

East African Rarities Committee Report for 2022

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 (or subspecies) from each of the five countries. The committee will also assess records of non-vagrant species that have not been recorded in the region since 2000. Membership of the committee in 2022 comprised Washington Wachira (Chairman), Neil Baker, Nik Borrow, Brian Finch, Colin Jackson, Johnnie Kamugisha, David Moyer, Nigel Redman, Itai Shanni, Roger Skeen, Terry Stevenson and Don Turner. We are grateful to Dick Forsman for his help with the assessment of some of these records.

Sightings of species (or subspecies) 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 nigelhunter74@gmail.com. Lists of species with fewer than five records for each country and the EARC rarity form are available as downloads from the EARC website (www.eararities.org). Please contact the Secretary to obtain clarification of whether a record requires submission and for guidance on what details to include in the submission. Old records of rare species are also sought in order to bring the EARC database up to date.

Category A: Fully accepted species

Crested Francolin *Dendroperdix sephaena*

Fourth and fifth records for Rwanda. The fourth record was a single bird seen and photographed on the northwestern edge of Kirara Plain, Akagera NP, on 27 September 2016 (J.M. Dehling). The fifth record was another single bird seen and photographed on the northwestern edge of Kirara Plain, Akagera NP, on 28 September 2016 (J.M. Dehling). However, this latter sighting was of a bird with a different face pattern which was located some 3.5 km from the previous day's sighting, on the other side of an extensive wetland. These two sightings predate the three previously accepted records by a year.

Vinaceous Dove *Streptopelia vinacea*

First record for Kenya. A single bird was seen, photographed and audio recorded at Oropoi, Turkana County, on 7 May 2022 (A. Hinkle, V. Ikawa, P. Steward, A. Waki, J. Gijsbertsen and A. S. Kennedy).

Plain Nightjar *Caprimulgus inornatus*

First record for Rwanda. A single bird was seen and photographed in Akagera NP on 12 February 2022 (D. Bantlin).

Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oediconemus*

Third record for Tanzania. A single bird was seen and photographed (Fig. 1) at Ndotu, Serengeti NP on 6 December 2021 (S. Hatfield, D. & C. Matson and G. Ndunguru).

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Fifth record for Kenya. A single bird was seen and photographed (Fig. 1) in Amboseli NP on 11 January 2022 (J. Ebr).

Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan*

First record for Tanzania and second record for East Africa. A single bird in full breeding plumage was seen and videoed at Dar es Salaam harbour on 11 July 2022 (J. Ching'anya).

Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Second to fourth records for Tanzania. A minimum of three birds were heard booming and audio recorded at Kiponzelo Wetland, Iringa District, between 8 June 2019 and 25 September 2020 (D. Moyer, T. Chansac, N. Baker and L. Deleyser).



Figure 1. Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus* at Serengeti NP (left: Stratton Hatfield), and Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* at Amboseli NP (right: Jan Ebr).

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*

Second record for Tanzania. A single bird was caught on a fishing lure, then brought on board the fishing vessel, photographed and released at sea off Pemba Island on 28 November 2021 (M. Sahed and M. Eager).

Secretarybird *Sagittarius serpentarius*

Fifth record for Rwanda. A single bird was seen and photographed on the southern end of Kirara Plain, Akagera NP, on 16 March 2017 (J.M. Dehling).

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

Third and fourth records for Kenya. The third record was a single bird seen and photographed in Tsavo East NP (near Satao camp) on 4 January 2022 (J. Ebr). The fourth record was also a single bird (and possibly the same individual) seen and photographed some seven weeks later between Sala Gate and Aruba Lodge, Tsavo East NP, on 20 February 2022 (N. Redman, G. Valentine and D. Danckwerts).

Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini*

First record for Tanzania. A single bird was seen and photographed at Kagera Sugar Estates, Missenyi District, on 11 November 2021 (C. Davis and S. Henderson).

Greater Spotted Eagle *Clanga clanga*

Second record for Uganda. A single bird was seen and photographed in Murchison Falls NP on 14 February 2022 (V. Sthamer).

Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*

First record for Uganda. A single bird was seen and photographed (Fig. 2) in Pian Upe GR, Karamoja Province, on 7 February 2022 (V. Sthamer).

Cassin's Hawk Eagle *Aquila africana*

Fifth record for Kenya. A single bird was seen and photographed at Castle Forest gate, Mt Kenya, on 20 November 2021 (T. Olsen).

