

SOME ADDITIONS TO THE FOREST AVIFAUNA OF THE UZUNGWA MOUNTAINS,  
TANZANIA

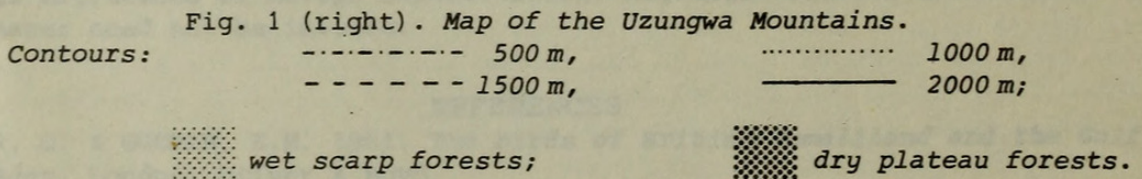
S.N. Stuart, K.M. Howell, T.A. van der Willigen and  
A.A. Geertsema

The Uzungwa Mountains are one of the most extensive highland regions in Tanzania, encompassing an area of some 23 000 km<sup>2</sup>; the highest peaks are around 2500 m. In Britton (1980) they are referred to either as 'Uzungwe', or the Iringa Highlands, while the Dabaga Highlands are part of the same area.

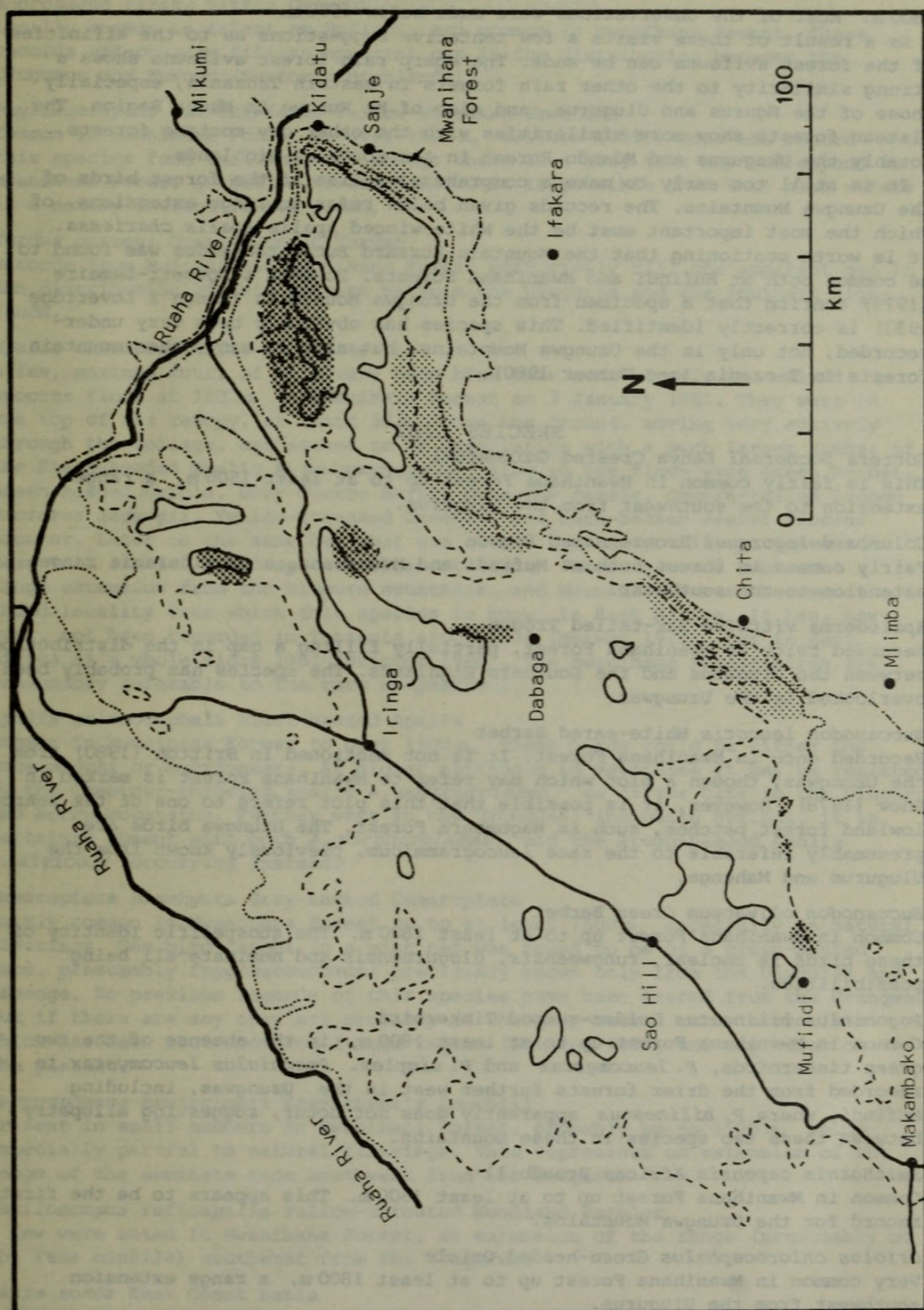
Compared with other mountains of eastern and southern Tanzania, the Uzungwa Mountains have been very poorly studied from a biological point of view. This fact is particularly emphasized by the discovery of a new and very isolated subspecies of the Crested Mangabey *Cercocebus galeritus* in late 1979 in the Mwanihana Forest, near Sanje (Homewood & Rodgers, in press). Ornithological work has been very limited, perhaps the most significant contribution being that of Bangs & Loveridge (1933). More recently, Ripley & Heinrich (1966, 1969) mention some interesting records from the Dabaga area which include the first records of the Iringa Ground Robin *Dryocichloides lowei* from the Uzungwa Mountains. However, no detailed account of the avifauna exists.

