Taxonomic notes on some East African birds. Part I — Non-passerines

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As a preliminary to the publication of a Revised list of the birds of East Africa (EANHS Ornithological Sub-Committee in prep.), and a Field guide to the birds of Kenya (Zimmerman, Turner & Pearson in prep.), it has become necessary to review fully the scientific nomenclature used by Britton (1980). Many publications which have appeared since 1980 have involved taxonomic revisions of many African bird groups. In making our recommendations we have tried to take all such published opinions into account. We have also relied on our own field observations in East Africa, together with the experience of colleagues here and elsewhere on the African continent.

We list below, giving brief background, all those cases where we recommend a change from Britton (1980). The English names used here are those we now prefer, and in some cases these differ from those in Britton. The names used by Britton are given on the right

in square brackets.

Oceanitidae storm-petrels

[Hydrobatidae]

We follow Condon (1975), Brooke & Sinclair (1978), Clancey (1980), and Harrison (1983) in recognizing the Oceanitidae.

Sula capensis Cape Gannet

[Sula bassana Gannet]

We agree with Clancey (1980), Brown et al. (1982), Harrison (1983), and Sibley & Monroe (1990) in recognizing capensis as specifically distinct from bassana.

Necrosyrtes monachus Hooded Vulture

[Neophron monachus]

Brown & Amadon (1968) reviewed evidence for placing this species in a monotypic genus. This course was followed by Voous (1973), Clancey (1980), Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire (1980), Brown et al. (1982), Amadon & Bull (1988) and Sibley & Monroe (1990). We too prefer to recognize the monotypic Necrosyrtes.

Polyboroides typus African Harrier-Hawk [Polyboroides radiatus Harrier Hawk] We agree with Snow (1978), Clancey (1980), Brown et al. (1982), Amadon & Bull (1988) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) in recognizing mainland African birds as typus. Madagascar birds (radiatus), considered by some to be specifically distinct, are probably best treated as conspecific with typus as suggested by Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire (1980).

Buteo oreophilus Mountain Buzzard

[Buteo tachardus]

James & Wattel (1983) argue that Brooke (1974) was in error in recognizing tachardus, and they strongly recommend that oreophilus should stand for this species. We agree that East African birds are best treated as nominate oreophilus, following Brown et al. (1982), Amadon & Bull (1988) and Sibley & Monroe (1990).

Spizaetus africanus Cassin's Hawk-Eagle [Hieraaetus africanus] We follow Snow (1978), Brown et al. (1982), Amadon & Bull (1988) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) in placing this forest eagle in Spizaetus.

Hieraaetus ayresii Ayres' Hawk-Eagle [Hieraaetus dubius Ayres' Hawk Eagle] Brooke & Vernon (1981) show convincingly that dubius was based on a specimen of H. pennatus, and urge everyone to revert to ayresii. This is now widely accepted by most recent authorities including Clancey (1980), Dowsett & Forbes-Watson (in press), Amadon & Bull (1988) and Sibley & Monroe (1990). We fully support this change.

Micronisus gabar Gabar Goshawk [Melierax gabar] We follow Snow (1978), Clancey (1980) and Brown et al. (1982) who accept the evidence given by Smeenk & Smeenk-Enserink (1975) for placing this species in the monotypic genus Micronisus.

Pandioninae Osprey
We follow Brown *et al.* (1982), Amadon & Bull (1988) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) in recognizing the subfamily Pandioninae, within the Accipitridae.

Coturnix adansonii Blue Quail [Coturnix chinensis] Although considered conspecific by Snow (1978) and Crowe (in Urban et al. 1986), we prefer to follow Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1952), Devilliers (1976), Clancey (1980) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) in keeping the African form adansonii distinct from the very different-looking Asian chinensis.

Guttera pucherani Crested Guineafowl [Guttera pucherani Kenya Crested Guineafowl]

Crowe (1978) regarded G. pucherani and G. edouardi as conspecific, based on intergradation in captivity and in the wild. We note that Clancey (1980), Urban et al. (1986) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) follow Crowe, and since both forms occur on the same ground in central Kenya where interbreeding may account for some racially indeterminate, possibly hybrid birds (Taylor & Taylor 1988), we fully support their view.

