

STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE EAST AFRICAN ENDEMIC SPECIES

D.A. Turner

Forbes-Watson (1971) listed 34 species as endemic to East Africa, 18 of which were discussed by Hall & Moreau (1962) in their study of the rare birds of Africa. The present paper is designed to bring up to date our knowledge of the status and distribution of all East African endemic species.

As can be seen from Table 1, almost 70 per cent. of the East African endemics occur in montane areas at 1500 m and above, and are fairly evenly distributed between forest and non-forest habitats. However, with over 80 per cent. of these montane species occurring in Tanzania as against 60 per cent. in Kenya and only 8 per cent. in Uganda, the high percentage of endemism in Tanzanian montane forests can be appreciated, with the non-volcanic blocks of the Usambara and Uluguru mountains containing some of Africa's rarest and least known birds. These two relatively small montane areas of old crystalline rock contain avifaunas far richer in species and endemics than the forests on the younger volcanic mountains to the north (Moreau 1966).

Lowland forest endemics are concentrated in the few remaining forest patches along the East African coast which, prior to the development of the coastal region, were undoubtedly more extensive. Today, the last remaining large area of forest is the Sokoke-Arabuko forest near Malindi which, unless very stringent conservation efforts are enforced, will soon be reduced to charcoal ashes and exotic pines causing the extinction of two, and possibly three, endemic species - all of which are already acutely threatened by the present forest destruction.

Altogether 35 species are now recognized as endemic to East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda), while an almost equally large number of 'near endemics' are also present. These 'near endemics' are species which, although geographically East African in their distribution and range, are found in a few localities outside the present political boundaries of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Similarly, a number of Kenya-Somali arid species qualify for the near endemic status.

An account of the East African endemics follows. Unless stated otherwise, nomenclature follows Forbes-Watson (1971).

FRANCOLINUS RUFOPICTUS Grey-breasted Spurfowl

More or less confined to the Serengeti region of northern Tanzania, south to the Wembere steppe around Tabora. Near Olduvai in the south-eastern Serengeti it appears to be hybridizing with the Yellow-necked Spurfowl *F. leucoscepus*. Hall (1963) considers that this species may possibly be a product of past hybridization between species that have since stabilized, and which has now established itself in an ecological island, i.e. the Serengeti acacia steppe. Widespread throughout most of the Serengeti, being particularly numerous in the Seronera valley around the National Park headquarters.

FRANCOLINUS JACKSONI Jackson's Francolin

A Kenya montane endemic confined to highland forest areas between 2300 and 3000 m on both sides of the Rift Valley. Generally found at the upper edge of the forest, in bamboo, and on moorlands. Widely distributed from Mt Kenya to Mt Elgon (Forbes-Watson pers. comm.) being most numerous in the Aberdare and Mt Kenya forests. Member of a superspecies which is represented in montane

TABLE 1

Ecological distribution of East African endemics

	Kenya	Tanzania	Uganda
MONTANE (1500 m and above)			
a) Forest (11)			
<i>Francolinus jacksoni</i>	x		?
<i>Tauraco hartlaubi</i>	x	x	x
<i>Malaconotus alius</i>		x	
<i>Dryocichloides montanus</i>		x	
<i>Dryocichloides lowei</i>		x	
<i>Bathmocercus winifredae</i>		x	
<i>Nectarinia loveridgei</i>		x	
<i>Nectarinia moreaui</i>		x	
<i>Anthreptes rubritorques</i>		x	
<i>Poeoptera kenricki</i>	x	x	
<i>Cinnyricinclus femoralis</i>	x	x	
	(4)	(10)	(1)
b) Non-forest (12)			
<i>Francolinus rufopictus</i>		x	
<i>Trachyphonus usambiro</i>	x	x	
<i>Macronyx sharpei</i>	x		?
<i>Prionops polioloapha</i>	x	x	
<i>Turdoides hypoleucos</i>	x	x	
<i>Turdoides hindei</i>	x		
<i>Cisticola hunteri</i>	x	x	x
<i>Cisticola aberdare</i>	x		
<i>Parus fringillinus</i>	x	x	
<i>Euplectes jacksoni</i>	x	x	
<i>Histurgops ruficauda</i>		x	
<i>Spreo hildebrandti</i>	x	x	
	(10)	(9)	(1)
Sub-totals (23)	14	19	2
LOWLAND			
a) Forest (5)			
<i>Otus ireneae</i>	x		
<i>Otus pambaensis</i>		x	
<i>Anthus sokokensis</i>	x	x	
<i>Anthreptes pallidigaster</i>	x	x	
<i>Ploceus golandii</i>	x		
	(4)	(3)	(0)
b) Non-forest (7)			
<i>Agapornis fischeri</i>		x	
<i>Agapornis personata</i>	x*	x	
<i>Mirafra williamsi</i>	x		
<i>Cisticola restricta</i>	x		
<i>Apalis karamojae</i>		x	x
<i>Ploceus castaneiceps</i>	x	x	
<i>Ploceus spekeoides</i>			x
	(4)	(4)	(2)
Totals (35)	22	26	4

