

East African Rarities Committee Reports for 2023 and 2024

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 2023 and 2024 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, Adam Scott Kennedy and James Bradley for their 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.

Nomenclature follows the *Checklist of the birds of Kenya*, 5th edition, Nairobi: Bird Committee, Nature Kenya, East Africa Natural History Society. Species not in that list follow the International Ornithological Community's world list (Gill, F., Donsker, D. & Rasmussen, P. (Eds). 2024. IOC World Bird List (v14.2). doi : 10.14344/IOC.ML.14.1.)

Year 2023

Category A(i): Fully accepted species

Cape Shoveler *Spatula capensis*

Second record for Tanzania. A single bird was seen and photographed (Fig. 1) at Ngorongoro Crater (Lake Magadi) on 13 September 2023 (I. Kilusu and R. Atkinson).

Chestnut-naped Spurfowl *Pternistis castaneicollis*

Second record for Kenya. Two birds were seen and photographed near Moyale on 1 May 2023 (M. Adamjee, P. Steward, A. Hinkle, V. Ikawa and A. Waki).

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*

Second record for Tanzania. A single bird was seen and photographed at Mwarongo Salt Pans, south of Tanga on 16 January 2023 (L. Mlawiila and N. Baker).

Third record for Tanzania. A single bird was seen and photographed at Maere Salt Pans, south of Tanga on 22 January 2023 (C. Jackson).

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Second record for Uganda. A single bird was seen and photographed (Fig. 1) on the shore of Lake Victoria, near Entebbe on 29 February 2020 (J. Onongo).



Figure 1. Cape Shoveler *Spatula capensis* (left: I. Kilusu), and Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* (right: J. Onongo).

Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei*

Third documented record for Uganda. A single bird was seen and photographed (Fig. 2) at Murchison Falls on 05 February 2022 (J. Onongo).

Fourth documented record for Uganda. Four birds were seen and photographed at Entebbe Bay wetlands on 15 January 2023 (A. Lacroix).

Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus*

First record for Kenya. A single bird seen and photographed 6 km offshore from Watamu on 24 March 2022 (J. Gijssbertsen).

Wilson's Storm-petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*

First record for Tanzania. Several birds seen and photographed (Fig. 2) offshore from Fish Eagle Point (near Tanga) during September 2023 (S. Attwell).



Figure 2. Slender-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus genei* (left: J. Onongo) and Wilson's Storm-petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* (right: S. Attwell).

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

First record for Tanzania. A single bird seen and photographed off Mkinga Mwamba reef (near Tanga) on 17 June 2023 (S. Attwell).

Persian Shearwater *Puffinus persicus*

Treatment of Tropical and Persian Shearwaters as two separate species follows Austin *et al.* 2004. Meanwhile, Bradley *et al.* (2023) provide a review of the status of these two species in Kenya and Tanzania. From their findings, they determined that a bird seen off Watamu, near Malindi on 31 December 1972 represented the first record of Persian Shearwater for Kenya, while specimens collected off Msambweni near Shimoni on 16 March 1976, off Mtwapa Creek, Kilifi on 27 December 1981 and one 'beached' at Diani, Ukunda on 26 February 2019, together with a further sight record off Watamu, near Malindi on 1 March 2022 represented the second, third, fourth and fifth records for Kenya.

The EARC have noted that with five confirmed records, this species is no longer an EARC rarity. Meanwhile, for Tanzania, the 'beached' record south of Pangani in March 2009 represented the first record for Tanzania.

Crested (Oriental) Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

Second record for Tanzania. A single bird was seen and photographed at Arusha on 9 April 2021 (N. Christensen).

Third record for Tanzania. A single bird was seen and photographed in Arusha National Park on 8 November 2022 (D. Gabriel).

Second record for Kenya. A single bird was seen and photographed in Meru National Park on 18 February 2023 (A. Scott Kennedy).

Third record for Kenya. A single bird was seen and photographed at Ol Donyo Sabuk on 10 April 2023 (D. Ogada).

Fourth record for Kenya. A single bird was seen and photographed at Castle Forest Station (Mt Kenya) on 26 August 2023 (W. Wachira).

Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini*

Second record for Tanzania. A single bird seen and photographed at Kitungule Gereza in Kagera Region on 25 November 2022 (M. McIlvenna).

Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes*

Fourth record for Uganda. A single bird was seen and photographed 12 km east of Moroto, Karamoja District on 22 January 2022 (V. Sthamer and S. Hatfield).

Greater Kestrel *Falco rupicoloides*

Second record for Uganda. A single bird was seen and photographed (Fig. 3) in Kidepo National Park on 23 February 2022 (J. Odongo).

Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonora*

Fifth record for Uganda. A single bird was seen and photographed at Rubanda, western Uganda on 3 November 2022 (H. Cotter, S. Davies and S. Ibrahim).

