Oriental Bird Club

BULLETIN No. 1
SPRING 1985

INSIDE: News..Asian Dowitchers..Himalayan Migration....Milky Storks....Ranthambhor.. Reviews..Recent Reports

The Bulletin of the Oriental Bird Club is published twice yearly.

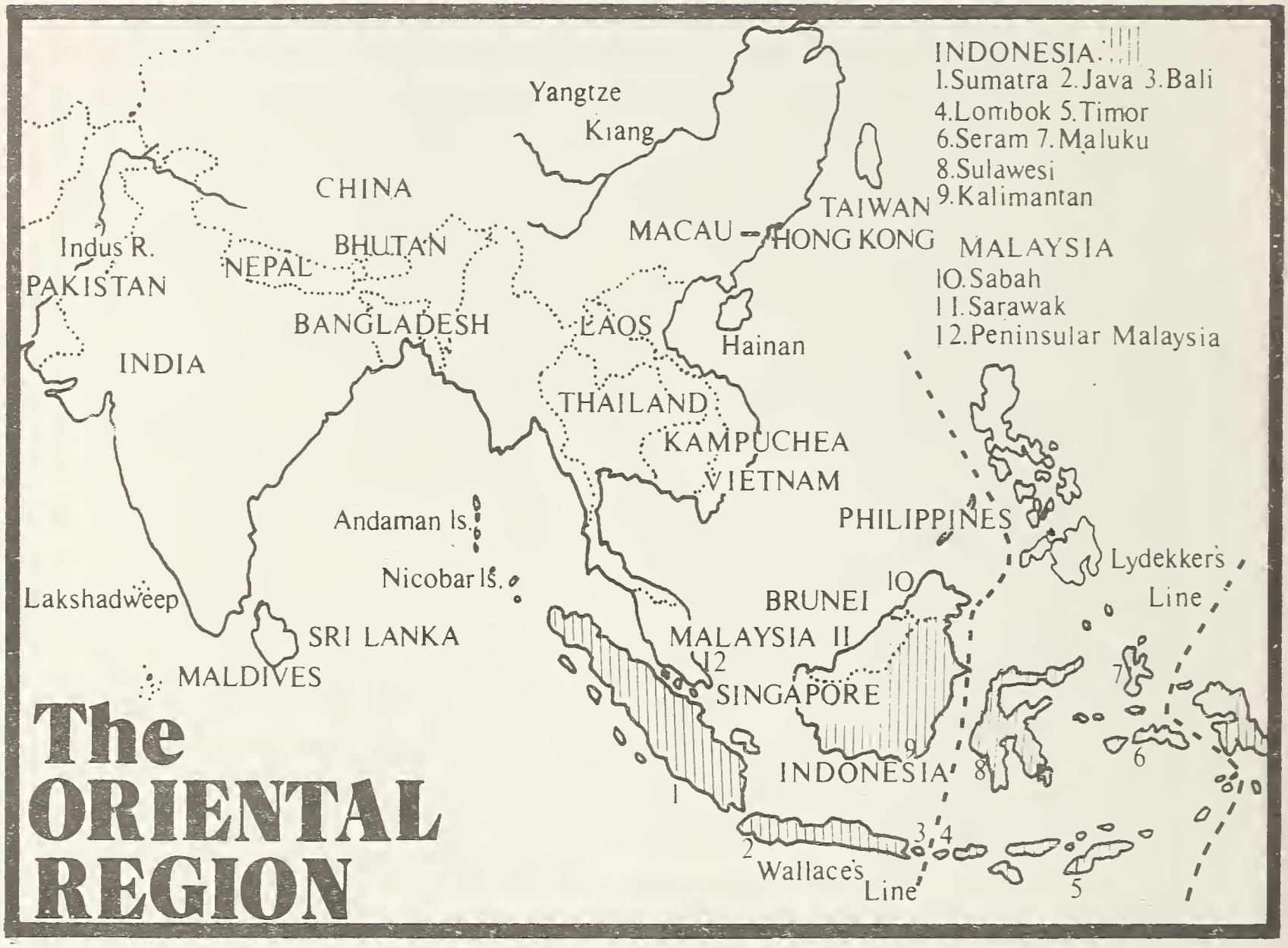
THE ORIENTAL BIRD CLUB aims to:

encourage an interest in the birds of the Oriental region and their conservation.

to liaise with and promote the work of existing regional societies.

to collate and publish material on Oriental birds.

