

Cooleman, S., Mergen, P. & Louette, M.

mailto:stijn.cooleman@africamuseum.be

Biology Department, Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, Belgium



Fig 1: Distribution map of *Accipiter castanilius* 2011 (c) RMCA, Tervuren, creator: Breman, F.C.

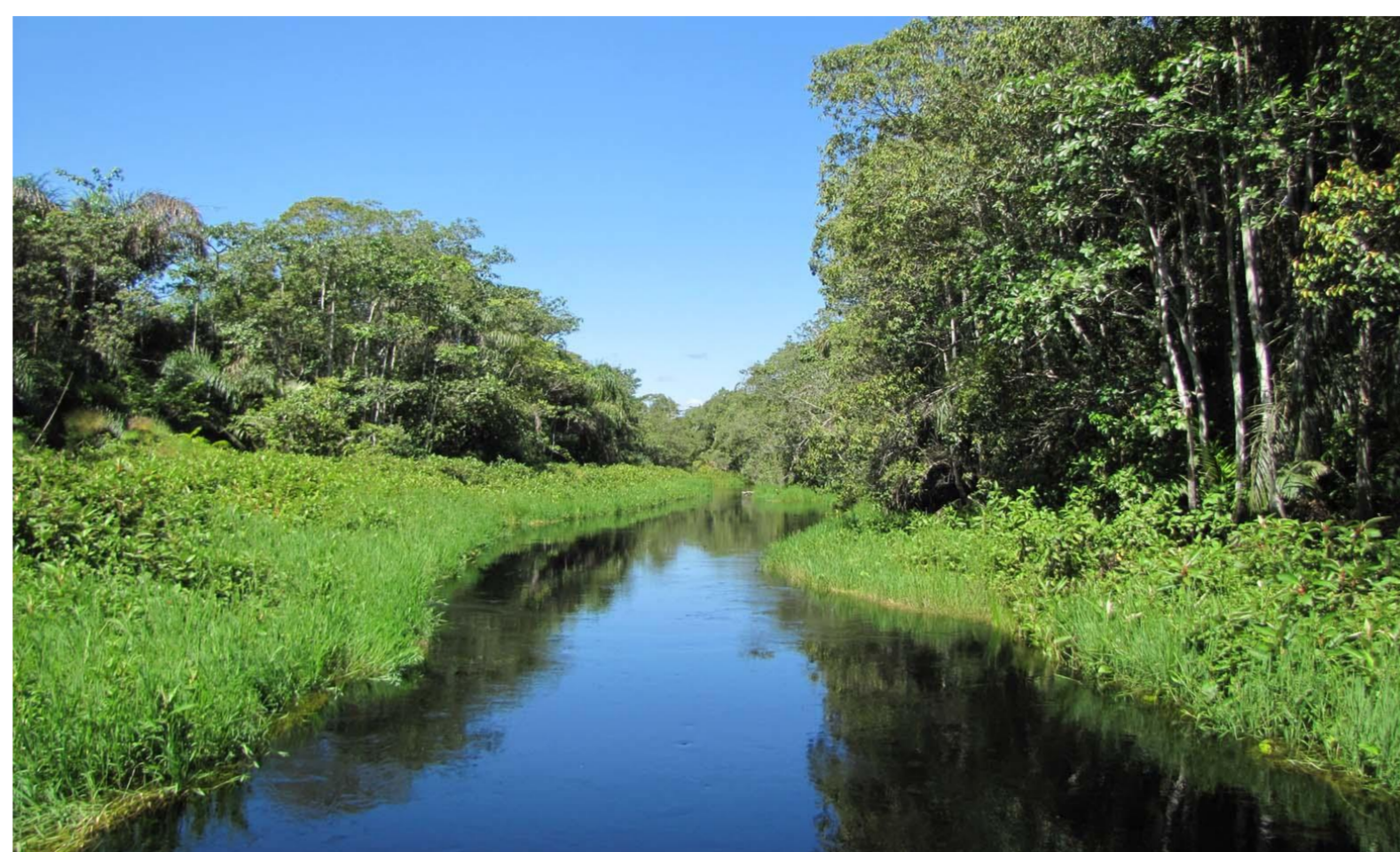


Fig 2: Lower Itimbiri river, DR Congo 2010 (c) photo: Dijkstra, K.-D.B.



Fig 3: *Accipiter castanilius* caught at Yaekela, DR Congo 2010 (c) photo: Dijkstra, K.-D.B.

