

## Short Notes — Notes Courtes

### Miscellaneous records of birds in Togo, including four species new to the country's list

Recent tracking studies and our own field work have revealed the occurrence of four species new to Togo, *i.e.* not listed as confirmed by Cheke & Walsh (1996), nor by any subsequent publications on the birds of Togo. These species, marked with asterisks, are described below, together with breeding information and records of other uncommon species.

**\**Aquila heliaca* Eastern Imperial Eagle.** A female, fitted with a satellite tracking device as a nestling at Jászság in Hungary on 3 Jul 2012, crossed the Mediterranean to reach Africa in Libya. On 4 Dec 2012 the bird entered north-western Togo, travelling there via Algeria, Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso. It left Togo for Ghana on the same day, where it travelled a few km further south than Tamale, before going to Burkina Faso on 9 Dec. On 11 Dec it returned to Ghana where its tag ceased to operate on 23 Jan 2013. However, the bird survived a return migration as it was observed at Pantelleria island, in the Mediterranean 70 km northeast of Tunisia, between April and October 2013 (see track and text describing the bird named Gabi at <[http://www.satellitetracking.eu/inds/showmap/?check\\_74=74](http://www.satellitetracking.eu/inds/showmap/?check_74=74)>, consulted 20 Nov 2013). The species is seldom recorded in West Africa, where it was considered as a vagrant by Borrow & Demey (2001) who listed only one record, from north Cameroon.

***Hieraaetus ayresii* Ayres's Hawk Eagle.** One seen by RAC on 29 Jul 2009 at the site referred to by Cheke & Walsh (1996) as Djodji (7°42'N, 0°35'E), *i.e.* the river crossing where the River Gban-Houa (known as the River Wawa in Ghana) forms the Ghana–Togo border. The bird appeared from the more forested Togolese side and soared across into Ghana doing lazy circles over a hill, then did three display false dives, plunging 30 m with half closed wings and twisting from side to side as it did so, before pulling up. After the third such dive, approximately 1 min. after the first one, the bird closed its wings completely and did a steep straight dive without twisting and disappeared within Ghana. Only the third record for Togo.

**\**Falco eleonorae* Eleonora's Falcon.** Gschweng *et al.* (2008) reported the results of tagging 13 birds with satellite tracking devices at two sites in Sardinia, Italy, between 12 Aug 2003 and 2 Oct 2005. One of these, juvenile c 49885, tagged on 19 Sep 2004 at a colony on Isola di San Pietro, passed through northern Togo in late October or early November 2004 (see Fig. 2 of Gschweng *et al.* 2008) and thence into Benin and further east. A second record for Togo was also the result of satellite tracking: a juvenile female tagged on the Columbretes islands, Spain, passed through Togo in the autumn

of 2010 (see track of bird no. 92528 in Fig. 2 of Mellone *et al.* 2013). Treated as a vagrant by Borrow & Demey (2001), who listed a record from Mauritania in November, the status of the species in West Africa needs to be re-assessed in the light of Gschwend *et al.* (2008) and Mellone *et al.* (2013) whose data suggest that juveniles take more western routes to reach eastern and southern Africa and Madagascar, than adults do.

***Treron calvus* African Green Pigeon.** At Djodji at 12h50 on 27 Jul 2009, RAC saw a male (identified as such by the behaviour to be described) land to the left of a female that was perched *c.* 10 m up in an exposed tree. The male bird then broke off a twig which it dropped into the river below, before the pair copulated for *c.* 30 s, the first evidence of breeding in Togo. The male then shifted to the right side of the female and then moved again to the left side of its mate, where it remained and preened.

**\**Coracias garrulus* European Roller.** Two satellite-tracked birds, tagged in northern Spain by members of an SEO/BirdLife project, passed through Togo on their return migration routes in late March 2013 (see maps for birds Lérída 01, tagged as an adult male in Ivars de Noguera Municipality on 2 Jul 2012, and Cuidad real 01, tagged as an adult male in Alcázar de San Juan Municipality on 19 Jun 2012, at <<http://www.migraciondeaves.org/en/>>, consulted 20 Nov 2013). Cheke & Walsh (1996) were unable to trace any Togolese records of this species, although the map in Fry *et al.* (1988) included the country within its geographical range.

***Lybius dubius* Bearded Barbet.** A pair, one of which was photographed by IO with food in its bill, performing distraction displays at the Centre du Formation Rurale at Tami (10°51'43"N, 0°3'37"E; *c.* 35 km west of Dapaong), on 25 May 2013. Although the nest was not found, this is more substantial evidence of breeding than the allopreening behaviour reported by Cheke & Walsh (1996).

***Oriolus oriolus* Eurasian Golden Oriole.** Noted six times by IO at Tami, between 24 Apr and 3 May 2013, after which only African Golden Orioles *O. auratus* were seen there until the observer's departure at the end of May. The fourth record for Togo.

**\**Bubalornis albirostris* White-billed Buffalo Weaver.** A group of four birds was seen and photographed by IO at Tami on 10, 19, 22 and 25 May 2013 (Fig. 1). The first record for Togo, realising the prediction by Cheke & Walsh (1996) that this species would eventually be found there, given that it was known from only 5 km north of the border in Burkina Faso.

***Quelea quelea* Red-billed Quelea.** Five seen and photographed by IO on 3 May 2013 at Tami. Only the second record for Togo, the first being flocks drinking from the River Kéran in northern Togo, 29–30 Jan 2010, reported by Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (2011).

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**Figure 1. Two White-billed Buffalo Weavers *Bubalornis albirostris*, Tami, Togo, 22 May 2013 (photo: I. Oliveras).**

## References

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