Two bulletins and a journal, The Forktail, will be published annually.



The Oriental region lies mainly between 68° and 135°E, and between 10°S and 32°N. It is bounded on the west by the Indus River in Pakistan, and in the north by the Himalaya and an imprecise line in China roughly coinciding with the basin of the Yangtze Kiang. Southwards it includes the Indian subcontinent, south-east Asia, Taiwan, the Philippines, and most of Indonesia. The eastern limit is defined by Lydekker's line, beyond which very few Oriental species extend. The area between this line and Wallace's line, which marks the westward extension of Australasian forms, contains a mixture of species from both faunal regions. It is referred to as Wallacea. Because of the imprecise boundaries with the Palearctic region in Pakistan and China, the OBC is interested in material for the whole of these two countries. However, in the Club's publications the emphasis will be on the core area of the Oriental region.

T.P. Inskipp

Editorial

This is the first Bulletin of the Oriental Bird Club. Future issues will include a mix of topical papers, reviews and reports. Contributions covering a wide variety of topics are required both for forthcoming editions of the Bulletin and the first issue of the Club's journal, The Forktail.

The Launching Committee would like to thank Chris Harbard for valuable technical advice.

This Bulletin was made possible by the assistance received from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Conservation Monitoring Centre.

Club News

Annual General Meeting

The Oriental Bird Club AGM is to be held in London on 14 December. It will be followed by three or four illustrated talks and food and drink will be available. Provisionally Paul Goriup has agreed to talk on Oriental Bustards and Wim Verheugt on Indonesian wetlands. Full details will be published in the autumn Bulletin. We hope as many members as possible will be able to attend.

Membership: £6.00 p.a. (£5.00 for residents in the Orient belonging to other Oriental ornithological societies). Institutional membership is £12.00 p.a. All sums remitted to the UK skould preferably be in £ sterling. If foreign currencies are sent (whether cash or personal cheque) we regret that £2 should be added to cover bank charges. For further information please contact: The Secretary, Oriental Bird Club, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds., SG19 2DL, UK.

DAVID HUNT

David Hunt, a founder member of OBC, was tragically killed by a Tiger this February whilst leading a party of birdwatchers in Corbett National Park. David's enthusiasm for India and its bird life was an inspiration to the many people who travelled with him or heard of his adventures. David was especially fond of Corbett and this was his sixth visit to the Park.