Fig. 1 shows the Uzungwa Mountains with the main settlements and forests. Like other mountain ranges in eastern Tanzania the Uzungwa Mountains have wet eastern and southern sides facing the Indian Ocean, and a drier area to the north and west. In the Uzungwa Mountains the very high rainfall area is restricted to the southeast scarp slope running approximately from Kidatu, south to Mlimba. The natural vegetation of this area is rain forest, covering a wide range of altitudes from 300 m to over 2000 m. The canopy of this forest rises to more than 40 m in places, as high as the forests of the Usambaras, Ngurus and Ulugurus. The plateau country, which encompasses most of the mountains, is considerably drier, especially to the north and north-west. Where forest does occur it is of a dry and scrubby type, often with a canopy below 20 m. It appears that most past ornithological work has been concentrated in these drier forests. Certainly Heinrich's work at Dabaga comes under this category. The scarp rain forests have, until very recently, remained virtually unstudied.

In order to at least partially fill the gap in our knowledge of the forest avifauna of these mountains, visits have been made to two previously unstudied forests in the last two years. In late August and early September 1979 SNS and TAVdW worked in Mufindi Forest, at 1800 m on the Brooke Bond-Liebig tea estate. This is an example of the dry plateau forests. In June 1980 AAG visited Mwanihana Forest Reserve on the steep scarp slope above Sanje village. This is an example of the scarp rain forests. In early January 1981 SNS and KMH also paid a visit to this locality. So far it has not been possible for any visits to be made to the higher part of the Mwanihana forest scarp, above









1800 m. Most of the observations were made below 1500 m.

As a result of these visits a few tentative suggestions as to the affinities of the forest avifauna can be made. The scarp rain forest avifauna shows a strong similarity to the other rain forests in eastern Tanzania, especially those of the Ngurus and Ulugurus, and also of Mt Rungwe in Mbeya Region. The plateau forests show more similarities with the other dry montane forests, notably the Ukagurus and Mdando Forest in the Southern Highlands.

