body parts were just like a typical black flycatcher. I searched for this new bird in Zimmerman *et al*, but could not find it. Upon inquiry at the Department of Ornithology, it was verified to be a partially albino Northern Black Flycatcher.

Two Cases of Brood Parasitism

While bird watching along the forest edge in Kakamega Forest in 2001, I came across an immature Red-chested Cuckoo being fed by a White-browed Robin-Chat. I watched them for a while, the cuckoo begging for food persistently and the robin chat dutifully picking food from the forest floor and flying up onto the branch and giving it to the cuckoo. After a while the robin chat flew away with the cuckoo in pursuit.

The next day I heard the calls of a young cuckoo close to my house. Upon walking out, I saw a similar immature Red-chested Cuckoo, however, this time an African Pied Wagtail was the foster parent! The wagtail was picking up food items next to my house and tirelessly flying up to the begging cuckoo. I watched them for a full hour in utter amazement till they flew away.

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Duckling Surprise

On our Athi River property there is a small dam, more of a reservoir, covering at most an acre. I go up almost every evening, with a fishing rod, but more often to just watch the birds that the water attracts. At dusk, nightjars dip in for their evening drink, before I wander back for my own.

This February evening, out of the corner of my eye, I saw a pair of White-faced Whistling Duck suddenly appear, paddling across the water. Between them, eight newly hatched ducklings!

Not only is this a new bird for our list here, but none of us, who pay daily visits to this little dam, only 100 metres away from our house, with constant comings and goings of people, ever caught the slightest glimpse of a White Faced Whistling Duck! They sneaked in, built a nest, and successfully reared a brood of ducklings, right under our noses! ... and we had no idea that they were even there!

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Arctic Tern in Kenya in July 2002

On 6 July 2002, Jan Bisschop and Arnout Linckens were birding at Sabaki River mouth, north of Malindi. There was a roost of several hundred terns on the beach, consisting of Lesser Crested, Greater Crested, Common and Roseate Terns and two African Skimmers. One other, smaller tern with a fairly dark grey belly was noted and initially identified as a White-cheeked Tern in breeding plumage, a regular bird at the Sabaki. Jan Bisschop photographed the bird, more or less unintentionally because it was standing next to a Skimmer... one more photo was taken when this tern flew off to sea.

Back at home, while studying the slides, Jan Bisschop noted several characteristics that would not fit a White-cheeked Tern: a comparatively short, all-red bill (longer and dark-tipped in White-cheeked), a white rump and tail contrasting with the grey back (grey back, rump and tail in White-cheeked), and in flight a uniformly pale grey underwing with a distinct, narrow black bar along the outer primary tips (broad and diffuse grey bar and a contrasting white mid-wing panel in White-cheeked), a short-headed, long-tailed appearance in flight (longer-headed in White-cheeked). The pictures further show short, bright red legs and a complete black cap. When perched, the tail reached to about the end of the wing tips.

All these characters convincingly fit an adult breeding plumage Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*, the first record of this species for Kenya! Common Tern usually has white underparts but can sometimes show dark underparts; Common Tern however has a longer, dark-tipped bill, a different underwing pattern (broad diffuse black bar along outer primaries) and a longer-headed appearance in flight. The superficially similar Whiskered Tern can easily be ruled out because it lacks the white rump and the long outer tail feathers and has a different wing pattern and shape (being a marsh tern, it is also more of an inland, fresh water species, not usually found at sea).

Arctic Terns breed in Europe, across northern Russia to Alaska and across northern America to Greenland. Since they spend the non-breeding season in the Antarctic region, these terns probably cover the longest migration distance of all birds! Arctic Terns usually migrate well offshore, mainly through the Atlantic and eastern Pacific Oceans. They occur regularly along the southern African coast, north to Mozambique. Records of Arctic Tern are very scarce further north along the African east coast. There are twelve records from Somalia, one inland record from Sudan, two from the Egyptian Red Sea (and 21 from the southernmost tip of Israel). Around the Indian Ocean, the only records are from Oman and India. Since most of these records are from the period April to July, it is possible that these birds are returning north along the 'wrong' side of the African continent and thus end up in unexpected places...

Compiled from the following article: Jan Bisschop, Artic Tern in Kenya in July 2002. Dutch Birding vol 24 no 6, 2002,

Some vital statistics for Kinangop grasslands, an Important Bird Area

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Art by Andrew Kamiti

Kinangop Grasslands Important Bird Area (IBA) lies on the Kinangop Plateau, a wide shelf of land at about 2,500m altitude, between the Aberdare (or Nyandarua) range of mountains and the floor of the Great Rift Valley. The IBA covers over 77,000 ha of mainly privately owned land. It holds a significant component of Kenya's unique highland grasslands, together with their bird specialties, among them two endangered Kenyan endemics: Sharpe's Longclaw and Aberdare Cisticola. The habitat requirements of Sharpe's Longclaw includes grass species that form tussocks or clumps, where the bird feeds, roosts and nests.

In September-October 2000, we visited a sample of 162 farms throughout the Kinangop Plateau to gather information. The data presented here may be helpful in assessing

(i) the extent, rate and pattern of loss of grasslands on the Kinangop Plateau;

(ii) the attitude and level of awareness of the community about bird conservation; and

(iii) the potential of public schools to provide reserves for Sharpe's Longclaw, and as centres for initiating awareness among the community.

The Farms

Human population density (people per km^2) on the Kinangop Plateau was 93 in 1969, according to national census figures. Density increased to 101, 110 and 184 in the census years of 1979, 1989 and 1999. The latest inter-census (1989-99) annual population growth rate is 5%. From this, we projected population density for the year 2010 to range between 223 and 281 people km^2.

We sampled 162 farms, covering a total area of 1600 ha. The farms varied in size, the mean size being 9.6 ha. Tussock grasslands occurred in patches in 83 of the farms. The patches ranged in size from 0.1 to 108 ha, with a mean area of 5 ha. Overall, 34% of the land on the farms was covered by tussock grassland.

The 156 farms where residence information was provided were occupied by 1582 residents, giving a mean of 10 people per farm. Human density decreased with increase in farm size: densities of about 5 persons per hectare in small farms (less than 6 ha) compared to 1 person per ha in larger farms.

Based on a sample of land survey maps, the number of farms on the entire Kinangop Plateau was estimated to have

almost doubled in ten years, from 6470 in 1984 to 12,550 in 1994. Correspondingly, mean farm size halved from 12 ha to 6 ha. Further increases of up to 30,000 farms and decreases in mean farm size to 2.5 ha in 2010 are projected if human immigration into the area continues as in the past decade.

Estimates for the year 2000 show that over 70% of Kinangop Plateau was divided into farms of less than 10 ha in size. The area under larger farms is rapidly decreasing. The percentage area covered by farms of more than 30 ha (those farms that are likely to hold grassland areas large enough to be considered suitable Sharpe's Longclaw reserves) decreased by half between 1984 and 1994, from 18% to 9%.

The Grasslands

Grasslands covered about half of the Kinangop Plateau in 2000, but tussock grasslands, the preferred habitat of Sharpe's Longclaw, were estimated to only cover 29% of the plateau (58% of the grassland area). Most of the tussock grasslands (57%) were estimated to be on small farms (2 to 10 ha), categorised as 'poor' – unlikely to support good longclaw territories. Only about 5% of tussock grasslands were on farms large enough (more than 30 ha) to support grasslands that can act as 'source' reserves for the longclaw.

It is estimated that by the year 2010, the current tussock area will have diminished to cover about one-fifth (15 to 24%) of the entire plateau. Almost all of the tussock grasslands will be on farms classified as 'poor' for conserving the longclaw. Virtually all farms that have potential for holding grasslands big enough to serve as 'source' reserves for longclaws are likely to be subdivided.

The Farmers

We interviewed 110 farmers who had grasslands (tussock and non-tussock) in their farms about their future plans for the grasslands. Sixty one (56%) of them had definite plans to convert at least part of the grasslands in the near future (before 2005). They might put them into cultivation (46/61), improved pasture (20/61), tree plantations (6/61) or other uses (2/61) such as residential structures or dams. Most of the farmers, (67%, especially those with large farms), did not plan to totally eliminate tussocks from their farms for a variety of reasons.

(1) Spare tussock pasture is valuable in dry seasons, because tussocks are more resistant to drought than other grasses.

(2) On some large farms, tussock grasslands cover quite large areas and it may take time before that land is needed for intensive grazing or cultivation

(3)In a few instances, the tussocks were found on steep, shallow-soiled, or infertile land that would not be good for cultivation.

(4)The costs of converting these grasslands to other uses are quite high.

(5)In a few cases, there were few people living on the farm and thus no need to cultivate more grasslands to meet household needs.

(6)Some farmers, especially in the more fertile areas, thought that tussocks have a high regeneration rate, and would continue to replace themselves in areas that are left fallow.

(7)A few individuals were sympathetic to Sharpe's Longclaw and were willing to spare some tussock cover for them.

One-third of the farmers, particularly those with small farms, could foresee the total elimination of tussock grasslands in their farms. Some felt that all tussocks needed to be removed to improve pasture, since they are less palatable and they cause eye and dental injuries to livestock. Others, especially those with smaller farms, felt that pressure from an increasing number of dependants meant that land would be further subdivided and more intensively used. The decision to eliminate tussocks may not necessarily lie with the current owners, but may be based on the economic requirements of future generations or land buyers.

