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Received 8 August 2011; revised 6 January 2012.

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### **First record and probable breeding of African *Pitta pitta angolensis* in Omo Forest Reserve, southwest Nigeria**

The Omo Forest in southwestern Nigeria is an Important Bird Area and Biosphere Reserve, known to hold at least 74 bird species restricted to the Guinea-Congo Forests Biome (Ezealor 2001). In spite of effort by the Nigerian Conservation Foundation and World Bank to secure the forest, its 4.6 km<sup>2</sup> Strict Nature Reserve and the 142 km<sup>2</sup> Biosphere Extension Areas around it are still experiencing severe degradation due to excessive exploitation of timber, agricultural encroachment and poaching (Ezealor 2001, Olmos & Turshak 2009, pers. obs.).

On the damp, calm, cloudy mornings of 27 and 30 May 2012, at 7h00 and 10h00 respectively, we caught two African Pittas *Pitta angolensis* (Figs 1 and 2) in the lower pockets of mist nets in the primary forest of Omo Forest Reserve, at altitude *c.* 75 m near Erin Camp (6°55'6"N, 4°19'10"E), at two locations separated by ≤ 60 m. Biometrics of the two birds were: wing length 114, 117 mm; tarsus 37, 34 mm; bill 22, 23 mm; head 49, 48 mm; tail 44, 40 mm; weight 69, 60g. One had an active brood patch (Fig. 2).



**Figure 1. African Pitta mist-netted in Omo Forest Reserve, 30 May 2012.**

This is the first record of African Pitta for Omo Forest Reserve (Green *et al.* 2007, Olmos & Turshak 2009), and provides a strong indication of local breeding. There are no breeding records of this species in Nigeria (Elgood *et al.* 2001).

This is contribution no. 55 from the A.P Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI). We are grateful to Dr A.P. Leventis for funding APLORI, to the National Centre for Biosystematics (Natural History Museum, University of Oslo) and the Research Council of Norway for sponsoring OTC's field work in Nigeria, and to Nicholas Wicks and Clifford Omonu who assisted during field work.

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**Figure 2. Brood patch of African Pitta, Omo Forest Reserve, 27 May 2012.**

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Received 17 July 2012; revised 2 August 2012.

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