

Stuart Keith, Department of Ornithology, American Museum of Natural History,
New York, NY 10024, USA

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Notable records from Chumbe Island, Zanzibar

Chumbe Island (6°17'S, 39°10'E) lies about 12 km SSW of Zanzibar town and less than 30 km from the Tanzanian mainland. The island, roughly 2 km long by ½ km wide, rises only a few metres above the high tide level and consists of old coral rock covered with high-growing dense bush, including a few trees.

The following records coincided with a period of heavy storms associated with a tropical cyclone centred off the north Madagascar coast during mid January 1993.

Eurasian Swift *Apus apus*

On 16 January 1993 at least 2000 Eurasian Swifts were observed passing Chumbe Island travelling in a northerly direction. Most were flying at 20–80 m above the sea against a light monsoon wind blowing steadily from the NNE. Many were seen at close range and from above (by standing on top of a derelict lighthouse). Apart from their whitish throats, all birds seen were uniform brownish-black without any contrast between mantle and wings, which should exclude *A. a. pekinensis*, as well as both the African Black Swift *A. barbatus* and the Pallid Swift *A. pallidus*.

There are very few records of *Apus apus* from Zanzibar. It is not listed by Pakenham (1979), but J. Vincent noted swifts there on 5 October 1936 which he believed to be of this species, while 40–50 over Bawe Island (6°09'S, 39°08'E), Zanzibar on 23 January 1993 were also thought to have been this species (A. L. Archer, pers. comm.).

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

A second winter light morph was first observed passing Chumbe travelling in a northerly direction on 16 January 1993, and it is believed that it was this individual that was later washed ashore on 18 January following a heavy tropical storm. The bird was captured and measurements taken: wing 339, 341 mm; tarsus 52 mm; bill 37 mm. The inner primaries were new and fully grown, others were very worn. The bird was released after being photographed but was later killed by a cat.

This represents the first record from Tanzanian waters.

Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus*

Two adults were watched flying against a local storm on 17 January 1993. The black head and nape contrasted clearly against the paler uniform brownish-grey mantle. A narrow white superciliary stripe extended well behind the eye, while the white leading edges of the wings and white outer tail feathers were also clearly visible.

This is the first record from Zanzibar since those documented by Pakenham (1979) in September 1932 and July 1933.

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Reference

PAKENHAM, R.H.W. 1979. *The birds of Zanzibar and Pemba*. London: BOU.

Drs Peter and Ursula Koehler, Korbinianplatz 1, 8045 Ismaning, Germany

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Nest record of the Collared Apalis *Apalis ruwenzorii* and description of a partial albino

The Collared Apalis *Apalis ruwenzorii* is endemic to the Albertine Rift Afromontane Region (Keith 1980). Hall & Moreau (1970), Britton (1980), Prigogine (1985) and Short *et al* (1990) regard *A. ruwenzorii* as a species distinct from the Black-collared Apalis *A. pulchra*. They suggest that the two form a superspecies. *A. ruwenzorii* differs from *A. pulchra* mainly in that it has a paler grey collar and upperparts, is more rufous below, and lacks white outer tail feathers.

However, Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (1990) recently found that they were unable to distinguish between the songs of the two and that the two have similar behaviours. They prefer that *A. ruwenzorii* be considered a subspecies of *A. pulchra*—*A. pulchra ruwenzorii*.

In the Impenetrable (= Bwindi) Forest (321 km²) of southwestern Uganda (0°53–1°08S, 29°35–29°50E) *A. ruwenzorii* is common in the dense undergrowth of medium-altitude and montane forest from 1500–2800 m. On 6 April 1989 I found an *A. ruwenzorii* nest in the Impenetrable Forest. Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1960, 1973) indicate that the nest and eggs are undescribed. Neither Brown & Britton (1980) nor the East Africa Natural History Society Nest Record Scheme have any breeding records for the species. The only published account of the nest and eggs of the species of which I am aware is that of Dowsett Lemaire (1990) for the Nyungwe Forest, southwest Rwanda. That nest, which held “two eggs, was found on 31 December 1989: it was a ball of moss with a lateral hole attached to a sapling of *Alchornea* at a height of 40 cm and partly concealed by *Impatiens* herbs. The two eggs measured 16 x 13 mm, and were whitish with pink-brown blotches.”

It appears that the nest I found in the Impenetrable Forest is only the second known for the species and is the first for East Africa. It was located at an altitude of 2200 m on a ridge-top in open forest about 1.5 km north of Mubwindi Swamp. On three occasions an adult carried nest material into the nest but construction was obviously nearly complete. It was 1 m above the ground on the edge of an extremely dense clump of the shrub *Alchornea hirtella*. The nest was an untidy oval ball (wider at the bottom) of moss hung 8 cm below a branch by a thin strap of moss. The general appearance was a hanging purse. The outer part of the nest was entirely of soft, very loosely woven green moss. Fine, whitish lichen lined the entrance hole. Inside, interwoven with the moss, was a neat, tight bowl entirely of *Panicum* sp. grass stems. The entrance was located slightly more than half-way up the side of the nest.

The nest was surprisingly large for such a small (10-cm long) bird. The outside diameter and height, excluding the moss ‘strap’ from which it hung, were 12 cm and 23 cm respectively. The inside of the nest cup was 6 cm in diameter and 2.5 cm deep.

No egg was present when the nest was discovered but there was one inside on the next visit on 17 April. The egg, which was cold, was 17.4 x 12.2 mm, pure white with



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