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Grey-headed Broadbill *Smithornis sharpei*, new to Nigeria

On 21–24 October 1995 we camped in a lowland forest at 7°0'N, 10°54'E, c. 2 km south of Buru village on the road east from Abong at the base of the Mambilla plateau, southeast Nigeria. The hillsides are 30–40° in slope and 100 m high from valley to ridge; we birded along trails that paralleled the ridges and streams. The forest has many palms and buttressed trees though the larger trees have been logged. It appears to be a lowland extension of the forests of northern West Cameroon (Sayer *et al.* 1992); Serle (1957) mapped the area as relict rain forest in derived Guinea savannah. Rains were heavy and persistent. Annual rainfall of the area is greater than 2000 mm (Federal Surveys, Nigeria 1967) and at Abong is 2563 mm (Bawden & Tuley 1966).

On 21 October we netted an adult Grey-headed Broadbill *Smithornis sharpei* 1 m over a clear stream in a steep forested valley at about 380 m elevation. It was photographed, a description written, diagnostic feathers removed, and released. On the next day MDH saw another one about 400 m from the net site. The captured bird was large with a dark grey head with blackish cap, and with rufous on the forehead, lores, across the upper breast, on the underwing coverts and edges of secondaries and tips of median and greater coverts. RBP and LLP compared the photographs and feathers (UMMZ 233.887) in the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology with study skins of seven *Smithornis sharpei zenkeri*, ten *S. r. rufolateralis* and ten *S. capensis camerunensis*. The photographs are dark but the large size (calibrated by fingertips, it was not measured) indicates that it is *S. sharpei*. The feathers all are identifiable as *sharpei*. The length of primary 5 is 59 mm, as in *sharpei* (57–61 mm) and larger than *rufolateralis* (44–49 mm) and *capensis* (48–54 mm); it is broad as in *sharpei* and not narrow and pointed at the tip as in the other two broadbills, and its colour is rufous brown as in *sharpei* and not grey brown as in the other two broadbills. The rufous vane with paler buff tip of the greater primary covert is the size and colour of *sharpei*, not slate as in *rufolateralis* or streaked black as in *capensis*. The underwing coverts are rufous, not whitish as in the other two broadbills. The streaked breast feather has a fine line of grey down the shaft as in *sharpei*, not a thin line of black as in *rufolateralis* or a thick line of black as in *capensis*. The back feather with a white base has a rufous tip and is large as in *sharpei*. Juvenile *S. sharpei* lack the white base of the back feathers and have rufous on the forehead and crown, a more distinctly marked orange-rufous tip to the wing coverts, and broad black streaks below (CM 106.280, specimen from Efulen, Cameroon; Fry 1992; Lambert & Woodcock 1996).

The forest is 10 km from the border along the Donga River. *S. sharpei* occurs in both lowland and highland forests (Louette 1981) and in Western Cameroon it occurs mainly above 1000 m but on Mt. Cameroon from 500–800 m (Bowden 1986, Stuart & Jensen 1986). The closest known locality in Cameroon is at least 50 km from Buru, depending on the exact location of the Bamenda highlands records. This appears to be

the first record of the Grey-headed Broadbill in Nigeria and the northernmost record in Africa for the species (Fry 1992, Elgood 1994).

We thank the Federal Environmental Protection Agency of Nigeria for research permits, and the Department of Zoology, University of Jos, for facilities. The Field Museum of Natural History (FMNH) and Carnegie Museum of Natural History (CM) loaned specimens. Fieldwork was supported by a National Science Foundation research grant.

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Received 4 February 1997

Revised 17 May 1997

R.B. Payne¹, L.L. Payne¹ & M.T.E. Hopkins²

¹Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan,
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109, U.S.A.

²TCNN, P.O. Box 64, Bukuru, Plateau State, Nigeria