Bugeranus carunculatus Wattled Crane [Grus carunculatus]
Balearica pavonina Black Crowned Crane [Balearica pavonina gibbericeps Crowned Crane]

Balearica regulorum Grey Crowned Crane [Balearica pavonina ceciliae Crowned Crane]

Walkinshaw (1973) and The International Crane Foundation have revised the taxonomy and English names for all cranes, a revision recently used by Urban *et al.* (1986) and Urban (1988), and Sibley & Monroe (1990) and we propose to follow suit. The Wattled Crane is placed in a monotypic genus and the two crowned cranes are given specific status.

Amaurornis flavirostris Black Crake [Limnocorax flavirostris] We follow Olson (1973), Snow (1978), Clancey (1980), Urban et al. (1986) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) in placing this species in Amaurornis.

Aenigmatolimnas marginalis Striped Crake [Porzana marginalis] Olson (1973) proposed placing this crake in the monotypic genus Aenigmatolimnas. This was later followed by Snow (1978), Clancey (1980), Urban et al. (1986) and Sibley & Monroe (1990). We also note that additional supporting reasons for the move were given by Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire (1980). We support the use of Aenigmatolimnas.

Ardeotis arabs Arabian Bustard

Ardeotis kori Kori Bustard

Collar, Goriup & Osborne (in Urban et al. 1986) point out that the genus Ardeotis is

distinct in structure and plumage from *Otis*, and place both Arabian and Kori Bustards in *Ardeotis*, as did Voous (1973), Clancey (1980) and Sibley & Monroe (1990). We fully support the change.

Eupodotis cafra White-bellied Bustard [Eupodotis senegalensis] We follow Goriup (Bustards of the world, in press) who, in determining that the form erlangeri is merely the juvenile plumage of canicollis, argues that senegalensis should be considered synonymous with the southern African form cafra. Thus the taxon in East Africa becomes E. cafra canicollis.

Pluvialis fulva Pacific Golden Plover [Pluvialis dominica Lesser Golden Plover] Connors (1983) pointed out that there was no evidence to show that this and P. dominica were conspecific where the two overlap in Alaska. Hayman et al. (1986) keep the two species separate, a move accepted by many, including ourselves.

Phalaropus spp. phalaropes [Phalaropidae] We follow Hayman et al. (1986), Urban et al. (1986) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) in placing phalaropes in the Scolopacidae and not as a separate family as in Britton (1980).

Columba iriditorques Western Bronze-naped Pigeon [Columba malherbii] We follow Goodwin (1967, and in Snow 1978) as well as Urban et al. (1986) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) in recognizing iriditorques for mainland western birds and malherbii for those from the Gulf of Guinea. We also note with interest the comments by Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire (1980) regarding close similarities in the voices of iriditorques and delegorguei, but until the voice of malherbii is studied we prefer to consider all three taxa as separate species.

Treron calva African Green Pigeon [Treron australis Green Pigeon] Goodwin (1967, and in Snow 1978) treated African mainland birds as T. calva, keeping separate the island forms on Pemba and Madagascar as pembae and australis respectively. This treatment of mainland birds was subsequently followed by Clancey (1980), Urban et al. (1986) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) and we fully support it.

The Pemba bird appears to be closely related to the birds on Madagascar and the Comoros, and for the time being we prefer to retain it as an endemic race of *australis* (*T. a. pembaensis*). Further field studies on Pemba are strongly recommended.

Tauraco schalowi Schalow's Turaco [Tauraco livingstonii Livingstone's Turaco] Snow (1978) treated the T. persa superspecies as consisting of five closely related species, as too did White (1965). Clancey (1980), however, placed livingstonii and schalowi in corythaix, while Fry et al. (1988) recognized only three species in this group. Meanwhile, Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (1988), in discussing the vocalizations of the T. persa superspecies, convincingly proposed that T. schalowi be recognized as a distinct species, thus making a superspecies of six. Sibley & Monroe (1990) also recognize both schalowi and livingstonii, a change we fully support.

Oxylophus jacobinus Black and White Cuckoo [Clamator jacobinus]
Oxylophus levaillantii Levaillanti's Cuckoo [Clamator levaillantii]
Irwin (in Fry et al. 1988) separated Oxylophus from Clamator for these two species on the grounds of their substantially different plumage and radically different wing shape. These two species also have all-black morphs, a condition which does not occur in Clamator glandarius. We support Irwin's views, as do Sibley & Monroe (1990).