* = introduced

forests as remote as Mt Cameroun, Ethiopia and Angola. Although not recorded from Uganda, it probably occurs on the Uganda side of Mt Elgon.

AGAPORNIS spp.

Although fairly common over much of Tanzania, this genus, apart from the Red-headed Lovebird *A. pullaria* in western Kenya, is strangely absent in the wild state from much of Kenya, though introduced birds, escapees and even hybrids, are now found around Naivasha, Nairobi, and Mombasa. All records outside the normal range of the two species in Tanzania should, I feel, be treated as highly suspect and almost certainly refer to either introduced or escaped cage birds. Although they breed freely in captivity, little is known of the breeding behaviour of either species in the wild state.

AGAPORNIS FISCHERI Fischer's Lovebird

A fairly common and widespread Tanzanian endemic occurring to the south and east of Lake Victoria. Limits appear to be the Mbulu and Ngorongoro crater highlands in the east, and the Nzega and Singida areas in the south (Moreau 1945). Common throughout much of the Serengeti National Park, also on the west side of Lake Eyasi and in the Singida area. While it does not actually come in contact with the Yellow-collared Lovebird *A. personata* in the wild, it has been introduced into the Tanga and Dar-es-Salaam areas, and appears to be successful and established alongside it in Dar-es-Salaam.

Little is known of its breeding habits in the wild, except that breeding takes place in the Serengeti during the January-February rains, and a nest in a hole of a dead tree in the south-eastern Serengeti contained four young in February 1973 (pers. obs.).

AGAPORNIS PERSONATA Yellow-collared Lovebird

Another fairly common and widespread Tanzanian endemic occurring in northern, central and southern areas from Arusha south through Dodoma to the Ruaha and Lake Rukwa areas. It is particularly partial to baobab trees, and is common in Tarangire National Park and around Dodoma. Introduced into Dar-es-Salaam about 1928 and now well established alongside a smaller population of Fischer's Lovebird. As with *fischeri*, little is known of its breeding habits in the wild state, but it is known to nest in holes in baobab trees.

A single sight record from Taveta in 1922 (Jackson 1938) constituted the sole Kenya record, but it may well have been an escape. However, it was introduced during the mid 1960s to the Mombasa area, and it now appears to be well established in the Nyali, Bamburi, and Kikambala areas to the north of the town.

TAURACO HARTLAUBI Hartlaub's Turaco

One of Kenya's most characteristic birds of highland forest areas, occupying almost exclusively (except for the extreme south-west) all Kenya highland forests above 1800 m, north to Kulal and south to Longido, the Chyulu and Taita Hills (Moreau 1958). In northern Tanzania common in all montane forests on Mt Meru, Mt Kilimanjaro, the Pares, and West Usambaras, while in eastern Uganda it is recorded from Mts Kadam, Moroto, and Morongole. Fairly common in forests around Nairobi and occurring as high as 3000 m on Mt Kenya, Mt Elgon and the Aberdares.

OTUS IRENEAE Sokoke Scops Owl

One of East Africa's most recently described species. First found in April 1965 in the Sokoke forest to the north of Mombasa, it constituted a major discovery in African ornithology.