There is some good news, though: most tussock grasslands were close to each other. On 76% of the farms that had grasslands (tussock plus non-tussock) on them (111 farms out of 146), grasslands were adjacent to other grasslands on neighbouring farms. Only 4% of the tussock grasslands on farms were more than 50 m from tussock grassland on other farms. However, adjacent grasslands often differed in tussock quality, with only 27% of the adjacent grasslands falling in the same tussock density category.

The Birds

Most of the people we spoke to (84%) liked wild birds, while 5.2 % disliked them. (10.4 % did not have a strong feeling either way.) Wild birds were liked for various reasons: their beauty of colour and song (33), as God's Creation (24), their role in the ecosystem, especially in eating pests (20), their interesting behaviour (2) and role in providing companionship (1). People disliked birds such as crows, queleas, and certain eagles due to the losses they bring as predators of domestic fowl and eaters of grain (17).

Sharpe's Longclaw could be identified by 70% (106/151) of the respondents. Positive identification was confirmed by showing a poster illustration of the bird and asking the respondent to give brief descriptions of its unique behaviour. Forty-eight people could remember seeing the species on their farms within the year before the study.

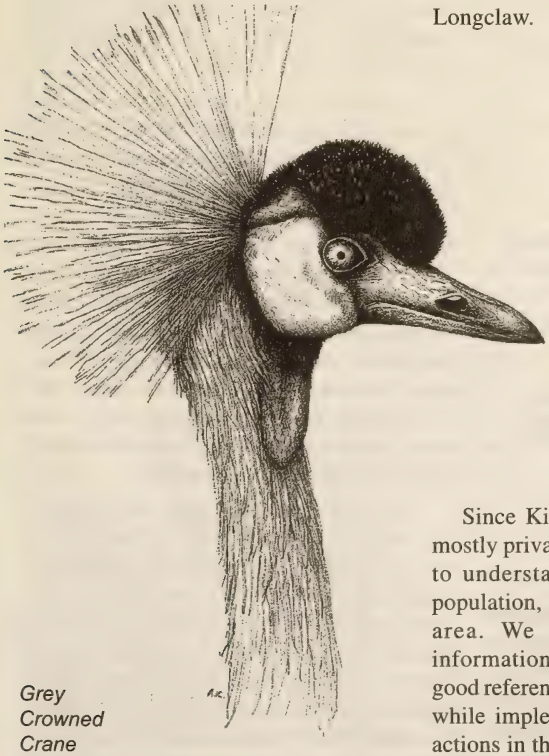
The Schools

We visited 34 public schools, 27 primary and 7 secondary. Their compounds ranged in size from 0.9 to 16.2 ha. Most of the schools (23) were on land of less than 6 ha. Unlike privately owned farms, schools plots were rarely subdivided. Only two schools had subdivided their plots since they acquired them, whereas ten had increased the size of their land through acquisition.

Grasslands covered about 75% of school plots. However, most of these grassy areas were playing grounds where tussocks had been removed. Only four of the 34 schools had grasslands with more than 5% tussock density. These tussocks occurred in small patches, except for one school that had 10.5 ha of dense tussock. Twenty (59%) of the school head teachers interviewed thought that it would be possible for their schools to set aside some land exclusively for the conservation of Sharpe's Longclaw.

Fourteen of the schools had clubs that participated in environmental activities such as tree planting (9), bird feeding and nest-box provision (5), field trips, camping and hiking (5), agriculture (4), international and national environmental events (3), bird watching (2), garbage collection (2), and soil conservation (2). Six of the schools offered some land for the clubs' activities. Membership in the clubs ranged from 15 to 63.

Twenty schools were aware of the existence of Friends of Kinangop Plateau (FoKP), a group established by a few local people to promote the conservation of the characteristic grassland birds of Kinangop. All but two of the schools that knew about FoKP were aware of the plight of Sharpe's Longclaw.



Grey Crowned Crane

Since Kinangop grasslands IBA is mostly privately-owned, it is important to understand the land use, human population, and social dynamics in the area. We hope that the general information provided here will be a good reference of things to keep in mind while implementing any conservation actions in the Kinangop Plateau.

Ringing at Ngulia, 2002

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Ngulia Safari Lodge in Tsavo West National Park was found, in December 1969, to be a unique site for observing Palaearctic bird migration: large numbers of southward-bound night-migrating birds are attracted to the lodge's game-viewing lights under misty conditions in the rainy months of November, December and sometimes January. Every year since then a team of ringers has gathered at Ngulia. Fine-mesh mist nets are set up north of the lodge, and migrating birds flying towards the lights become trapped in the nets. Team members extract the birds, take measurements, fit a light aluminium ring on one leg, and release them.

Ringing Recoveries

Six birds ringed at Ngulia, were reported last year from distant places. The term "controlled" means caught and released with ring intact by another ringer.

Barn Swallow, ringed 28.11.2000, controlled Chokpak, Kazakhstan, 26.04.2002

Sprosser, ringed 15.12.2001, killed Alnigehah, N Egypt, 22.08.2002

Marsh Warbler, ringed 25.11.1998, found dead Kuwait 05.05.2001 (only just notified)

Marsh Warbler, ringed 21.11.2000, killed by cat, Fyn, Denmark, 25.07.2002

Marsh Warbler, ringed Ngulia 24.11.01, recovered Lodeynoye Pole, Leningradskaya Ob, Russia, 24.06.02

Marsh Warbler, ringed 25.11.2001, controlled Bandirma, Turkey, 09.05.2002

Turkey is a "new" country for Ngulia recoveries, and Kuwait is a "new" country for any Marsh Warbler ringed in Ngulia (two Red-tailed Shrikes were recovered there in the 1970s).

The 2002 Season

The main bird-ringing session at Ngulia was 25 November to 16 December, both sides of the early December new moon, with a team of 12 to 18 people most of this time; over 14,000 Palaearctic birds were ringed. A small team from the National Museums of Kenya covered five more days over the New Year, adding over 1300 migrants.

Most birds were caught at dawn in a standard arrangement of 18-19 nets in three lines in front of the Lodge, behind the main area illuminated at night. Catching at night with a couple of nets under the lights, once the main thrust of the Ngulia operation, was only undertaken on ten occasions this year, due to poor or no mist. Less than 20% of the overall catch was taken at night. This year we did not play tapes on misty nights when many birds were attracted to the lights. We switched on tapes late at night only when there was no mist, to augment what would otherwise be very small catches.

When we arrived the grass was well up, the bush in leaf and some *Thunbergia* in flower. The first night was misty, and a good mixed catch included 10 Olive-tree Warblers (about half the year's total) and many Red-backed Shrikes. Then conditions turned obstinately clear, with just one more misty night in the first week. However, hundreds of feeding Barn Swallows were caught each morning in front of the Lodge, attracted to

tapes of their calls. Excitement was provided by a female Eurasian Sparrowhawk netted on 1st December.

The swallows soon disappeared, but on four nights with some mist between 3rd and 9th December some large catches of migrants were made, including one of 1849. A Eurasian Cuckoo on the 5th was followed by an Asian Lesser Cuckoo the 6th, and over 600 Sprossers were caught on the 8th. The third week, with a growing moon up later each night, did provide better mist and showers, and the ringing total increased steadily.

The New Year team encountered misty, showery weather each night, and despite the lateness of the season caught well with two lines of bush nets. Nearly 500 migrants were ringed on 30th December, and 399 before packing up on 2nd January.

Palaearctic Migrants

The migrant catch for the season was 15,735, of which 45% were Marsh Warblers. River Warbler (606) and Willow Warbler (227) featured prominently, but most 'minor' species were in short supply, in part because ringing was practically confined to December. There were very few Nightjars, Rufous Bush Chats, wheatear spp., Spotted Flycatchers or Olive-tree Warblers (all November species). Upcher's Warblers were boosted to 12 over the New Year session, but this bird has had a poor run in the last five years. Basra Reed Warblers remained scarce (only 19 ringed), a second poor year, which might indicate a real decline in the numbers of a breeding species confined to the Iraq marshes. However Great Reed Warbler had one of its best seasons with eight ringed, and Eurasian Cuckoo, strangely scarce at the lodge, posted a record year with four ringed.

For the first season in many years there were no foreign-ringed controls. But five of our birds returned from earlier years: two Barn Swallows ringed in December 2000 and one from December 2001; and Sprossers from November 1999 and December 2001.

Afrotropical Species

This year, 1136 Afrotropical birds of 78 species were ringed. Because of the advanced grass growth there were good numbers and variety of seed eating species: Chestnut Weavers, Vitelline Masked Weavers, White-winged Widowbirds and Paradise Whydahs were abundant and Purple Indigobirds were common. Yellow-billed Oxpecker and Rüppell's Robin Chat were added to the Ngulia ringing list, while Pallid Honeyguide, Pale Prinia, Northern Crombec and Baglafecht Weaver were ringed for only the second time. A Dwarf Bittern was the first ringed since 1990. Two Common Button-quails were ringed in early December and several others seen. The few Afrotropical nightjars caught were all Plain or Dusky.

A Red-chested Cuckoo, a scarce bird at Ngulia, was calling on 27 November. And two species new for the area, Eastern Bearded Scrub-Robin and Buff-spotted Flufftail, were found at Kalanga Spring on 12 December. Several flufftails were calling at dusk and were heard again on subsequent evenings.

Thanks

As always, we thank the Ngulia Lodge staff and the Kenya Wildlife Service for allowing us to catch and ring birds at Ngulia. For financial support, we thank the Wetlands Trust and Nature Kenya.

