

References:

- Binford, L. C. 1989. *A distributional survey of the birds of the Mexican state of Oaxaca*. Orn. Monogr. No. 43.
- Chapman, A. D. 1999. Quality control and validation of point-sourced environmental resource data. Pp. 409–418 in Lowell, K. (ed.) *Spatial accuracy assessment: land information uncertainty in natural resources*. Ann Arbor Press, Chelsea, MI.
- Deignan, H. G. 1961. Type specimens of birds in the United States National Museum. *Smithsonian Inst. Bull.* 1961: 1–718.
- Godman, F. D. 1915. *Biologia Centrali Americana: introductory volume*. Taylor & Francis, Ltd., London.
- Knox, A. G. 1993. Richard Meinertzhagen—a case of fraud examined. *Ibis* 135: 320–325.
- Navarro-Sigüenza, A. G., Peterson, A.T. & Gordillo-Martinez, A. 2002. A Mexican case study on a centralized database from world natural history museums. *CODATA Journal* 1: 45–53.
- Peterson, A. T., Navarro-Sigüenza, A. G. & Benitez-Diaz, H. 1998. The need for continued scientific collecting: a geographic analysis of Mexican bird specimens. *Ibis* 140: 288–294.
- Peterson, A. T. & Nieto-Montes de Oca, A. 1996. Sympatry in *Abronia* (Squamata: Anguidae) and the problem of Mario del Toro Aviles' specimens. *J. Herpetology* 30: 260–262.
- Rasmussen, P. C. & Collar, N. J. 1999. Major specimen fraud in the forest owlet *Heteroglaux* (*Athene* auct.) *blewitti*. *Ibis* 141: 11–21.
- Rasmussen, P. C. & Prŷs-Jones, R. P. 2003. History vs mystery: the reliability of museum specimen data. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 123A: 66–94.

Addresses: A. Townsend Peterson, Natural History Museum and Biodiversity Research Center, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045, e-mail: town@ku.edu. Adolfo G. Navarro-Sigüenza, Museo de Zoología, Facultad de Ciencias, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Apartado Postal 70-399, Mexico, D.F. 04510, Mexico. Ricardo Scachetti Pereira, Centro de Referência em Informação Ambiental, Av. Romeu Tórtima 388, Barão Geraldo 13084-520 Campinas S.P., Brazil.

© British Ornithologists' Club 2004

Rediscovery of the White-necked Picathartes *Picathartes gymnocephalus* in Ghana

by Ben D. Marks, Jason D. Weckstein, Kevin P. Johnson,
Mathys J. Meyer, James Braimah & James Oppong

Received 1 July 2003

The White-necked Picathartes *Picathartes gymnocephalus* is endemic to the Upper Guinean forests of West Africa (Fry *et al.* 2000) from Guinea to Ghana. Throughout this range, the rapid fragmentation and destruction of lowland rain forest threatens the survival of this remarkable species (BirdLife International 2000). Recent studies have focused on various demographic and ecological questions regarding populations of *P. gymnocephalus* in Guinea (Halleux 1994), Liberia (Allport 1991), Sierra Leone (Thompson 1993, 2001, Thompson & Fotso 2000), and Ivory Coast (Salewski *et al.* 2000). However, no recent records of this bird are available from Ghana. The most recent published records of *Picathartes* in the country are those of

Grimes (1964, Grimes & Darku 1968), the latter summarising results from a 1966 survey. Since the 1960s, attempts to locate this species in Ghana have been unsuccessful (John Mason pers. comm.). As a result, it was widely believed that *P. gymnocephalus* had been extirpated from Ghanaian forests. Here we report on the recent rediscovery of *P. gymnocephalus* in the Brong-Ahafo Region, Ghana.

On 14–30 March 2003 we conducted an avifaunal survey in a block of forest reserves in Brong-Ahafo Region. Our survey relied heavily on a line of 26 consecutively-strung mist-nets running along the boundary line between Ayum and Subim forest reserves (06°71'N, 02°73'W). The forest in this region is dominated by *Celtis* spp., *Ceiba* and *Pterogota* tree species and has many large boulders and rocky outcrops. On 26 March 2003 at 1040 h we mist-netted a *P. gymnocephalus* (Fig. 1), videotaped, photographed and released it unharmed. On 28 March 2003 we showed the video of the *Picathartes* to a local hunter in Asumura to discover whether he was familiar with the species. He immediately recognised the bird and told us that he had encountered at least three individuals in the nearby forest reserves. He reported some of the life history attributes of the species, such as breeding period (the fifth month of the year) and nest site. On 30 March he led us to a nest site. The nests were located on a boulder c.5 m high with a cave-like overhanging face sloping at a steep angle down to the ground. The two nests were constructed from mud and plant fibres, attached to the overhang with the cup of the nest forming a semi-circle c.30 cm wide, 15 cm high, and 15 cm deep. They were positioned less than 1 m apart at approximately the same height (c.2.5 m). On the floor of the shelter formed by the



