

First host species record for Yellow-throated Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx flavigularis*

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Première mention d'un hôte du Coucou à gorge jaune *Chrysococcyx flavigularis*. Cette note rapporte l'observation d'un jeune Coucou à gorge jaune *Chrysococcyx flavigularis* nourri par un couple de Gobemouches à gorge grise *Myioparus griseigularis* dans le Parc National de l'Ivondo, Gabon, le 13 octobre 2006. Ceci constitue la première mention de reproduction parasite chez cette espèce de coucou, pour laquelle aucun hôte n'était connu.

Yellow-throated Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx flavigularis* is described as very rare in lowland forest in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Nigeria, and rare to frequent in Cameroon, Gabon, Democratic Republic of Congo, south-west Sudan and south-west Uganda. It inhabits primary forest canopy, forest edges, clearings, secondary and gallery forest, and, occasionally, densely wooded savanna (Irwin 1988). It is an extremely unobtrusive and little-known species, presumed to be a brood parasite though its hosts are unknown and eggs undescribed (Irwin 1988, Borrow & Demey 2001, Payne 2005).

On 13 October 2006 we were observing birds in primary forest in Ivindo National Park, at the Ipassa Strict Nature Reserve (also known as Mpassa), west of the town of Makokou, Gabon. This reserve holds almost all of the forest birds known from Gabon, and all but 11 species of the Guinea-Congo Forests biome found in Gabon (Christy 2001). Amongst the species recorded are all four African species of *Chrysococcyx* cuckoo.

At 07.30 hrs, along the main track leading from the research centre into the forest, we found a juvenile cuckoo being fed by two adult Grey-throated Tit-Flycatchers *Myioparus griseigularis*. We observed the activity for more than five minutes; the juvenile cuckoo was stationary at a distance of c.10 m from us and 5 m above the track. Based on the whitish undertail and buffish underparts, very finely barred brown and lacking any green coloration, we identified it as a juvenile Yellow-throated Cuckoo (Fig. 1). The flycatchers were initially located by their characteristic song, a series of 3–4 soft, plaintive whistles, and their identification was verified visually: small, all-grey flycatchers that regularly cocked and fanned their

relatively long tails which lacked the white of Grey Tit-Flycatcher *M. plumbeus*. During two days at the reserve we saw one and heard another male Yellow-throated Cuckoo.

Our sighting represents the first published host species for Yellow-throated Cuckoo. Like other *Chrysococcyx* in Africa, Yellow-throated Cuckoo appears to parasitise small passerines and, like African Emerald Cuckoo *C. cupreus* and Klaas's Cuckoo *C. klaas*, its host(s) appear to be largely insectivorous. Klaas's Cuckoo is known to parasitise Grey Tit-Flycatcher in Malaŵi, thus suggesting at least some overlap in hosts with Yellow-throated Cuckoo. Further data are required to confirm that Yellow-throated Cuckoo has multiple hosts and that it shares the same spectrum of hosts as its closest congeners.

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Figure 1. Juvenile Yellow-throated Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx flavigularis*, Ivindo National Park, Gabon, 13 October 2006 (John Caddick & Michael Mills)

Coucou à gorge jaune *Chrysococcyx flavigularis* juvénile, Parc National de l'Ivindo, Gabon, 13 octobre 2006 (John Caddick & Michael Mills)

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