

## The first confirmed breeding record and new distribution data for Böhm's Flycatcher *Myopornis boehmi* in Tanzania

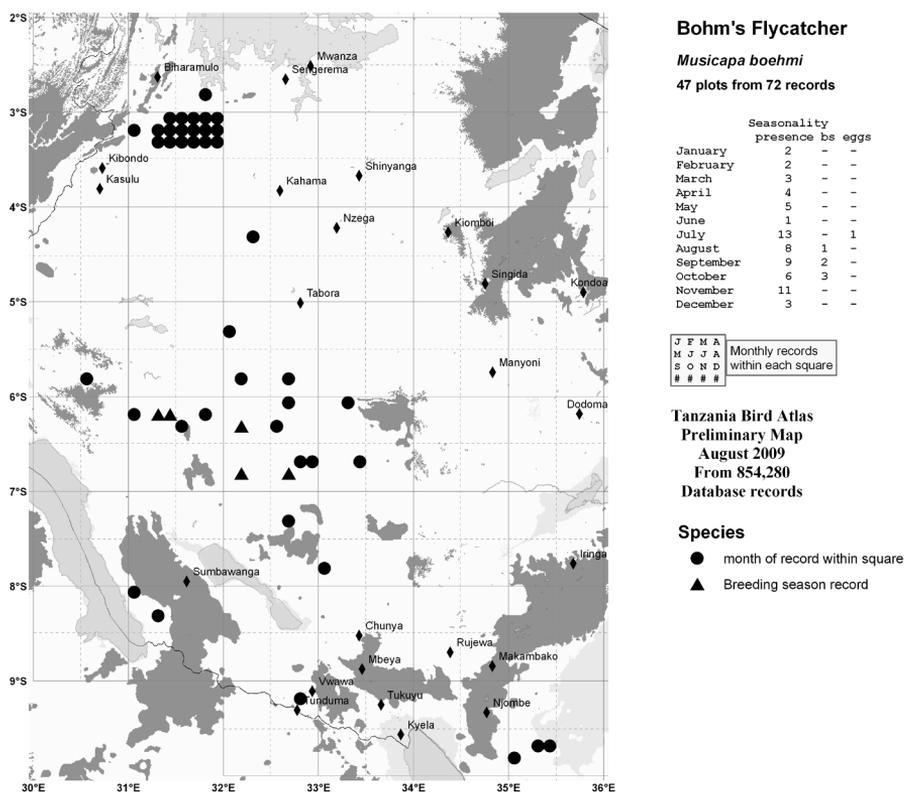
On 17 November 2007 during fieldwork for the Tanzania Birds Atlas in western Tanzania, we were camped at the only known site for Chestnut-mantled Sparrow Weaver *Plocepasser rufoscapulatus*, a recent addition to the country avifauna (Norman 2007). After finding the weaver and while searching for others, GAM disturbed a Böhm's' Flycatcher *Myopornis boehmi* from an unidentified weaver nest. The nest was watched for several minutes and it was clear that the flycatcher was carrying food to feed young or a sitting adult. The nest was about 5 m high on the end of a thin downward branch and could not be reached to check the contents.

Böhm's Flycatcher is known to use the nests of weavers, and at least three species have been reported on: Chestnut-mantled Sparrow Weaver, the range-restricted Olive-headed Weaver *Ploceus olivaceiceps* and the widespread and common Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes melanotis* (Urban *et al.* 1997, Dowsett *et al.* 2008). However, the account in Britton (1980) for this species only states that "The few East African records of this *miombo* endemic are from the Tabora Region of W Tanzania at 5-7°S."

The Tanzania Bird Atlas currently holds 72 records for this species for all months of the year, but only seven breeding season records and only this single confirmed nest record described above (Fig. 1). In western Tanzania the range can now be described as occurring from 2.8 to 9.4° S, and from approximately 30.5 to 33.5° E, thus encompassing a block of more or less contiguous broad-leaved *miombo* woodland covering some 195 000 km<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 1). It therefore appears likely that this bird is far more widespread than shown on the map, occurring at low densities throughout, but it must be emphasised that it is quiet and retiring, and not at all as active as most flycatchers. Indeed, the records to the southeast of Njombe are from the vicinity of Madaba, where several birdwatchers were temporary residents for three years (1992-95) in a road camp built into natural *miombo* habitat. That there are only seven records from this site is testament to the elusiveness of this bird and/or its extremely low density.

In Zambia, Böhm's Flycatcher occurs throughout the *miombo* belt in 182 (60%) of atlas squares, where it is stated to have a breeding season peak in September and October (Dowsett *et al.* 2008). The few breeding season records from Tanzania suggest a similar breeding season (Fig. 1).

Lastly, not shown on the map is a recently submitted record from the middle reaches of the Wami River at approximately 6.3° S and 37.9° E. If confirmed this will be a new and exciting locality for this species and raises the possibility of it occurring elsewhere in the eastern *miombo*.



**Figure 1.** Preliminary distribution map of Böhm's Flycatcher *Myopornis boehmi* in Tanzania.

## References

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**Neil E. Baker and G. A. Mbilinyi**

*Tanzania Bird Atlas, P.O. Box 1605, Iringa, Tanzania. Email: tzbirdatlas@yahoo.co.uk*

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