

# First record of Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus* for Senegal and sub-Saharan Africa

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**Première mention du Merle obscur *Turdus obscurus* pour le Sénégal et l’Afrique subsaharienne.** Le 10 décembre 2015, un Merle obscur *Turdus obscurus* de 1<sup>er</sup> hiver a été photographié dans le Parc National de la Langue de Barbarie, au nord-ouest du Sénégal (15°52’N 16°30’W). Ceci constitue la première donnée pour le pays et l’Afrique subsaharienne. Le Merle obscur niche en Sibérie centrale et orientale et hiverne en Asie du sud-est, du nord-est de l’Inde à Taiwan et aux grandes îles de la Sonde. L’espèce est accidentelle mais presque annuelle en Europe en automne. Il n’y a qu’une seule observation précédente en Afrique, d’un oiseau de 1<sup>er</sup> hiver photographié le 17 décembre 2008 à Merzouga, au Maroc, à environ 2.100 km de l’observation rapportée ici.

On 10 December 2015 at 12.55 hrs, we observed an unfamiliar thrush in coastal forest near the Hotel Teranga in Parc National de la Langue de Barbarie, north-west Senegal (15°52’N 16°30’W). It was perched in a tree next to feeders visited by various bird species, including doves (Columbidae), weavers (Ploceidae) and Greater Blue-eared Starlings *Lamprotornis chalybaeus*. The thrush was similar in size to African Thrush *Turdus pelios*—the only widespread Afrotropical thrush occurring in Senegal—but had a prominent white supercilium, dark lores underlined by a white stripe merging with a white crescent below the eye, dark brown ear-coverts, a white submoustachial stripe, and a white throat bordered by a dark brown malar stripe. Breast and flanks were pale orange-brown, with the rest of the underparts off-white. Upperparts and tail were olive-brown with white tips to the greater coverts (Fig. 1). After c.2 minutes the bird flew off and was not seen again.

After consulting relevant literature (e.g. Clement & Hathway 2000, Svensson *et al.* 2009) and comparing photographs on the internet, we identified the bird as an Eyebrowed Thrush *T. obscurus*. The white tips to the greater coverts and the white throat indicated it was a first-winter.

Eyebrowed Thrush breeds in central and east Siberia, and winters in south and south-east Asia, from north-east India to Taiwan and the Greater Sundas (Clement & Hathway 2000, Collar 2005). It is a rare but nearly annual vagrant to Europe in autumn (Clement & Hathway 2000, Svensson *et al.* 2009). In Africa there is just one previous record, of a first-winter photographed at Merzouga, Morocco, on 17 December 2008 (Messemaker 2009), c.2,100 km north-east of

our record. The sighting reported here is thus the first documented record of Eyebrowed Thrush for Senegal and sub-Saharan Africa, and also the south-westernmost ever (Morel & Morel 1990, Urban *et al.* 1997, Borrow & Demey 2011, 2014).



**Figure 1.** First-winter Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus*, Parc National de la Langue de Barbarie, Senegal, 10 December 2015 (Rafael Benjumea)

Merle obscur *Turdus obscurus*, 1<sup>er</sup> hiver, Parc National de la Langue de Barbarie, Sénégal, 10 décembre 2015 (Rafael Benjumea)

## Acknowledgements

The observation was made during a bird survey undertaken in Parc National de la Langue de Barbarie (PNLB) and financed by Project Tougoupeul ([www.tougoupeul.be](http://www.tougoupeul.be)). We thank Dirk Vanhoecke, initiator of the project, for inviting us to carry out the study, Moussa Fall, director of PNLB, and the park staff for assisting us in many ways, and Simon Cavaillès for helping us with the identification and commenting on the submitted manuscript.

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Received 11 January 2016; revision accepted 15 January 2016.