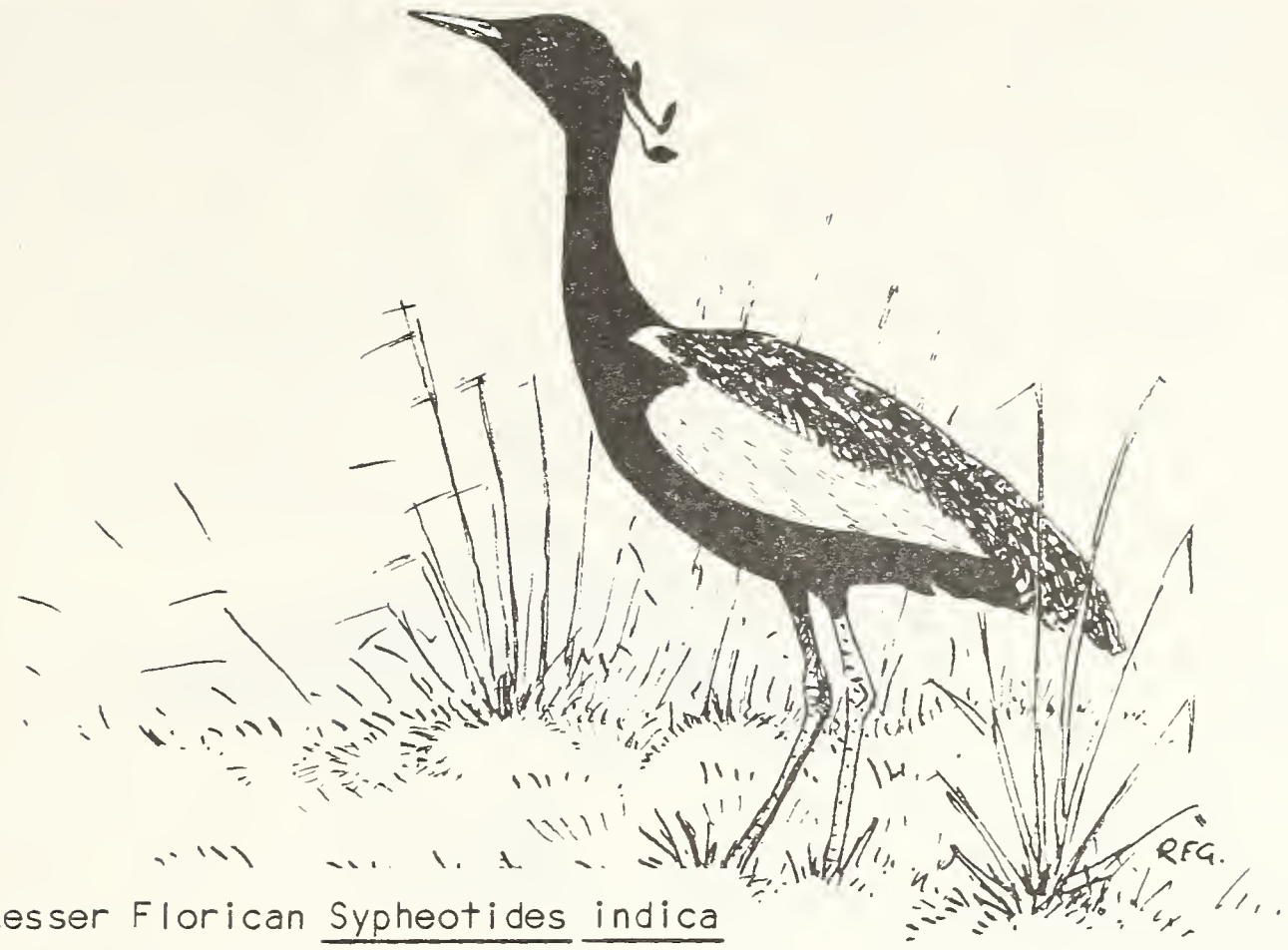
News & Views

LESSER FLORICAN - CONCERN FOR REMAINING GRASSLAND HABITATS

The Lesser Florican or Likh Sypheotides indica, endemic to the Indian subcontinent, is a monsoon visitor to the grasslands of western and central India. The species was once relatively abundant but is now considered endangered; its decline is attributed to the destruction of its grassland habitat in order to grow cash crops such as ground-nuts and cotton. Survey work has shown that floricans are now restricted to areas set aside for the production of hay, and that many of their most important breeding areas are located in Gujarat, India. These grasslands or 'vidis' may now face threat from the intervention of the State Government of Gujarat. As part of a proposed land redistribution programme, all privately-owned 'vidis' would be taken over and handed to landless members of the scheduled classes for conversion to grow cash crops. Although land redistribution may be commendable, it seems tragic that to achieve it areas could be lost which at present produce a valuable fodder crop, offer protection against soil erosion, and have an irreplaceable wildlife heritage. (Source: ICBP Bustard Group).