INTRODUCTION

Combining digital ornithological content via a virtual research environment at the Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA) [a] through a **Rubenstein Fellowship** [b] contributes to the goal of the Encyclopedia of Life (EOL): <http://eol.org/>

EOL wants to describe and illustrate all species known to science, via a freely accessible online information system, as a partnership between the scientific community and the public.



Fig 4: *Strix cabrae*



Fig 5: *Ispidina leopoldi*

VARIOUS SOURCES

To create or enrich EOL taxon pages about Afrotropical birds, we integrate biological information and images from various sources via a new LifeDesk:

<http://afrotropicalbirds.lifedesks.org/>

Biological information

We summarize scientific content (including descriptions of species and ecological, distributional, genetic and conservation aspects) from publications (such as specialized papers and handbooks about birds) and online resources (such as BirdLife International). Generally, we follow one of the most important modern **classifications** of birds, namely *The Howard & Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World* (Dickinson (ed.), 2003).

Images

Beside RMCA research maps [1], images are assembled from contributions of photographers [8], the RMCA's photographic archives, including historical grayscale pictures [7], and scanned old literature, including drawings [4 & 5].

TAXA SELECTION

The taxa selection is especially based on Louette's ongoing research, such as on *Accipiter* raptors [1-3] and *Ploceus* weavers [6], endemism and threat status of birds in the Congo Basin and surroundings and on presence in the ornithological collection at the RMCA, especially its type specimens [9].



Fig 6: printscreen <http://afrotropicalbirds.lifedesks.org/pages/315>

IMPORTANCE

All this online access to knowledge about the remarkable Sub-Saharan avifauna will be valuable for scientists and birders.

It may act to enliven collaboration among African experts and help conservation and management in some of the world's biodiversity hotspots.



Fig 7
DR Congo circa 1930s
(c) RMCA, Tervuren,
photo: Lippens, L.

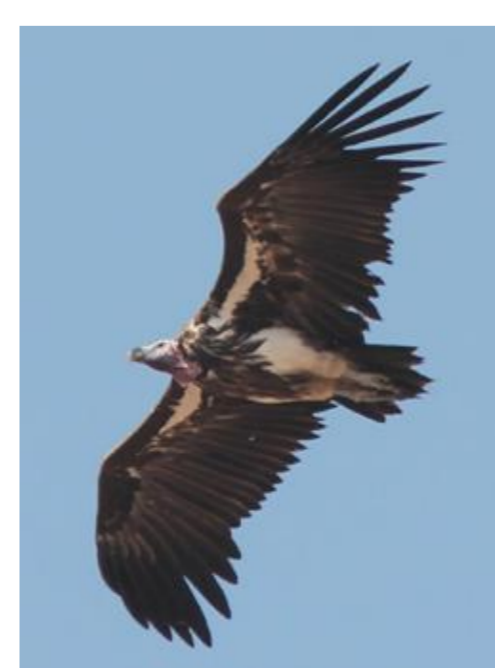


Fig 8
Kenya 2010
(c) photo: Buckens, J.

RMCA COLLABORATION

Through a digitization project funded by the Belgian Science Policy, the RMCA's 130 name-bearing types were photographed [9] and made available via a Zoomify application [c] in the framework of the Semantic web-based Thematic European Reference Network Application (STERNA) [d]. This bird type data set is already accessible online via a BioCASE portal [e] thanks to the RMCA cybertaxonomy unit's experience in Biodiversity Information Standards.



Fig 9: Holotype RMCA A.9695 *Ispidina leopoldi* (c) RMCA, Tervuren, photo: Molitor, P.

Through Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) [f] and Biodiversity Heritage Library for Europe (BHL-Europe) [g], extra information and illustrations [4 & 5] from digitized old literature can be linked.

EXTRA URLS

- [a]: <http://www.africamuseum.be>
- [b]: <http://eol.org/info/fellows>
- [c]: http://biology.africamuseum.be/STERNAimages/Ornithology/SternaRMCA_Details.php?image=_PHM7381
- [d]: <http://www.sterna-net.eu>
- [e]: http://193.190.223.47/biocase_rmca/querytool/main.cgi?dsa=STERNA_gbifmapping
- [f]: <http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>
- [g]: <http://bhl-europe.eu>



<http://cybertaxonomy.africamuseum.be/Poster/TDWG/2011/EOL>

