

# ANGOLA 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

## *BIRD CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES*

*Compiled by Michael Mills*



The Endangered Braun's Bushshrike *Laniarius brauni* ©Michael Mills

### Summary

Angolan bird conservation and research activities progressed well in 2011. Three month-long visits were made to Angola – February, April/May and September/October. Activities performed during this time include a survey of the Lagoa Carumbo Important Bird Area, three visits to Mount Moco to maintain the nursery, distribution of environmental education material in the Kumbira valley and field surveys in the northern scarp forests. Awareness was raised for the plight of Angolan birds by delivering various talks (in and outside Angola) and publications (both popular and scientific). Further support was garnered in Luanda for these activities. A full report follows:



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## **ACTIVITIES PERFORMED DURING 2011**

### **MOUNT MOCO PROJECT (WWW.MOUNTMOCO.ORG)**

During the year, three visits were made to Mount Moco.

In May, Michael Rogerson of CGGVeritas, Sendi Baptista and Michael Mills visited Kanjonde/Mount Moco to assess progress with the nursery, which was in good condition. A detailed report was produced after this visit (please email me for a copy), but our findings can be summarized as follows:

1. The seedlings planted in July 2010 were looking healthy. Although they had not grown a lot taller, they now had a very healthy growth of leaves.
2. Some plants had probably grown sufficiently to be planted in October 2011, at the start of the next rainy season.
3. Space in the nursery was identified as becoming a limiting factor. We spaced the plants slightly more, to give them more room to grow. At this time there were about 180 plants in the nursery.
4. The pilot project has shown both that we can easily grow plants here and that the villagers we employ have the necessary skills to take care of the plants.
5. The nursery guardians had planted 13 *Podocarpus* saplings, which were collected from a distant part of the mountain. For their efforts they were paid 100 Kwanzas/USD 1 per sapling.
6. We regrettably had to fire the head nursery keeper due to his manipulative and exploitative behaviour, and because money had gone missing, and replaced him immediately with another young man from the village.
7. We approached the Soba/Chief of the village to request permission to construct a larger nursery at the village. He was happy to grant permission for this, and has promised to provide land in a convenient spot for this purpose.

During a brief visit in August Michael Mills quickly visited the nursery, and was pleased to see that it has not suffered at all by firing the previous head nursery man. The three men employed currently are doing a fine job at maintaining things. During this visit nursery keepers were paid their salaries for three months: July-September.

Finally, in October Michael Rogerson, Catherine McMahon and Michael Mills spent six days at Mount Moco. During this time we identified that a small white spider had infested the nursery, spinning its web in the younger leaves and causing them to curl over. We spent an entire day working in the nursery to solve this problem, washing all the leaves by hand with soap and water (Catherine did most of this very arduous work!). Other than this the plants looked healthy, and several trees had grown sufficiently for us to attempt a pilot replanting project. Working with our three nursery men Michael cleared an area of brush and herbaceous growth on the edge of the forest patch closest to the village, of about 10 x 10 m, immediately adjacent to the nursery. In this space we planted the ten largest trees, spaced approximately at 2.5-3.0 m intervals. We have asked the nursery keepers to keep the area clear of other plants and to water these trees when it does not rain.



Further good news for the nursery is that during the year, the country manager of The Gulf Agency Company in Luanda, Gerrit Laubscher, made a commitment to funding and building a new nursery

facility for us at Kanjonde village. He has earmarked USD 5000 for these purposes and will oversee the building of this new nursery in 2012.

With regards to the Vesto Fuel Efficient stoves, Michael has been trying since the end of 2010 to get an order of 80 stoves produced. The company who designed the stove, New Dawn Engineering, has been experiencing production problems. Eventually Michael made contact with Crispin Pemberton-Pigott, the designer of the stove. In October Crispin eventually confirmed that he had sourced enough material for 100 stoves, and in November he confirmed that they had started production on some of the necessary parts. Michael has asked him to go ahead and produce the order requested as soon as possible. We had hoped to distribute them among the community this year, but due to these production delays this will have to be carried out next year, hopefully by May.

