

Capt. Daley's Sea Stories

**Pennant-Winged Nightjar
Macrodipteryx Longipennis
Art Carlson, Ghana**

30 July 2011

Just when you think you have seen all of the types of birds there are in the world, a new type shows up. We had no idea what type of bird this was. Friends at National Geographic were able to identify it and then I was able to do research on it.

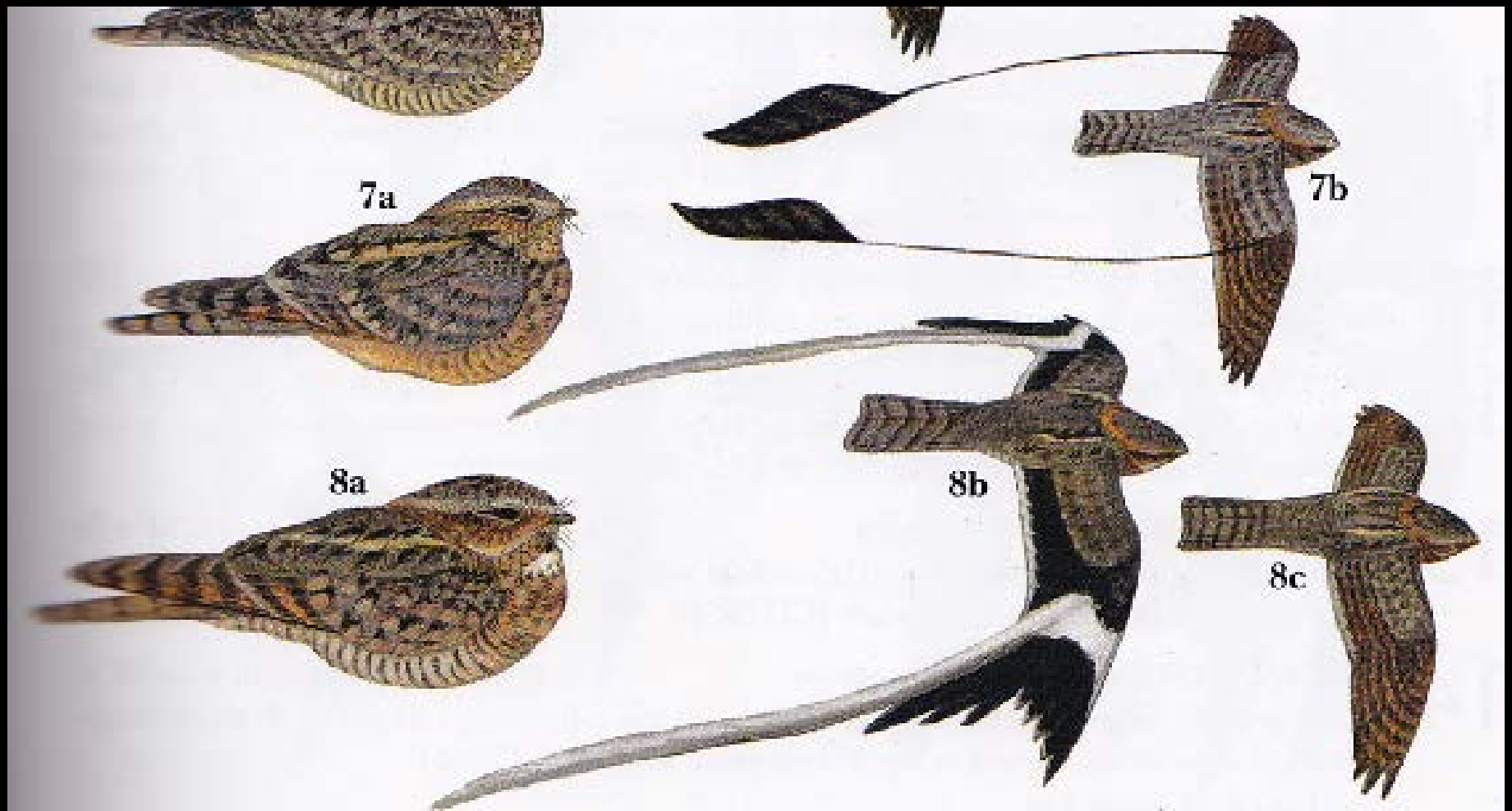
Now this type of bird is found only in dense bush and only flies at night, not in the day. Yet, he spent the morning with us, flying around the Deepwater Millennium and the Art Carlson. So why was this bird flying in the day 20 miles offshore Ghana?



This was the first time I have seen a bird with long pennants off its wingtips.



He would fly near my boat, then go off to the rig. He did this for four hours one day and two hours the next, then vanished.



The plate above is from *Birds of Western Africa* by Nik Borrow and Ron Demey. They explain that 8a is an adult female, 8b is an adult male in flight, and 8c is an adult female in flight.

Birds of Southern Africa by Kenneth Newman explains that Nightjars are a nocturnal, insectivorous bird with soft, cryptically colored plumage, short bills, wide gaps surrounded by stiff bristles with large eyes and short weak legs. They hawk insects at night, lying up all day. If approached, they may not flush until nearly trodden on; instead they close their eyes to narrow slits, thereby reducing the sun's reflection and so enhancing their camouflage.

So what was this bird doing 20 miles offshore Ghana, flying around during the day?

















