

# THE FIRST RECORD OF THE ORANGE-FLANKED BUSH-ROBIN *TARSIGER CYANURUS* IN SERBIA

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Here we report the first record of the Orange-flanked Bush-robin *Tarsiger cyanurus* in Serbia, the westernmost record of this species on the Balkan Peninsula. The individual aged as 2Y (in second calendar year) was ringed in Tara National Park, Western Serbia, on 7 October, 2020. The bird was caught in a mist net situated in a young open-canopy mixed forest.

**Key words:** autumn migration, Balkan Peninsula, passerine, vagrant

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U ovom radu opisujemo prvi nalaz modrorepke *Tarsiger cyanurus* u Srbiji, ujedno i najzapadniji nalaz na Balkanskom poluotoku. Jedinka u drugoj kalendarskoj godini (2Y) obilježena je u Nacionalnom parku Tara, u Zapadnoj Srbiji, 7. listopada 2020. godine. Ptica je uhvaćena u ornitološku mrežu postavljenu u mladu mješovitu sastojinu potpuno otvorenog sklopa.

**Ključne riječi:** jesenska migracija, Balkanski poluotok, vrapčarka, skitalica

## INTRODUCTION

The breeding area of the Orange-flanked Bush-robin *Tarsiger cyanurus* ranges from Finland, through Siberia, Mongolia and China, to the Kamchatka Peninsula and Japan. The species inhabits humid mixed forest stands, rich in moss, lichen and shrubs (BOYKO & KALYAKIN, 2020; COLLAR *et al.*, 2020). In the past 30 years, the European breeding population of the Orange-flanked Bush-robin, which is located on the Scandinavian Peninsula, has displayed an increasing trend (MIKKOLA & RAJASÄKKÄ, 2014). Because of the globally increasing population trend and the large distribution area, the conservation status of this species is considered Least Concern (BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL, 2016). Apart from the Japanese population, the Orange-flanked Bush-robin is a migra-

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tory species, which spends the non-breeding period on the Korean Peninsula, south-east China, and mainland Southeast Asia (BOYKO & KALYAKIN, 2020; COLLAR *et al.*, 2020). Beyond the European breeding range, single individuals have been recorded across Europe during the autumn migration (MIKKOLA & RAJASÄKKÄ, 2014). The aim of this study is to present the first record of the Orange-flanked Bush-robin in Serbia, the westernmost record on the Balkan Peninsula.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted at Tara National Park in Western Serbia (UTM 34T CP86), at the locality Sokolarica (985 m a.s.l) from 5 October to 9 October, 2020. The forest contains coniferous as well as deciduous trees of various sizes and ages. The understory is rich in deciduous shrubs. Birds were ringed during the regular autumn bird-marking field work. Birds were captured with four 12 m long mist nets (mesh size 16 mm), which were carefully placed among the shrubs and lower parts of the canopies. Birds were attracted with a mixed playback song, containing songs of Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*, Eurasian Blackcap *S. atricapilla*, and European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*. For the determination of species, the biometric measurements of the body, and the ageing of individuals, we used SVENSSON (1992) and NOREVIK *et al.* (2020). We estimated the body condition, according to KAISER (1993) and BUSSE (2000).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On 7 October, around 11 a.m., we captured a single individual Orange-flanked Bush-robin in the second pocket (counted from the ground) of a mist net. The exact coordinates of the capture were N 43.92218°, E 19.503803°. We recognized the species immediately; the marks such as the dull blue tail, the olive-brownish wing-cover, the orange flanks, the dark beak, legs and iris, and as well the whitish eye-ring were clearly visible (Fig. 1). Wing-length was 75 mm, tail-length was 58 mm, and third primary-length was 57 mm. The individual was in a good condition with muscles scored 3, fat scored 3, and moulting scored 0. Based on the measurements and morphological characteristics, we concluded that the individual's age was 2Y (individual in second calendar year; Euring Code 5, BAKER, 2016).



**Fig. 1.** Orange-flanked Bush-robin *Tarsiger cyanurus* ringed on 7 October, 2020, in Tara National Park, Serbia.

The Orange-flanked Bush-robin was never before recorded in Serbia (ŠĆIBAN *et al.*, 2015), therefore, we consider this species a new member of the Serbian ornithofauna. In northern and north-western parts of Europe (beyond the breeding area in Scandinavia), the Orange-flanked Bush-robin is a more frequent but still rare vagrant (total records 544). Vagrant individuals were most often found in Great Britain (184 records), Norway (71 records), The Netherlands (66 records), and Germany (33 records) (data from [www.tarsiger.com](http://www.tarsiger.com), accessed on 21 September, 2022). In the countries surrounding Serbia, the species was recorded 11 times in Romania (data from [www.rombird.ro](http://www.rombird.ro), accessed on 23 September, 2022), eight times in Hungary (data from [www.rarebirds.hu](http://www.rarebirds.hu), accessed on 22 September, 2022), and three times in Bulgaria (SHURULINKOV *et al.*, 2021). In the countries bordering Serbia to the south and west, the species has not previously been recorded (SAVELJIĆ & JOVIĆEVIĆ, 2015; BARIŠIĆ *et al.*, 2016; TOPI & NI-KOLOV, 2016; VELEVSKI & VASIĆ, 2017).

Our record is particularly interesting, because in 2020 there were no significant records of vagrant individuals in Europe (beyond the breeding area). The last influx of the Orange-flanked Bush-robin in Europe was recorded in 2016 (data from [www.tarsiger.com](http://www.tarsiger.com), accessed on 21 September, 2022). Based on the available sources we conclude that this record of the Orange-flanked Bush-robin is the westernmost record on the Balkan Peninsula. We believe that the increasing population trend will result in new records of this vagrant species in Serbia and surrounding countries. We suggest that new records should be precisely documented and published not only in online avian data-bases but also in scientific journals. Such publications will contribute to a broader knowledge about a rare vagrant species, and will serve as valuable sources in the avian bibliography.

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