NOW IT'S 1350 SIBERIAN CRANES

A remarkable event in 1980 was the discovery by Chinese ornithologists of wintering Siberian Cranes Grus leucogeranus at Lake Poyang in the Jiangxi Province of south-east China. Surveys conducted by the Chinese in the spring of 1984 counted 840. The most recent fieldwork undertaken this winter has boosted the known population of Siberian Cranes for this area to 1350! Lake Poyang, recently designated as a nature reserve, also provides a refuge for important populations of Hooded and White-naped Cranes G. monacha and G. vipio. However, the area is threatened by the damming of the Yangtze river and management of the area is required in order to maintain the water level, and thus the suitability of the area for wintering cranes. According to George Archibald of the International Crane Foundation the Chinese welcome tours to this area and hotel accommodation is available in the town of Wucheng. (Source: IUCN Bulletin Vol. 15(4-6); ICBP/George Archibald).



Lesser Florican Sypheotides indica

A NEW NATIONAL PARK IN NEPAL

A new national park, the Shey-Dolpo National Park, newly established in Nepal, covers approximately 145km^2 and is the only trans-Himalayan protected area in the country. This brings the total number of national parks in Nepal to five. The Park is comparatively small; the largest Nepalese park, Langtang National Park covers 1709km^2. Ringmo Lake or Phoksundo Tal, Nepal's second largest lake is within the Park boundaries. The area is poorly known ornithologically and few visitors have been allowed to travel there.

Also recently established is the Khaptad Wildlife Reserve in Seti Anchal in western Nepal. The birdlife in this area also remains little known. (Source: Oryx Vol. 18 No.3).

TWO OF THE WORLD'S MOST THREATENED PROTECTED AREAS

Kutai Game Reserve in Indonesia and Mount Apo National Park in the Philippines were identified as two of the world's eleven most threatened protected areas by the General Assembly of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), held in Madrid in November 1984.

Between October and November 1982 and April and May 1983 approximately 3.5 million ha. of forest in East Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) were ravaged by what was probably the world's worst ever forest fire. Kutai Game Reserve, situated on

the coast of East Kalimantan Province, was severely affected, particularly those areas that had already been selectively logged. The Game Reserve protected extensive tracts of lowland rain forest and provided important habitat for Bornean primates. Birds known to occur in the reserve include Great Argus Argusianus argus and Crested Fireback Lophura ignita as well as eight species of hornbill. Urgent action is clearly required, and it has been recommended that the boundaries of the Reserve be redefined, logging activities be halted, and an alternative site for the protection of a representative area of lowland rainforest be established.

Mount Apo National Park, on the south-east coast of Mindanao is under severe pressure from logging and shifting cultivation, and it is estimated that now only half of the Park remains worthy of national park status. The Park provides protection for the endangered, endemic Philippine Eagle Pithecophaga jefferyi.

