

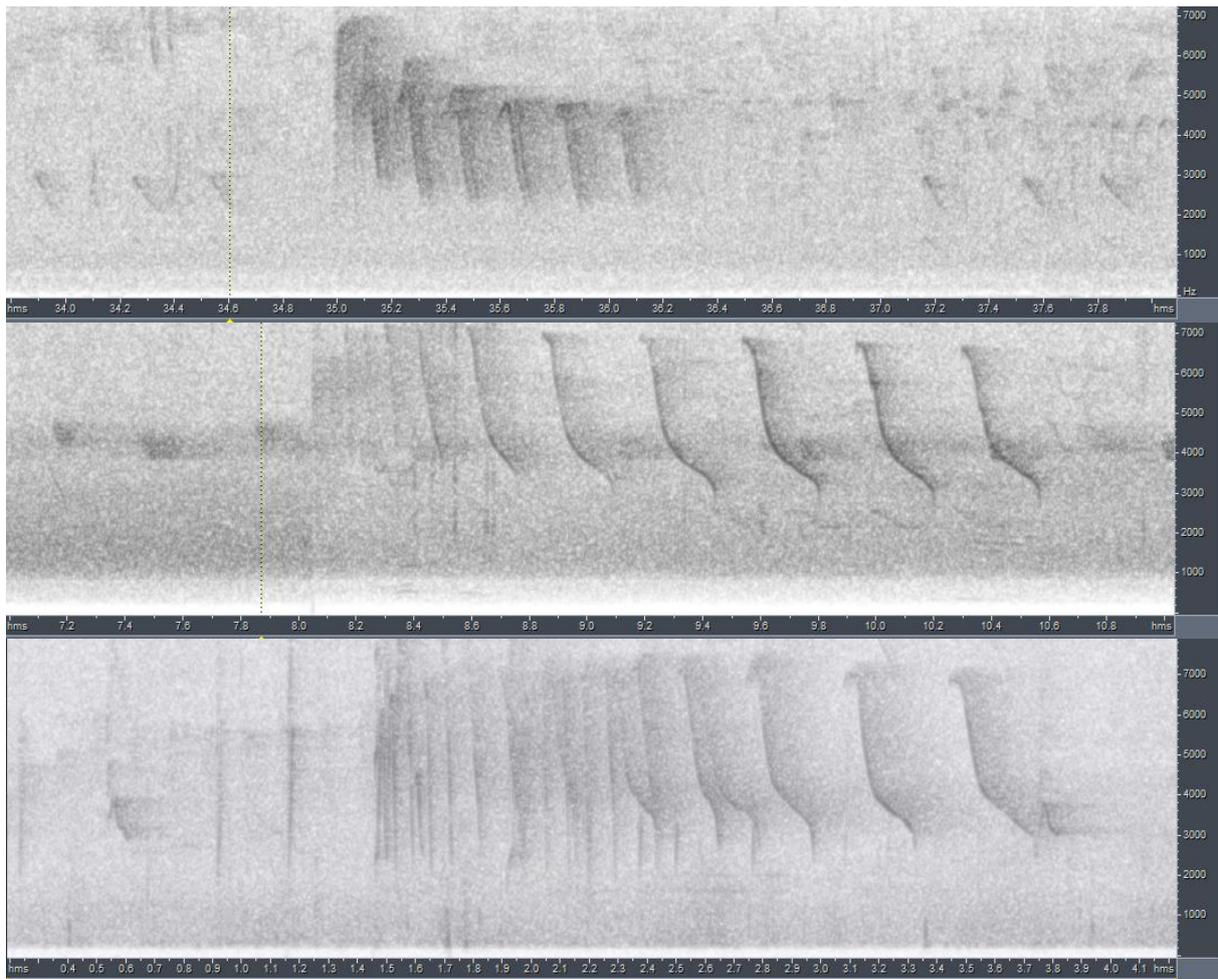
Notes on the vocalizations of Madagascar Cuckoo-shrike (*Coracina cinerea*)

Peter Boesman

In the following we briefly analyze and compare voice of the different races of Madagascar Cuckoo-shrike (*Coracina cinerea*). We also try to quantify the extent of any vocal differences using the criteria proposed by Tobias *et al.* (2010), as a support for taxonomic review. We have made use of sound recordings available on-line from Xeno Canto (XC) and Huguet & Chapuis (2003).

