

PREVENTING EXTINCTIONS

Long-billed Tailorbird *Artisornis moreaui*



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Long-billed Tailorbird.

Background

Long-billed Tailorbird occurs at low density in two widely separated forests - the nominate race is found in the East Usambaras, Tanzania, whilst the subspecies *sousae* has recently been rediscovered in the Njesi Plateau of northern Mozambique. These two subpopulations are 1,000 km apart, and despite much recent fieldwork, there are still no records from any of the intervening forests.

An elusive and skulking species, it inhabits forest edge and large canopy gaps where a dense undergrowth of tangled vines and climbers prevails. Although the species is likely to have been under-recorded in the past, its restricted range and low population density suggest that the total population is extremely small. Only c.110 km² of suitable habitat remain in the East Usambaras and areas of unprotected forest remain under considerable pressure from mining, pole-cutting, cultivation and firewood collection. Recent research suggests that the introduced tree *Maesopsis eminii* may further threaten the tailorbird as it regenerates rapidly within forest gaps rendering these areas unsuitable for the species.

Actions being implemented

1. A **census** in various protected areas led to the discovery of 20 territories in the Nilo Nature Reserve, and informed a population estimate of 371 individuals for the East Usambaras. The surveys also improved knowledge of the species's ecology: it was found that it occupies all altitudes above 800m.
2. The **educational awareness scheme** has reached a wide-ranging audience. Wildlife Groups have started in local schools, leaflets have been disseminated, the species has been mentioned in village meetings, and reserve staff have taken part in Important Bird Area monitoring workshops.
3. Using field surveys, mapping and laboratory work, eight **core conservation zones** have been identified for Long-billed Tailorbird in the East Usambaras. Advocacy is ongoing to ensure these are discussed in the Management Plans of the Amani, Nilo and Derema Corridor reserves.



The field team have carried out extensive surveys, including using playback to attract Long-tailed Tailorbird.

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