Abyssinian Owl *Asio abyssinicus*

Fourth record for Rwanda. A single bird was seen and photographed (Fig. 2) at Uwasenkoko Swamp, Nyungwe NP, on 21 November 2019 (G. Vande weghe, J.P. Vande weghe, P. Devillers, J. Terschuren and W. Craig). The subspecies in the region is *graueri*. More detailed information with regard to this species and its occurrence in Rwanda can be found in Vande weghe *et al.* (2021), where *graueri* is treated as a full species.



Figure 2. Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* at Pian Upe GR (left: Volker Sthamer), and Abyssinian Owl *Asio abyssinicus* at Nyungwe NP (right: Gaël Vande weghe).

White-headed Barbet *Lybius leucocephalus*

Second record for Rwanda. A pair was seen and photographed north of Mutumba Hill, Akagera NP, on 16 March 2017 (J.M. Dehling).

Swallow-tailed Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus*

Second record for Kenya, and first record of the subspecies *heuglini*. Three birds were seen and photographed (Fig. 3) at Oropoi, Turkana County, on 3 May 2022 (J. Gijsbertsen, A. S. Kennedy, V. Ikawa, P. Steward, A. Hinkle and A. Waki).

Fox Kestrel *Falco alopex*

Second record for Tanzania. A single bird was seen and photographed at Oldonyo-Sambu, Arumeru District, on 10 February 2022 (T., D. and M. Peterson, A. Alhabesha, G. Thomas, I. Salim Said, H. Dilenga, C. Stephen, and C. and A. Ihayeja).

Shining Sunbird *Cinnyris habessinicus*

Fourth and fifth records for Uganda. A single female was seen and photographed at Oropoi, near Kaabong, Northern Province, on 3 May 2022, and two males and a female were seen and one male photographed (Fig. 3) in the same locality on 7 May 2022 (A. Hinkle, J. Gijsbertsen, A. Waki, A. S. Kennedy, P. Steward and V. Ikawa).

Little Weaver *Ploceus luteolus*

First record for Rwanda. A pair was seen and photographed (Fig. 4) at Akagera NP headquarters, on 6 March 2022 (D. Bantlin).

River Prinia *Prinia fluviatilis*

Third record for Kenya. Two birds were seen, photographed and audio recorded at Lopwaurin, near Nanam village, Turkana County, on 6 May 2022 (A. Hinkle, P. Steward, J. Gijssbertsen and A. Waki).



Figure 3. Left photo: Swallow-tailed Bee-eater *Merops hirundineus* at Oropoi, Kenya (left: Adam Scott Kennedy), and Shining Sunbird *Cinnyris habessinicus* near Oropoi, Uganda (right: Adrian Hinkle).

Ethiopian Swallow *Hirundo aethiopica*

Second to fifth records for Tanzania. The second record was three birds seen and photographed at Tanga on 21 March 2021 (M. Mwaliza). The third to fifth records consisted of several birds seen and photographed at three different sites adjacent to Fish Eagle Point, Boma, Mkinga, north of Tanga, between January and May 2022 (S. Atwell, N. Baker and W. Schroder).

Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata*

Second and third records for Rwanda. The second record was a single bird seen and photographed at Mutumba Hill, Akagera NP, on 7 December 2021 (L. Abbot and J. and G. Deutsch). The third record was a single bird seen and photographed near Mutumba Hill, on 15 March 2022 (G. Vande weghe).

Brown-tailed Rock Chat *Oenanthe scotocerca*

First record for Uganda. A single bird was seen, photographed and audio recorded at Oropoi, near Kaabong, Northern Province, on 7 May 2022 (A. Hinkle, A. Waki and J. Gijssbertsen).

Gosling's Bunting *Emberiza goslingi*

First record for Kenya. Three birds, including a male and female, were seen and photographed (Fig. 4) near Lokichoggio, Turkana County, between 2 and 5 May 2022, all at the same location (V. Ikawa, A. S. Kennedy, P. Steward, J. Gijssbertsen, A. Hinkle and A. Waki). This taxon has in the past been considered to be a subspecies of Cinnamon-breasted Bunting *E. tahapisi* but is now widely regarded as specifically distinct. See Ikawa *et al.* 2023 for further details.



Figure 4. Little Weaver *Ploceus luteolus* at Akagera NP (left: Drew Bantlin), and Gosling's Bunting *Emberiza goslingi* near Lokichoggio (right: Victor Ikawa).

References

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- VANDE WEGHE, G. R., VANDE WEGHE, J. P., DEVILLERS, P. & DEVILLERS-TERSCHUREN, J. 2021. An observation of Grauer's Long-eared Owl, *Asio graueri*, in Nyungwe Forest, Rwanda. *Les Naturalistes Belges* 102(2): 1-24.

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