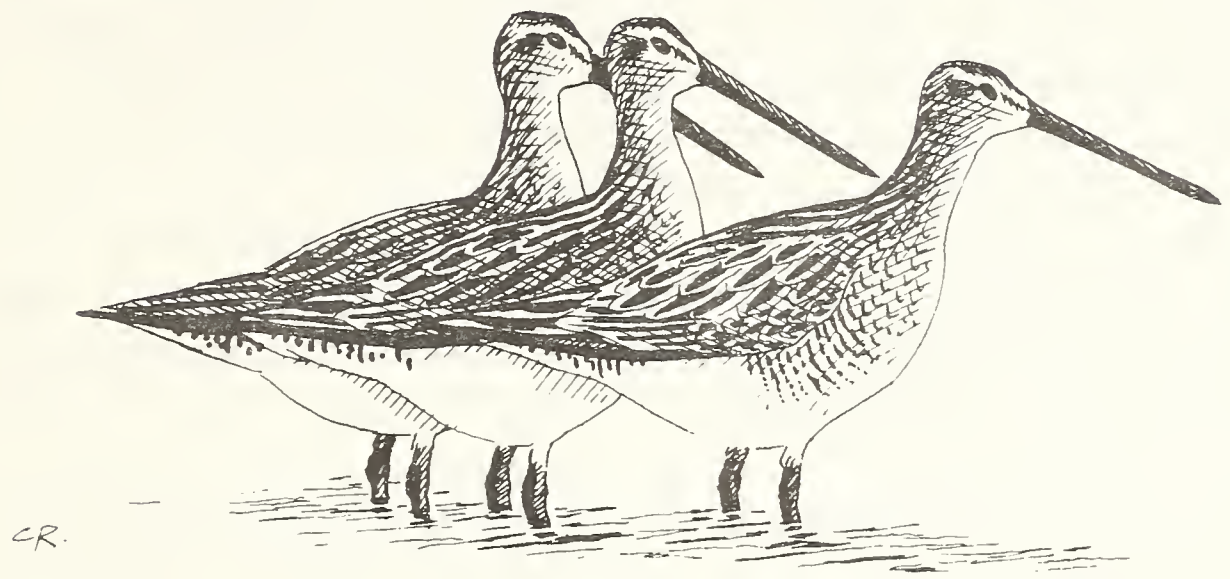
In addition, IUCN listed 32 other protected areas as seriously threatened, six of these are in the Oriental region: Manas Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhutan and the adjacent Manas Tiger Reserve, India; Gir National Park, India; Silent Valley National Park, India; Kerinci-Seblat National Park, Indonesia; Klias National Park, Sabah, Malaysia; and Thung Yai and Huai Kha Kaheng Wildlife Sanctuaries in Thailand. The inclusion of Silent Valley in this seriously threatened protected area list is either misplaced or renews concern for the integrity of the area; it had previously been announced that the Kerala Government had dropped the Silent Valley Hydroelectric Project and had promised inclusion of the area in the proposed Silent Valley National Park. (Source: Threatened protected areas of the world, IUCN press release, Nov. 1984).

CRESTED IBIS NEWS

In 1981, a small remnant population of Crested Ibis Nipponia nippon was rediscovered nesting in the Quinling Mountains of Shaanxi Province, China. The location of two pairs, one with three young, followed intensive field work by the Institute of Zoology, Beijing. In 1984 five young were raised by two pairs, bringing the total known population in China to seventeen. Apart from an unconfirmed report of a single bird in North Korea in 1984, this small population appears to represent the last wild Crested Ibises in the world. (Source: Flying Free, Newsletter of the W.W.Brehm Fund, Vol.2,No.2).

Richard Grimmett

RECORDS OF THE ASIAN DOWITCHER *Limnodromus semipalmatus* IN THAILAND



Approximately 400 Asian Dowitchers were found on passage in spring 1984, considerably more than previously recorded.

