

The four photos by Peter Steward show the different poses of the male during the display. Naboisho Conservancy, Rift Valley, Kenya, 10 May 2021.

## *Euplectes jacksoni*

### Jackson's Widowbird

#### DESCRIPTION

*Drepanoplectes jacksoni* Sharpe, 1891. Ibis Ser. 6 vol. 3 p. 246.

#### TYPE MATERIAL

SYNTYPE – RMCA A.27542 – ♂ juv.; prp: dry skin; rec: F. J. Jackson 22 July 1890; loc: lake Elmenteita [Kenya]

SYNTYPE – RMCA A.27543 – ♂; prp: dry skin; rec: F. J. Jackson 14 October 1889; loc: Lumbwa [Kenya]

SYNTYPE – BMNH 1893.12.1.3 – ♂ ad.; rec: F. J. Jackson 22 July 1890; loc: Masailand, (north of Lake Nakuru) [Kenya]

#### TAXONOMIC HISTORY

Old genus names such as *Drepanoplectes* are since a long time merged in the large genus *Euplectes* (for an overview of the list of synonyms in this genus, see Oschadleus 2016).

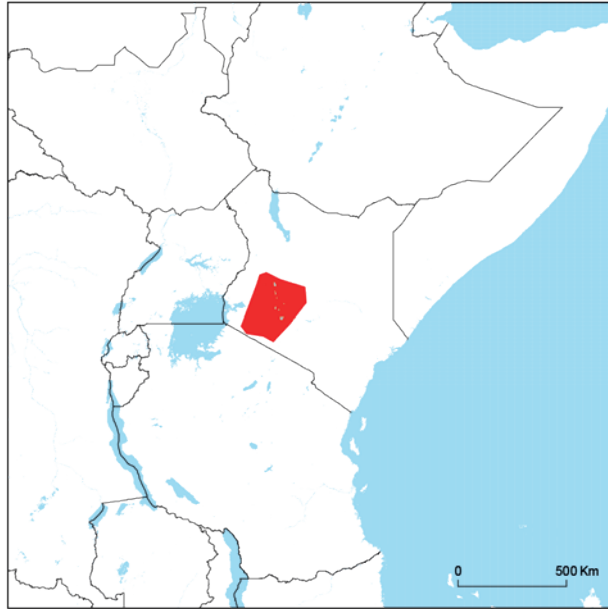
De Silva et al. (2017) did include *jacksoni* in their molecular study and confirm that it belongs in the “clade” *Euplectes*.

#### BIOLOGY

Jackson's Widowbird inhabits open grassland from 1 500 m - 3 000 m. It also feeds in agricultural land and is found in tall grassland in some areas.

It feeds on grass seeds, as well as termite alates (Fry & Keith 2004).

A polygynous and highly territorial species, with males gathering at leks (Andersson 1989). They perform spectacular “dancing” parades during the breeding season, much helped by their elongated tail feathers and contrasting colors. It breeds in drier grasslands than its relative Long-tailed Widowbird *Euplectes progne*, with which its range overlaps (Lewis & Pomeroy 1989). The species' breeding sites are



traditional. Its nest, situated within 10 cm of the ground is placed in a tuft of grass, with living grass bent down over it to form a bower (Fry & Keith 2004).

#### **DISTRIBUTION MAP**

Resident of the highlands of Western and Central Kenya and Northeastern Tanzania. From Eldoret and Nandi East to Laikipia and Mount Kenya, and South to the Aberdares, Loita and Nguruman Hills, North Serengeti National Park, Loliondo and the Crater Highlands.

#### **CONSERVATION**

Classified as “Near Threatened” by BirdLife International. Jackson’s Widowbird is locally common over much of its relatively small range. This and other restricted-range species of the Kenyan highlands are threatened by destruction

and fragmentation of montane grasslands, as a result of intensified agricultural development and livestock production. Montane grasslands are poorly covered by the protected area system in Kenya (Lens et al. 2001). Friends of Kinangop Plateau is a community based organization with the major goal of conserving the environment, including some areas where this species occurs (see Mwangi et al. 2022).

