## Photospot:

# Iago Sparrows *Passer iagoensis* in the mirror

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**Moineaux du Cap-Vert *Passer iagoensis* dans le miroir.** Des photos documentent le comportement d'un couple de Moineaux du Cap-Vert *Passer iagoensis* à Santiago, îles du Cap-Vert, qui regardaient leurs propres réflexions dans des pare-brises et vitres de voitures.

Iago Sparrow *Passer iagoensis* is endemic to the Cape Verde archipelago, where it occurs on all of the islands and the majority of islets, although it is scarce on Fogo (*cf.* Geniez & López-Jurado 1998), if present at all (R. Barone pers. obs.). The species is found from marine cliffs to montane areas, being especially common in lowland xerophytic vegetation, gorges and cliffs, lava plains, cultivation, towns and villages, and is locally abundant in some forested areas (Summers-Smith 1988, Cramp & Perrins 1994, Hazevoet 1995, Barone & Delgado 1999, Barone 2005).

On 15 October 2009, while visiting the botanical garden at São Jorge dos Orgãos, Santiago, we were surprised by the behaviour of an adult pair of Iago Sparrows. After parking our car, both birds came directly to the vehicle and repeatedly observed their own reflections in different windows and windscreens (Figs. 1–3). On 21 October, we visited this locality again and observed the same behaviour for several minutes.

**Figures 1–3.** Adult male and female Iago Sparrows *Passer iagoensis* observing their reflections in the windscreens and windows of a car, São Jorge dos Orgãos, Santiago, Cape Verde Islands, October 2009 (R. Barone)

Moineaux du Cap-Vert *Passer iagoensis* mâle et femelle observant leurs réflexions dans le pare-brise et les vitres d'une voiture, São Jorge dos Orgãos, Santiago, îles du Cap-Vert, octobre 2009 (R. Barone)



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Elsewhere on the island of Santiago, we did not observe similar behaviour, which seems to be rare and presumably induced by the high frequency of human visits to the botanical garden and the incidental reflection of the birds in windows and windscreens while feeding around parked cars. However, C. J. Hazevoet (*in litt*. 2010) frequently witnessed, in 1992–93, an Iago Sparrow observing its reflection in, and flying against, a house window at Mindelo, São Vicente. This behaviour is well known in several European small passerines and Corvidae (see Siverio & Felipe 2008), including the related House Sparrow *P. domesticus* (Radford 1966). It has recently been recorded in another insular species, Berthelot's Pipit *Anthus berthelotii* (Siverio & Felipe 2008). In some instances, this particular behaviour has been also associated to vehicles, involving, as in other similar cases, generally single individuals (see Siverio & Felipe 2008). Apart from simple reflection, window collision in birds is a widespread phenomenon and seems to be caused not only by territorial individuals fighting their mirror images, which frequently result in harmless collisions and explain perfectly our case, but by a variety of other quite different situations, as noted by Klem (1989).


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