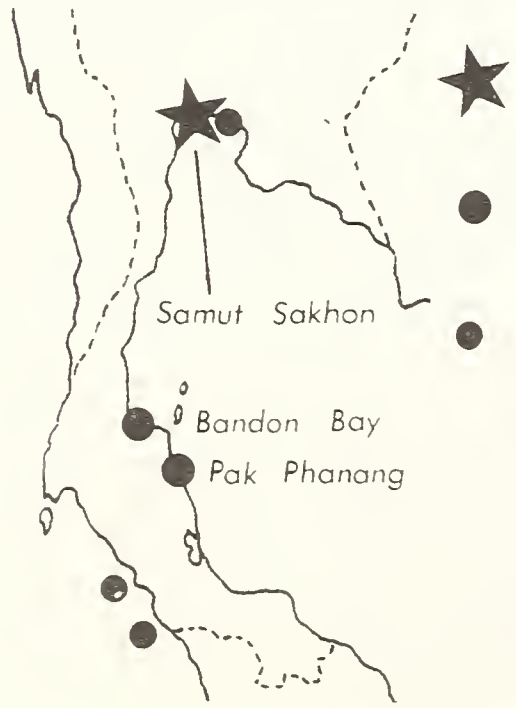
Away from its breeding grounds, the Asian Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus* is one of the least-known Asian shorebirds. Collectors working in Thailand during 1910-1926 obtained over 80 specimens,[1] suggesting the presence of localised concentrations on the east peninsular coast at Nakhon Si Thammarat during August to November and in the Inner Gulf of Thailand, near Bangkok during May (Figure 1). In recent decades, small flocks of dowitchers have been regularly reported from the mudflats of Malaysia and Singapore, with the largest single concentration of 29 birds[2]. In Thailand, however, there have only been two further published records, both of birds from the Inner Gulf. A single specimen was collected on 1 May 1954, while eight birds were seen on 20 March 1981[3]. Until 1984, the largest concentration recorded anywhere in the world was a flock of 130 in north-west Australia (B.A.Lane & C.D.T.Minton, *in litt.*).

During 8-10 April 1984, a concentration of approximately 400 Asian Dowitchers was located on intertidal mudflats at Samut Sakhon (Figure 1), about 30 km. west of Bangkok, between the mouths of the Tachin and Mae Klong Rivers. On each day, the birds were present on an ebb tide, when they fed with over 200 Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa*. The dowitchers were

scattered from the upper shore down to the water's edge and evidently flew into the area around five hours after high tide (during a 24-hour tidal cycle). Although the area is bounded by an estimated 50 sq. km. of fish ponds and salt pans, the birds' roost site was not discovered. 145 dowitchers were once observed loafing on fish ponds, although they only gathered here briefly, in transit to the mudflats. Approximately two-thirds of the birds were in complete or near-complete breeding plumage.

No dowitchers could be located during a return visit to Samut Sakhon on 5 May 1984, when almost all the godwits had also dispersed. The sighting in Thailand was followed by an unprecedented count of 340 in Hong Kong, about two weeks later (P.Kennerley, in litt.). No more than 39 had previously been recorded there. Although the Samut Sakhon area was visited regularly during August-December 1984, no further sightings were made.

It has been suggested that the Asian Dowitcher may have been overlooked in the past, owing to confusion with the godwits, which it approaches closely in size[4]. However, the all dark, swollen-tipped bill would normally be sufficient for identification. Unlike the Long-billed Dowitcher Limnodromus scolopaceus or the Short-billed Dowitcher L.griseus the species lacks a clear whitish trailing edge to the wing, having instead a diffuse silvery, pale area across the entire secondaries, contrasting with the darker outer primaries and carpal area. The Asian Dowitcher also lacks the white rump and lower back of the other Limnodromus spp., and in flight recalls a Bar-tailed Godwit of the race Limosa lapponica baueri. Although dowitcher feeding is said to be characterised by high probing rates [5] or a "sewing-machine" action, the Asian Dowitchers observed at Samut Sakhon showed a slower "stitching" action when wading in



Records of Asian Dowitchers in Thailand.

shallow standing water. Every two or three steps were followed by a brief, shallow probe in a rhythmic sequence. This gave the peculiar impression that the birds were propelled along by both legs and bill. When feeding on exposed mud, the birds were stationary for longer periods, and probed more deeply. The only call heard was given from one of a flock loafing on a fish pond and was a peculiar airy "chaow" or "aow", with something of the quality of a distant human cry.

The distribution of past and present records suggests that the Inner Gulf of Thailand may be an important spring staging area. It seems that the area supports no appreciable numbers of dowitchers in mid winter. Throughout December and January, tides in the Inner Gulf remain high throughout the daylight hours and may reduce feeding opportunities for waders. December and January wader numbers at Samut Sakhon, including Marsh Sandpipers Tringa stagnatilis and Curlew Sandpipers Calidris ferruginea, are certainly much lower compared with numbers during September to November.