Summary results, July 2001 and January 2002 Waterbird Counts
(see also page 28)

(a) Rift Valley lakes

Wetland	Date	No. birds	No. species
Lake Naivasha	20.01.02	14,910	83
Lake Oloidien	19.01.02	6,076	41
Lake Sonachi	19.01.02	77	9
Lake Elmenteita	19.01.02	34,906	52
Lake Nakuru	29.07.01	281,364	48
Lake Nakuru	06.01.02	796,998	58
Nakuru Sewage Treatment Ponds	29.07.01	2,178	27
Nakuru Sewage Treatment Ponds	06.01.02	2,421	37
Lake Bogoria	05.01.02	197,128	26

(b) Wetlands around Nairobi

Wetland	Date	No. birds	No. species
Manguo Floodplain	02.01.02	1,117	34
Limuru Sewage Ponds	02.01.02	74	11
Dandora Oxidation Ponds	09.01.02	6,774	46
Hillcrest School	16.01.02	44	13
AHV Church Pond	16.01.02	88	18
Carnivore Splash	16.01.02	35	4
Nairobi National Park	16.01.02	179	32
Kenyatta University Sewage Works	23.01.02	913	42
Jogoo Road Ponds	30.01.02	29	9
Fourteen Falls	30.01.02	275	28
Kahawa Sukari Dam	23.01.02	378	31

(c) Kenya Coast

Wetland	Date	No. birds	No. species
Sabaki River Mouth	27.01.02	11,923	51
Mida Creek	26.01.02	3,689	22
Malindi Habour	26.01.02	728	19
Lake Bartum	26.01.02	1,084	30
Lake Jilore	26.01.02	620	31
Roka Pools	26.01.02	83	11
Kensalt	27.01.02	2,555	34
Tansy's Pool	26.01.02	44	12
Kararacha Pools	26.01.02	37	12

Waterbird counts in Kenya, July 2001 and January 2002

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Ornithology Department, NMK, P O Box 40658, GPO 00100, Nairobi, Kenya

As part of the African Waterbird Census, 153 volunteers counted waterbirds in Kenyan wetlands in July 2001 and January 2002, including Site Support Groups from various Important Bird Areas and Wednesday Morning Birdwalk teams organised by Nature Kenya.

Lake Nakuru (including the two sewage treatment works within Nakuru town) was the only site counted in July 2001. There was a drop in the overall numbers of waterbirds, and specifically of flamingos, at Nakuru compared with January 2001 (see *Kenya Birds* volume 9). A total of 281,364 waterbirds of 48 species were counted at the lake. The two sewage treatment works in Nakuru town had a combined total of 2,178 waterbirds of 27 species.

Egyptian Goose by Nani Croze

In January 2002, however, Lake Nakuru had a much higher concentration of flamingos, with over 760,000 being recorded. Lake Bogoria had significantly fewer flamingos, just over 190,000, compared with the 500,000 counted the previous year. Lake Elmenteita also had fewer flamingos (over 21,000), about half the number recorded in January 2001. Flamingos in Kenya's southern Rift Valley lakes totalled 986,375, less than in January 2001. Breeding attempts by flamingos, evidenced by abandoned nests, could still be seen at Nakuru and Elmenteita, as in January 2001.

Sites within the Rift Valley held over 1 million waterbirds of 89 species – a little lower than the January 2001 results (*Kenya Birds* volume 9). Most Rift Valley sites had moderately higher water levels compared with January 2001, and mud flats were found along the shorelines of some sites. The eleven sites counted within Nairobi and central Kenya had a total of 9,906 waterbirds of 65 species. The nine wetland sites on the north coast, most of them inland, held over 20,000 waterbirds of 81 species. The three sites around Lake Victoria recorded 1,272 waterbirds of 34 species. The low counts at the Lake Victoria sites and a few sites within

(d) Lake Victoria wetlands

Wetland	Date	No. birds	No. Species
Sondu Miriu River Mouth	26.01.02	292	22
Nyamware Rice Field	26.01.02	28	1
Dunga Beach	27.01.02	952	27

Nairobi could be due to the temporal movements of waterbirds in response to site conditions.

In January 2002, 29 sites were covered – less than in January 2001 Lakes Magadi and Ol' Bolossat, and lake Chem Chem, Arabuko swamp, Kisumu Sewage Ponds and dams within the Kinangop Plateau were not counted during the session. However, three new wetlands were included – Kararacha Pools and Tansy's Pool (north coast) and Carnivore Splash (Nairobi).

Acknowledgements

The waterbird counts are a collaborative effort between the Department of Ornithology of the National Museums of Kenya, Nature Kenya (the East Africa Natural History Society) and Kenya Wildlife Service. The count organisers are grateful to the volunteers and IBA site support groups and to all who contributed in different ways to make the July 2001 and January 2002 counts a success.

More particularly, we are grateful to the Bird Committee of the EANHS, the Important Birds Areas programme of Nature Kenya, the Kenya Wildlife Service - Netherlands Wetlands Programme, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) for providing funds for the exercise.

Lake Nakuru National Park provided accommodation for the volunteers at their hostels in Nakuru. We thank the boat owners at Lake Naivasha who kindly loaned their boats and in most cases donated fuel: Colin Burch, John D'Olier, Elsamere Conservation Centre, Fisherman's Camp, Lake Naivasha Yacht Club, Loldia Farm and the Fisheries Department. We thank the landowners around Lake Oloidien who permitted us to count the site, and Tom Cholmondley of Delamere Estate Camp who permitted us to count at Lake Elmenteita.

A Rocha Kenya, through Colin Jackson, assisted with the organisation of counts at the coast. Wildlife Clubs of Kenya (Western Kenya) and Kenya Wildlife Service provided transport to the participants at Lake Victoria wetlands and Nairobi National Park.

We appreciate these major contributions.

Fleur Ng'weno led the Wednesday Morning Birdwalk participants in wetland counts around Nairobi. William Kimosop, Tim Samwels, Margaret Otieno, Evans Mkalla, Bernd De Bruijn, Itai Shanni, Narinder Heyer, Bill and Sue Deverell, Sarah Higgins (LNRA), Ann Kahihia, Bernard Kuloba, Sospeter Okungu and Oliver Nasirwa assisted in many ways and deserve special thanks. Special thanks also go to Henry Ndithia and Nickson Otieno who assisted with the data entry work.

Three Darwin Initiatives

The Darwin Initiative of the UK is fueling three exciting ongoing projects for building capacity in conservation in the region.

1. IBA Monitoring, Management and Action

Kenya's Important Biodiversity Areas: improving monitoring, management and conservation action is helping Nature Kenya to establish and co-ordinate an effective, sustainable monitoring system at 60 Important Bird Areas – key sites for bird conservation that protect other biodiversity too. The 3-year project, funded by the Darwin Initiative of the U.K. through the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB, the British BirdLife Partner), will build the capacity of local communities and Government agencies to monitor conditions and changes at IBA sites, and feed back into improved site management, conservation action and national reporting.

Representatives from Government agencies and community groups are training in ecological survey, data management, management planning, project management and training skills. They in turn will train and support a network of local people and government field staff. Monitoring guidelines are being developed that are low in cost and simple to implement. With continued fund-raising to secure long-term resource requirements, and continued RSPB support, the project is expected to produce a sustainable monitoring system.

Paul Matiku, Nature Kenya,
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Sunbird by Andrew Kamiti

2. Monitoring and planning for eastern African Wetlands

Monitoring biodiversity for site management planning in eastern African Wetlands

The wetlands of eastern Africa contain high biodiversity, supporting internationally important populations of threatened species. Social and economic changes have resulted in considerable loss and degradation of many wetlands in this region, and numerous sites, species and habitats are threatened.

To address some of these issues, the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) was awarded a grant by UK's Darwin Initiative for survival of species (part of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) in May 2002,

to help conserve eastern African wetlands and their biodiversity. It is designed to serve the interests of local people and organisations in eastern Africa by underpinning the sustainable use of valuable water resources. A partnership of 11 organisations has been established: WWT, Wetlands International and organisations in nine eastern African countries, namely Kenya, Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. In the region, the project is hosted by the National Museums of Kenya.

The wetland project will build and maintain capacity in the monitoring of wetland biodiversity in eastern Africa by: developing a wetlands database and query tools, and deliver this, together with the necessary computing equipment, to the nine partner countries; providing training in the use of the database for developing site management plans and to fulfil obligations under international conventions and agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention; launching of a Wetland Biodiversity Monitoring Scheme for eastern Africa (WBMS), based on the activities of the African Waterbird Census, but with a regional identity to encourage participation by individuals, organisations and governments; and putting training into action, by supporting the development of a wetland site management plan in each of the nine countries.

Oliver Nasirwa from Kenya is the Darwin Project Officer for Eastern Africa. Since July 2002, Oliver has been on a ten-month internship at WWT's headquarters in Slimbridge, UK, to learn how UK's Wetland Bird Surveys (WeBS) scheme operates. In conjunction with other WWT staff, Oliver is developing a wetland database as well as training materials to be used in training activities in the eastern African region.

In February 2003, the first Project Steering Committee meeting was held at the Kenya Wildlife Service Training Institute in Naivasha. Oliver will soon be back at the National Museums of Kenya, where the regional project office will be based. The project-funding phase ends in May 2005, but a strategic work plan and exit strategy will be developed to maintain the sustainability of the scheme.

