

The Ornithology of North Western Kenya Colony with Special Regard to the Suk and Turkana Districts⁽¹⁾.

BY

HUGO GRANVIK, PH. D., M. B. O. U.

(Plates I-IV)

During my second expedition to Kenya Colony in 1925-1927 I had ample opportunities of continuing my studies of the Ornithology of Mount Elgon, having been appointed the superintendent of the Swedish Biological Station, built by the Swedish African Fund, on the north-eastern slopes of the mountain.

To the founder of the above-mentioned fund, Consul-General SVEN A. LOVÉN, I am indebted for many favours; for his never-failing interest in and care of the Station and the work done there, for procuring the special equipment and material required and for valuable assistance on every possible occasion.

I take this opportunity of expressing my respectful and sincere thanks to The Swedish African Fund for the financial support accorded me.

To my old friend and companion, Lieut. KRISTER ASCHAN, I wish to tender my heartiest thanks for all help and labour bestowed for the success of our expedition. Without his contribution the result attained would not have been so satisfactory and extensive.

The program we had mapped out also included a « safari » up to the Suk and Turkana districts in the vicinity of Lake Rudolph. I am extremely indebted to my fellow-traveller for defraying all the heavy expenses

(1) The Suk and Turkana Districts are situated north and north-east of the old, extinct volcano Mount Elgon, on the boundary between Kenya Colony and Uganda.

pared my examples with others from Nairobi, Maroto (Uganda) and Ruwenzori and found that they agree well with each other.

But as in all Owls we even notice in this case a remarkable difference in the colour of specimens from the same locality. Specimens procured during the rainy season are generally much darker chestnut on the upper and lower parts and the barring on the under-side is very pronounced. Elgon birds from April, for instance, are sometimes very similar to the dark race *S. w. umbrina* (HEUGL.) from Abyssinia. In some cases it is almost impossible to separate the races. *S. w. bohndorffi* from Belgian Congo is sometimes exactly like *S. w. suahelica* specimens from Ruwenzori, etc. Until we have large series from different places, showing the change of dresses due to age and season, it is sometimes very difficult to name the different races.

♂ Wing : 240 mm., tail 168 mm., culmen 25 mm., tarsus 51 mm.

♀ » 238 mm., » 155 mm., » 28 mm., » 44 mm.

Iris coffee-brown, bill light orange, legs orange.

***Otus leucotis leucotis* (TEMM.).**

21/1, 1927 Bududa (Uganda).

In Bududa (below the Western slopes of Mount Elgon in Uganda) I saw this bird twice. Both times it was observed in banana groves, where it flew about and was very difficult to see and follow.

My specimen differs from all I have seen in the Brit. Museum's collection in having the three middle tail-feathers rufous and all the others distinctly light grey with dark grey barring. Further, it has all primaries and secondaries distinctly brown (not grey as all others have). The entire back is of a black appearance and does not agree with that of any specimen from Abyssinia, Somali, Sudan, Kenya Colony and Uganda. It is stated by REICHENOW (Journ. f. Orn., 1904, p. 233) that young birds have a brownish wash in the dress as a whole, and I have examined such examples from Somaliland and other parts of Africa. But these younger specimens have always the whole upperside, the tail, wings and the under parts distinctly light brownish-grey. Even the under wing-coverts are brown or rufous.

Wing 180 mm., tail 95 mm., culmen 16.5 mm., tarsus 36 mm.

Iris lemon-yellow, bill yellowish-grey, legs dark-grey.

***Glaucidium tephronotum elgonense* GRANVIK.**

♀ 1/7 1926 Mt. Elgon.

In 1911 BATES described the Yellow-legged Owlet *G. pycrafti* (B. B. O. C., col. XXVII. p. 85) from South Cameroon. On Elgon I only once met with this West African bird, which is known by a few specimens

from Cameroon. My discovery shows that there are still unknown West African elements in the East African fauna. How far eastwards this Owllet goes I do not know, but it is a typical forest-bird and I shot my specimen in the dense forest on the north-eastern slopes.

When comparing my bird with the type and one other male specimen in the Brit. Mus. I find great differences between West and East African birds.

The Elgon bird differs in being much larger. Head, back and upper surface of the wings dark umber-brown as in typical *G. t. pycrafti*. The white-spotted collar, formed by subterminal bars on the feathers of the nape and sides of the neck, is not so distinct as in typical specimens. It differs, further, from *pycrafti* in having the sides of the chest and flanks brownish red, and all the underside pure, clear white, each feather with a large drop-shaped spot (in true *pycrafti* they are round or oval). Under wing-coverts pure white (West African specimens pale buff or cinnamon). Thighs dark rufous.

♀ Wing 124 mm., tail 104 mm., culmen 13 mm., tarsus 21 mm.

Iris lemon, bill greenish-yellow, legs pale orange.

Although I do not like describing birds on 1-2 specimens, I have done so in this case, because of the obvious differences.

CHAPIN has (Am. Mus. Nov. n° 570, 1932, p. 4) described two new races of this rare Owl. Judging from the description it seems to me as if my Elgon bird comes near *G. t. lukolelae* from the middle Congo River.

Fam. CAPRIMULGIDAE

Caprimulgus rufigena frenatus SALVAD.

♂♂ 28/3, 13/II 1926 Mt. Elgon.

♀♀ 28/3, 29/3 1926 Mt. Elgon.

The Rufous-checked Nightjar is a very common bird in the steppe-country below the northern slopes of Mt. Elgon. But even in Uganda I often met with it.

On the 11th Febr. I found a nest with two very much incubated eggs (Plate III, fig. 1-2). As is always the case with Nightjars it was situated in the bare ground between tall plants and flowers. The eggs very elongated and elliptical in shape. The ground colour is buffish or reddish-white with underlying grey shell-marks, irregularly spotted or blotched with rufous brown or sienna-red over the whole shell. As a rule the spots are rather large.

1) 25,3 × 18,5 mm.

2) 25 × 19,2 mm.