

East African Rarities Committee Report for 2017

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

The East African Rarities Committee assesses records of new and very rare birds occurring in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. This includes up to the fifth record of any species from each of the five countries. Sightings of species for which there are fewer than five records for a country should be submitted to the EARC Secretary, Nigel Hunter, P.O. Box 24803, Karen 00502, Nairobi, Kenya; Email: nigelhunter@timbale.org. Please contact the Secretary to obtain clarification of whether a record requires a submission and for guidance on what details to include in the submission. Past records of rare species are also sought in order to bring the EARC database up to date. Nomenclature follows the *Checklist of the Birds of Kenya* 4th edition (Bird Committee 2009) unless stated otherwise.

Since the Committee's last report published in 2017 (*Scopus* 37(2): 46–48) the following records have been accepted:

Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Second record for Kenya. One was seen and well photographed in Amboseli National Park on 28 November 2016 (W. Ole Kasaine; Fig. 1). This species is sometimes called the Great Bittern, or just Bittern but del Hoyo & Collar (2014), Dickinson & Remsen (2013) and Gill & Donsker (2018) all call it the Eurasian Bittern. The first Kenya record was from Lake Baringo on 22 December 1994 (Fisher & Hunter 2014).



Figure 1. Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* (photo: W. Ole Kasaine).



Figure 2. Black Kite *Milvus m. migrans* x *M. m. lineatus* intergrade (photo: A. Scott Kennedy).

Black Kite *Milvus m. migrans* x *M. migrans lineatus* intergrade ('Eastern Black Kite')

First, second and third records for Kenya. The first one was seen and photographed over Nairobi National Park on 8 January 2017 (B. Finch). The second was seen and photographed over Mara Conservancy (Maasai Mara) on 13 March 2017, and the third over Oloololo Escarpment (Angama Mara) on 14 March 2017 (A. Scott Kennedy). These three records were reviewed and accepted by Dick Forsman, an independent expert familiar with this 'intergrade' and its recent expansion into Africa.

Oriental Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

First record for Tanzania and second for the East African region. One was seen and photographed in flight over Arusha National Park on 10 April 2017 (T.A. Gous; Fig. 3). The report was reviewed and accepted by Dick Forsman, an independent expert familiar with this species. [Crested Honey Buzzard is the Gill & Donsker (2018) name whereas Dickinson & Remsen (2013) and del Hoyo & Collar (2014) call it the Oriental Honey Buzzard.]



Figure 3. Oriental Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* (photos: Tertius Gous).

Heuglin's Courser *Rhinoptilus cinctus*

Third record for Uganda. Two birds were observed 25 km north of Moroto Town on 4 September 2011, with a description provided (R. Skeen and M. Opige).

Pallas's Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*

Second record for Uganda. A single bird was observed and photographed at Lake Munyanyange, Queen Elizabeth National Park on 18 January 2017 (R. Skeen). [Called *Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus* by both Dickinson & Remsen (2013) and Gill & Donsker (2018); Dickinson & Remsen (2013) give the name Great Black-headed Gull as an alternative. del Hoyo & Collar (2014) call it *Larus ichthyaetus*.]

Thick-billed Cuckoo *Pachyoccyx audeberti*

Third and fourth records for Uganda. The third record was one observed and photographed at the Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary on 1 February 2015 (C. Wanyama and Dr M. Zieger). The fourth record was one observed (and its distinctive call heard) and photographed in the vicinity of Katuuso Primary School, Mpigi on several occasions between February and May 2017 (S. Clark).

Black-collared Barbet *Lybius torquatus*

Fourth record for Uganda. Two birds were observed and photographed at Lake Mburu National Park on 17 January 2017 (R. Skeen, J. Mirembe and M. Matisiko).

Southern Black Tit *Melaniparus niger*

New for Tanzania. A detailed submission with photographs taken in September 2016 demonstrates conclusively that this species does occur in southeast Tanzania and that good records of this species have been wrongly assigned to White-winged Black Tit *M. leucomelas* (N.E. Baker and the late E.M. Baker).

Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica*

Fourth record for Kenya. Adult male observed and photographed in Tsavo West National Park on 6 January 2011 (W. Ole Kasaine).

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti*

Third record for Kenya. Adult male in winter plumage observed in Nairobi National Park on 17 November 2016. Description provided (B. Finch, N. Hunter and J. James).

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Third and fourth records for Kenya. Two separate birds were observed at the same location in the Kenya Forest Service Compound at Kakamega Forest on 29 and 30 March 2017. A detailed description and several photographs were provided (J. Bradley, N. Hentze and A. Kilpin; Fig. 4; *Scopus* 32(2): 19–20).



Figure 4. Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* (photo: A. Kilpin).



Figure 5. Striped Pipit *Anthus lineiventris* (photo: S. Clark).

Shining Sunbird *Cinnyris habessinicus*

Third record for Uganda. A male was observed 20 km north of Moroto Town on 4 September 2011, with a description provided (R. Skeen and M. Opige).