The only other Moco-related activity performed this year is that Michael is in the process of drawing up a proposal for the establishment of a new conservation area at Mount Moco, as requested by The Ministry of the Environment via Brian Huntley. This will be submitted in 2012.

Funding for this year's Mount Moco activities came primarily from CGGVeritas, and from core funding provided by APLORI. In 2012 most of the work will be funded by a grant from The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

## **KUMBIRA FOREST PROJECT**

During May Michael made a visit to Kumbira valley together with Francisco Gonçalves, Michael Rogerson of CGGVeritas and Sendi Baptista, in order to complete the final phase of our Conservation Leadership Programme project. At this time, access to Kumbira Forest was problematic due to poor road conditions. We had to stay overnight in Conda village and then hire motorbikes to take us in to Kumbira valley. During our stay we visited the only two communities in the valley with schools, namely Kumbira Primeiro and Monte Belo. At each village we addressed the soba about our project, Francisco Gonçalves addressed the parents about our project and the importance of forest conservation and taking care of the environment, and we distributed the pamphlets to them that Aimy Cáceres had

prepared. Although the children were on vacation, we also addressed about 60 children in Kumbira and 40 in Monte Belo, and showed them the handout made by Aimy Cáceres. We left 250 copies of the handout (about 150 in Kumbira and 100 in Monte Belo) and some crayons with these communities, to be used by the teachers in their lessons. We were accompanied during our visit by one of the teachers (Arnaldo) from Kumbira village; he has agreed to make sure that the materials will be used by the teachers.

During this visit to Kumbira/Conda, we were informed that the administrator of Conda, with whom Aimy Cáceres, Francisco Gonçalves and I had met in October 2010, was suspended for irregularities. We arranged a meeting with the current deputy administrator, who has invited us to submit a proposal for a conservation area within Kumbira valley to him.

All other work on the Kumbira Project this year was restricted to office work. We (Aimy, Francisco and Michael) have submitted the preliminary report of our findings to The Conservation Leadership Programme and are currently preparing our final report for them. We are also preparing a publication on our findings (see details below), which we hope to submit during 2012. Once this is complete we will draft a proposed conservation plan for the establishment of a new conservation area here. This will be submitted both to The Ministry of the Environment in Luanda, and local government authorities in Conda.

## **OTHER ORNITHOLOGICAL FINDINGS/ACTIVITIES**

1. February: On a field outing led for the Angola Field Group, Michael found Braun's Bushshrike at a new locality, which constitutes a range extension for this Endangered species.
2. March: Michael Mills attended an AEWA workshop in Maun, Botswana as the Angolan expert, to produce a Slaty Egret conservation plan.
3. April: Michael Mills joined the biodiversity survey team led by Brian Huntley, to Lagoa Carumbo. Findings from this work have been presented in a report compiled by Brian, and Michael is currently working on a paper of his findings.

4. April: Michael Mills recorded the first South African Cliff Swallow for Angola during the Lagoa Carumbo visit.
5. May: Michael Mills found two male indigobirds occupying song posts in Kanjonde village. Both were mimicking Dusky Twinspot, never previously recorded as a host for indigobirds. Another individual also mimicking Dusky Twinspot was found about 50 km away, and three further indigobirds were seen in the area. They are probably Dusky/Variable Indigobirds, but we will try to capture them next May to establish whether this is the case.
6. August: Michael found a species of Oliveback in the northern scarp forests. This is the first record of the member of this genus in Angola. In October Michael returned with Michael Rogerson and Chris Hines, and found these birds again. They may just be the Cameroon Mountains Endemic Shelley's Oliveback, or perhaps a new species.
7. October: field surveys were made at three different sites in the northern scarp forests, as a start to identifying the most important areas in the northern scarp forests for bird conservation.
8. October: Michael found the first Yellow-throated Cuckoo for Angola during field surveys in the northern scarp forests.
9. November: Michael Mills attended the annual BirdLife South Africa staff meeting and delivered a short presentation on his Angolan work.