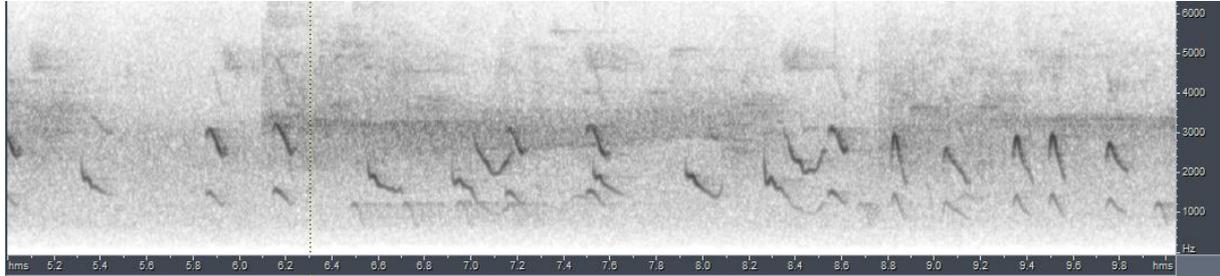
cinerea/pallida

Most typical vocalization is a series of downslurred notes, initially rattling, then slowing down:



Other vocalizations are:

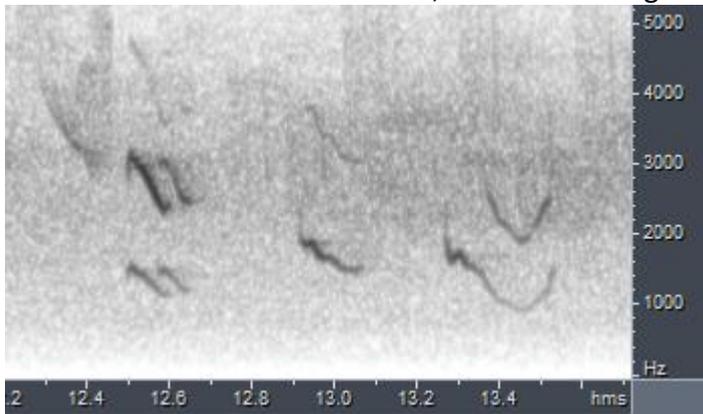
a continuous delivery of short melodious notes:



and several excitement calls.

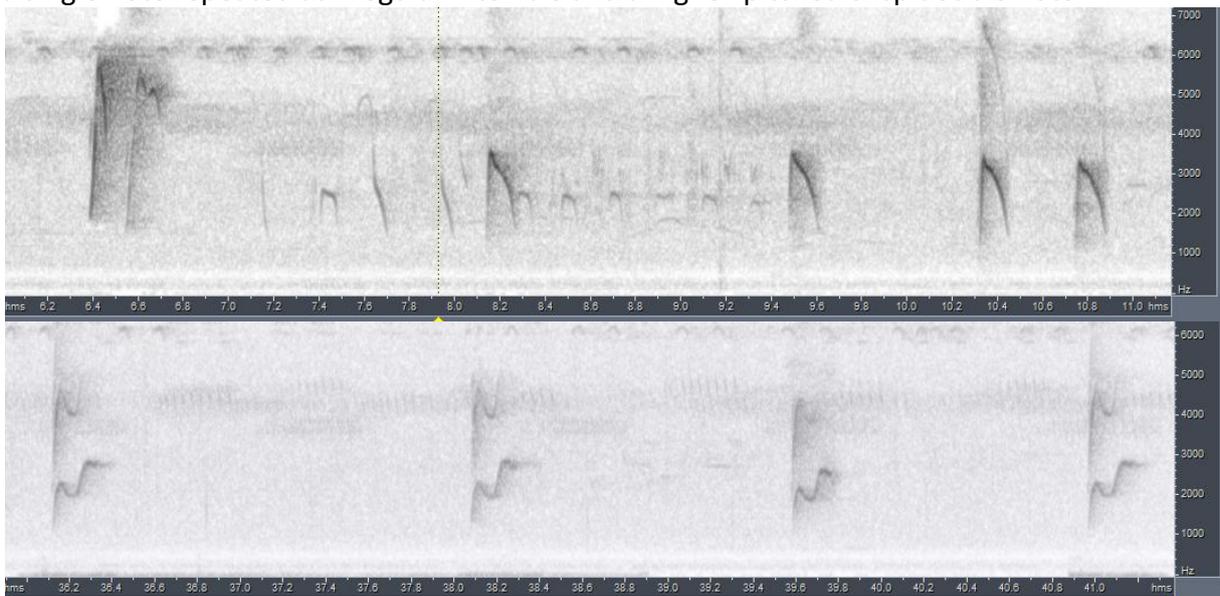
The 'kip-kewkew' (described by BoA, Hawkins & Safford 2013) might well come from two birds (one delivering the repeated kip-notes, the other answering with kewkew, etc.)