This small and little known scops owl is confined to the Sokoke-Arabuko forest, and although believed more common than originally thought, the present forest destruction in the area poses a very serious threat to its existence. Although difficult to locate, its tinkerbird-like call is very distinctive at night.

See Ripley (1966) for a full description of the type; he regards it as a member of a superspecies with the Sandy Scops Owl *O. icterorhynchus* of West Africa. The nest and eggs are undescribed.

OTUS PEMBAENSIS Pemba Scops Owl

Rare and little known; confined to Pemba Island to the north of Zanzibar. Although Pakenham (1939) in his description of the bird and its habitat described it as common all over the island, inhabiting clove plantations as well as natural forest, there have been no further records. The nest and eggs are undescribed.

A member of a superspecies with the Madagascar Scops Owl *O. rutilus*; it was originally described as a race of *rutilus* but was later given species status by Benson (1960).

If it can exist in plantations as well as in natural forest, as stated by Pakenham, it may not be as threatened by rural development and forest destruction as other coastal endemics.

TRACHYPHONUS USAMBIRO Black-billed d'Arnaud's Barbet

Originally described as a race of d'Arnaud's Barbet *T. darnaudii*, but recently given specific rank by Wickler (1973). Differs from other races of d'Arnaud's Barbet in having an all black bill and a totally different call. A fairly common resident in the Mara Game Reserve of south-western Kenya and in the Serengeti National Park in northern Tanzania, extending west to Lake Victoria around Mwanza.

MIRAFRA WILLIAMSI Williams' Bush-Lark

Rare and little known; recorded from only two localities in northern Kenya - in Marsabit district and to the east of Isiolo, some 320 km south of Marsabit. It has been recorded in short grass country or overgrazed grassland, always on black lava soil. Nest and eggs are undescribed.

Tentatively placed in a superspecies with *M. cordfanica* of the sub-Saharan steppe by Hall & Moreau (1970).

ANTHUS SOKOKENSIS Sokoke Pipit

Rare and little known; unique in that it is found in coastal *Brachystegia* forest and forest edge, in areas where there are scattered shrubby thickets and moderate grass growth. Known only from the Sokoke and Gedi forests on the Kenya coast, where it is undoubtedly a rare bird. In Tanzania, recorded from a small area of scrubby forest at Moa near Tanga, and from the Pugu Hills forest to the west of Dar-es-Salaam. There are, however, no recent records from either

locality, and the nest and eggs are still undescribed. Always shy and difficult to observe as it is rarely seen until flushed, whereupon it is easily lost to sight in low and patchy undergrowth. Probably more common prior to rural development of the coastal region, as undoubtedly its required or preferred habitat was then more extensive than today. Also, the present forest destruction of the Sokoce poses a serious threat to the bird's continued survival.

MACRONYX SHARPEI Sharpe's Longclaw

A fairly common Kenya montane longclaw, generally found in areas of open grassland at altitudes of between 2000-2500 m on both sides of the Rift Valley. Recently recorded from Mt Elgon (Britton & Sugg 1973) on alpine moorland at 3350 m and, as such, quite probably occurs also on the Uganda side of the mountain. Common on the Kinangop and Mau plateaux and around Nyahururu Falls (formerly Thomson's Falls) in central Kenya.

Placed in a superspecies with the Abyssinian Longclaw *M. flavicollis* of the Ethiopian highlands by Hall & Moreau (1970).

PRIONOPS POLIOLPHA Grey-crested Helmet-Shrike

A local and uncommon species, found sparingly in south-western Kenya and northern areas of the Serengeti National Park in northern Tanzania. Due to recent rural development it has probably completely disappeared from the Kedong Valley/Naivasha area (the type locality), as there have been no recent records from the area at all. Very little is known of its breeding biology, or why it appears to have such a restricted range.

MALACONOTUS ALIUS Black-Cap Bush-Shrike

One of Africa's rarest and most restricted birds, of which nothing is known in life. Confined to the Uluguru mountains in eastern Tanzania, although there have been no records since the early 1950s when a few specimens were collected by a local sisal planter (Friedmann & Stager 1964). Prior to this, no records since its discovery in 1927 in the forest canopy at an altitude of 1500-1800 m.

