

First record of Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* for Tanzania

On 11 January 2010, Vicki Kennedy and I visited Arusha National Park with local driver/guide Basil Kessey. We entered the park mid-morning and, after driving around the main crater, took lunch by the Momella Lakes. Around 15:00, we followed the tracks by the southwest corner of the lakes where I spotted a small, grey-brown, warbler-like bird take off from the ground and land in a small tree beside the track. The bird immediately reminded me of Eurasian Wryneck, so I was keen to get some images of the bird. I had seen numerous Wrynecks in Europe so was in no doubt about



the identification of the bird but was keen to confirm it was not a Red-throated Wryneck *Jynx ruficollis*, which was a more likely proposition in this part of the world. The pale buff throat showing subtle barring was enough for me to confirm it was indeed a Eurasian Wryneck. I grabbed the camera and took a few record shots of the bird (regrettably out of focus as on wrong settings), just before it took off and flew across the track and into some taller trees some 30m away, which was a considerable distance from the designated track. We agreed not to stay to search for the bird any longer.

Description

The size of a large *Sylvia* warbler, the greyish-brown bird showed a wide tail as it flew from the ground. When perched, the bird showed a dark streak through the eye, pale throat with fine barring. The back was mostly grey with two bold dark streaks, the belly and vent were pale and the brown flight feathers showed obvious barring. The bird was silent.

Once the bird had flown, I checked Stevenson & Fanshawe (2002) who write of the species "very scarce Palearctic visitor". The corresponding distribution map shows no coverage or vagrant records for Tanzania. As soon as I had phone reception, I called Neil Baker in Iringa to report my observation whereby he confirmed my suspicion that it was indeed the first record for the species in Tanzania (Fisher & Hunter 2014). My observation was made at 3°14' S, 37°00' E.

References

- FISHER, D. & HUNTER, N. 2014. East African Rarities Committee Report 2010–2013. *Scopus* 33: 87–91.
- STEVENSON, T. & FANSHAWE, J. 2002. *Birds of East Africa*. London: T. & A.D. Poyser Ltd.

Adam Scott Kennedy

Email: adamscottkennedy@gmail.com

Editors' note: A second photographic record for Tanzania was obtained at Kitumbeine (2°44' S, 36°16' E), northwest of Arusha on 20 February 2019 by Kevin Mlay (D.A. Turner, *in litt.*). The most southerly African record we can trace is of one photographed at Nguuni, near Mombasa, Kenya (4°00' S, 39°42' E) on 20 April 2012 by Doris Schaule (Pearson, D. & Jackson, C. (2016) *Scopus* 36(1): 31. In addition, two have been ringed by the Ngulia Ringing Group at Ngulia Lodge, Tsavo West National Park (3°00' S, 38°13' E) on 5 January 2000 and 1 December 2003 (G.C. Backhurst, *in litt.*).

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