#### **REFERENCES**

- Andersson, S. 1989. Sexual selection and cues for female choice in leks of Jackson’s widowbird *Euplectes jacksoni*. *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology* 25: 403-410.
- De Silva, T. N., Peterson, A. T., Bates, J. M., Fernando, S. W. & Girard, M. G. 2017. Phylogenetic relationships of weaverbirds (Aves: Ploceidae): a first robust phylogeny based on mitochondrial and nuclear markers. *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution* 109: 21-32.
- Fry, H. & Keith, S. 2004. (Eds.). *The Birds of Africa, Volume 7. Sparrows to Buntings*. Christopher Helm, London.
- Lens, L., Bennun, L. A. & Duchateau, L. 2001. Landscape variables affect the density of Sharpe’s Longclaw *Macronyx sharpei*, a montane grassland specialist. *Ibis* 143: 674-676.
- Lewis, A. & Pomeroy, D. 1989. *A Bird Atlas of Kenya*. A.A. Balkema, Rotterdam.
- Mwangi, M., Mumbi, M., Ngari, L., Gitogo, J., Waithira, C. & Bakari, S. 2022. Monitoring and habitat rehabilitation for Sharpe’s Longclaw in Kinangop, Kenya. Conservation Leadership Programme. Final Report- Project N° 1422.
- Oschadleus, H. D. 2016. Overview of the discovery of the weavers. *Biodiversity Observations*: 1-15.



Photo by Tasso Leventis, Nyungwe Rwanda,  
13 august 2013. There is no photograph from Idjwi.



Photo by Tasso Leventis, Nyungwe Rwanda,  
13 august 2013. There is no photograph from Idjwi.

*Apalis (argentea) eidos*  
Idjwi Apalis

**DESCRIPTION**

*Apalis eidos* Peters & Loveridge, 1942. Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool. vol. 89(3) p. 252.

**TYPE MATERIAL**

HOLOTYPE – MCZ 270942 – ♂ ad.; rec: A. Loveridge 28 February 1939; loc: Upper Mulinga River, Idjwi Island, Lake Kivu [DRC]

2 PARATYPES – RMCA A.43074 - A.43075 – ♀♂; prp: dry skins; rec: A. Loveridge 23 February - 1 March 1939; loc: île Idjwi, lac Kivu [DRC]

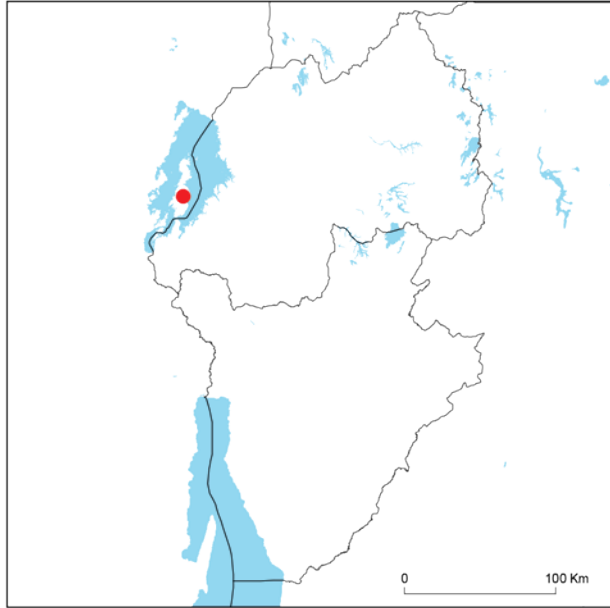
4 PARATYPES – MCZ 270939-270941-270943-270944 – rec: A. Loveridge 1939; loc: Idjwi Island [DRC]

**TAXONOMIC HISTORY**

*Apalis eidos* is often included as a subspecies in Kungwe Apalis *A. argentea*. *A. argentea* itself was sometimes considered as a subspecies of the Buff-throated Apalis *A. rufogularis*, but the morphological differences between these apalises are really small (Mills et al. 2016). Sometimes, the voices help in the distinction between similar birds. According to Boesman (2018): “the voices of both *argentea* and *eidos* are actually quite different from Buff-throated Apalis, and can easily be identified on a sonogram”.

It remains to be seen if the population on Idjwi island (*A. eidos sensu strictu*) could be recognized as a species of its own, separate from the “mainland” birds. It should then be called Idjwi Apalis; this is the only species of the genus *Apalis* on Idjwi island.

This genus and some allied birds are since a number of years removed from the large family Sylviidae and grouped in a separate family Cisticolidae. The phylogeny of Cisticolidae is well-supported and the diversification is currently shown by several papers, including Nguembock et al. (2012).



Upcoming text  
 Upcoming text  
 Upcoming text  
 Upcoming text  
 Upcoming text

### BIOLOGY

Prigogine (1967) mentioned Idjwi Apalis as common in primary forest and also present in secondary vegetation in groups of 12-20. Later, Prigogine (1973), he was able to establish breeding in the month of August.

All apalises are insectivore leaf-gleaners.

### DISTRIBUTION MAP

Idjwi island in Lake Kivu (Democratic Republic of Congo).

