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Ornithological Observations accepts papers containing faunistic information about birds. This includes descriptions of distribution, behaviour, breeding, foraging, food, movement, measurements, habitat and plumage. It will also consider for publication a variety of other interesting or relevant ornithological material: reports of projects and conferences, annotated checklists for a site or region, specialist bibliographies, and any other interesting or relevant material.

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UNUSUAL FORAGING BEHAVIOUR OF AFRICAN PARADISE FLYCATCHER *TERPSIPHONE VIRIDIS* *PLUMBEICEPS*

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The African Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone viridis plumbeiceps* (Chittenden *et al.* 2012) is a widespread and common intra-African migrant that is familiar to most nature lovers even those who are not birders. It is very visible making its presence known when it arrives in September by its catchy song and highly visible behaviour. It has striking sexual dimorphism and despite it being so well known there is relatively little written about its feeding behaviour.

Johnson (2005) describes various foraging techniques. These include "hawking from a perch within the canopy" (Fraser, 1983), "systematically searching the undersides of leaves along branches and in thick tangles, often in large trees" (Fraser, 1983), frequently hover hawks" (Fraser, 1983), "foraging 12-15 m above the ground in the sub-canopy in fairly open parts of the Knysna Forest" (Koen, 1988) and "in the E Cape Kloofs much food is collected on the ground and grassy verges" (Skead, 1967). The behaviour that I witnessed is similar to that mentioned by Skead.

In September 2012 while the weather was inclement and guests were confined to the main camp at Bongani Mountain Lodge (S25°27.590 E31°17.402) I watched three adult African Paradise Flycatchers from my porch. The lodge is situated in the Mthethomusha Game Reserve in the Malelane Mountains. It runs along the south-western border of the Kruger National Park. It consists mainly of granite and dolomite outcrops with sandy soil. The vegetation is of a granite lowveld vegetation type consisting of tree species such as *Terminalia phanerophobia*, *Ficus ingens*, *Aneilema*

spp, *Cissus cactiformis* amongst others (McLeland and March 2012). The area occupied by the flycatchers was open sand between low rocks less than one metre high with some small trees and shrubs. There were two females and one male. According to the resident ranger the birds were recent arrivals having made their presence known in the preceding few days.

The birds sat either on very low rocks or on the ground. The birds proceeded to hawk very small unidentified insects by making short sallies from their perches usually at very low altitude of no more than two metres above the ground and then returning to their perch. The pursuit flight was usually very short and the insect was swallowed in flight. This behaviour lasted for most of the period 13-15 September 2012 while I was at the Lodge and was witnessed during the day on numerous occasions. Although there were suitable trees available for perch hunting along the fringes of this sandy open area these were not used by any of the birds during the observation time for the other described hunting methods. In close proximity to the study area was tangles of thick mountain bush along a drainage line but this area was not utilised during this period.

The insects attracted numerous other bird species such as Chinspot Batis *Batis molitor palliditergum*, Southern Black Tit *Parus niger xanthostomus*, Black-backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla hamatus* (Chittenden *et al.* 2012) and Orange-breasted Bush-shrike *Telophorus sulfureopectus* but none of these adopted a similar foraging strategy.

The article written by Skead was penned in 1967. It would be interesting to know exactly how the food he described was collected and whether the habitat was similar to that in my description. It has taken about forty-five years to confirm his observations.

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