Figure 1. *Picathartes gymnocephalus* mist-netted in Ghana on 26 March 2003 (J. D. Weckstein & B. D. Marks)

over-hanging rock were several hundred snail shells; snails are a potential food source for this species (Fry *et al.* 2000). The local hunter noted that when he first found this nesting site there was only one nest and that the second nest was new. JO and the hunter revisited the nesting site on 22 April 2003 and noted that one of the nests had undergone further construction, making it 18.5 cm high. The activity at the nest site, coupled with the hunter's report of other *Picathartes* in different sites in this forest reserve system, suggest that this location may hold a viable population of *Picathartes*. The Ghana Wildlife Division, Nature Conservation Research Centre (NCRC, a Ghanaian NGO), and the Chief of Asumura are making an effort to protect the species in these reserves. Further work is needed to census the area for other individuals and nests to determine the viability of this *Picathartes* population.

Acknowledgements

We thank the Ghana Wildlife Department for their continued support of our research programme in Ghana. In particular we would like to thank Mike Adu-Nsiah for all of his help with permits and his enthusiasm for our work. John Mason, Patrick Adjewodah and Mavis Boateng from NCRC, as well as Samuel Agyei, provided invaluable logistical support during all phases of this project. We also thank Frank Agbeko, the people of Asumura, and especially Nana Prince Yaw Adomako for granting us access to the forest reserves. Finally we thank the Louisiana State Museum of Natural Science and NSF PEET DEB-0118794 to KPJ for financial support.

References:

- Allport, G. (1991) The status and conservation of threatened birds in the Upper Guinea forest. *Bird Conserv. Intern.* 1: 53–74.
- BirdLife International. 2000. *Threatened birds of the world*. BirdLife International, Cambridge, UK & Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.
- Fry, C. H., Keith, S. & Urban, E. K. (eds.) 2000. *The birds of Africa*, vol. 6. Academic Press, London.
- Grimes, L. 1964. Some notes on the breeding of *Picathartes gymnocephalus* in Ghana. *Ibis* 106: 258–260.
- Grimes, L. & Darku, K. 1968. Some recent breeding records of *Picathartes gymnocephalus* in Ghana and notes on its distribution in West Africa. *Ibis* 110: 93–99.
- Halleux, D. 1994. Annotated bird list of Macenta Prefecture, Guinea. *Malimbus* 16: 10–29.
- Salewski, V., Göken, F., Korb, J. & Schmidt, S. 2000. Has the White-necked Picathartes *Picathartes gymnocephala* still a chance in Lamto, Ivory Coast? *Bird Conserv. Intern.* 10: 41–46.
- Thompson, H. S. 1993. Status of White-necked Picathartes—another reason for the conservation of the Peninsula Forest, Sierra Leone. *Oryx* 27: 155–158.
- Thompson, H. S. 2001. Body mass, measurements and moult of the White-necked Picathartes, *Picathartes gymnocephalus*, in Sierra Leone. *Ostrich* 72: 209–212.
- Thompson, H. S. & Fotso, R. 2000. Conservation of two threatened species: *Picathartes*. *Ostrich* 71: 154–156.

Addresses: Ben D. Marks & Jason D. Weckstein, Department of Biological Sciences and Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, USA, e-mail: bmarks5@lsu.edu. Kevin P. Johnson & Mathys J. Meyer, Illinois Natural History Survey, 607 East Peabody Drive, Champaign, IL 6182, USA. James Braimah & James Oppong, Ghana Wildlife Division, Forestry Commission, P.O. Box M.239, Accra, Ghana.



Marks, Ben D et al. 2004. "Rediscovery of the White-necked picathartes *Picathartes gymnocephalus* in Ghana." *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 124, 151–153.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/123799>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/76552>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Biodiversity Heritage Library

Copyright & Reuse

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

Rights Holder: British Ornithologists' Club

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Rights: <https://www.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>.