

The Rock Pratincole *Glareola nuchalis* in Tanzania: the first breeding record, a summary of past records and new distributional data

The Rock Pratincole *Glareola nuchalis* is a resident and intra-African migrant in central and western Africa with Tanzania on the eastern fringe of the population (Delany *et al.* 2009). Britton (1980) mentions only Siguri Falls in the Selous Game Reserve for Tanzania and while suggesting that it breeds there, no breeding records were admitted in Brown & Britton (1980). Over the last three decades, a number of new observations—including the first breeding record—of this species have been made in Tanzania. These records are shown in Figure 1, and summarised briefly below as numbered.

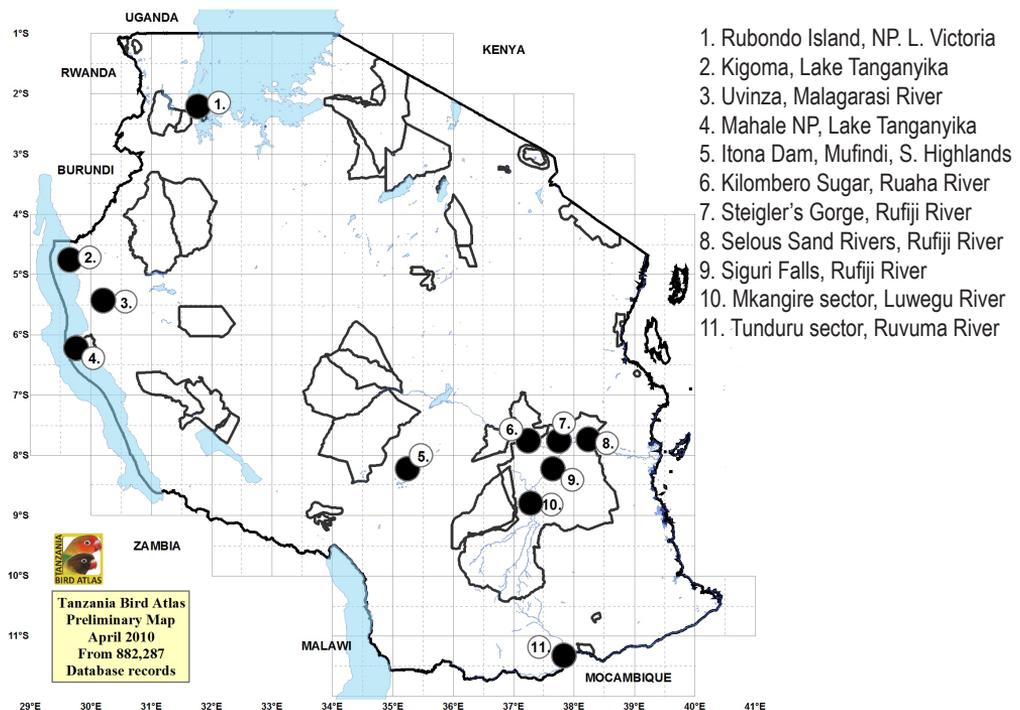


Figure 1. Map showing all Tanzanian records of Rock Pratincole *Glareola nuchalis*. Refer to text for further details about each of the 11 locations where the species was observed.

1. In January 1995 I located three separate birds on rocks off the NW corner of Rubondo National Park in Lake Victoria at 2° 13' 13" S, 31° 43' 54" E (Baker 1997). Although well known from the Ugandan sector of the lake (Britton 1980), these were the first records from Tanzanian waters and while there have been no new records since, these outlying rocks are not a well-visited area on Rubondo Island.
2. Archer (1994) located two birds off-shore on Lake Tanganyika in Kigoma Bay on 20 September 1993.

3. On 6 October 1992 I located a sitting bird on rocks on the eastern, upstream, side of the road bridge crossing the Malagarasi River at Uvinza in western Tanzania at $5^{\circ} 07' 06''$ S, $35^{\circ} 22' 48''$ E at an altitude of 980 m. I swam out to the rocks and disturbed the sitting bird from two eggs laid on the bare rock. This was the *first confirmed breeding record* for this bird from Tanzania and a new locality record.
4. Archer (1994) saw a single bird in Mahale National Park on 23 September 1993. Ben Jackson (*pers. comm.*) also recorded this species in Mahale NP in September 2000.
5. On 5 December 2008 Liz Baker photographed an immature bird (Fig. 2) at Itona Lower Dam ($8^{\circ} 28' 27''$ S, $35^{\circ} 24' 23''$ E) in Mufindi District of the Southern Highlands at an altitude of 1900 m. This record, quite far from any known suitable breeding habitat, could also suggest extensive post-breeding dispersal.



Figure 2. An immature Rock Pratincole *Glareola nuchalis* at Itona Lower Dam, Mufindi District, Southern Highlands (photograph: Liz Baker).

6. In March and September 2003 and again in January 2005 Cindy Coster (*pers. comm.*) found "low numbers" on the Ruaha River alongside Kilombero Sugar Estate east of the road bridge below Kidatu Dam close to $7^{\circ} 48' S$, $36^{\circ} 59' E$.
7. Records from the Selous Game Reserve include those made in December 2002 by Jo Anderson (*pers. comm.*) of a single bird at Steigler's Gorge on the Rufiji River ($\sim 7^{\circ} 48' S$, $37^{\circ} 51' E$).
8. In late September 2003, Paul Oliver (*pers. comm.*) also recorded a single bird close to the Selous Sand Rivers tourist camp on the Rufiji River downstream of Steigler's Gorge.
9. Britton (1980) mentioned Siguri Falls in the Selous Game Reserve for Tanzania as the only confirmed locality for this species in Tanzania at the time, also suggesting that it might breed there although this was not reflected in Brown & Britton (1980).

10. Neil Stronach (*pers. comm.*) located birds probably breeding on the Luwegu River within the Mkangira sector of the Selous GR in September 1992. This site is some 70 km upstream (south) of the Siguri Falls and may constitute a second breeding site along this river.
11. Brooke (1984) gives details of an undated specimen from the Tunduru sector of the Ruvuma River that was probably taken in November 1936. This remains the only record from this river, most likely due to the general paucity of data from this part of Tanzania.

In summary the Rock Pratincole has a more extensive range in Tanzania than suggested from both old and recent literature. There can be no doubt that the paucity of records is due to the remoteness of suitable habitat and the general lack of observers in Tanzania. The lengthy shorelines of lakes Victoria and Tanganyika provide much suitable habitat, even where these shores are populated by fishermen. The Malagarasi, Ruvuma and Rufiji river systems are other extensive potential sites, but are seldom visited by bird watchers. There are records from the Malawi shoreline of Lake Nyasa (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2006) so it is likely that this species also occurs in Tanzanian waters on this lake, the shoreline of which remains largely ornithologically unknown.

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