

BIRDS of the KAMPALA AREA an UPDATE

It is now over 25 years since the publication of **BIRDS of the KAMPALA AREA** by *Margaret Carswell* during that time many changes have taken place. The size of Kampala alone has increased to such an extent that many areas which were considered viable for birds have now been swallowed up in urban sprawl. *Carswell's* predictions in many cases have proved correct with on going battles to save part of Mabira Forest continuing. While it is correct to say most swamps remain, the nature of some of them has changed radically with the main Namuwongo Swamp heavily farmed and ongoing factory building, the main water channel being no more than an open sewer. While swamps close to the newly opened Northern By-Pass are very quickly being eaten up by urbanization. The cutting of trees and shrubs to produce charcoal continues and if the population continues to grow then Uganda is in peril of losing many of her forests. This problem being more pronounced the further you leave Kampala. It is with these points in mind that this article is intended.

Since 1986 when the publication was printed quite a few species have been added but to counter that a number have not been recorded since. *Carswell's* publication listed some 577 entries, of these a random sample give us an indication of the likelihood of them being seen again.

Heuglins Francolin: Introduced on the Entebbe Peninsula in the early 1920s for shooting purposes, presume all shot as no further records.

African Finfoot: This species has not been recorded since ca 1972 and given the state of Lake Victoria is unlikely to be seen again.

European Oystercatcher: A single record at Entebbe in 1915 is the only Uganda record.

Kentish Plover: Not recorded since a single record in 1950.

Brown-chested Lapwing: A single specimen collected in 1945.

Great Black-headed Gull: Single immature bird at Entebbe during 1966 is still the only Uganda record.

Lesser-crested Tern: Single sight record of a bird at Entebbe in 1950 is the only record for Uganda.

Rose-ringed Parakeet: Escapes from captivity seen in Kampala in the 1960s appear to have died out.

Marsh Owl: Single bird seen in 1969 the only record and its origin could well have been captive.

Eurasian Wryneck: Recorded in the literature of a single seen at Entebbe in 1915.

Tawny Pipit: Uganda's only record of a bird seen at Entebbe in 1966 is still the only record.

To counter the doom and gloom several species have been recorded in the Kampala area in recent years which were not included in *Carswell* which can indicate either increased observer awareness or more likely genuine population expansion. Whatever the reasons it can be seen that the Kampala region is still a very rich area despite the proliferation of concrete, pollution and demand of natural resources.

Common Teal: Single bird at Lutembe on 31/10/2009. Bird with influx of similar plumaged Garganey; presume the occasional Teal is overlooked.

Northern Shoveller: Single female at Nakiwogo 09/12/2010. Although not recorded in *Carswell* the Uganda Atlas gives a record for Lutembe.

Red-billed Teal: Recent records of single birds at Lutembe and Entebbe.

Verreaux's Eagle: Single bird over Kitintale in 2009 (ref Derek Pomeroy).

Great Knot: This first for Uganda and East Africa was present at Lutembe from 08/12/2010 till 05/01/2011, a juvenile bird its full identification not being apparent until the 20th December when conclusive photographs were taken.

White-eyed Gull: An adult in summer plumage at Lutembe on 22/11/2002 was seen by numerous observers and has been accepted by EARC.

Slender-billed Gull: This species appears to be expanding its wintering range in East Africa as the sightings in Uganda are matched in other East African countries. The first confirmed sightings were of fifty birds at Lutembe in 1997, since when it a regular winter visitor.

Whiskered Tern: Although not recorded in *Carswell* this species is now recorded in some numbers with the first in our area being seen at Lutembe In 1999. Interestingly these birds have been assigned to the race *delalandii* which breeds in Africa rather than the nominate form which breeds in the Palearctic.

Speckled Pigeon: This pigeon was first noted in Kampala at Makerere University in March 2001. It is now regularly recorded in flocks of over fifty birds and is now the commonest pigeon in the city and surrounding suburbs.

Fischer's Lovebird: First recorded on 14th Jan 2006 at Entebbe botanical gardens further records have come from Ggaba with most recently a pair on 20th March 2011. Whether these birds have escaped from captivity or been deliberately released is unknown but they are unlikely to be genuine vagrants.

Tullberg's Woodpecker: Recent published sight records from Maberia and Kivu forest have not been confirmed.

Bearded Woodpecker: Recently recorded from Maberia forest and Munyonyo. Presumably the similarity to Yellow-crested Woodpecker may have clouded the identification in the past.

White-tailed Ant-Thrush: This species occurs in good forest to the west of the Kampala region so when a bird was removed from a mist net in Mpanga forest recently it was not too surprising.

Familiar Chat: Single bird seen well at Muyenga quarry on 8th March 2011. Although a long way from its preferred habitat the quarry proved an ideal substitute and it was present for two hours at least.

Little Rush Warbler: At least three pairs are resident in a Sugar Cane crop near Namuwongo and singing birds have been recorded in swamps at Lower Muyenga and from the northern by-pass.

Black-throated Wattle-eye: Recent records from Maberia forest.

Piapiac: This sometimes common bird of short grassland associated cattle and game. It was not recorded in the Kampala area till 1993 when birds were discovered at Entebbe. Since then it has consolidated and can be seen in most Kampala suburbs.

House Sparrow: Since its first arrival in Uganda at Kibimba Rice Scheme in 2001 its steady progress through the country meant its arrival in the Kampala area was imminent and so a small colony at Entebbe in 2009 and a single male at Port Bell in 2010 were not surprising.

Black-winged Red Bishop: Recent records from tall grassland near Namulonge in 2007.