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Project coordinator:
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Project officer for Eastern Africa
Oliver Nasirwa
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The project is establishing a wetland biodiversity monitoring scheme for the entire eastern African region, and a database for information generated, using the existing African Waterbird Census as its foundation. Training will be provided within key organisations on how to use data from the monitoring scheme for biodiversity conservation and in the development of site management plans for wetlands.

Oliver Nasirwa

3. Species-based Actions for globally threatened birds in Africa

Many of Africa's 349 globally threatened bird species need co-ordinated action to secure their future survival. The BirdLife Africa Partnership saw the need for a species action plan based approach for birds not well protected by site conservation programmes, and established an African Species Working Group (ASWG) to promote single species action plans (SAPs) and conservation initiatives. However, neither the African BirdLife partners nor their government colleagues had the experience of undertaking species action plans, nor the resources to do so.

Actions for the Conservation of Globally threatened birds in Africa (SAP project) is a three-year BirdLife project, aiming to build capacity for species action planning in Africa. The project started in April 2001 and is coordinated on behalf of the BirdLife International African Species Working Group by Nature Uganda and the RSPB (BirdLife Partners in Uganda and UK respectively). It is implemented by BirdLife partner organisations in 17 African countries (Nature Kenya in Kenya). Co-funding was received from the UK Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) under the Darwin Initiative.

The SAP project is producing 8 international and 15 national action plans for priority bird species in Africa. Cross-border species have been selected for the participative training because they are particularly difficult to conserve, they require concerted action in all important range countries and they ensure that a high number of people from a wide range of countries receive training and practical experience in a short time. Three of the eight focus species – Spotted Ground Thrush *Zoothera guttata*, Blue Swallow *Hirundo atrocaerulea* and Lappet faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotus* – have ranges extending into Kenya.

Spotted Ground Thrush by Edwin Selempo

What has happened so far?

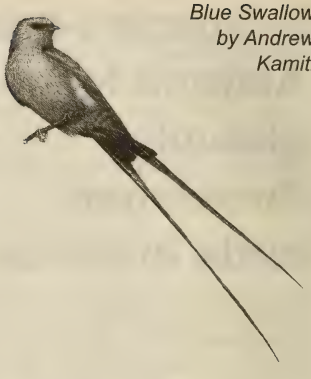
1. National Species Action Plan Co-ordinators (NSAPCs) were identified from each African BirdLife partner involved. By applying their knowledge in species conservation and the training obtained from the programme, each NSAPC is expected to play a major role in developing and implementing species action plans, as well as training colleagues. Nature Kenya nominated Kariuki Ndang'ang'a from its close collaborator, the Ornithology Department of the National Museums of Kenya. He now volunteers 10% of his time to the programme. The importance of involving relevant government ministries in implementing species action plans was also recognised by ASWG, and Nature Kenya asked the Kenya Wildlife Service to nominate a government representative. He is Charles Musyoki, a research scientist at KWS.

2. ASWG developed a species action plan format and process which has now been tested and refined in three international workshops.

3. A "Training of Trainers" workshop was held to train national co-ordinators and their government colleagues in single species conservation and action planning process.

4. Three workshops for developing international action plans for priority species have so far been held. International Action Plans for the Blue Swallow, Grey-necked Picathartes and Grauer's Rush Warbler are now in place.

5. To translate the international plans into the national context, a process has recently been developed and tested with the Grauer's Rush Warbler National Action Plan for Uganda.



Blue Swallow by Andrew Kamiti

Still to be done

Five of the planned international action plans are yet to be developed. As the focal person for the Spotted Ground Thrush, Kariuki is organising an international workshop at Watamu in May 2003 to develop an action plan with stakeholders from six range countries. He has also secured funds from RSPB for a survey to re-assess the conservation status of the Spotted Ground Thrush and its coastal forest habitat in June/July 2003. In October 2003 he will facilitate a national stakeholder workshop to develop a Spotted Ground Thrush Action Plan in the Kenyan context.

All 15 national action plans scheduled under this project will be undertaken and launched by the end of the SAP project. Considerable effort will also be devoted to fundraising for implementation of the action plans and also to ensure that the partners are in a position to continue the process of producing plans for more species in their own countries.

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Records

Compiled by the Records Sub-committee of the Bird Committee of the EANHS

This section exists for the publication of interesting observations and for updates to *A Bird Atlas of Kenya* (Lewis & Pomeroy, 1989). All contributions are welcomed.

If you are sending records to *Kenya Birds* please consider the following guidelines:

For all (non-breeding) records of Afrotropical, Oceanic, and Palaearctic birds, please send in any observation **with notes** that you think are of interest, e.g. early or late dates for Palaearctic and intra-African migrants, unusual records for your area, or any unusually large or impressive movements of birds. We are keen to publish information of this kind. Records with information are particularly interesting and valuable; for example,. "male singing from bush", or "the bird was seen in a flock of Barn Swallows...", or "1 adult and 3 immatures..." etc. The editors will select records for publication according to space available. However, please remember that **all** records are useful for supplementing the computerized bird Atlas database in the Ornithology Department, National Museums of Kenya. Your contributions will help to improve our knowledge of bird distribution and seasonality in Kenya.

Eagles by Nani Croze

For breeding records, those of confirmed breeding are useful for ALL species, even the most common ones; records of probable breeding (nest building, courtship etc.) are only needed for rare species or ones where there are few breeding records. For definitions and codes of "confirmed" and "probable" breeding, see *Kenya Birds* Vol. 5(2) p. 82. Interesting records will be published here and the others stored by the EANHS for analysis of breeding seasons, success rates, habitat requirements, etc. You are strongly urged to fill in a nest record card at the same time. Much more detail can be recorded on a card, and if your record can be added to the card collection then it has permanent value.

For all records, including breeding records, please be as detailed as possible about dates and locations. If you have sightings from places not easily found on the map, please take the trouble of giving us the latitude and longitude of the site to as much precision as you can (preferably the nearest second of arc or better). We can then use this information as we update the Atlas.

Supporting details and descriptions of problematic species (easily confused, out of range etc.) are always welcome, and make publication more likely (see *Kenya Birds* Vol. 4(2), p. 84 for suggestions on how to submit a record). Records of certain species are particularly requested for inclusion in this

report. These species are indicated by the codes "A", "B" and "X" in the *Check-list of the Birds of Kenya* 3rd edition, 1996 (available for 100/= from the Nature Kenya office). For particularly unusual sightings (rarity), supporting details (i.e. field notes, photos, tape-recordings) will be needed for scrutiny by the EANHS Rarity Committee before the record can be accepted.

All records should be sent to the

Records Officer at the Ornithology Department, National Museums of Kenya

Box 40658, GPO 00100 Nairobi, Kenya

<kbirds@africaonline.co.ke>

Ph.(020) 3742161/4 or 3742131/4, ext. 243

At the Ornithology Department you will also be able to obtain Nest Record cards and National Birdmap checklists free of charge.

Key to records

For new Atlas records, the species number as given in the Atlas is placed in brackets after the name: e.g. Whinchat (A# 653). The new records themselves are indicated in square brackets. Codes are: pres, present (first record); post pres, present (first post - 1970 record); prob, probable breeding; conf, confirmed breeding; post conf, confirmed breeding (first since 1970); e.g. [conf 25B] indicates that the species is confirmed as breeding (and is therefore present) in square 25B. The English names follow the *Check-list of the Birds of Kenya*, 3rd edition, EANHS, Nairobi, 1996.

Due to confusion in the backlog files, a number of records were erroneously published in *Kenya Birds* volume 9. The rectifications appear at the end of the records

Overview

This report deals with records from World Birdwatch 2001 onwards through the whole year of 2002. This is a substantial part of the backlog, most of which is now cleared; breeding records from this period are still remaining, however, and will be covered (hopefully) in the next issue. Many records have been received, notably checklists (which is excellent!), with many new records for atlas squares. As a consequence, however, limited space prompts us, again, to restrict this section mainly to new atlas records, with only little room for interesting other records. But this should not put you off sending in records; ALL data is used, checked, and entered in databases for analysis.

Two recent developments have greatly contributed to obtaining and analysing data. Firstly, the e-mail group "Kenyabirdsnet", a new fast way of exchanging interesting bird sightings (and digital photographs!), is a great medium to gather records of unusual sightings. Secondly, the new records database (known also as the "Kagu project"; see *Nature Net* of February 2003) allows fast extraction of interesting species from a huge amount of checklist data. This is a great help in compiling the records report, especially in the near future when the backlog will be cleared and this report can focus more on interesting sightings. So, please keep sending in your records!

Much new information for the Atlas has come in from areas that are rarely visited by birders, most notably Loita Hills – including the westernmost records of **Yellow-bellied Greenbul** and **Montane White-eye** – and Marsabit, with for example the country's northernmost record of **River Warbler**. A World Birdwatch trip to Marich Pass notched up many nice finds, with new atlas square records for some very local birds such as **Boran Cisticola, Western Violet-backed Sunbird** and **Variable Indigobird**.

Many new records came from Department of Ornithology staff doing research at Mpala Ranch, Laikipia, including a breeding record for **African Finfoot** (*see* p.15). Several visits to Western Province have yielded many interesting finds, such as the rarely recorded **Black-rumped Button-quail, Green-backed Eremomela, Buff-spotted Woodpecker** and **Green Hylia** (the latter two are rarely found outside Kakamega forest); **Levant Sparrowhawk**

and **Palm-nut Vulture** are interesting records as well. Sadly, it was also noted that there is a lot of pressure on the little remaining grassland and riverine forest habitats in this area.