### CONSERVATION

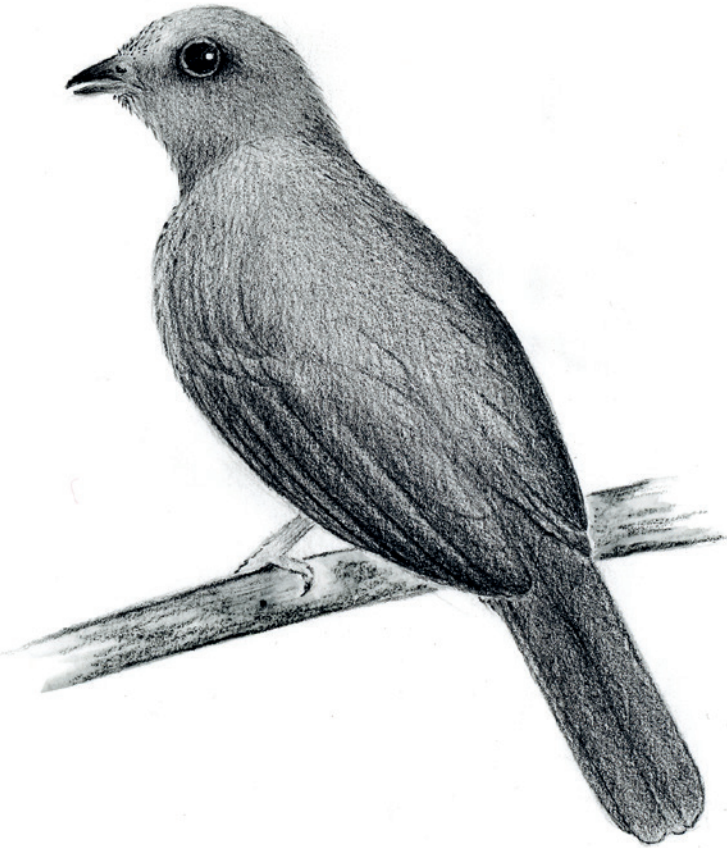
Not as such in BirdLife International; they indicate the category "Least Concern" for the species group *A. argentea*.

In recent decades, unfortunately, the humanitarian situation is alarming; there has been a large influx of refugees on Idjwi island, with a great impact on the vegetation. Nowadays, there is no forest left on the island (Akilimali 2017) and the survival of the bird is doubtful.

### REFERENCES

- Akilimali, J. B. 2017. Etude socio-économique sur les droits des peuples autochtones pygmées de l'île d'Idjwi. Rapport de volontariat. Bureau National de Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgique.
- Boesman, P. 2018. Notes on the vocalizations of Kungwe Apalis (*Apalis argentea*). HBW Alive Ornithological Note 457. In: Handbook of the Birds of the World Alive. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona. (retrieved from [www.hbw.com/node/1527794](http://www.hbw.com/node/1527794) on 5 November 2018).
- Nguembock, B., Cruaud, C. & Denys, C. 2012. A large evaluation of passerine cisticolids (Aves: Passeriformes): more about their phylogeny and diversification. The Open Ornithology Journal 5.
- Prigogine, A. 1967. La faune ornithologique de l'île Idjwi. Revue de Zoologie et de Botanique africaines 75: 249-274.
- Prigogine, A. 1973. La faune ornithologique de l'île Idjwi (addendum). Revue de Zoologie et de Botanique africaines 87: 189-194.
- Mills, M. S. L., Msimanga, A., Reygel, A. & Louette, M. 2016. Kungwe Apalis *Apalis [rufigularis] argentea*: a summary. Bulletin African Bird Club 23: 176–184.





Artist's impression: painting by Alain Reygel.

*Turdoides chapini*  
Chapin's Mountain-Babbler

**DESCRIPTION**

*Kupeornis chapini* Schouteden, 1949. Rev. Zool. Bot. Afr. vol. 42 p. 344.

**TYPE MATERIAL**

HOLOTYPE – RMCA A.35662 – ♂; prp: dry skin; rec: Mme Lepersonne 10 June 1939; loc: Mongbwalu [DRC]

2 PARATYPES – RMCA A.36006 - A.36007 – ♂♀; prp: dry skins; rec: Mme Lepersonne 26 - 29 July 1939; loc: Mongbwalu [DRC]

PARATYPE – RMCA A.47252 – ♂; prp: dry skin; rec: A. Prigogine 31 July 1949; loc: Loiki alt: 1 200 m [DRC]

PARATYPE – AMNH 348502 – ♀; rec: A. Prigogine 31 July 1949; loc: Loiki alt: 1 200 m [DRC]; rem: ex RMCA 47251

The RMCA also holds the type material for two more subspecies in this species (all three subspecies are still considered valid):

*Lioptilus chapini nyombensis* Prigogine, 1960. Rev. Zool. Bot. Afr. vol. 61 p. 16.

