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# Oystercatcher *Haematopus* records from Angola

Robert E. Simmons<sup>a,b</sup>, Michael S. L. Mills<sup>a,c</sup> and W. Richard J. Dean<sup>a</sup>

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**Observations d'huitriers *Haematopus* en Angola.** Il y a peu d'observations d'huitriers *Haematopus* en Angola. Avant 1975, il n'y avait que deux mentions de l'Huître de Moquin *H. moquini*. Plus récemment, en 1999, l'espèce était toutefois assez commune le long de la côte au sud de la ville de Namibe. Des inventaires effectués en janvier 2009 le long du littoral du Parc National de Iona confirment que l'Huître de Moquin est maintenant un visiteur non-nicheur régulier et assez commun au sud de l'Angola. Ceci est peut être dû à l'augmentation récente de sa population. En plus, un Huître pie *H. ostralegus*, auparavant connu que d'une seule observation non confirmée en 1982, a été observé pendant ces inventaires, confirmant sa présence en Angola.

There are few documented records of oystercatchers *Haematopus* from Angola; neither Traylor (1963) nor Pinto (1983) included any species on the Angolan list. Dean (2000) includes only African Black Oystercatcher *H. moquini*, although he draws attention to a record by Günther & Feiler (1986) of a juvenile European Oystercatcher *H. ostralegus* from Ilha dos Passeros, Mussulo Bay, Luanda, in November 1982, which was reportedly photographed. We report here on additional records of both African Black Oystercatcher and Eurasian Oystercatcher from Angola.

## African Black Oystercatcher

On the north Namibian coast, African Black Oystercatchers are rare (Hockey 1983), and breeding occurs only south of the Hoanib River mouth, although only small numbers breed to the north of Lüderitz. Most records north of Lüderitz are of dispersing juveniles, which form flocks year-round and remain on the 'nursery' grounds for 2–3 years before returning to the breeding sites (Hockey 2005). J. C. Sinclair recorded the first African Black Oystercatchers in Angola; two at Lobito in May 1973 (Summers & Cooper 1977), the most northerly record accepted as valid by Hockey (1983). The second record, by K. H. Cooper, was of a single at Foz do Cunene in January 1975 (Dean *et al.* 1988). Dean (2000) lists a third record by Simmons *et al.* (1993) from the Cunene River mouth, in March–May 1991, although strictly this record is from Namibia. Subsequently, this species was recorded as reasonably common in January 1999 in southern Angola, with a total of

35 birds at Baia dos Tigres, Iona National Park, and a single at Namibe town (Dean *et al.* 2002, Simmons *et al.* 2006).

J. Mellenthin (pers. comm.) reported a single bird in December 2003 at Baia dos Tigres. RES visited the coastline of Iona National Park on 24–27 January 2009, conducting shorebird surveys from Tombua (15°48'S 11°51'E) to Foz do Cunene on the Namibian border (17°23'S 11°47'E). African Black Oystercatchers were recorded on three consecutive days, between Tombua and the northern end of Ilha dos Tigres on 24 January (four birds), at Baia dos Tigres on 25–26 January (35 birds) and on 24 January between these two localities (five birds). All birds were recorded in groups of four or more. These records confirm that African Black Oystercatchers are now at least a regular non-breeding visitor to southern Angola; these birds are probably mainly immature. Given the complete absence of earlier records, despite collecting trips by the Ornithology Department of the Instituto de Investigação Científica de Angola to the south-west coast, numbers in Angola appear to be increasing in line with the global population trend (Hockey 2005).

## Eurasian Oystercatcher

A single Eurasian Oystercatcher was seen on two consecutive days (25–26 January 2009) at Baia dos Tigres, together with a flock of African Black Oystercatchers (Fig. 1). Excepting the report by Günther & Feiler (1986), this is the first record of this species for the country, which can now be added to the Angolan list with confidence.



**Figure 1.** Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*, Baía dos Tigres, Angola, January 2009, in company of African Black Oystercatchers *H. moquini* (Rob Simmons)  
 Hútrier pie *Haematopus ostralegus*, Baía dos Tigres, Angola, janvier 2009, avec Hútriers de Moquin *H. moquini* (Rob Simmons)

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