

First record of Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* for Seychelles

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Première mention de la Rynchée peinte *Rostratula benghalensis* pour les Seychelles. L'observation d'une femelle adulte de la Rynchée peinte *Rostratula benghalensis* sur l'Île Persévérance, Seychelles, le 30–31 janvier 2016, a été acceptée comme la première donnée pour le pays par le Comité d'Homologation Seychellois.

In the afternoon of 30 January 2016, Catherina Onezia and Joel Souyave noted a waterbird they did not recognise at the margin of a track in an industrial area on Île Persévérance, a reclaimed island joined by a causeway to the main island of Mahé, near the capital of Seychelles, Victoria. The bird was feeding in small, shallow, muddy rainwater pools surrounded by low vegetation, mainly Beach Morning Glory *Ipomea pes-caprae*. Identification as an adult female Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* was made that evening through reference to guide books (Sinclair & Langrand 2013, Hawkins *et al.* 2015) and a record form was sent to me as Secretary of Seychelles Bird Records Committee (SBRC). I visited the area the following day, joined by CO & JS. The bird was relocated at a nearby temporary rainwater pool, taking flight upon our approach for *c.*50 m and landing in the vicinity of the original observation, where it was photographed (Figs. 1–2). Searches

of the area during the following days failed to relocate the bird.

Description

A medium-sized, dumpy, short-tailed wader. Plumage strongly patterned, head and neck mostly dark rufous with broad white patches around and behind the eye. Most of upperparts dark bronze-green, finely barred black; underparts white. Flight fairly slow, showing rounded wings and white underwing.

Status and distribution

Greater Painted-snipe breeds across most of sub-Saharan Africa and Madagascar, the Nile Delta in Egypt, and in Asia from Pakistan to China, Japan, South-East Asia, Philippines and Indonesia (Kirwan 2016). Mainly sedentary in Asia and Egypt, within Africa it performs short-distance movements in response to feeding and breeding



Figures 1–2. Adult female Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*, Île Persévérance, Seychelles, 31 January 2016 (Adrian Skerrett)

Rynchée peinte *Rostratula benghalensis*, femelle adulte, Île Persévérance, Seychelles, 31 janvier 2016 (Adrian Skerrett)

habitat requirements, principally in the northern tropics, the species being largely nomadic in South Africa. Vagrant to Morocco, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Tibet, Middle East, Pemba and Zanzibar, it has bred in Israel and Saudi Arabia (Kirwan 2016). In the Malagasy region, the species is confined to Madagascar, where the population has been described as a separate race, *madagascariensis*, but no consistent differences have been noted in specimens at the Natural History Museum, UK (Safford & Hawkins 2013). It was formerly considered conspecific with Australian *R. australis* but is now generally considered monotypic (Kirwan 2016).

The record has been accepted by SBRC as an adult female Greater Painted-snipe, the first for Seychelles.

Acknowledgements

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References

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