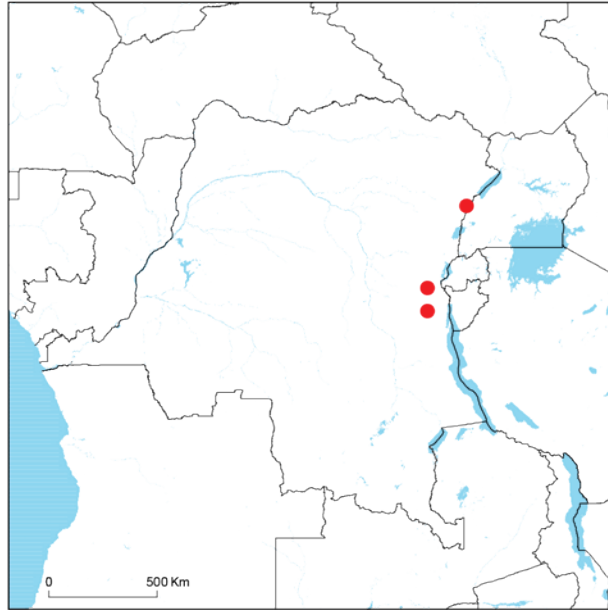
HOLOTYPE – RMCA A.100576 – ♂; prp: dry skin; rec: A. Prigogine 10 June 1959; loc: Butokolo alt: 1 460 m [DRC]

2 PARATYPES – RMCA A.100577 - A.103741 – ♂♂; prp: dry skins; rec: A. Prigogine 10 - 11 June 1959; loc: Butokolo alt: 1 340 - 1 450 m [DRC]

*Lioptilus chapini kalindei* Prigogine, 1964. Rev. Zool. Bot. Afr. vol. 70 p. 401.

HOLOTYPE – RMCA A.111154 – ♂; prp: dry skin; rec: A. Prigogine 17 May 1964; loc: Kiliza alt: 1 420 m [DRC]

4 PARATYPES – RMCA A.111153 - A.111155 - A.111156 - A.111157 – ♂♀♀♀ juv; prp: dry skins; rec: A. Prigogine 27 May - 7 June 1964; locs: Kitongo & Kiliza alt: 1 390 – 1 470 m [DRC]



### TAXONOMIC HISTORY

The babblers once grouped in the genus *Kupeornis* (species *gilberti*, *rufocinctus* and *chapini*) should now be classified in *Turdoides*, according to Moyle et al. (2012) and Cibois et al. (2018), making at the same time the genus name *Lioptilus* superfluous.

The family name applicable is no longer Timaliidae but Leiothrichidae.

### BIOLOGY

Chapin's Mountain-Babbler occurs in parties of up to ten under crowns of large trees, at lower altitudinal level than some of its congeneric species (e.g. Red-collared Babbler *Turdoides rufocinctus*, with which it is almost sympatric in Itombwe: Prigogine 1971).

Chapin's Mountain-Babbler joins mixed bird parties (Prigogine 1971; Fry 2000). The species in this genus are insectivorous, with the occasional addition of fruit (Fry 2000).

### DISTRIBUTION MAP

The ranges of the tree subspecies are as follows (all in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo):

- *T. chapini chapini*: Lake Albert to Lake Edward
- *T. c. nyombensis*: Mount Nyombe
- *T. c. kalindei*: Southwestern part of Itombwe highlands

### CONSERVATION

Considered as "Least Concern" by BirdLife International. This species has a very large range, but two of the subspecies inhabit only very restricted areas. This is a good illustration how biodiversity could be lost, if only the level species is considered.

### REFERENCES

- Cibois, A., Gelang, M., Alström, P., Pasquet, E., Fjeldså, J., Ericson, P. G. & Olsson, U. 2018. Comprehensive phylogeny of the laughingthrushes and allies (Aves, Leiothrichidae) and a proposal for a revised taxonomy. *Zoologica Scripta* 47: 428-440.
- Fry, C. H. 2000. *Kupeornis*. In: Fry, C. H., Keith, S. & Urban, E.K. (Eds.). *The Birds of Africa*. Volume 6. Picathartes to Oxpeckers. Academic Press, London & New York.
- Moyle, R. G., Andersen, M. J., Oliveros, C. H., Steinheimer, F. D. & Reddy, S. 2012. Phylogeny and Biogeography of the Core Babblers (Aves: Timaliidae). *Systematic Biology* 61: 631-651.
- Prigogine, A. 1971. Les oiseaux de l'Itombwe et de son hinterland. Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale. *Annales Série 8, Sciences zoologiques*. N° 185.