## **AWARENESS AND PUBLICITY**

### **Presentations**

1. February: Michael Mills delivered a 45-minute talk entitled "Angola: Bird Conservation and Research. Working towards a secure future for Angola's most threatened birds" to the Angola Field Group in Luanda.
2. February: Michael Mills delivered a short follow-up talk on the Mount Moco project to scholars of the Luanda International School, and thanked them for their fund raising effort for the Vesto stoves.
3. May: Michael Mills delivered a 45-minute talk on Angolan Bird Conservation and Research, upon invitation, to the Embassy of the United States of America, in Luanda.



4. June: Michael Mills delivered a 45-minute talk “Bird Conservation and Research in Angola” to the Cape Bird Club in Cape Town.

### **Other**

1. February: Michael Mills led a one-day bird watching outing for the Angola Field Group.
2. April: Alexandre Vaz had a popular article published in the Portuguese National Geographic on our bird conservation work in Angola.
3. April: an article on birds in Angola “Bird life entices eco-tourists” for which Michael Mills provided information, was published in the national oil producer Sonangol’s magazine Universo
4. April: a one-page outline of the work was published in the pages of BirdLife South Africa in the magazine Africa Birds & Birding.
5. May: Michael Mills engaged Year 7 scholars from Luanda International School by offering bird walks during a field outing organized by the school. At least 25 scholars attended.
6. October: Michael Mills led a morning outing for the Angola Field Group to Mussulo Bay.
7. December: a full article on Angolan birds written by Michael Mills is due to be published in African Birds & Birding before the end of the year.

### **TARGETS: 2011 AND 2012**

#### **MAIN TARGETS SET FOR 2011 IN THE 2010 REPORT, AND COMMENTS ON THEIR EXECUTION**

1. Secure funding for further work at Mount Moco and Kumbira Forest. A second proposal to The Rufford Small Grants Foundation is currently being developed with Martim Melo. **This application was successful and the full amount of funding has been carried forward to 2012.**
2. Make two month-long field trips to Angola: one in April/May and the other in July/August. **Done (see report for details).**



3. In April 2010 I will be joining a research expedition to Lagoa Carumbo in Lunda Norte Province organised by Brian Huntley, and in association with The Angolan Ministry of the Environment. In addition to providing distribution information on birds from a poorly known area, this exercise will help strengthen links with ministry. **Done (please contact me for a copy of the final report prepared by Brian; a paper of my ornithological findings is being prepared).**
4. Possibly make further ornithological explorations along the northern scarp forest, to survey more extensively for Braun's Bushshrike. **One day was spent in February and six days in October conducting surveys in three different area. More surveys are planned for 2012.**
5. Purchase and register a four-wheel-drive vehicle to be stationed in Luanda, at the Luanda International School, for field work. Michael Rogerson is assisting with this. **Still in progress, although sufficient funds have now been raised to purchase a new vehicle. I plan to do this in February 2012.**
6. Purchase and transport a shipment of 70 fuel efficient stoves to Kanjonde at Mount Moco, and train community to use stoves effectively. Or bring in an expert on fuel efficient stoves to teach the community of Kanjonde how to build fuel efficient clay stoves. **The order is still being processed by New Dawn Engineering. Further training was held in May.**
7. Continue to expand the nursery at Kanjonde and, if they are big enough, replant the first trees. **Funding for nursery expansion has been secured through the Gulf Agency Company in Luanda, who are organizing the building of the nursery too. We planted our first ten trees in October!**
8. Continue to work with the local community at Kanjonde. **Done (details in report).**
9. Research and test alternative sources of construction materials for the community of Kanjonde. **Not executed this year. To be investigated in 2012.**
10. Write a research report (to be submitted to the Conservation Leadership Programme) on findings made during the Kumbira Forest surveys of September 2010. **Preliminary report submitted. Final report in preparation and due to be submitted by the end of 2011.**
11. Make a formal written proposal to the Administrator of Conda, for the establishment of a nature reserve at Kumbira, and present this proposal to him in person during May 2011. **The previous administrator of Conda was dismissed for misconduct. The new administrator was met**

**with and we will submit a proposal in 2012, and at the same time present the same proposal to The Ministry of the Environment.**

12. Continue collaboration with the Luanda International School. **Done.**
13. Make a presentation on work to the Angola Field Group, to garner further involvement from people resident in Angola. **A presentation was delivered and two field outings led.**