Bush Petronia *Petronia dentata*

Fourth record for Uganda. A female observed and photographed at Kidepo National Park on 23 July 2017 (D. Hoddinott).

Cut-throat Finch *Amadina fasciata*

Second, third and fourth records for Uganda. The second record involved two males and one female at Kidepo National Park on 25 April 2011 (R. and J. Skeen). The third record involved one male and two females at Irriri, Karamoja on 24 October 2011 (R. Skeen and M. Opige). The fourth record was a sighting of some 20 birds including males at Kidepo National Park on 23 July 2017 (D. Hoddinott). All three records included good descriptions.

Eastern Paradise Whydah *Vidua paradisaea*

Third record for Rwanda but with an earlier date than the two records included in our previous report. This record is of three birds, including one photographed male, which were observed at Mashoza Forest Patch, Ngoma District on 11 January 2014 (A. Yates, T. Majanen and C. Nsabagasani).

Steel-blue Whydah *Vidua hypocherina*

Second and third record for Uganda. The second record was one observed 20 km north of Moroto Town on 5 September 2011, with a description provided (R. Skeen and M. Opige). The third record was one observed and photographed south of Kaabong on 24 July 2017 (D. Hoddinott).

Striped Pipit *Anthus lineiventris*

First and second record for Uganda. The first was of two birds observed and photographed at Mihingo Lodge, in western Uganda on 13 November 2016 (S. Clark). The second record was a single bird observed and photographed at Rwakobo Rock Lodge, in western Uganda on 8 May 2017 (Fig. 5, S. Clark).

Southern Citril *Crithagra hyposticta*

New for Uganda. Up to eight birds were observed and photographed at Sipi River Lodge, Mount Elgon on 7 January 2017 and a further pair observed at the Research Centre, Mount Elgon National Park on 8 January 2017. Good descriptive features distinguishing this species from the Western Citril *C. frontalis* were provided (S. Clark). Subsequent to this record, three further records (R. Skeen), including photographs, from the same Sipi Falls area of Mount Elgon, with earlier dates of 4–6 April 2010, 19–20 April 2014 and 3–5 October 2015, were submitted and accepted.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

First record for Tanzania. Observed and photographed at Seronera Wildlife Lodge, Serengeti on 12 October 2012 (T. Stevenson).

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

Striped Crake *Aenigmatolimnas marginalis* at Doho Rice Scheme, Mbale, Uganda on 12 January 2011.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* at Lutembe Lagoon, Lake Victoria, Uganda on 31 October 2009.

Thick-billed Cuckoo *Pachycoccyx audeberti* in Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda on 31 January 2014.

Tiny Cisticola *Cisticola nanus* in Kidepo National Park, Uganda on 23/24 July 2017.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* at South Nandi Forest, Kenya on 29/30 March 2017.

Cameroon Indigobird *Vidua camerunensis* near Ishasha, Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda on 21 December 2016. [This is the English name used by Gill & Donsker (2018) and del Hoyo & Collar (2016), although Dickinson & Remsen (2013) use Fonio Indigobird as their first preference, with Cameroon Indigobird as an alternative.]

Acknowledgements

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Letter to the Editor

Checklist confusion

As all readers will surely know, there is much confusion these days about the names birds are given – both English and scientific – and the order in which they are listed (e.g., Turner 2018). There are four ‘competing’ lists: Howard & Moore (Dickinson & Remsen 2013, Dickinson & Christidis 2014), Clements (Clements *et al.* 2017), the IOC World Bird List (Gill & Donsker 2018), and the HBW-BirdLife illustrated checklist (del Hoyo & Collar 2014, 2016). A useful account of the situation and an explanation of why the lists vary in the way they do is given by Collar (2018).

We suspect that most people believe that the IOC list has the authority of the International Ornithological Congress behind it, and that ‘IOC’ stands for that body. The purpose of this letter is to clarify the current meaning of ‘IOC’ in the list’s title. ‘IOC’ originally referred to the International Ornithological Congress; this body initiated the process of creating a list of English names of the world’s birds, headed by Frank Gill who, with colleagues, first published the IOC list in 2006 (Gill & Wright 2006) in book form. Soon after it became available on line as an Excel file. The printed version is no longer available but online versions continue to appear twice a year, the latest being http://www.worldbirdnames.org/master_ioc_list_v8.2.xlsx of June 2018.

The first sentence under the Home and Welcome headings of the IOC World Bird List website is, “The IOC World Bird List is an open access resource of the international community of ornithologists.” In other words, ‘IOC’ should really be ‘ioc’ since the ‘international community of ornithologists’ has no right to capital letter status!

The IOC has now become the IOU, the International Ornithological Union, and the IOU makes clear in its website that it takes no position in supporting *any* list, and that, specifically, the *IOC World Bird List* is not under the Union’s authority. However, it is sponsoring a round table discussion at the 27th International Ornithological