It is still too early to make a comprehensive list of the forest birds of the Uzungwa Mountains. The records given below refer to range extensions, of which the most important must be the White-winged Apalis *Apalis chariessa*. It is worth mentioning that the Mountain Buzzard *Buteo tachardus* was found to be common both at Mufindi and Mwanihana Forests. Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire (1979) confirm that a specimen from the Uzungwa Mountains (Bangs & Loveridge 1933) is correctly identified. This species has obviously been very under-recorded, not only in the Uzungwa Mountains, but also in many other mountain forests in Tanzania (see Turner 1980).

#### SPECIES LIST

*Guttera pucherani* Kenya Crested Guinea-fowl

This is fairly common in Mwanihana Forest up to at least 1500 m, a range extension to the southwest from the Ulugurus.

*Columba delegorguei* Bronze-naped Pigeon

Fairly common in forest both at Mufindi and Mwanihana, a considerable range extension to the southwest.

*Apaloderma vittatum* Bar-tailed Trogon

Recorded twice in Mwanihana Forest, partially filling a gap in the distribution between the Ulugurus and the Southern Highlands. The species has probably been overlooked in the Uzungwas.

*Buccanodon leucotis* White-eared Barbet

Recorded once in Mwanihana Forest. It is not mentioned in Britton (1980) from the Uzungwas, though a plot which may refer to Mwanihana Forest is marked in Snow (1978). However, it is possible that this plot refers to one of the nearby lowland forest patches, such as Magombera Forest. The Uzungwa birds are presumably referable to the race *leucogrammicum*, previously known from the Ulugurus and Mahenge.

*Buccanodon olivaceum* Green Barbet

Common in Mwanihana Forest up to at least 1800 m. The subspecific identity of these birds is unclear, *rungweensis*, *uluguruensis* and nominate all being possibilities.

*Pogoniulus bilineatus* Golden-rumped Tinkerbird

Common in Mwanihana Forest up to at least 1800 m, in the absence of the two green tinkerbirds, *P. leucomystax* and *P. simplex*. *Pogoniulus leucomystax* is recorded from the drier forests further west in the Uzungwas, including Mufindi, where *P. bilineatus* apparently does not occur, suggesting allopatry between these two species in these mountains.

*Smithornis capensis* African Broadbill

Common in Mwanihana Forest up to at least 1500 m. This appears to be the first record for the Uzungwa Mountains.

*Oriolus chlorocephalus* Green-headed Oriole

Very common in Mwanihana Forest up to at least 1800 m, a range extension southwest from the Ulugurus.



*Andropadus virens* Little Greenbul

Locally common in forest at Mufindi, and common in Mwanihana Forest. These records effectively fill an apparent gap in the distribution between the Ulugurus and Tukuyu (Southern Highlands).

*Phyllastrephus flavostriatus* Yellow-streaked Greenbul

Common in Mwanihana Forest to over 1500 m. Britton (1980) does not record this species from the Uzungwas, though there is a plot that may correspond to Mwanihana Forest in Hall & Moreau (1970). It is possible that this plot refers to a nearby lowland forest patch.

*Turdus gurneyi* Orange Ground Thrush

Records from Mufindi and Mwanihana Forest effectively fill the apparent gap in the distribution of this species between the Ulugurus and the Southern Highlands.

*Apalis chariessa* White-winged Apalis

A few, maximum four, of this very rare bird were seen clearly in a mixed species flock at 1100 m in Mwanihana Forest on 3 January 1981. They were in the top of the canopy, at least 30 m above the ground, moving very actively through the foliage, and seemed to be associating with a much larger number of the Black-headed Apalis *A. melanocephala*. Also in the flock were Green Barbet, Green-headed Oriole, Grey Cuckoo Shrike *Coracina caesia*, Square-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus ludwigii*, Yellow-streaked Greenbul and Dark-backed Weaver *Ploceus bicolor*. Later on the same day what was almost certainly this species was seen in a similar mixed species flock at 1500 m. These records represent a range extension from the Uluguru Mountains, and Mwanihana Forest becomes the third locality from which this species is known in East Africa. It has, however, not been recorded in Tanzania since 1938 (Moreau 1940), nor in East Africa as a whole since 1961 (Britton 1980). The Mwanihana Forest birds are presumably referable to the race *macphersoni*.