## **MAIN TARGETS FOR 2012**

1. Successfully purchase and register a vehicle for our activities in Angola, to be stationed in Luanda.
2. Construct a new nursery facility at Kanjonde/Mount Moco. This is done in collaboration with Gerrit Laubscher of The Gulf Agency Company.
3. Maintain the current nursery at Kanjonde and continue to assess its effectiveness.
4. Assess the success of initial tree planting done in October 2011.
5. Plant 30 new trees at the commencement of the next rainy season – October 2012.
6. Secure funding for 2013 field work.
7. Conduct further field surveys in the northern scarp forests, specifically on the Endangered Braun's Bushshrike.
8. Successfully deliver a shipment of 80 Vesto fuel efficient stoves to Kanjonde.
9. Submit a proposal for the establishment of a new conservation area at Mount Moco to The Ministry of the Environment in Luanda.
10. Prepare a first draft of a proposal for the establishment of a new conservation area at Kumbira, to be submitted to The Ministry of the Environment in Luanda.
11. Organise and execute a week-long bird training workshop at Kissama National Park for a select group of Angolan students and field rangers of Kissama National Park, to be done in collaboration with Paula Francisco, National Director of Biodiversity in The Ministry of the Environment, and Roeland Goetz of the Kissama Foundation.
12. Research and test alternative sources of construction materials for the community of Kanjonde.
13. Attend and contribute to the meeting in Nairobi in March of the Council for the African Partnership of BirdLife.

14. Attend and contribute to the Pan African Ornithological Congress in Arusha in October.
15. Deliver on all planned publication outputs (see the following section).
16. Make first steps towards the registration of a society/organization for bird conservation in Angola.
17. Continue to engage various Angolan individuals and organization in our work.

## **PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS: 2011 AND 2012**

### **PUBLICATION OUTPUTS 2011**

1. Mills MSL, Melo M and Vaz A. 2011. Black-tailed Cisticola *Cisticola melanurus* in eastern Angola: behavioural notes and the first photographs and sound recordings. *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* 18: 193–198.
2. Mills MSL, Melo M, Borrow N and Vaz Pinto P. 2011. The Endangered Braun's Bushshrike *Laniarius brauni*: a summary. *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* 18: 174–181.
3. Mills MSL, Olmos F, Melo M and Dean WRJ. 2011. Mount Moco: its importance to the conservation of Swierstra's Francolin *Pternistis swierstrai* and the Afromontane avifauna of Angola. *Bird Conservation International* 21:119–133.
4. Mills MSL and Vaz A. 2011. The nest and eggs of Margaret's Batis *Batis margaritae*. *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 131: 208–210.

### **PUBLICATIONS PLANNED FOR 2011 (AS IN THE 2010 REPORT) AND COMMENTS ON THEIR EXECUTION**

1. Mills MSL, Olmos F, Melo M and Dean WRJ. 2011. Mount Moco: its importance to the conservation of Swierstra's Francolin *Pternistis swierstrai* and the Afromontane avifauna of Angola. *Bird Conservation International*. **Published.**

2. Mills MSL, Melo M, Borrow N and Vaz Pinto P. Submitted. The Endangered Braun's Bushshrike *Laniarius brauni*: a summary. *Bulletin of the African Bird Club*. **Published.**
3. Mills MSL, Melo M and Vaz A. Submitted. Black-tailed Cisticola *Cisticola melanurus* in eastern Angola: behavioural notes and the first photographs and sound recordings. *Bulletin of the African Bird Club*. **Published.**
4. Mills MSL. Submitted. The first record of Willcocks's Honeyguide *Indicator willcocksii* from Angola. *Bulletin of the African Bird Club*. **Withdrawn and being re-written.**
5. Mills MSL, Vaz Pinto P and Haber S. In preparation. Grey-striped Francolin *Pternistis griseostriatus*: skins, distribution and morphometrics. *Bulletin of the African Bird Club*. **In press.**
6. Mills MSL and Vaz A. In preparation. The nest and eggs of Margaret's Batis *Batis margaritae*. *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club*. **Published.**
7. Report on the avifauna of Mount Namba, perhaps for *Bird Conservation International*. **Submitted to Bird Conservation International in November.**
8. Status of threatened birds at Kumbira Forest, perhaps for *Bird Conservation International*. **In progress, to be completed in 2012.**

