



Photospot:

Juvenile Rufous Fishing Owl *Scotopelia ussheri* in Guinea

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Une Chouette-pêcheuse rousse *Scotopelia ussheri* juvénile en Guinée. Des photos sont présentées d'une Chouette-pêcheuse rousse *Scotopelia ussheri* juvénile capturée dans le sud-est de la Guinée en octobre 1993. La plupart du petit nombre d'observations récentes et de photos de cette espèce, qui est confinée au bloc forestier de la Haute Guinée, proviennent de la Sierra Leone, de la Côte d'Ivoire et du Ghana, les photos de juvéniles étant particulièrement rares. Celles reproduites ici sont également les premières de la Chouette-pêcheuse rousse pour la Guinée.

Rufous Fishing Owl *Scotopelia ussheri* is the rarest of the three African fishing owls and is confined to the Upper Guinea forest block where it frequents rivers and streams in rainforest and, additionally, mangroves (Gatter 1997, König *et al.* 1999, Mikkola 2013, Borrow & Demey 2014). Most of the limited number of recent records and photographs are from Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana (Atkinson *et al.* 1994, Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2014, Monticelli *et al.* 2015, eBird 2021). Photographs of juveniles are especially rare: a very young, captive bird with mainly whitish downy plumage is depicted in Atkinson *et al.* (1994), whilst a free-living juvenile with pale rufous plumage was published by Monticelli *et al.* (2015).

Here we present additional photographs of a juvenile Rufous Fishing Owl, which on 6 October 1993 was brought by local people to a compound

in Sérédou, south-east Guinea, where biologists assessing various aspects of the biodiversity of nearby Ziama Forest Reserve were staying. It was still in its whitish downy plumage (Figs. 1–2) and was accommodated in an aviary. A photograph taken six months later, on 3 April 1994, shows the same individual that meanwhile attained adult plumage (Fig. 3).

There are few previously published records of Rufous Fishing Owl in Guinea—a specimen was collected on the Guinean side of Mount Nimba in 1951 (Hald-Mortensen 1971 *in* Collar & Stuart 1985) and the species was listed for Ziama Forest by Robertson (2001)—and the photographs presented here are the first from the country.

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Figures 1–2. Juvenile Rufous Fishing Owl *Scotopelia ussheri*, Sérédou, Guinea, 6 October 1993 (Wolfgang Böhme)

Chouette-pêcheuse rousse *Scotopelia ussheri*, juvénile, Sérédou, Guinée, 6 octobre 1993 (Wolfgang Böhme)





Figure 3. Captive adult Rufous Fishing Owl *Scotopelia ussheri* (same individual as in Figs. 1–2), Sérédou, Guinea, 3 April 1994 (Henning Vierhaus)

Chouette-pêcheuse rousse *Scotopelia ussheri*, adulte en captivité (le même individu que sur les Figs. 1–2), Sérédou, Guinée, 3 avril 1994 (Henning Vierhaus)

the photograph of the adult. WB is indebted to W. Bützler for hosting him during his research in south-east Guinea. Thanks are due also to Ursula Bott (Zoologisches Forschungsmuseum Alexander Koenig, Bonn) for digitising the slides.

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