Hall & Moreau (1970) place it in a superspecies with the Grey-headed Bush-Shrike *M. blanchoti* though it differs from all others in this superspecies in having a black, not grey, head.

(Note that the English name of *Tchagra minuta*, a widespread species over much of Africa, is 'Blackcap Bush-Shrike'.)

DRYOCICHLOIDES spp.

Irwin & Clancey (1974) introduce a new genus *Dryocichloides* for seven species of small forest robins which previously had been included in *Cossypha* and *Dessonornis* by Hall & Moreau (1970). The Tanzanian endemic *montanus* and *lowei* superspecies are discussed below.

DRYOCICHLOIDES MONTANUS Usambara Alethe

Rare and little known; confined to the forest floor of the West Usambaras, north-eastern Tanzania at an altitude of around 1800 m. Ripley & Heinrich (1966) describe birds from near Shume (around 2000 m) as silent and unobtrusive, living in shaded lower vegetation of montane cloud forest, feeding on driver ants alongside the White-starred Bush-Robin *Pogonocichla stellata* and White-chested Alethe *Alethe fuelleborni*. They also consider *D. montanus* and *D. lowei*

conspecific, based on the previously undescribed juvenile plumages; also, they believe the whole ecology and behaviour of the two to be alike. Nest and eggs, however, remain undescribed.

Whereas Irwin & Clancey (1974) make no reference to the Ripley & Heinrich observations, I feel that, for the time being, in the light of their findings these two forest robins should be treated separately.

DRYOCICHLOIDES LOWEI Iringa Alethe

Extremely rare and little known; recorded only from the high montane forest in the Iringa and Njombe highlands of southern Tanzania, at altitudes of between 2000 and 2400 m. The nest and eggs are undescribed.

TURDOIDES HYPOLEUCOS Northern Pied Babbler

Locally common, occurring in varying numbers from central and southern Kenya south to central and east Tanzania. Common in and around Nairobi where it is found in noisy groups in many residential areas. Although less common in Tanzania, it is frequently observed in the Lake Manyara and Tarangire National Parks.

TURDOIDES HINDEI Hinde's Babbler

A rare and little known species recorded from only the Athi River, Kitui, Murang'a (formerly Fort Hall), and Donyo Sabuk areas of eastern and central Kenya. An extremely variable species, all individuals are fairly large, mottled dark brown, white and rufous, with no two birds ever apparently alike. A scaly pattern always appears to predominate and some birds have traces of arrow-markings on the breast feathers. Indeed, the individual variations suggest a possible hybrid population, and both the Northern Pied Babbler and the Arrow-marked Babbler *T. jardinei* have been collected in the same localities as *hindei*, thus showing as some characteristics of both these species occur in all specimens of *hindei*, it is possible that hybridization may be taking place. It may be mentioned though that all specimens are indeed both larger and more rufous than either of the other two species.

CISTICOLA ABERDARE Aberdare Cisticola

Originally described as a race of the Stout Cisticola *C. robusta* from the Aberdare mountains of central Kenya, but recently given species status by Traylor (1967b). Although sympatric with *robusta* in a number of areas, it normally prefers the higher altitudes from 2300-3700 m in the Kenya highlands, and on both sides of the Rift Valley, while *robusta* is rarely found above 2400 m. It is plentiful around Molo and Mau Narok, being the commonest cisticola in the highland grasslands around 2400 m.

Its most notable character is the colour of the tail, which, apart from the buff tips, is entirely black. Also there is no rusty nape as in *robusta*, and the dark streaking of the hind crown extends down over the nape.

CISTICOLA RESTRICTA Tana River Cisticola

Recently raised to species level by Traylor (1967a). Specimens are from the lower Tana River basin area around Karawa, Ijara, and Sangole on or near the Kenya coast north of Malindi. They resemble a pale medium-sized grey-brown version of the Ashy Cisticola *C. cinereola*, but differ in that they lack the

white bases to the nape feathers, have a rusty wash to feathers on top of the head and nape, which are in contrast to the grey-brown back, and have a grey wash on the sides of the breast and flanks which is not present in *cinereola*. The tail is proportionately longer than in *cinereola*.

