
First record of Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* for Cameroon

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Première mention du Bécasseau tacheté *Calidris melanotos* pour le Cameroun. Le 8 mars 2009, un Bécasseau tacheté *Calidris melanotos* a été découvert sur un banc de sable dans le Sanaga (03°46'N 10°03'E), près d'Edea, Cameroun. Ceci constitue la première donnée pour le pays de cette espèce, qui est occasionnelle en Afrique de l'Ouest et a notamment été observée au Nigeria et au Gabon, pays limitrophes.

On 8 March 2009, together with eight other participants of a bird tour, we were observing birds along the lower Sanaga River (03°46'N 10°03'E), near Edea in Cameroon. Several shorebirds, such as Grey Pratincole *Glareola cinerea*, White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus*, Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*, Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* and Little Stint *Calidris minuta*, were observed feeding on a large sandbar in the river, c.200 m from the north bank, where we were positioned. SC observed a medium-sized sandpiper with yellowish legs, mid-length, down-curved bill and a very heavily streaked breast clearly demarcated from the white belly. He immediately alerted the group's attention to the probability of the bird being a Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*. We observed the bird through telescopes for c.5 minutes as it fed along the water's edge. During this time it appeared unsettled and repeatedly took flight, eventually travelling a total distance of c.50 m along the sandbar. In flight the upperwing was seen to be uniform in colour, with no obvious pale wingbar or other features.

This combination of features led us to confirm the bird's identity as a Pectoral Sandpiper, the first record for Cameroon (Borrow & Demey 2004; African Bird Club checklists database per J. Caddick pers. comm.). A distant but diagnostic digiscoped photograph was taken, but is of insufficient quality to be published. Pectoral Sandpiper breeds in north-east Russia, northern Alaska and northern Canada, and winters in Australia, New Zealand and South America (Cramp & Simmons 1983). The species occurs widely as a vagrant and there are several previous records from West

Africa, including in neighbouring Gabon (Borrow & Demey 2004) and Nigeria (G. Hak in *Bull. ABC* 15: 134), making the present record far from unexpected.

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References

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