White-breasted Cuckooshrike *Cebilepyris pectoralis*

This species is thought to be at possible risk of extinction in Kenya. Two birds were seen and photographed (Fig. 3) at Kanyakwot, near Kapenguria, West Pokot on 15 September 2023. (J. Omenya).



Figure 3. Greater Kestrel *Falco rupicoloides* (left: J. Odongo), and White-breasted Cuckooshrike *Cebalepyris pectoralis* (right: J. Omenya).

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

Second record for Uganda. A single bird was seen and photographed (Fig. 4) at Kampala on 2 October 2022 (A. Lorand).

Mascarene Martin *Phedina borbonica*

Fifth record for Kenya. Four birds seen and photographed at Marara wetland, Dakatcha, near Malindi on 17 June 2023 (A. Scott Kennedy).

Irania (White-throated Robin) *Irania gutturalis*

First record for Uganda. A single adult female seen and photographed at Tororo on 3 March 2023 (H. Byaruhanga).

Arnot's Chat *Myrmecocichla arnotti*

First record for Kenya. A single bird was seen and photographed (Fig. 4) at Sagala Lodge, near Voi, Taita District, between 29 December 2022 and 2 January 2023 (B. Kanaka and B. Hillier).



Figure 4. Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* (left: A. Lorand), and Arnot's Chat *Myrmecocichla arnotti* (right: B. Kanaka and B. Hillier).

*Category A(ii): Fully accepted subspecies***Tropical Shearwater *Puffinus bailloni nicolae***

A well-prepared specimen sent to AMNH New York by John Williams back in 1963 and identified at the time as *Procellaria* sp. has been critically examined and confirmed as an example of *Puffinus bailloni nicolae* and not the nominate form, as had earlier been assumed (Bradley *et al.* 2023, Turner 2025a).

Bare-faced Go-away-bird *Corythaixoides personatus personatus*

Fourth record for Kenya. Two birds were seen and photographed at Qultipe (west of Moyale) on 2 May 2023 (M. Adamjee, P. Steward, A. Hinkle, V. Ikawa and A. Waki).

*Category F: Fully accepted hybrids***Crested/European Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus / apivorus***

First record for Tanzania. A single bird was seen and photographed at Morogoro on 9 November 2022 (L. Shallom).

Records not accepted

Western Reef Heron *Egretta gularis schistacea*. One near the Ngezi Forest, Pemba Island on 28 October 2018. Photographic evidence submitted deemed inconclusive.

Grey-headed Batis *Batis orientalis*. One west of Moyale on 1 May 2023. Evidence submitted deemed inconclusive.

Year 2024*Category A(i): Fully accepted species.***Black-headed Lapwing *Vanellus tectus***

Second record for Tanzania. Three birds seen and photographed at Kagera Sugar Estate on 18 December 2023 (C. Davis).

Third record for Tanzania. Six birds seen and photographed at Ngorongoro Crater on 17 May 2024 (I. Kilusu).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Second record for Tanzania. A single bird seen and photographed at Dar es Salaam on 20 March 2019 (R. Marais).

Third record for Tanzania. A single bird seen and photographed at Dar es Salaam on 30 December 2023 (R. Marais).

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*

First record for Kenya and the East African Region. A single bird seen and photographed 18km south of Malindi on 8 January 2024 (B. Kanaka and B. Hillier). See Bradley *et al.* 2024a.

Saunders's Tern *Sternula saundersi*

First record for Kenya, and possibly the East African region. A single bird seen and photographed on Manda Island on 7 July 2014 (J. Pitteloud). See also Turner 2025b: 61.

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

Fifth record for Kenya. A single bird seen and photographed near Marsabit on 26 January 2024 (T. Butynski and Y. de Jong).

Beaudouin's Snake Eagle *Circaetus beaudouini*

Third record for Tanzania. A single bird seen and photographed at Kagera Sugar Estate on 7 February 2024 (C. Davis).

Fourth record for Tanzania. A single bird seen and photographed at Kagera Sugar Estate on 16 March 2024 (C. Davis).

Madagascar Harrier *Circus macroscleles*

First record for Tanzania and the East African Region. A single adult bird seen and photographed (Fig. 5) on Zanzibar on 16 August 2024 (M. Blok).



Figure 5. Both photos, Madagascar Harrier *Circus macroscleles* (M. Blok).

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Third record for Tanzania. A single bird seen and photographed in northern Serengeti on 12 December 2023 (M. Mohammed).

Speckle-breasted Woodpecker *Dendropicos poecilolaemus*

First record for Tanzania. A single bird seen and photographed in a swampy area around the Kagera River on 18 June 2024 (F. Atasalan).

Piapiac *Ptilostomus afer*

First record for Tanzania. A single bird seen and photographed at Kagera Sugar Estate on 8 November 2023 (C. Davis).

Second record for Tanzania. Two birds seen and photographed at Kagera Sugar Estate on 27 February 2024 (C. Davis).

Rosy Starling *Pastor roseus*

Third record for Kenya. A single bird seen and photographed in Tsavo West National Park on 10 February 2024 (E. Malamba).

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