APALIS KARAMOJAE Karamoja Cisticola

Extremely rare and little known, with an extraordinary distribution in eastern Uganda and north-central Tanzania.

Previously known only from the base of Mt Kadam and the lower slopes of Mt Moroto in eastern and north-eastern Uganda; a small group was recently observed in Kidepo National Park (Elliott 1972), and a specimen collected at Itumba, close to the Wembere depression near Nzega in north-central Tanzania. This is some 300 km south of, and across Lake Victoria from the Uganda locality. The wide separation of localities could possibly be due to extensive rural development and cultivation around Lake Victoria, thus clearing the original habitat, which possibly extended around the eastern side of the lake in earlier times. Nest and eggs are still undescribed.

BATHMOCERCUS WINIFREDAE Mrs Moreau's Warbler

Another rare and little known species, recorded only from the Uluguru and Ukaguru mountains of eastern Tanzania. Montane, occurring from 1500-2000 m in forest where there is an abundance of thick undergrowth and creeper-covered trees; favours areas where trees have been cut out and dense secondary growth has developed. Usually in pairs on or close to the ground, extremely shy and difficult to locate except by call. Nest and eggs are undescribed.

Not uncommon around Bunduki in the Ulugurus and, although undoubtedly threatened by habitat destruction in the area, it may be able to survive in the secondary growth if this is dense enough.

PARUS FRINGILLINUS Red-throated Tit

Although a rather local and generally uncommon species, it is found throughout Masailand in southern Kenya and northern Tanzania. Fairly common in the Mara Game Reserve in south-western Kenya and in the Serengeti and Arusha National Parks in northern Tanzania. Reaches the Nairobi area at the Nairobi National Park where it is frequently seen in the Athi River Hippo Pool area. Always occurs in areas of open acacia woodland where it competes with the White-bellied Tit *P. albiventris*. Forms a superspecies with the Cinnamon-breasted Tit *P. rufiventris* (Hall & Moreau 1970).

NECTARINIA LOVERIDGEI Loveridge's Sunbird

Rather restricted and little known; confined to the Ulugurus in eastern Tanzania. Fairly common around Bunduki, from 800-2000 m in both primary and secondary growth; breeds from September to February (Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1960). It appears to be a very adaptable species, for despite continued encroachment of its habitat by native cultivation it continues to be fairly common, both in the remaining forest and outside (Williams 1951).

A member of a rather complex superspecies comprising many closely related montane double-collared sunbirds.

ANTHREPTES RUBRITORQUES Banded Green Sunbird

Another little known species confined to forest edges in the Usambara and Nguru mountains of north-eastern and eastern Tanzania, occurring between 900 and 1500 m. A canopy and tree-top bird occurring in both lowland and highland forest in the East and West Usambaras; fairly common at Amani (East Usambaras). Moreau (1937) describes the nest, but the eggs still remain undescribed. Forms a superspecies with the Green Sunbirds *A. rectirostris* and *A. tephrolaema* of western Kenya, Uganda and across to West Africa.

ANTHREPTES PALLIDIGASTER Amani Sunbird

A very distinctive but little known forest sunbird, found in the Sokoke-Arabuko forest on the Kenya coast, and from the East Usambaras in north-eastern Tanzania where it occurs up to 900 m at Amani. A canopy species, not uncommon in the Sokoke forest, where it is seen either singly or in pairs, as a member of mixed bird parties in the more open areas of the *Brachystegia* woodland. Quite possibly occurs in other areas of coastal lowland forest, but is a species acutely threatened by forest destruction. The nest and eggs remain undescribed.

PLOCEUS CASTANEICEPS Taveta Golden Weaver

Widespread and locally common in Kenya and northern Tanzania, but found only to the east of the Rift Valley. In Kenya it is common in the Samburu Game Reserve, and abundant in Amboseli and around Lake Jipe in Tsavo National Park, while in Tanzania it is common around Arusha and at the base of the Usambaras.