Cuculus poliocephalus Asian Lesser Cuckoo [C. p. poliocephalus Lesser Cuckoo]
Cuculus rochii Madagascar Lesser Cuckoo [C. p. rochii Lesser Cuckoo]
Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire (1980) recommended that rochii be considered a distinct species on the basis of its voice, which is quite different from poliocephalus. Subsequently, Fry et al. (1988) treated them as separate species, while Becking (1988) discussed in detail the taxonomic status of rochii, also deeming it a species separate from the Asian poliocephalus. We support these views.

Centropodidae coucals [Cuculidae, Centropinae] We follow Sibley & Monroe (1990) in recognizing coucals at the family level, and being sufficiently distinct from their previous position as a subfamily within the Cuculidae. All species within the genus Centropus are included in this new assemblage, while the Yellowbill Ceuthmochares aereus is placed in the subfamily Coccyzinae. Britton (1980) used the subfamily name Phoenicophaeinae to house this bird within the Cuculidae.

Bubo poensis Fraser's Eagle-Owl [Bubo poensis vosseleri Nduk Eagle Owl] Bubo vosseleri Usambara Eagle-Owl [Bubo poensis vosseleri Nduk Eagle Owl] Collar & Stuart (1985) treat vosseleri as a distinct species, endemic to the Usambara Mountains in northeastern Tanzania. White (1974) appears to be the only person to have heard both poensis and vosseleri in the wild, noting their calls "similar, but significantly different." In view of the vast distance separating poensis from vosseleri, and the long isolation of the latter in the Usambaras, we agree with Collar & Stuart and prefer to treat vosseleri as a distinct species.

Strix woodfordii African Wood Owl

Colston (in Snow 1978) placed this species in Strix, perhaps following the conclusion of Voous (1964) that Ciccaba was probably not recognizably distinct. Subsequently Clancey (1980), Fry et al. (1988) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) have all followed suit, a move we fully support.

Otus scops Eurasian Scops Owl
Otus senegalensis African Scops Owl
[Otus scops scops and turanicus Scops Owl]
[Otus scops senegalensis, nivosus, and pulchellus Scops Owl]

Marshall (1978) and Chappuis (1978) both proposed that senegalensis be considered a separate species on the basis of vocal differences from O. scops, a view supported by Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire (1980) and Clancey (1980). Although Fry et al. (1988) preferred to retain senegalensis in scops, Sibley & Monroe (1990) have treated them as separate species, an arrangement we ourselves favour.

Caprimulgus pectoralis Fiery-necked Nightjar [Caprimulgus pectoralis fervidus Fiery-necked Nightjar]

Caprimulgus nigriscapularis Black-shouldered Nightjar [Caprimulgus pectoralis nigriscapularis Fiery-necked Nightjar]

We follow Fry (1988) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) in separating nigriscapularis from pectoralis on the basis of some vocal differences. Habitat preference may also be a major factor as well: nigriscapularis prefers non-forested habitat in areas of much higher rainfall than favoured by pectoralis.

Caprimulgus poliocephalus Montane Nightjar [Abyssinian in Montane Nightjar] Caprimulgus ruwenzorii Ruwenzori Nightjar [in Montane Nightjar] [Usambara in Montane Nightjar] Caprimulgus guttifer Usambara Nightjar Although treated as separate species by Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1952), Snow (1978) considered them conspecific, a view followed by Britton (1980). Later on, Chappuis (1981) separated ruwenzorii from poliocephalus because of its different call, a point further emphasized by Fry (1988). În addition, it has a totally different tail pattern from poliocephalus. While agreeing that ruwenzorii should be treated separately for the reasons shown above, we also feel that the same reasoning should be applied to guttifer, which both Fry (1988) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) place in poliocephalus. It is a bird of montane grasslands adjacent to areas of highland forest, it too has some vocal differences from the other two, and again has a different tail pattern with only a small amount of white on the outer tail feathers compared to the all-white outers in poliocephalus and the at least half-white outers of ruwenzorii. We recommend that field studies of all three species be undertaken to help determine their true affinities.

Merops nubicus Northern Carmine Bee-eater [Carmine Bee-eater]
Merops nubicoides Southern Carmine Bee-eater [Merops nubicus nubicoides]
Although considered conspecific by Fry (1988), we prefer to follow Clancey (1980) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) in treating nubicoides as specifically distinct.