The east coast of the Malayan peninsula may be important as an autumn staging area, or possibly even wintering area, for the Asian Dowitcher and could conceivably also support spring concentrations. The two areas with the most extensive mudflats are the Bandon Bay area of Surat Thani Province and the Pak Phanang estuary at Nathon Si Thammarat, neither of which has yet received more than cursory examination. Both may well prove to be sites of International Importance for a range of wader species on passage. (see Recent Reports for autumn 1984 counts in Sumatra, Eds.)

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MIGRATION ACROSS THE NEPALESE HIMALAYA

Evidence is presented which shows that trans-Himalayan migration is more common than once thought. Raptors also carry out migration east-west along the Himalaya.

Nepal is a land-locked country in the central Himalaya situated between China to the north and India to the south. There is increasing evidence from Nepal, and elsewhere in the Himalaya, to suggest that some bird species breeding in the Palearctic region migrate across the Himalaya to winter in southern Asia. However, Moreau[1] noted that relatively few species take this route compared with the number which migrate to Africa, despite Africa being considerably further away: 137 species from the West Palearctic (west of 45°E) winter in Africa and 10 in India, and 82 from the mid-Palearctic (45° to 90°E) winter in Africa compared with only about 50 in India. He suggested that 'the high elevated and ecologically inimical Tibetan plateau flanked by the gigantic Himalaya' is an effective barrier for migrants. Much of the current evidence for north-south movements across the Himalaya is based on casual observations made by visiting birdwatchers and mountaineering expeditions. There have been few systematic studies of migration in these ranges[2,3].

Most trans-Himalayan migrants observed have been non-passerines: large numbers of cranes, birds of prey, flocks of ducks, geese, and waders, gulls, terns, and also Hoopoes Upupa epops and Eurasian Wrynecks Jynx torquilla.

Birds have been noted flying over the highest parts of the Himalaya, enabling them to shorten their journeys considerably. Examples include a flock of Bar-headed Geese Anser indicus seen as high as 9375m. over Mount Everest[4], and a Steppe Eagle Aquila rapax nipalensis found dead at 7925m. on the South Col of Mount Everest[5]. A movement of small grey birds across the South Col has also been noted[6], indicating that even small birds can migrate at such heights. In spring and autumn, a variety of species, mainly ducks but also waders, gulls and terns, are regularly recorded stopping off at Himalayan lakes including Phewa Tal, Begnas Tal, Rara, and frequently as high as 4750m. at Gokyo lakes in Khumbu.

However, some trans-Himalayan migrants, whether they are the majority is not known, have been observed moving along the main river valleys such as those of the Karnali, Kali Gandaki, Dudh Kosi, and Arun rivers.

Two systematic studies of autumn migration in the upper Kali Gandaki Valley in central Nepal, by Beaman in 1973[2] and by Thiollay in 1978[3], have shown this to be an important route for trans-Himalayan migrants. Beaman pointed out that the Valley is unusual in breaching the main Himalayan range, forming a natural route for migrants leaving the Tibetan Plateau. However, to the north the Valley is bounded by an extensive tract of plateau, so that potential migrants are faced with one of the most arduous crossings in the region.

Both studies recorded large numbers of cranes flying south. Between 29 September and 14 October 1973, 3751 cranes, including 2220 Demoiselles Anthropoides virgo were seen[2]; and about 63 000 cranes, mainly Demoiselles, were recorded between 24 September and 5 October 1978[3].

Thiollay[3] counted a total of 151 birds of prey representing 15 species, and Beaman[2] noted 18 species totalling 404 birds. The largest species totals were of 254 Black Kites Milvus migrans flying south between 14 September and 1 October 1973[2], 45 Common Buzzards Buteo buteo between 31 August and 14 October 1973[2], and 39 Lesser Kestrels Falco naumanni between 24 September and 5 October 1978[3]. Some interesting observations of migrant birds of prey were made in the same area by Christensen et al.[7] between 13 October and 4 November 1984. They recorded approximately 130 birds comprising 12 species, including 56 Aquila eagles (mainly Steppe Eagles).