But new birds also continue to be found in well-watched squares such as Nairobi, with **Pectoral Sandpiper, Heuglin's Gull, Golden-tailed Woodpecker, White-eared Barbet, Fan-tailed Raven** and **Yellow-backed Weaver** as surprising examples.

A well-known birder living in Watamu must have had a surprise when an exhausted **Red-footed Booby** was found on the beach in front of his house! Seemingly the first **Great Crested Grebe** on Lake Naivasha in several years was seen during the 2002 Waterbird Census. **African Darters** came in from few localities only, notably Lake Naivasha, Nairobi NP and Windsor Golf & Country Club. **Grey-crested Helmet-shrikes** were reported only from Lake Nakuru NP; a project to monitor this species is ongoing in Naivasha. Please submit any records of this vulnerable species!

While enjoying their victory in Shaba NR, the winning team from World Birdwatch 2001 were further rewarded with **Friedmann's Lark**. Another record of this species came from Taita Discovery Centre (Rukinga Ranch). Rare raptors were staging a good show, with records of **Short-toed Snake-Eagle, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Western Red-footed Falcon,** several **Long-legged Buzzards** and **Greater Spotted Eagles**, and a **Barbary Falcon**. A **Dunlin** – in summer plumage! – was present in Lake Nakuru NP in July 2002. Small but smart: a pair of **Black-backed Cisticola** in western Mara was a good find; are they spreading north following recent records in Serengeti?

A new bird for Kenya – if accepted by the Rarities Committee – was an **Arctic Tern** at Sabaki River mouth (*see* p. 19). The second record of **Pied Flycatcher** in Kenya (pending approval of the Rarities Committee) consisted of two males at Kakamega Forest. One of our most exciting birds, **African Pitta**, was reported twice; one from Arabuko-Sokoke forest and one, rather less predictably, from a garden in Thika! Towards the end of the year, a male **Black-eared Wheatear** was seen near Baringo and another individual was found at Mpala Ranch.

Acknowledgments

The Records Sub-committee members are Bernd de Bruijn, Itai Shanni, Shailesh K. Patel, Colin Jackson, John Musina, Anthony Kuria and Nicodemus Nalianya. We would like to thank the Department of Ornithology, National Museums of Kenya, for their help and support.

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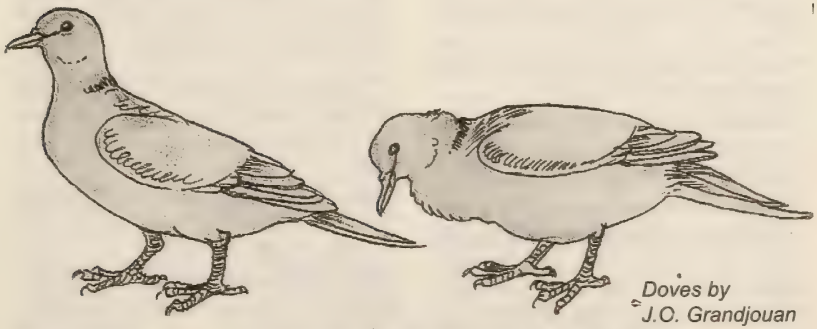

Doves by J.O. Grandjouan

Note

Two asterisks (**) in front of the species name indicate a record that is yet to be accepted by the Rarities Committee.

World Birdwatch 2001

White-backed Night Heron (A# 28): [pres 114B] Bamburi NR, 7/10/01, Mombasa, MNGS.

Purple Heron (A# 41): [pres 37A] Marich Pass field study centre, 7/10/01, ISH, JK, AM, OK, DWS.

Woolly-necked Stork (A# 48): [pres 74B] Loita Hills, 7/10/01, S&BD, SF.

Allen's Gallinule (A# 199): [pres 114B] Mombasa, 7/10/01, MR, JKo, JMu.

Spur-winged Plover (A# 218): [pres 60C] Ruma NP, 7/10/01, BMu, MK, AS, SN, VO.

Common Snipe (A# 249): [pres 75C] Lake Magadi, 7/10/01, GE, HN, TA, JKa, GS.

Black-faced Sandgrouse (A# 319): [pres 50B] Bobong Field Centre, Rumuruti, 7/10/01, MKa, MN, JMr, JW.

Ross's Turaco (A# 361): [pres 74D] Loita Hills, 7/10/01, S&BD, SF.

Brown Parrot (A# 344): [pres 74B] Loita Hills, 7/10/01, S&BD, SF.

African Cuckoo (A# 367): [pres 63D] Mwea NR, 7/10/01, M&LC, RC, BF, BA, PKo.

Donaldson-Smith's Nightjar (A# 404): [pres 63D] Mwea NR, 7/10/01, M&LC, RC, BF, BA, PKo.

African Black Swift (A# 419): [pres 74A] Governor's Camp, Masai Mara NR, 7/10/01, DR.

White-tailed Lark (A# 528): [pres 74A] Masai Mara NR, 7/10/01, PKi.

Williams's Lark (A# 535): [post pres 51B] lava desert 14 km south of Shaba gate, near Shaba NR, 7/10/2001, SP, BC, HG, BdB.

African Golden Oriole (A# 572): [pres 63A] Mukurwe-ini Valleys, 7/10/01, CJM, LM.

Brown Illadopsis (A# 589): [pres 49C] South Nandi forest, 7/10/01, SNBCG.

Black-shouldered Kite by A. Osanya-Nyyneque

Arrow-marked Babbler (A# 601): [pres 37A] Marich Pass field study centre, 7/10/01, ISH, JK, AM, OK, DWS.

Little Rush Warbler (A# 682): [pres 114B] Mombasa, 7/10/01, MR, JKo, JMu.

Red-capped Robin-Chat (A# 669): [pres 89C] Tsavo West NP, 7/10/01, P&RH, P&KP, RM, HE; [pres 51D] Meru forest, 7/10/01, P&HP, LSL, JKK.

Boran Cisticola (A# 728): [pres 37A] Marich Pass field study centre, 7/10/01, ISH, JK, AM, OK, DWS.

Gambaga Flycatcher (A# 781): [pres 63D] Mwea NR, 7/10/01, M&LC, RC, BF, BA, PKo.

Lead-coloured Flycatcher (A# 787): [pres 63D] Mwea NR, 7/10/01, M&LC, RC, BF, BA, PKo.

Mountain Wagtail (A# 833): [pres 37A] Marich Pass field study centre, 7/10/01, ISH, JK, AM, OK, DWS.

Common Fiscal (A# 864): [pres 102B] Mida Creek, 7/10/01, DN, JD, AG, LN.

Shelley's Starling (A# 888): [pres 100B] Lake Jipe, 7/10/01, RK, BAm, MG, DS, SK, MC.

Western Violet-backed Sunbird (A# 907): [pres 37A] Marich Pass field study centre, 7/10/01, ISH, JK, AM, OK, DWS.

Yellow White-eye (A# 937): [pres 62D] Murungaru, N. Kinangop, 7/10/01, LB, AK.

African Golden Weaver (A# 946): [pres 63A] Mukurwe-ini Valleys, 7/10/01, CJM, LM.

Black-winged Red Bishop (A# 974): [pres 37A] Marich Pass field study centre, 7/10/01, ISH, JK, AM, OK, DWS.

Village Indigobird (A# 1019): [pres 63A] Mukurwe-ini Valleys, 7/10/01, CJM, LM.

Variable Indigobird (A# -) [pres 37A] Marich Pass field study centre, 7/10/01, ISH, JK, AM, OK, DWS.

African Firefinch (A# 1022): [pres 37A] Marich Pass field study centre, 7/10/01, ISH, JK, AM, OK, DWS.

Blue-capped Cordon-bleu (A# 1025): [pres 63D] Mwea NR, 7/10/01, M&LC, RC, BF, BA, PKo.

Black-and-white Mannikin (A# 1042): [pres 37A] Marich Pass field study centre, 7/10/01, ISH, JK, AM, OK, DWS.

Afrotropical species

Great Crested Grebe, Lake Naivasha, 18/01/02, WBC.

** **Red-footed Booby (A# 18):** [pres 103A] One brown morph, Watamu, 13/12/02, CJ – the first record of a live bird in Kenya.

Long-tailed Cormorant (A# 22): [pres 62B] Sangare Ranch, Nyeri, 9/2/02, P&KP, P&RH.

Little Bittern: One adult and one immature bird at Sukari dam near Peponi School, 23/06/02, ISH, AGa; Probable breeding; Rosslyn River Garden Centre, Nairobi, 3/07/02, WMB; one bird at the tip of Hyena dam, Nairobi NP, 22/12/02, BF.

Dwarf Bittern: Seven birds at Endashant swamp, west of Ngong Hills, 18/06/02, SP, ISH.

White-backed Night Heron: One adult and one juvenile bird, Hippo Pools, Nairobi NP, 7/04/02, BdB, SP, ISH.

Black Heron: six birds at lakeshore near Hippo Camp, Naivasha, 19/1/02, WBC.

Purple Heron (A# 41): [pres 75C] Lake Magadi, 23/06/02, SP, SR, JMur, ER, JKi, JWw.

African Open-billed Stork (A# 51): [pres 27D] Marsabit NR, 11/12/02, LBo, MKa.

Glossy Ibis (A# 56): [pres 103A] Sabaki River mouth, Malindi, 8/10/02, SP, ISH, BF, BdB; [pres 27D] Marsabit NR, 11/12/02, LBo, MKa.