Upupa epops Eurasian Hoopoe
Upupa africana African Hoopoe
We follow Sibley & Monroe (1990) in regarding the African form africana specifically distinct from the northern epops.

Phoeniculus damarensis Violet Wood Hoopoe [Phoeniculus granti] We follow Snow (1978), Fry et al. (1988) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) in regarding granti as conspecific with damarensis. The taxon in eastern Africa now becomes P. damarensis granti.

Phoeniculus purpureus Green Wood Hoopoe Phoeniculus somaliensis Black-billed Wood Hoopoe

[Phoeniculus purpureus somaliensis]

We follow Snow (1978), Fry et al. (1988) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) in treating somaliensis as specifically distinct from purpureus.

Rhinopomastus cyanomelas Scimitarbill [Phoeniculus cyanomelas]
Rhinopomastus aterrimus Black Scimitarbill [Phoeniculus cyanomelas]
Rhinopomastus minor Abyssinian Scimitarbill [Phoeniculus minor]
Ligan & Ligan (1978) poting that scimitarbills were not communal birds as were the

Ligon & Ligon (1978), noting that scimitarbills were not communal birds as were the wood hoopoes, considered them in the genus *Rhinopomastus*, as did many earlier authors (Jackson 1938, Chapin 1939, Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1952). More recently, following DNA-DNA hybridization studies, Sibley & Monroe (1990) separated scimitarbills at the family level, proposing the new name Rhinopomastidae. While we agree that there are substantial differences between the two groups, we prefer, for the time being, to retain the genus *Rhinopomastus* within the Phoeniculidae. We also follow Fry *et al.* (1988) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) in recognizing *aterrimus* as a distinct species.

Bucorvidae ground hornbills [Bucoracinae in Bucorvidae] We follow Sibley & Monroe (1990) in recognizing the two species of ground hornbill Bucorvus spp.as constituting a family.

Lybiidae African barbets

[Capitonidae barbets]

We follow Sibley & Monroe (1990) whose DNA studies have shown that African barbets are clearly distinct from both Asian and New World forms. We support this change and recognize the family Lybiidae.

Stactolaema leucotis White-eared Barbet

Stactolaema whytii Whyte's Barbet

Stactolaema olivacea Green Barbet

We follow Short & Horne (in Fry et al. 1988) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) in recognizing Stactolaema, and in removing the above three species from Buccanodon.

Tricholaema hirsuta Hairy-breasted Barbet
Tricholaema diademata Red-fronted Barbet
Tricholaema frontata Miombo Pied Barbet
Tricholaema lacrymosa Spotted-flanked Barbet
Tricholaema melanocephala Black-throated Barbet
We follow Short & Horne (1985, and in Fry et al. 1988) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) in recognizing Tricholaema and in removing the above five species from Lybius. We note that lacrymosa, and not lachrymosa, is the correct spelling.

[Indicator narokensis Kilimanjaro Honeyguide]

Short & Horne (1985, and in Fry et al. 1988) comment that this form (based on an immature bird taken at Ol Donyo Orok) is indistinguishable from the type of *I. meliphilus*, which was also an immature. Thus narokensis is a synonym of *I. meliphilus*. We accept this view and recommend that narokensis be deleted from the East African list.

Campethera abingoni Golden-tailed Woodpecker Campethera mombassica Mombasa Woodpecker

[Campethera abingoni mombassica]

Clancey (1988) and Short (in Fry et al. 1988) are both of the opinion that the form mombassica should be considered specifically distinct from abingoni, although hybrids between mombassica and C. abingoni suahelica may occur in some areas. Both forms, however, do occur near Kilimanjaro with no trace of hybridization, and we therefore follow Short (op. cit.) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) in treating mombassica as a separate species.

Dendropicos namaquus
Dendropicos xantholophus Yellow-crested Woodpecker
Dendropicos elliotii Elliot's Woodpecker
Dendropicos goertae Grey Woodpecker
Dendropicos griseocephalus Olive Woodpecker
We follow Short (in Snow 1978, 1982, and in Fry et al. 1988). Those species previously placed in Thripias and Mesopicos are considered closely related to the fuscescens group, and are now included in Dendropicos. We also note that Sibley & Monroe (1990) do likewise.

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