

First record of the Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria* in Malawi

On 7 January 1989 a Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria* was caught and ringed at Nchalo (16°16'S, 34°55'E) in the lower Shire valley of Malawi in an area of short, dry grassland and scattered bushes, with *Acacia/Combretum* thicket nearby. On 9 January a second bird was caught in the same net. These are the first records of the species from Malawi. The weather at the time was extremely hot, sunny and dry. Rain had been falling in Lilongwe (13°59'S, 33°47'E) from 1 January and in Blantyre (15°47'S, 35°00'E) from 5 January, but did not reach Nchalo until 20 January.

Britton (1980) states that the Barred Warbler is locally common in north and east Kenya in woodland, bushland undergrowth and low scrub in semi-arid country. Many have been ringed at Ngulia, Kenya (3°00'S, 38°13'E) and the species has been recorded as far south in Tanzania as Dodoma (6°00'S, 36°00'E). It may occur further south in Tanzania, as that country has not been well explored ornithologically, but even so, a range extension of over 10° southwards is somewhat unexpected.

A Rufous Bush Chat *Cercotrichas galactotes* caught at Nchalo in December 1987 (Hanmer 1989) was assumed to have been assisted in its migration southwards by strong winds, but this could not have been the case with the Barred Warblers. From early December 1988 to late January 1989 the winds, although northerly, were very light. It is possible that the Intertropical Convergence Zone developed to the north of the birds in late December and the heavy rain which it produced forced them to keep moving southwards ahead of it in search of drier conditions.

References

- BRITTON, P.L. (ED.) 1980. *Birds of East Africa*. Nairobi: EANHNS.
- HANMER, D.B. 1989. First record of the Rufous Bush Chat *Cercotrichas galactotes* in Malawi. *Scopus* 12: 93–94.

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Seasonality of Banded Martin *Riparia cincta* flocks in Kenya

Lewis & Pomeroy (1989) summarized the evidence for the migrant status of the Banded Martin *Riparia cincta* in Kenya, and found that the species appeared to be migrating or wandering in the September–November period. In the course of particularly extensive travel in Kenya during 1986–88, flocks of these martins have been observed on the following occasions:

Amboseli National Park (2°30'S, 37°00'E)

18 August 1986: common, over 100 seen.

22 October 1987: numerous, hundreds seen.

15 November 1987: over 100 still present, but fewer than during the October visit.

18 January 1989: 5 or 120 only.



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