

A record of Chestnut-capped Flycatcher *Erythrocercus mccallii* from Semuliki National Park, Uganda

While birdwatching in Semuliki Forest National Park, western Uganda, on the morning of 11 June 2019, with Per Holmen and our expert ranger-guide Olibokiriho Justice, we were fortunate to enjoy good views of the sought-after African Piculet *Sasia africana*, a species new to Per and me. No sooner had the bird disappeared into the wooded swamp, Justice drew our attention to some lively, chattering notes coming from directly above us. As we looked up, two birds flew a short distance and



Justice called them out as Chestnut-capped Flycatchers *Erythrocercus mccallii*, another new species for Per and me. We all managed good binocular views and I was able to locate one of the birds through my camera viewfinder even though they were, by now, some distance away. The resulting image clearly shows the plumage characters of this species: orange-chestnut crown and tail, greyish nape and ear coverts, buffy throat and paler

underparts, and olive-brown upperparts, leaving the identification in no doubt. In terms of behaviour, the two birds were quite vocal and, at times, rather hyperactive before remaining quiet for several moments. Tail-wagging, a characteristic of the genus, was witnessed although not as frantically as one might expect.

Having recognized the call so quickly, I assumed that Justice knew these birds well from the site. However, this appears to be a new locality and elevation (700 m) for the species in East Africa and worthy of documentation.

Britton (1980) says of *Erythrocercus mccallii*, "The race *congicus* is reasonably common in the undergrowth, mid-stratum and canopy of forest at Budongo in W Uganda", and Stevenson & Fanshawe (2002) state the altitude of 1100 m at the same location as the only site for the species in the region.

I have since contacted Johnnie Kamugisha and Herbert Byaruhanga, two of Uganda's most experienced birdwatchers, and both are familiar with this flycatcher at Semuliki National Park. Additionally, Herbert has seen the species in forest "between Masindi and Fort Portal" (pers. comm.).

Accordingly, I feel it would not be a surprise to find the Chestnut-capped Flycatcher in suitable habitat between Budongo and Semuliki Forest, and it should be both looked and listened for during future visits to the area.

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References

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