A species easily confused with the Golden Palm Weaver *P. bojeri* and the Golden Weaver *P. subaureus* and is sympatric with both in a number of areas. However, eye colour and breeding behaviour easily provide positive identification characters: the eye colour is dark (almost black) compared with brown in *bojeri* and red in *subaureus*. Breeds exclusively over water in reeds or bullrushes, while *bojeri* breeds in bushes and palm trees and rarely, if ever, over water. On the other hand, *subaureus* sometimes breeds over water, but its eye is always red.

PLOCEUS SPEKEOIDES Fox's Weaver

Very restricted and little known, apparently confined to swampy areas in north-east Teso district of eastern Uganda, to the north-east of Soroti, though presumably occurring elsewhere in suitable localities in the Lake Kyoga area. The nest and eggs appear to be undescribed, though breeding is reported to take place during July and August (Mann 1976).

Similar in appearance to Speke's Weaver *P. spekei*, but the ranges would never overlap and the habitats are so different.

PLOCEUS GOLANDI Clarke's Weaver

Rare and little known, apparently confined to the Sokoke-Arabuko forest near Malindi on the Kenya coast, and yet another bird which is threatened by current forest destruction in the area. Although certainly more common in the Sokoke forest than originally thought, and possibly occurring in other coastal forests as well, it is subject to considerable local movements, and months go by without a single sighting; then, quite suddenly, large flocks will be seen in mixed bird parties, often in association with helmet-shrikes *Prionops* spp.

The nest and eggs are still undescribed, and it is thought that it may possibly

breed outside the forest during its periods of unexplained absence. It may form a superspecies with Weyn's Weaver *P. weynsii* of Zaire and western Uganda, another equally rare and little known forest weaver, also subject to considerable local movements.

EUPLECTES JACKSONI Jackson's Widow-Bird

A fairly common and conspicuous bird of highland grassland, occurring throughout the Kenya highlands where at times it is abundant above Nakuru and around Nyahururu Falls, while in northern Tanzania recorded only from the Loliondo and Ngorongoro crater highlands. Common around Nairobi, breeding regularly in the Nairobi National Park and suitable areas of Kabete, Karen and Langata.

HISTURGOPS RUFICAUDA Rufous-tailed Weaver

East Africa's sole endemic genus, and largely confined to the Serengeti region of northern Tanzania, though extending east to the Ngorongoro crater highlands and Lake Manyara, and south to the Wembere steppe region near Tabora - in fact a very similar distribution to that of Fischer's Lovebird which does associate to some degree with *Histurgops*, see Turner & Pitman (1965). A common bird in the southern Serengeti, Ngorongoro Crater, and to the west of Lake Eyasi.

POEOPTERA KENRICKI Kenrick's Starling

A highland forest species occurring fairly commonly on Mt Meru, Mt Kilimanjaro, the Usambara and Uluguru mountains in north-eastern and eastern Tanzania, while in Kenya recorded only from Mt Kenya, where it is at times common around the Irangi and Castle Forest Stations in Embu district, often in company with other tree-top starlings in mixed bird parties. Nests in holes in trees, but the eggs are undescribed.

Forms a superspecies with the Narrow-tailed Starling *P. lugubris* and Stuhlmann's Starling *P. stuhlmanni*. Whereas the ranges of *kenricki* and *stuhlmanni* come close to each other in central Kenya, separated only by the Rift Valley, eye colour easily separates the two: yellow in *stuhlmanni* and dark slate in *kenricki*.

CINNYRICINCLUS FEMORALIS Abbott's Starling

An extremely local and little known montane species. Quite common above 1800 m on Mt Kilimanjaro and also at times on Mt Kenya around the Irangi and Castle Forest Stations in Embu district. It is extremely scarce in the forests of Mt Meru and in the Arusha National Park, and no recent records at all from the Chyulu Hills. Nest and eggs undescribed. Forms a superspecies with Sharpe's Starling *C. sharpei* and the Violet-backed Starling *C. leucogaster*.

SPREO HILDEBRANDTI Hildebrandt's Starling

Fairly common and widespread throughout southern Kenya and northern Tanzania, occurring as far north as the Samburu district in Kenya, and south to central Tanzania. Quite common around Nairobi, particularly in the Athi River basin area. A hole-nesting species, unlike other members of the genus, and has recently been recorded as host to the Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius* in northern Tanzania.

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