

# MIX & MATCH *Which apalis is this?*

**Y**ou might be forgiven for thinking that this is a mystery bird quiz... With its completely dark grey head and prominent black throat-line, this bird is undeniably a Black-throated Apalis *Apalis jacksoni*, but with the white belly and red eye-ring it is also very much a Yellow-breasted Apalis *A. flavida*.

This individual was seen and photographed on 8 April 2012 feeding in the mid-canopy of Minziro Forest, located in the Bukoba District in the Kagera region of north-western Tanzania. It was frequenting *Baikiaea-Podocarpus* seasonal swamp forest (or groundwater forest),

essentially an outlier of the Guinea-Congo lowland forests.

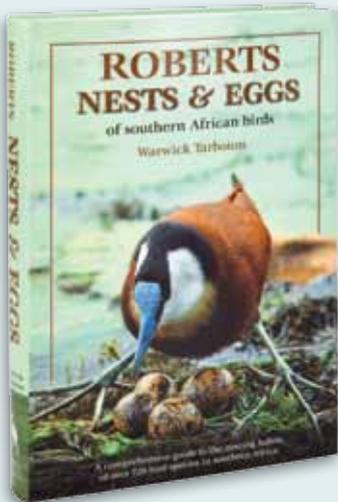
Consulting the definitive *Handbook of Avian Hybrids of the World* (McCarthy, 2006) revealed that although there are records of hybrids between Brown-headed Apalis *A. alticola* and Grey Apalis *A. cinerea* and between Yellow-breasted Apalis and Brown-tailed Apalis *A. viridiceps*, there is no mention of hybridisation between the two species involved here. It thus seems likely that this Minziro Forest bird is a new hybrid record. □

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## ON THE *shelf*



### ROBERTS NESTS & EGGS OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN BIRDS

Warwick Tarboton

Softcover; R280; 415 pages

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John Voelcker Bird Book Fund

**A**s a schoolboy egg-collector I was weaned on Captain Cecil Priest's *Eggs of Birds Breeding in Southern Africa*, published in 1948. It contained 20 accurate hand-coloured plates depicting the eggs of 430 species. The major drawback

was the brevity of the information, which provided no more than a few basic facts.

My own life-long interest in birds' breeding biology culminated in the publication of *Nesting Birds* in 1996, but this was essentially an overview of the breeding habits of southern African birds. Then, in 2001, Warwick Tarboton's *Nests & Eggs of Southern African Birds* was published by Struik. It was a major achievement in that it contained not only detailed and accurate information about each species, but also life-sized photographs of their eggs.

Now, a decade later, Tarboton has produced an upgraded version of the original under the aegis of the John Voelcker Bird Book Fund, which provided generous funding. How does this edition differ from the first? Basically the breeding information remains the same, but with inevitable additions in the light of new knowledge gathered in the interim. The main difference is in the layout, and here the author pays well-deserved tribute to his wife Michèle for her major contribution.

In the original, all the text was collated in a lengthy section at the beginning of the book, followed by the egg plates and accompanying photographs at the end. Now the

plates illustrating eggs are grouped at the back and the text information on 680 species has the relevant photographs on the facing page. This is a much improved arrangement, enabling the reader to immediately view the photographs without having to turn to the back as was previously the case. The number of photographs has increased enormously (sometimes there are 10 to a page), and they have been supplied by numerous photographers. The images alone make it worthwhile acquiring the new version.

Warwick Tarboton has rendered an immense service in providing such a comprehensive and attractive wealth of information on the nests and eggs of the birds of the region.

**PETER STEYN**