Palm-nut Vulture (A# 86): [pres 48C] One individual near the Sio River south of Nambale, 13/4/02, BdB, SP, ISH; [pres 48A] one individual north of Alupe (might have been the same individual), 14/4/02, BdB, SP, ISH; one bird again over Alupe 18/09/02, BF – these might well be birds from the Ugandan population.

Rüppell's Griffon Vulture (A# 89): [pres 63C] Castle Forest Station, Mt. Kenya, 29/4/02, EM, JN.

African Harrier Hawk (A# 94): [pres 27D] Marsabit NR, 11/12/02, LBo, MKa.

Black-chested Snake Eagle (A# 100): [pres 103A] Gongoni, 6/10/02, CJ, BF, ISH, SP, BdB.

Great Sparrowhawk (A# 104): [pres 91B] Manda island, Lamu, 29/4/02, BdB.

African Goshawk (A# 108): [pres 27D] Marsabit NR, 11/12/02, LBo, MKa.

Gabar Goshawk (A# 114): [post pres 100B] Kitobo Forest, Taveta, 8/2001, DO.

Lizard Buzzard (A# 115): [pres 51C] One bird on a pole near the Isiolo-Timau junction, 26/10/02, BF.

Ayres's Hawk-Eagle (A# 126): [pres 74D] trek from Magori to Shombole, Loita Hills, 17-22/8/2001, JJ; [pres 103A] Gongoni, 6/10/02, CJ, BF, ISH, SP, BdB; [pres 89C] A single bird over Ngulia Lodge, Tsavo West NP, 31/12/02, BdB, NN, DG, TI, JM, ISH.

Bat Hawk: One bird at Giraffe Manor, Nairobi, 1/04/02, DR; Shaba NR, 30/5/02, CJ, WK, AB, BCo, YG.

African Swallow-tailed Kite (A# 140): [pres 74A] One bird over Musiara airstrip near Governor's Camp, Masai Mara, 23/11/02, WO.

African Hobby (A# 151): [pres 62D] Tetu forest, Nyeri, 1/9/02, JWam – a nice record from central highlands.

Fox Kestrel (A# 157): [pres 51B] One bird at Shaba NR, 11/02, NB.

Crested Guineafowl (A# 178): [post pres 102B] Arabuko-Sokoke forest, 8/10/2000, DN, HG, FN, BC.

Common Button-quail (A# 181): [pres 50D] Mpala Ranch, Laikipia, 2001-2002,

DoO; Five birds at Oltopesi waterhole, 22/07/02, ISH, NS.

**** Black-rumped Button-quail (A# 182):** [pres 48C] Birds calling at Nambale, 18/09/02, BF – possibly three different territories. The species hasn't been recorded in the country since the 1950's.

Quail-plover: Tsavo East NP, near Galana River, 22/12/01, BdB, ED.

Buff-spotted Flufftail (A# 186): [pres 89C] Four birds calling from bushy slopes behind Ngulia Lodge, 12-13/12/02, BM.

Purple Swamphen (A# 198): [pres 27D] Marsabit NR, 11/12/02, LBo, MKa.

Buff-crested Bustard (A# 206): [pres 75B] west of Ngong Hills, 28/12/02, BF, BdB.

Black-headed Plover (A# 219): [pres 88C] Amboseli NP, 24/12/02, ISH, AGa.

Brown-chested Plover (A# 221): [pres 74A] One bird close to Governor's Camp, Masai Mara NR, 6/10/02, DR, DT.

Whiskered Tern (A# 312): [pres 103A] Sabaki River mouth, Malindi, 29/12/2000, PK, ET.

Black-billed Turaco: Several birds calling in Yala Reserve, Kakamega, 13/09/02, BF.

Purple-crested Turaco: One, possibly 2, on Giraffe Center nature walk, 2/04/02, DR, EO.

Black Cuckoo (A# 366): [pres 61D] Trans Mara forest, 8/12/2001, SP, ISH, BdB.

Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo (A# 371): [pres 102B] One bird at Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, 24/07/02, JeB; A bird calling at Kieni Forest, 21/10/02, BF.

Dusky Nightjar (A# 400): [pres 51C] Lolmarik Farm, Timau, 29/8/02, SP.

Plain Nightjar (A# 402): [pres 50D] Mpala Ranch, Laikipia, 2001-2002, DoO.

Mottled Spinetail (A# 412): [pres 63C] Birds flying around Mountain Lodge, 22/10/02, BF.

Scarce Swift (A# 414): [pres 61C] Trans Mara forest, 8/12/2001, SP, ISH, BdB; [pres 62A] Ol Joro Orok, 10/4/02, EM, LBl, IW, JWa.

African Black Swift (A# 419): [pres 75B] Nairobi NP, 3/6/02, SP, ISH.

White-headed Mousebird: Westermann's Safari Camp,Voi, 4/11/01, JDa.

Giant Kingfisher (A# 430): [pres 49B] Cheptebo, Kerio Valley, 17/6/02, KD.

Black-and-white-casqued Hornbill (A# 464): [post pres 61D] Trans Mara forest, 8/12/2001, SP, ISH, BdB.

White-headed Barbet (A# 479): [pres 50C] Lake Bogoria NR, 10/11/02, MKi; [pres 89C] Ngulia area, Tsavo West, 30/12/02, NRG.

White-eared Barbet (A# 486): [pres 75B] One bird in Kiambethu Farm, Limuru, 19/12/01, FN.

Yellow-spotted Barbet (A# 487): [pres 61D] Trans Mara forest, 8/12/2001, SP, ISH, BdB.

Moustached Green Tinkerbird: Malewa River Lodge, 07/02, EH.

Lesser Honeyguide (A# 501): [pres 27D] Marsabit NR, 11/12/02, LBo, MKa.

Pallid Honeyguide (A# 505): [pres 89C] Ngulia lodge, Tsavo West, 31/12/02, NRG – immature, ringed.

Eastern Honeybird (A# 508): [pres 51C] Lolmarik Farm, Timau, 29/8/02, SP.

Golden-tailed Woodpecker (A# 513): [pres 75B] One bird at Mbagathi Ridge, behind the Karen Blixen Museum, 31/07/02, WMB – a most surprising find, so far from the species' known range in Kenya, during a Wednesday Morning Birdwalk!

Buff-spotted Woodpecker (A# 516): [pres 48C] Mungatsi grassland, 13-14/4/02, SP, ISH, BdB.

African Pitta (A# 525): [pres 76A] Thika, 6-7/06/02, Pf; Nyari Track, Arabuko-Sokoke forest, 16/06/02, WK.

Friedmann's Lark (A# 536): [post pres 51B] Several birds singing at Shaba NR, 05/02, CJ, WK, AB, BCo, YG; Birds singing near Taita Discovery Centre, 10/02, BF.

Wire-tailed Swallow (A# 552): [pres 74D] trek from Magori to Shombole, Loita Hills,

Swifts by A. Osanya-Nyyneque

17-22/8/2001, JJ.

Lesser Striped Swallow (A# 559): [pres 61D] Trans Mara forest, 8/12/2001, SP, ISH, BdB.

Green-headed Oriole: One on Kararacha trail, Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, 5/01/02, CJ, BF, WK, SP, BdB, ISH.

Fan-tailed Raven (A# 579): [pres 75B] One bird over Loresho, Nairobi, 21/10/01 and again on 12/8/02, BdB.

Mouse-coloured Penduline Tit (A# 587): [pres 75B] west of Ngong Hills, 28/12/02, BF, BdB.

Scaly Chatterer (A# 596): [post pres 101D] Many birds coming to the bird feeding table at Taita Discovery Centre, 10/02, BF.

Brown Babbler (A# 602): [post pres 51C] In Cypress on the ridges around Loldaiga, 14/06/01, BF; [pres 60A] A small group in the grounds of Lake Victoria Safari Village, Mbita Point, 14-15/09/02, BMu, H&PH.

Black Cuckoo-shrike (A# 603): [pres 49B] Cheptebo, Kerio Valley, 17/6/02, KD.

Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike (A# 606): [pres 62C] Malewa River lodge, Gilgil, 12/10/02, BdB.

Yellow-bellied Greenbul (A# 621): [pres 74D] trek from Magori to Shombole, Loita Hills, 17-22/8/2001, JJ – the westernmost atlas square for this species in Kenya.

Grey-olive Greenbul (A# 629): [pres 63A] Kianyaga valleys, 8/10/02, SP, BC, HG, BdB.

Northern Anteater Chat: ILRI, Nairobi, 27/1/02, SP.

Brown-chested Alethe (A# 663): [pres 62C] Eburru, 24/11/2001, DGa, JWam.

White-browed Robin-Chat (A# 666): [pres 88D] Ol Ngosua water point, Mbirikani, 5/2/02, DM.

Rüppell's Robin-Chat (A# 667): [pres 89C] Ngulia lodge, Tsavo West, 31/12/02, NRG – ringed.

Wing-snapping Cisticola (A# 717): [post pres 61B] Molo grasslands, 7/12/2001, SP, ISH, BdB.

** **Black-backed Cisticola (A# 718):** [pres 74A] A pair at Sabaringo Valley, Masai Mara, 30/10/02, BF.

Desert Cisticola (A# 720): [pres 50D] Mpala Ranch, Laikipia, 2001-2002, DoO.

Stout Cisticola (A# 722): [pres 89C] Ngulia area, Tsavo West, 29/12/02, NRG.