If we zoom in on this vocalization, which according to BoA is similar to *cucullata*:



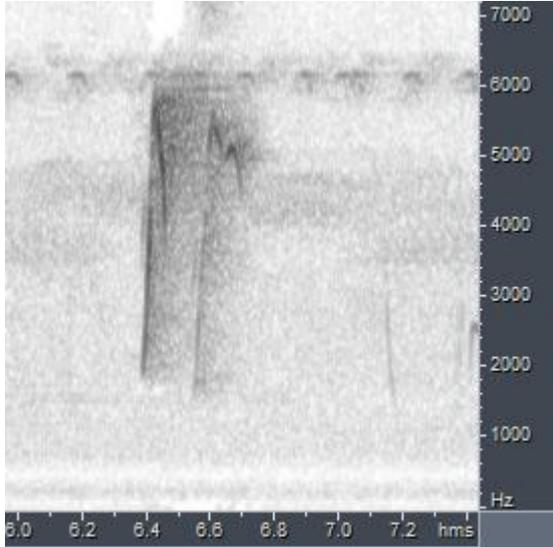
cucullata (no recordings of *moheliensis*)

a single note repeated at irregular intervals and a higher-pitched crisp double note.

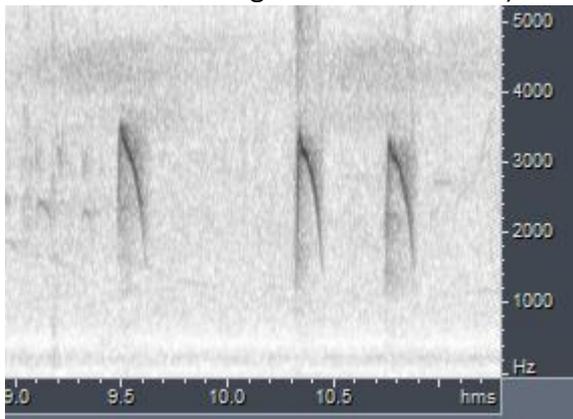


If we zoom in on the vocalizations described in BoA:

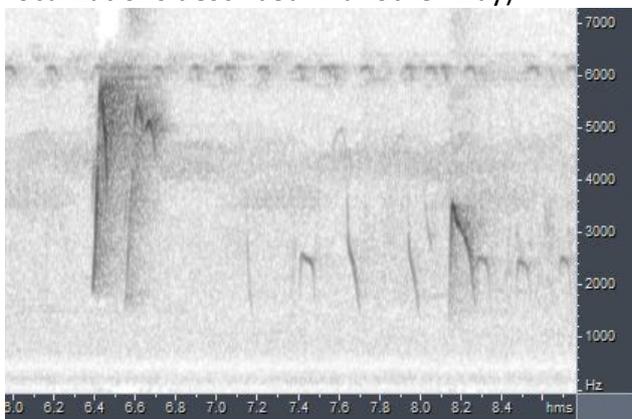
Call a loud, high, snappy *whi-whew*, second note lower than first:



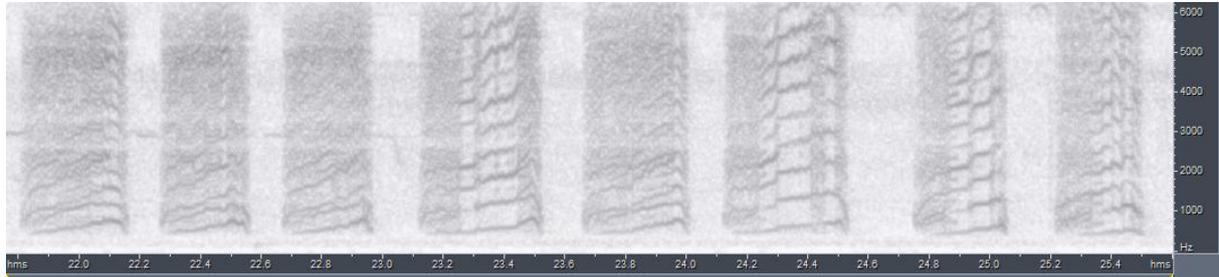
a quieter but still penetrating *pew* or *pew-pew* (same notes, but spacing varies, thus somewhat sounding like a double note)



a pleasant *kwick-fie.... pfjoew* (this is probably the combination of both previous vocalizations described in another way)



nasal calls



There is hardly any similarity in the vocalizations of both groups, although BoA suggests 'similarity in structure but softer'.

The only similarity which is apparent from the available recordings is the 'kip' note from *cinerea* (typically followed by 'kewkew', but this may be a second bird), and the 'pew' note of *cucullata*. This is obviously 'structurally similar' being a single repeated overslurred note, but all similarity ends here.

If we look however at the range of vocalizations available, it is far more obvious that there are significant differences:

Vocalizations of *cinerea* apparently NOT shared with *cucullata*:

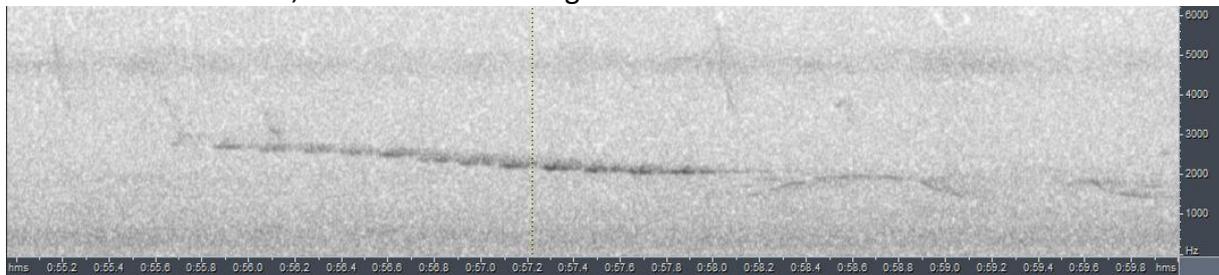
- 1) a rapid, high-pitched "piitikakewkewkew-kew-kew"
- 2) a mellow "kewkew"

Vocalizations of *cucullata* apparently NOT shared with *cinerea*:

- 1) a loud, high, snappy "whi-whew"
- 2) a lower groaning "crawcrawcrawcraw"

It is unclear which are homologous vocalizations for both groups, but overall vocabulary seems so different that an estimated score of (at least) 3 could be given.

A recording of *cucullata* (XC207059/IBC280004) is very different, but if this recording would indeed be of *cucullata*, this would not change at all the above mentioned vocal score:



This note was finalized on 4th January 2016, using sound recordings available on-line at that moment. We would like to thank in particular the sound recordists who placed their recordings for this species on XC: Phil Gregory, Dan Lane and Mike Nelson.

References

Huguet P., Chapuis C. (2003). Oiseaux de Madagascar, Mayotte, Comores, Seychelles, Reunion et Maurice. SEOF. Paris.

Safford R., Hawkins F. (2013) Birds of Africa Vol. 8: The Malagasy Region: Madagascar, Seychelles, Comoros, Mascarenes. Christopher Helm. London.

Tobias, J.A., Seddon, N., Spottiswoode, C.N., Pilgrim, J.D., Fishpool, L.D.C. & Collar, N.J. (2010). Quantitative criteria for species delimitation. *Ibis* 152(4): 724–746.

Recommended citation

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