

# First record of Mountain Wagtail *Motacilla clara* for Senegal

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**Première observation de la Bergeronnette à longue queue *Motacilla clara* au Sénégal.** Le 6 mars 2015, une Bergeronnette à longue queue *Motacilla clara* a été photographiée dans la Réserve Naturelle Communautaire de Dindéfello, au sud-est du Sénégal. Il s'agit de la première donnée de l'espèce pour le pays.

Dindéfello Nature Reserve, now covering c.14,045 ha, is located in Kedougou district, south-east Senegal. It is managed by the Commune Rurale de Dindéfello, targeting the conservation of natural resources and the socio-economic development of the local population on a sustainable basis. Several wildlife inventories have been carried out in the reserve and 221 bird species have been recorded to date, including six whose occurrence in Senegal is known only from this site, as well as Kulikoro (Mali) Firefinch *Lagonosticta virata*, an endemic to the upper Niger Valley (Fernández-García *et al.* 2013). The presence of a large number of species restricted to the Sudan-Guinea savanna biome has supported the recent classification of the reserve as an Important Bird Area (BirdLife International 2016).

On 6 March 2015, LP was conducting a routine field survey in one of the main ravines (12°21'N 12°19'W) near the village of Dindéfello, along a path leading to the highest waterfall in Senegal (125 m). This small, permanent river, a tributary of the Gambia, drains water from a lateritic plateau 400 m above sea level. The river is full of rocks, fallen from the surrounding cliffs, and is bordered by dense gallery forest (Fig. 1). A wagtail at the base of the waterfall attracted LP's attention because it did not match the features of White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* or African Pied Wagtail *M. aguimp*, the two black-and-white wagtails recorded in Senegal (Dowsett *et al.* 2016). The bird had mainly grey upperparts, a white supercilium contrasting with dark grey lores and ear-coverts, blackish wing feathers fringed white, and white underparts with a narrow, dark grey breast-band (Figs. 2–3). It was identified as an adult Mountain Wagtail *M. clara*; juveniles are browner above and lack a breast-band (Tyler 2004, Borrow & Demey 2011). The bird was not observed again, despite repeated visits during the following weeks.

Mountain Wagtail is widespread across central and eastern Africa, but in West Africa its range is more fragmented. The species is known from Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Ivory Coast (Tyler 2004, Borrow & Demey 2014), while claims of its occurrence in south-west Mali have been rejected (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2005). There appear to be no previous records for Senegal (Morel & Morel 1990, Barlow *et al.* 1997, Borrow & Demey 2011, Dowsett *et al.* 2016).

The presence of Mountain Wagtail in Dindéfello Nature Reserve is not entirely



**Figure 1.** View of the Dindéfello waterfall, Senegal, in the wet season, where the Mountain Wagtail *Motacilla clara* was recorded (N. Ruiz de Azua)

Vue de la cascade de Dindéfello, Sénégal, pendant la saison des pluies, où la Bergeronnette à longue queue *Motacilla clara* a été observée (N. Ruiz de Azua)



**Figures 2–3.** Mountain Wagtail *Motacilla clara*, Dindéfello Nature Reserve, Senegal, 6 March 2015 (L. Pacheco)  
Bergeronnette à longue queue *Motacilla clara*, Réserve Naturelle de Dindéfello, Sénégal, 6 mars 2015 (L. Pacheco)

surprising, given its occurrence in the Fouta Djallon highlands of north-central Guinea, c.200 km away (Borrow & Demey 2014). Streams with steep gradients and exposed rocks, its preferred habitat (Tyler 2004), are relatively common in the reserve, unlike in the rest of Senegal. Despite the fact that the waterfall is frequently visited by naturalists and tourists, and that intense bird surveys were conducted in 2011 (Fernández-García *et al.* 2013), this rather conspicuous species had not been recorded previously, suggesting Mountain Wagtail is probably an irregular or seasonal visitor to the reserve.

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