Ashy Cisticola (A# 725): [pres 50D] Mpala Ranch, Laikipia, 2001-2002, DoO.

Red-faced Cisticola (A# 736): [pres 62A] Kabati, Kipipiri, 7/5/02 JWam.

White-chinned Prinia (A# 745): [pres 61D] Trans Mara forest, 8/12/2001, SP, ISH, BdB.

Black-headed Apalis (A# 757): [pres 88D] Chyulu Hills, 21/5/2001, PG.

Grey Wren-Warbler (A# 761): [pres 62A] Lake Elementeita, 1/10/02, JK.

Green-backed Eremomela (A# 767): [pres 48A] Two near Malaba, 3/06/01, BF.

Green Hylia (A# 777): [pres 48C] Birds calling in Mumias Sugar Company golf course, 16/09/02, BF.

Gambaga Flycatcher: A pair in the Kerio Valley, 11/09/02, BMu, H&PH; A pair about 30km north of Archer's Post, 08/02, BC.

Southern Black Flycatcher (A# 788): [post pres 100B] Kitobo Forest, Taveta, 8/2001, DO.

Northern Black Flycatcher (A# 789): [pres 50D] Mpala Ranch, Laikipia, 2001-2002, DoO.

White-eyed Slaty Flycatcher (A# 790):

[pres 27D] Marsabit NR, 11/12/02, LBo, MKa.

Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher: One bird in Yala Reserve, Kakamega, 13/09/02, BF.

African Paradise Flycatcher by Nani Croze

Plain-backed Pipit (A# 818): [pres 74D] trek from Magori to Shombole, Loita Hills, 17-22/8/2001, JJ.

Long-billed Pipit (A# 819): [pres 74D] trek from Magori to Shombole, Loita Hills, 17-22/8/2001, JJ.

Bush Pipit (A# 821): [pres 51C] A pair in Acacias in Loldaiga, 14-16/06/01, BF – might be the first record north of the Equator! Six birds in the Kedong Valley below Kiamese, 3/06/02, BF; A pair and two singles west of Ngong Hills, 28/12/02, BdB, BF.

Black-backed Puffback (A# 836): [post pres 61D] Trans Mara forest, 8/12/2001, SP, ISH, BdB.

Northern Puffback (A# 837): [pres 62C] Malewa River lodge, Gilgil, 11/10/02, BdB – the southernmost atlas square for this species.

Pringle's Puffback (A# 838): [pres 75C] between Olepolos and Oltepesi, Magadi road, 21/4/02, BF, SP, IS, BdB – a bird of the disjunct Olorgesailie-area population; [post pres 101D] Many birds in the area of Taita Discovery Centre, Rukinga ranch, 10/02, BF.

Sulphur-breasted Bush-Shrike (A# 852): [pres 100B] Kitobo Forest, Taveta, 8/2001, DO.

Grey-backed Fiscal (A# 861): [pres 49B] Cheptebo, Kerio Valley, 17/6/02, KD.

Long-tailed Fiscal (A# 862): [pres 74D] trek from Magori to Shombole, Loita Hills, 17-22/8/2001, JJ; [pres 62A] Ol Joro Orok, 10/4/02, EM, LBl, IW, JWa.

Rüppell's Long-tailed Starling (A# 881): [pres 91B] Lamu, 27/4/02, BdB.

Red-winged Starling (A# 885): [pres 74D] trek from Magori to Shombole, Loita Hills, 17-22/8/2001, JJ.

Superb Starling (A# 890): [pres 48C] Mungatsi grassland, 13-14/4/02, SP, ISH, BdB.

Olive-bellied Sunbird (A# 919): [post pres 61C] Trans Mara forest, 8/12/2001, SP, ISH, BdB.

Eastern Double-collared Sunbird (A# 922): [post pres 100B] Kitobo Forest, Taveta, 8/2001, DO.

Hunter's Sunbird (A#931): [pres 49B] Cheptebo, Kerio Valley, 17/6/02, KD.

Montane White-eye (A# 938): [pres 74D] trek from Magori to Shombole, Loita Hills, 17-22/8/2001, JJ – the westernmost atlas square for this species in Kenya.

Golden Palm Weaver (A# 945): [post pres 91B] Manda island, Lamu, 29/4/02, BdB.

Yellow-backed Weaver (A# 949): [pres 75B] A pair at the tip of Hyena dam, Nairobi NP, 22/12/02, BF – a very unusual record this far from Lake Victoria.

Vitelline Masked Weaver (A# 954): [pres 27D] Marsabit NR, 11/12/02, LBo, MKa.

Little Weaver (A# 957): [pres 50D] Mpala Ranch, Laikipia, 2001-2002, DoO.

Black-necked Weaver (A# 963): [pres 50D] Mpala Ranch, Laikipia, 2001-2002, DoO.

Paradise Whydah (A# 1010): [pres 75B] Endashant swamp, west of Ngong Hills, 18/6/02, ISH, SP.

Purple Indigobird (A# 1020): [pres 89C] Ngulia lodge, Tsavo West, 28/11/02, NgRG – several ringed.

Blue-capped Cordon-bleu (A# 1025): [pres 50D] Mpala Ranch, Laikipia, 2001-2002, DoO.

Black-crowned Waxbill (A# 1036): [pres 61D] Trans Mara forest, 8/12/2001, SP, ISH, BdB.

Somali Golden-breasted Bunting (A# 1051): [pres 75D] Olepolos area, Magadi road, 28/12/02, BF, BdB – a part of Magadi road just creeps into the little visited square 75D.

Palaearctic species

Common Teal: One male on lakeshore near Hippo Camp, Naivasha, 19/1/02, WBC.

** **Short-toed Snake-Eagle:** An immature bird on the Musiara Plain, Masai Mara, 2/12/02, BF.

** **Levant Sparrowhawk (A# 111):** [pres 48A] One adult male flying west in an area between Alupe and Malaba, 15/04/02, ISH, BdB, SP.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk (A# 106): [pres 74A] One bird east of Narok, 28/10/02, BF; one female at Sabaringo Valley, Masai Mara NR, 30/10/02, BF.

Long-legged Buzzard (A# 118): [post pres 62C] One bird flying above Mt. Longonot, 10/10/02, MV; [pres 76A] Blue Posts Hotel, Thika, 26/11/02, BF; [press 89C] one dark morph bird over Ngulia lodge, Tsavo West NP, 8/12/02, ISH.

Booted Eagle (A# 124): [pres 51D] One light morph bird north of Isiolo, 30/06/02, ISH – a strange date for this species that may represent birds coming from the South African population; [pres 27D] Marsabit NR, 11/12/02, LBo, MKa.

Lesser Spotted Eagle: Nairobi NP, 30/11/01, SP, BdB.

Greater Spotted Eagle (A# 128): [pres 88C] Amboseli NP, 7-20/12/2001, SW, DB; one adult bird in Lake Nakuru NP, 26/10/02, BF; adult flying west over Masai gate, Nairobi NP, 14/12/02, BF, BdB, ISH.

Eurasian Honey Buzzard (A# 137): [pres51D] One bird over Isiolo, 27/10/02, BF; [pres 27D] Marsabit NR, 11/12/02, LBo, MKa.

** **Barbary Falcon (A# 144):** [pres 50A] Immature bird hunting at the area of Lake Baringo Club, 29/11/02, BF.

** **Red-footed Falcon (A# 149):** [pres 74A] Two female/ imm over the Sabaringo Valley, Masai Mara, 30/10/02, BF.

Eleonora's Falcon (A# 155): [pres 76C] A dark morph individual just after the turn to Machakos on the main Mombasa road, 6/12/02, ISH; One dark morph immature over Loresho, Nairobi, 25/10/02, BdB.

Sooty Falcon (A# 156): [pres 50C] Thompson's Falls, Nyahururu, 9/4/02 EM, LBl, IW, JWa.

Corncrake (A# 192): [pres 50D] Mpala Ranch, Laikipia, 2001-2002, DoO.

Pacific Golden Plover: Sabaki River Mouth, Malindi, 27/12/01, CJ, BdB.

Temminck's Stint (A# 240): [pres 61B] One bird at Mogotio, 30/11/02, BF; one bird on Sukari dam, near Peponi School, 2/11/02, ISH, GB, TH.; one on lakeshore near Hippo Camp, Naivasha, 19/01/02, WBC.

Pectoral Sandpiper (A# 242): [pres 75B] Athi Basin dam, Nairobi NP, 7/4/02, BF, R&AB – the third record for Kenya, a spectacular find!

** **Dunlin (A# 244):** [post pres 62A] A bird in summer plumage in Nakuru NP, 2/07/02, SE – the bird was seen again later on the 22nd and 23rd of July by the same observer.

Common Snipe (A# 249): [pres 61B] marsh near St. Andrew's School, Turi, 7/12/2001, SP, ISH, BdB.

Green Sandpiper (A# 262): [post pres 61B] Molo grasslands, 7/12/2001, SP, ISH, BdB.

Eurasian Thick-knee (Stone Curlew): Twenty birds, outside the Irinito gate (off the pipeline road) in Amboseli NP, 25/11/02, BF, MO.

Red-necked Phalarope: Four birds in Gongoni Salt ponds, north of Malindi, 6/10/02, BF, CJ, BdB, SP, ISH – might represent

the largest ever group in Kenya.

Heuglin's Gull (A# 299): [pres 75B] One 2nd year bird in Athi Basin dam, Nairobi NP, 20/04/02, BF, BdB - this gull is only rarely recorded inland.

