

The first record for Cyprus of Crimson-winged Finch *Rhodopechys sanguineus*

BIRTAN GÖKERI & WAYNE J FULLER

The Crimson-winged Finch *Rhodopechys sanguineus* is a pale-brown stocky finch with a heavy, pale yellowish bill and as the name suggests pink in the primaries. The nominate subspecies is found from Turkey to northern Pakistan (Porter & Aspinall 2010, Rasmussen & Anderton 2005). The other subspecies *alienus* is found in the Atlas mountains of northwest Africa. This species is found inhabiting mountain slopes of semi-arid regions, often at high altitude in areas of sparse vegetation and sometimes nests in rock crevices. It feeds on seeds, and during the winter months descends in flocks to lower altitudes to feed in agricultural fields. In Turkey, the breeding population appears to be increasing (Kirwan *et al* 2008).

On 27 November 2010 at 11.30 h a group of five individuals were seen briefly in trees by BG and one photographed (Plate 1a, b), at a water tank near the village of Sadrazamkoy (GPS 35.387810° N, 32.948460° E). This area is a well known bird watching location particularly during spring and autumn migration. The habitat surrounding the site is a patchwork of agricultural fields and aborescent mattoral juniper type habitat (Fuller *et al* 2009). The species was not immediately identified; however, after consultation and via Kuşkor's sightings committee it was clear from the photographic evidence that the species concerned was in fact Crimson-winged Finch. Pink in the wings was seen when the birds flew away. The pink loreal region and dark cap are visible in Plate 1. This is the first record of Crimson-winged Finch for the island of Cyprus (Richardson 2011).



Plate 1a, b. A Crimson-winged Finch *Rhodopechys sanguineus* 27 November 2010, Cyprus. © Birtan Gökeri

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- Birtan Gökeri & Wayne J Fuller, Kuşkor, Vakıflar İşhanı, No: 3-4, Girne, Mersin 10, Turkey. WJF also European University of Lefke, Gemikonagi, Lefke, Northern Cyprus, Mersin 10, Turkey. wfuller@seaturtle.org