

A Kenya record of the Shy Albatross *Diomedea cauta*

An albatross caught by fishermen a few kilometres off Mombasa Island in late October 1986 was brought ashore alive (but unable to fly) and taken to Professor M. Hyder in Mombasa. Although maintained for several days on a fish diet it continued to weaken. It was moved to Nairobi where it died and was brought in to the National Museum. We examined the bird before it was skinned and identified it as an immature Shy Albatross *Diomedea cauta* of the nominate race. The following description and measurements were taken:

Sides of face and hindcrown to nape pale grey; narrow line from base of forehead back to eye blackish; rest of head white. Hindneck deeper grey, extending as a narrow collar around sides of neck and continuous in colour with mantle. Above, mantle and scapulars dark grey, contrasting with white rump and uppertail coverts; tail dark grey; upperwing blackish grey, darkest on flight feathers. Underparts wholly white; underwing white with narrow dark leading and trailing margins and small dark tip, dark grey mark present at base of forewing. Legs flesh; bill large with thick base, grey with a pinkish horn tinge, tips to both mandibles blackish.

Wing 605 mm, tail 215 mm, tarsus 97 mm, culmen 135 mm, middle toe including claw 141 mm; wing-span 246 cm.

The bird appeared to be in juvenile or young immature plumage. The Shy Albatross breeds in Australasia and disperses throughout the southern oceans (Harrison 1983). It visits the Cape and Natal coasts of South Africa in reasonable numbers (Clancey 1980). The only other report from further north on the coast of eastern Africa is of a bird caught by fishermen off Lindi in south-eastern Tanzania in 1986; this bird was photographed and the record is still under review.

References

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Scopus 11: 44, September 1987

Received 5 August 1987

Rock-loving *Cisticola* *Cisticola aberrans* near Kichwa Tembo, Maasai Mara, south-western Kenya

On 20 November 1986, on the rocky slopes of the Siria Escarpment behind Kichwa Tembo Camp on the edge of the Maasai Mara Game Reserve in south-western Kenya, the author and Nick Glaysher heard a loud, mournful two-syllabled note. It was reminiscent of the mournful call of a Fiscal Shrike *Lanius collaris* but definitely a double *pee-yu* rising on the first note and dropping

slightly on the second. Two birds were calling to each other, but the source was ventriloqual and difficult to pin-point. A few metres on two small birds got up and flew low and directly into a group of boulders beneath a shrub. The mournful piping ceased at this point; the call now given by the birds was a nasal *zeer*, when perched and also in flight. They clambered inquisitively up into the low shrub, but soon dropped into rocks and disappeared again. They were flushed several more times and some excellent views were obtained as they scurried over rock faces or perched openly on flat slabs under overhangs. They were located again and watched over about 2 h the following day. They were identified as *Cisticola aberrans* and the following details were noted.

The birds in some ways resembled Trilling Cisticolas *C. woosnami* and Tabora Cisticolas *C. fulvicapilla*. The upperparts were dull greyish brown, with no contrast between back and primaries, but distinct from the warm brown of *woosnami* or the slaty colour of *fulvicapilla*. The crown was redder than in *woosnami* but not as bright or extensive as in *fulvicapilla*. The constantly cocked tail was proportionately longer than in *woosnami* but not nearly as long as in *fulvicapilla*. It was brownish with no white visible on the upper surface, though in flight there appeared to be a paler tip. The rufous cap was bordered by a long creamy stripe extending from the base of the bill over the eye to the sides of the nape. The sides of the face were also creamy, with darker ear coverts, giving the impression of a buffy ring encircling the conspicuously dark eye. This was very different from the short pale supercillium of *woosnami* or the situation in *fulvicapilla* where the rufous cap extends down to the eye. The underparts of one individual were creamy although the throat was whitish; the undertail coverts were richer buff and there was a greyish wash down the flanks. The second bird lacked the creamy wash and was whitish below with greyer flanks. The bill was noticeably blackish, as was the interior of the mouth of one bird. The fleshy pink legs were rather long and strong.

Calls were varied. The piping call (heard only on the first day) and the *zeer* alarm note are referred to above. Other notes recorded on the second day included a double squeak uttered by one bird (the male?), with the second note lower, answered by a note halfway between from the other bird; also a three-note airy squeak. The song was a complex jumble of sweet and harsh notes interspersed with churring. Flight was usually fast and direct, straight into piles of large rocks. The birds often bounded around on rocks and perched in full view with the tail cocked, flicking their wings. They foraged right into small crevices and seemed to favour small caves with surrounding vegetation. They readily climbed up into small shrubs to scold noisily in full view. All the time they kept to a line of boulders running down the face of the escarpment, and on reaching the end they would double back, so that it seemed that they were holding a territory. The boulders were piled on each other and the whole area was very rocky with sparse grass and scattered shrubs and only the occasional larger tree.

The same birds were subsequently located a number of times in late November and early December, and were photographed and tape-recorded. Further birds were found nearby, and a minimum of six pairs was located on a 2-km walk along the escarpment on 6 December.

These would appear to be the first records of the species from this part of Kenya. The race *emini* is known from Tanzania, the nearest locality being Mwanza (Britton 1980); there is one report from Limuru (Britton 1980), but this

seems to be controversial (D.A. Turner, *pes. comm.*). Elsewhere in Kenya the race *teitensis* occurs in the Voi/Tsavo area, but it has not been reported for over fifteen years. The Mara birds would presumably be referable to *emini*.

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Scopus 11: 44–46, September 1987

Received 17 December 1986

**Stripe-cheeked Greenbul *Andropadus milanjensis* in Mbulu District,
northern Tanzania**

One of us (RS) has had doubts about the identity of a bulbul he tape-recorded in the Marang Forest (3°30'S, 35°40'E), Mbulu, northern Tanzania in December 1978. FD-L has examined the tape, and finds it to be of the song of the Stripe-cheeked Greenbul *Andropadus milanjensis*.

Britton (1980) does not record this species from northern Tanzania west of Arusha National Park, in which general area Dowsett (1974) mentions specimens (race *striifacies*) from Monduli Mt. Marang Forest represents an extension westwards of known range, being about 130 km southwest of Monduli. Bennun *et al.* (1986) have recently captured this bulbul in Kenya, on Ol Doinyo Orok—a northward extension from the Kilimanjaro area of some 65 km. The Stripe-cheeked Greenbul may be uncommon in Mbulu, as Moreau & Sclater (1937) do not record it.

Acknowledgements

We thank R.J. Dowsett for help in preparing this note.

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Scopus 11: 46, September 1987

Received 7 August 1987



Finch, Brian W. 1987. "Rock-loving cisticola *Cisticola aberrans* near Kichwa Tembo, Maasai Mara, south-western Kenya." *Scopus* 11, 44–46.

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