**** Arctic Tern (A# –):** [pres 103A] One adult in summer plumage at the Sabaki River mouth, 6/07/02, JB – if accepted, will be a great addition to the East African list!!!

Common House Martin (A# 563): [pres 75D] Olepolos area, Magadi road, 28/12/02, BF, BdB – a part of Magadi road just creeps into the little visited square 75D.

Black-eared Wheatear: One male in Baringo, 29/11/02, BF.

Rufous Bush Chat (A# 658): [pres 75C] Oltepesi, 10/2/02, SP, BC, GE, ISH, BdB.

River Warbler (A# 688): [pres 27D] Marsabit NR, 11/12/02, LBo, MKa – the northernmost record in Kenya.

Olivaceous Warbler (A# 698): [pres 50D] Mpala Ranch, Laikipia, 2001-2002, DoO.

Upcher's Warbler (A# 699): [pres 50D] Mpala Ranch, Laikipia, 2001-2002, DoO.

Common Whitethroat (A# 706): [pres 50D] Mpala Ranch, Laikipia, 2001-2002, DoO.

Garden Warbler (A# 707): [pres 27D] Marsabit NR, 11/12/02, LBo, MKa.

Blackcap (A# 708): [pres 27D] Marsabit NR, 11/12/02, LBo, MKa.

Semi-collared Flycatcher, Mount Elgon, 30/03/02, BdB.

White Wagtail (A# 832): [pres 75D] Olepolos area, Magadi road, 28/12/02, BF, BdB.

House Sparrow (A# 992): [pres 74C] Keekorok lodge, Masai Mara, 23/5/2001, KdJ, BdB; [pres 51C] El Karama Ranch, Laikipia, 31/5/02, IG – the northernmost record so far!

Ortolan Bunting (A# 1049): [pres 89C] One bird at Ngulia lodge, and another individual thirty kilometres away towards Mtito Gate, Tsavo West NP, 22-23/11/02, BF.

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CORRECTIONS for *Kenya Birds* Volume 9

The following records were NOT NEW for their Atlas square. They are, however, still valid records.

Afrotropicals

Long-tailed Cormorant, [pres 88B] Kibwezi Forest, Umani springs, 9-11/02/01, BdB.

African Green Ibis, [pres 62D] Kieni Forest, 21/05/00, NKPL.

Spur-Winged Goose, [pres 103A] Sabaki River mouth, 29/12/00, PK, ET.

Banded Snake-Eagle, [pres 52C] Meru NP, 5-6/5/00, BF.

Crested Guineafowl, [pres 48D] Kakamaga Forest, Bunyagu, 24/8/01, GE, SP, BdB.

Red-fronted Parrot, [pres 62B] Aberdare Country Club, 15-16/09/01, P&KP, P&RH.

Red-throated Wryneck, [pres 62D] Njurui, Murungaru, 15/7/00, AMw, GN, JWT.

Montane Oriole, [pres 62D] Kieni Forest, 21/5/00, NKPL.

Ashy Flycatcher, [pres 88B] Kibwezi Forest, Umani Springs, 9-11/2/01, BdB.

Grassland Pipit, [pres 103A] Sabaki River mouth, Malindi, 29/12/00, PK, ET.

Rosy-breasted Longclaw, [pres 88C] Amboseli NP, 05/01, DR.

Purple Starling, [pres 48A] Alupe, 3/6/01, BF.

Waller's Starling, [pres 62D] Kieni Forest, 21/5/00, NKPL.

Feral Lovebird, [pres 75D] Athi Plains – is NOT 75D, but 75B, and therefore not new.

Mottled Swift, [pres 75B] Gatamaiyu Forest, Kimende –is NOT 75B but 62D, and therefore not new.

Bush Pipit, [pres 75C] Endashant Swamp, Ngong – is NOT 75C, but 75B and therefore not new.

World Bird Watch 1999

Yellow-billed Egret, [pres 88B] Umani Springs Camp, Kibwezi, 3/10/99, HE, RM, P&RH, P&KP.

Madagascar Bee-eater, [pres 88B] Kilalinda to Mtito Andei, 2/10/99, AM, Ki, MM. – should be [**post** pres 88B]

Yellow-bellied Greenbul, [pres 52C] Meru NP, 2/10/99, JJ, MMa.

Chestnut Weaver, [pres 49C] Mugedu Mugo, 3/10/99, BB, BL, KM, BS.

Spotted Creeper, [pres 37A] Cherangani Hills - is NOT Cherangani Hills but Marich Pass (37C), and therefore not new.

Palaearctic Migrants

Eurasian Marsh Harrier, [pres 61A] Muhuroni junction, 27/05/01, BF – still a very unusual date for the species.

Ruff, [pres 75D] Athi Plains – is NOT 75D, but 75B, and therefore not new.

Red-throated Pipit, [pres 75D] Athi Plains – is NOT 75D, but 75B, and thus not new.

Changes

Eurasian Nightjar should be in PALEARCTIC MIGRANTS.

Common Squacco Heron should be in AFROTROPICAL RECORDS.

Withdrawn (incorrect records):

Black-faced Sandgrouse, Mugedu Mugo, 3/10/99, BB, BL, KM, BS.

Emerald-spotted Wood-Dove, Lake Kanyaboli, Kadenge, 2/10/99, NN, SG, JM.

NOTICE BOARD

World Bird Watch 4-5 October 2003 – Plan to Participate!

Nature Kenya is a member of the global Partnership of conservation organisations called BirdLife International. These Partners work closely together to conserve birds, their habitats, and global biological diversity, working with people towards the sustainable use of natural resources. The idea of uniting with a single birdwatching event gave rise to BirdLife's first ever World Birdwatch in 1993.

Since then, there has been a World Birdwatch on the first weekend in October every two years. BirdLife Partners in Europe also run European Birdwatch annually, and in the Americas, the BirdLife network holds bird and nature events during October, called "Festival Mundial de las Aves". This inspired BirdLife to run World Bird Festival in 2001, attracting well over 300,000 people to more than 1,450 events in 88 countries – the largest global celebration of birds ever.

In Kenya, large numbers of birders in teams fan out across the country to tick off the highest number of species in a locality over the 48 hours of World Birdwatch weekend. It is exhausting, competitive and fun. It also collects data on bird occurrence and distribution.

This year, we want to involve the public and draw people's attention to birds and their environment. We plan to produce a leaflet with 30 common birds found in the towns, highlands and coast, to give people a chance to identify the birds they see every day. On World Birdwatch weekend they can tick the birds they observe and send the list to Nature Kenya. Lists will entered in a draw for a prize.

If you wish to take part, sponsor a team or help distribute leaflets, please visit the Nature Kenya office or drop us a line at <office@naturekenya.org>

BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat now in Nairobi!

We welcome Dr Hazell Thompson and his team of Julius Arinaitwe, Maaike Manten, Edith Onyango, Antoinette Otieno and Samuel Njoroge. Contacts are phone Nairobi 862246 or 803225, e-mail <birdlife@birdlife.or.ke>

Kenya Birds

Kenya Birds is looking for articles on:

- Choosing plants that attract birds
- How to identify a family of birds
- Building a bird bath or feeder
- Good birding spots (Birding in...)

If you have that skill or knowledge, please share it with us. Not all articles in hand could be published in this issue; some will appear in *Kenya Birds* 11. Thank you all for your contributions!

A matter of style: *Kenya Birds* uses the English bird names in the green *Check-list of the Birds of Kenya*, Third Edition, EANHS, 1996. This checklist is available at Ksh.100/- at the Nature Kenya office (for overseas orders, see www.naturekenya.org). Scientific names are normally only included for birds not in the checklist, or where there might otherwise be some confusion.

Fleur Ng'weno, Editor
<fleur@africaonline.co.ke>

Photo Gallery

from top left

***1. Senegal Thick-knee**. Note the lack of a white bar below the dark line bordering the grey wing panel; the whitish supercilium and the heavy bill. Photo by* Rafi Kfir *at Lake Baringo on 19.08.02.*

*2. A juvenile **Greater Spotted Eagle** shows why it is called "spotted". Photo by* Itai Shanni *at Lake Nakuru N.P., early January 2003.*

*3. **Brown-chested Alethe**, photographed on 18.01.03 in Kakamega Forest by* Itai Shanni.

*4.The **Quail-Finch** is one of these birds that you always see when it is too late to have a long look! This individual was pictured by* Itai Shanni, *when it came down to drink at Athi Basin Dam, Nairobi N.P., on 25.02.03.*

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Mystery Bird Photo Challenge

Use your identification skills to win a prize!

Three mystery bird photos will be published in each issue of Kenya Birds. *What species are they? Send Nature Kenya the answer within three months of publication. What the birds are and why will be explained in the following issue of* Kenya Birds.

Rules

The winner will be the first participant to score 6 consecutive correct answers. That is, the winner is the first person to correctly identify the mystery birds in two issues of Kenya Birds.

Your answer must include:

- *the bird's English name*
- *the bird's scientific (Latin) name*
- *the number on the photo*

Send your answer to office@naturekenya.org or to Nature Kenya, P.O. Box 44486, GPO 00100 Nairobi clearly marked "Mystery Bird Photo Challenge".

All entries for this issue of Kenya Birds *must be submitted before the end of July 2003.*

The challenge is open to all (except for members of the Bird Committee and staff and volunteers at Nature Kenya or the Department of Ornithology, National Museums of Kenya).

Prize

Set of 4 checklists; winners' names will be published in Kenya Birds.

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