#### **PLANNED PUBLICATIONS FOR 2012**

1. Dean WRJ, Franke U, Joseph G, Gonçalves FM, Mills MSL, Milton SJ, Monadjem A and Oschadleus HD. **In press.** Type specimens in the bird collection at Lubango, Angola. *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club*.
2. Mills MSL, Vaz Pinto P and Haber S. **In press.** Grey-striped Francolin *Pternistis griseostriatus*: skins, distribution and morphometrics. *Bulletin of the African Bird Club*.
3. Mills MSL, Melo M and Vaz A. **Submitted.** The Namba Mountains: new hope for Afromontane forest birds in Angola. *Bird Conservation International*.
4. Mills MSL and Dean WRJ. **In preparation.** The avifauna of the Lagoa Carumbo Important Bird Area, Angola. *Malimbus*.

5. Mills MSL, Gonçalves FM and Cáceres A. **In preparation.** Impacts of subsistence farming on forest avifauna: how threatened birds on the central Angolan escarpment respond to current agricultural practices. *Bird Conservation International* or similar.
6. Mills MSL and Oschadleus HD. **In preparation.** Black-chinned Weaver *Ploceus nigrimentus* in Angola, and its nest. *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club*.
7. Mills MSL. **In preparation.** The little-known Bocage's Sunbird *Nectarinia bocagii*: an Angolan near-endemic. *Bulletin of the African Bird Club*.
8. Mills MSL. South African Cliff Swallow new for Angola. *Bulletin of the African Bird Club*.
9. Mills MSL. Yellow-throated Cuckoo new for Angola. *Bulletin of the African Bird Club*.
10. Cáceres A, Santos P, Tchalo F, Mills MSL and Melo M. In preparation. Easter Island syndrome? Human resource use in the last Afromontane forest remnants of Mount Moco, Angola. *Biodiversity and Conservation*.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

APLORI has now been, almost single-handedly, supporting bird conservation and research activities in Angola for three full years. Although much has been achieved during this period, it feels like the time has come for the bird conservation movement as a whole to commit more of its resources and expertise to help grow Angolan bird conservation far beyond my personal input as supported by APLORI. A significant first step this year was the closer collaboration between me/APLORI and the BirdLife network, and specifically with BirdLife South Africa, following a request from the BirdLife Africa secretariat to BirdLife South Africa to take forward the interests of the BirdLife network in Angola. I look forward to growing this collaboration with BirdLife South Africa and to see other conservation organizations becoming involved too, to rapidly reach the point where my input is but a small part of the bird conservation scene in Angola.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Funding from this year's work came from the generosity of CGGVeritas, The A. P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute, The Conservation Leadership Programme, National Geographic (specifically for my participation in the Lagoa Carumbo expedition), The Gulf Agency Company, and The Clancey Fund of the Percy FitzPatrick Institute. The Rufford Small Grants Foundation continues to support this work, and is funding field work in 2012.

Various other individuals and organizations continue to support this work, and I am especially grateful to Michael Rogerson, Mark Anderson, Brian Huntley, Paula Francisco, Nigel Collar, Phil Hall, Tasso Leventis, Sendi Baptista, Julian Francis, Pedro Vaz Pinto, Fernanda Lages, Francisco Gonçalves, Aimy Cáceres, Martim Melo, David Laing (web site hosting), Ursula Franke, Phil Hockey, Margaret Koopman, Nádia Marques, Jane Raymond, Peter Ryan, Julius Arinaitwe, Tony Baron, Pam Barrett, Robyn Dalzen, Kim Fourie, Ursula Franke, Ali Shebani, Lincoln Fishpool, Karen Hasselberg, Henriette Koning, Chris Hines, Juliet Mills, Gerrit Laubscher, Catherine McMahon, Fabio Olmos, Ernst Retief, and anybody else I may have missed, for their continued support and assistance.