*Apalis melanocephala* Black-headed Apalis

Common in Mwanihana Forest to over 1500 m. These birds could be either the race *moschi* or *muhuluensis*. At higher altitudes in Mwanihana it may be replaced by the Chestnut-throated Apalis *A. porphyrolaema*, as is the case in the Uluguru and Nguru Mountains. Further west in the Uzungwas, including Mufindi, it is certainly absent with both *A. porphyrolaema*, and the Brown-headed Apalis *A. alticola* occurring instead.

*Camaroptera brachyura* Grey-backed Camaroptera

Fairly common in Mwanihana Forest up to at least 1500 m, especially in natural clearings. One bird caught in a mist net was found to be of a green-backed race, presumably *fugglescouchmani* previously known only from the Ulugurus and Mahenge. No previous records of this species have been traced from the Uzungwas, but if there are any they are probably of the grey-backed race *intercalata* which has been recorded from Iringa Region (Britton 1980) and may occur on the plateau.

*Macrosphenus kretschmeri* Kretschmer's Longbill

Present in small numbers in Mwanihana Forest, probably up to 1500 m, being especially partial to natural clearings. This represents an extension of the range of the nominate race southwest from the Ulugurus.

*Phylloscopus ruficapilla* Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler

A few were noted in Mwanihana Forest, an extension of the range (presumably of the race *minulla*) southwest from the Ulugurus.

*Batis soror* East Coast Batis

A few in Mwanihana around 600 m, extending the range inland.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SNS and TAVdW would like to thank the staff of Brooke Bond-Liebig Ltd., especially Mr J. Niblett, for helping us during our stay at Mufindi. SNS, KMH and AAG would like to thank Dr W.A. Rodgers for making our visits to Mwanihana Forest possible. We would also like to thank Dr Rodgers for his helpful comments on a draft of this paper.

## REFERENCES

- BANGS, O. & LOVERIDGE, A. 1933. Reports on the scientific results of an expedition to the southwestern highlands of Tanganyika Territory: 3 Birds. *Bulletin of the Museum of Comparative Zoology (Harvard)* 75: 143-221.
- DOWSETT, R.J. & DOWSETT-LEMAIRE, F. 1979. The Mountain Buzzard *Buteo tachardus* in Central Africa. *Scopus* 3: 14-18.
- HOMEWOOD, K.M. & RODGERS, W.A. (in press). A new Mangabey from Southern Tanzania. *International Journal of Primatology*.
- MOREAU, R.E. 1940. Distributional notes on East African birds. *Ibis* 14th ser. 4: 454-463.
- RIPLEY, S.D. & HEINRICH, G.H. 1966. Comments on the avifauna of Tanzania. I. *Postilla* 96: 1-45.
- 1969. Comments on the avifauna of Tanzania. II. *Postilla* 134: 1-21.
- TURNER, D.A. 1980. The Mountain Buzzard *Buteo tachardus* in Tanzania. *Scopus* 4: 92-93.
- S.N. Stuart, Box 44, Soni, Tanzania, K.M. Howell, Box 35064, Dar es Salaam, Tessa A. van der Willigen, Box 9543, Dar es Salaam and Aadje A. Geertsema, Box 1501, Karatu, Tanzania.

(Received 1 April 1981)

## CORRECTION

In the paper by Short and Horne, Vocal and other behaviour of Stierling's Woodpecker *Dendropicos stierlingi* (*Scopus* 5: 5-13) we regret that the names of C. Chappuis, R. Stjernstedt and C.J. Vernon were omitted from the Acknowledgements section on p. 13.

Ed.



Stuart, S N et al. 1981. "Some additions to the forest avifauna of the Uzungwa Mountains, Tanzania." *Scopus* 5, 46–50.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/137749>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/118409>

**Holding Institution**

Harvard University, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Ernst Mayr Library

**Sponsored by**

Harvard University, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Ernst Mayr Library

**Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Rights: <https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.