Only about 19 species of passerine migrants were recorded by Beaman, with significant numbers of Greater Short-toed Larks Calandrella cinerea (brachydactyla), Hume's Short-toed Larks C.acutirostris, White Wagtails Motacilla alba, Black Redstarts Phoenicurus ochruros, and Tickell's Warblers Phylloscopus affinis. Even after bad weather few migrants were seen, indicating that large numbers of passerines were probably not moving over at night. Other observations also indicate that only small numbers of passerines regularly cross the Tibetan plateau. Species recorded include wagtails Motacilla spp., Booted Warbler Hippolais caligata, Lesser Whitethroat Sylvia curruca, and Common Chiffchaff P.collybita.

The majority of passerines wintering in the subcontinent presumably skirt the Himalaya. Populations of Black-throated Thrush Turdus atrogularis atrogularis, Paddyfield Warbler Acrocephalus agricola, Blyth's Reed Warbler A.dumetorum, and Greenish Warbler P.trochiloides mainly originate in the west and probably fly round the range from this direction. Species such

as Siberian Rubythroat Luscinia calliope, Red-throated Flycatcher Ficedula parva, Brown Shrike Lanius cristatus, Black-faced Bunting Emberiza spodocephala and Yellow-breasted Bunting E.aureola, which chiefly come from the east, probably skirt the eastern end of the Himalaya.

Birds of prey, especially Aquila eagles, have recently been found to use the Himalaya as an east-west pathway in autumn, and also in larger numbers than hitherto recorded in Nepal. The phenomenon was first described by Fleming[8] who made observations in October and November 1975 in the Kathmandu Valley, and also at Dhampus, south of Annapurna, where at least 490 birds of three Aquila species were seen from 3 to 5 November 1976. Christensen et al.[7] noted 1059 birds of 15 species, including 1004 Steppe Eagles, flying west-south-west or west between 26 and 28 October 1984, also south of Annapurna, mainly between Birethante and Naudanda. In the Kathmandu Valley they saw 63 Aquila eagles, mainly Steppe Eagles, flying west, plus a Saker Falcon Falco cherrug moving south-west between 2 and 4 November 1984. There is also evidence that Spot-winged Stares Saroglossa spiloptera undertake east-west movements along the Himalaya[9]. It is possible that other species undertake similar movements.

Flocks of Lesser Kestrels and Amur Falcons F.amurensis are regularly recorded on passage, particularly in autumn. It is not clear whether they are moving north-south or east-west. A maximum of 300 Amur Falcons was estimated on 29 October 1984 at Pokhara[7]. There is an interesting report of a roost of up to 300 mixed falcons including Eurasian Kestrels F.tinnunculus, Lesser Kestrels, Amur Falcons and Peregrine Falcons F.peregrinus between 10 and 23 November 1977 in trees near Phewa Tal.

The marshes and large expanse of open water at Kosi Barrage in eastern Nepal provide the most important staging point for migratory wildfowl, gulls, terns and waders in Nepal. The area has been well studied by ornithologists between January and May. Peak numbers of wildfowl pass through in mid-February with a maximum of over 50 000 estimated in 1981[11]. Wader passage has been noted from the end of February to early May, with most birds passing through in March and April[11]. Large numbers have not been reported, with peaks of about 1000 to 1500 birds. This presumably reflects the relatively low numbers of waders crossing the Himalaya.

The study of migration is one of the most exciting areas of ornithological work in Nepal. Further studies on the east-west

movements of migrating raptors in October and November in the area south of Annapurna should be rewarding. Almost no information is available on autumn passage at Kosi Barrage and counts in September and October would be valuable.

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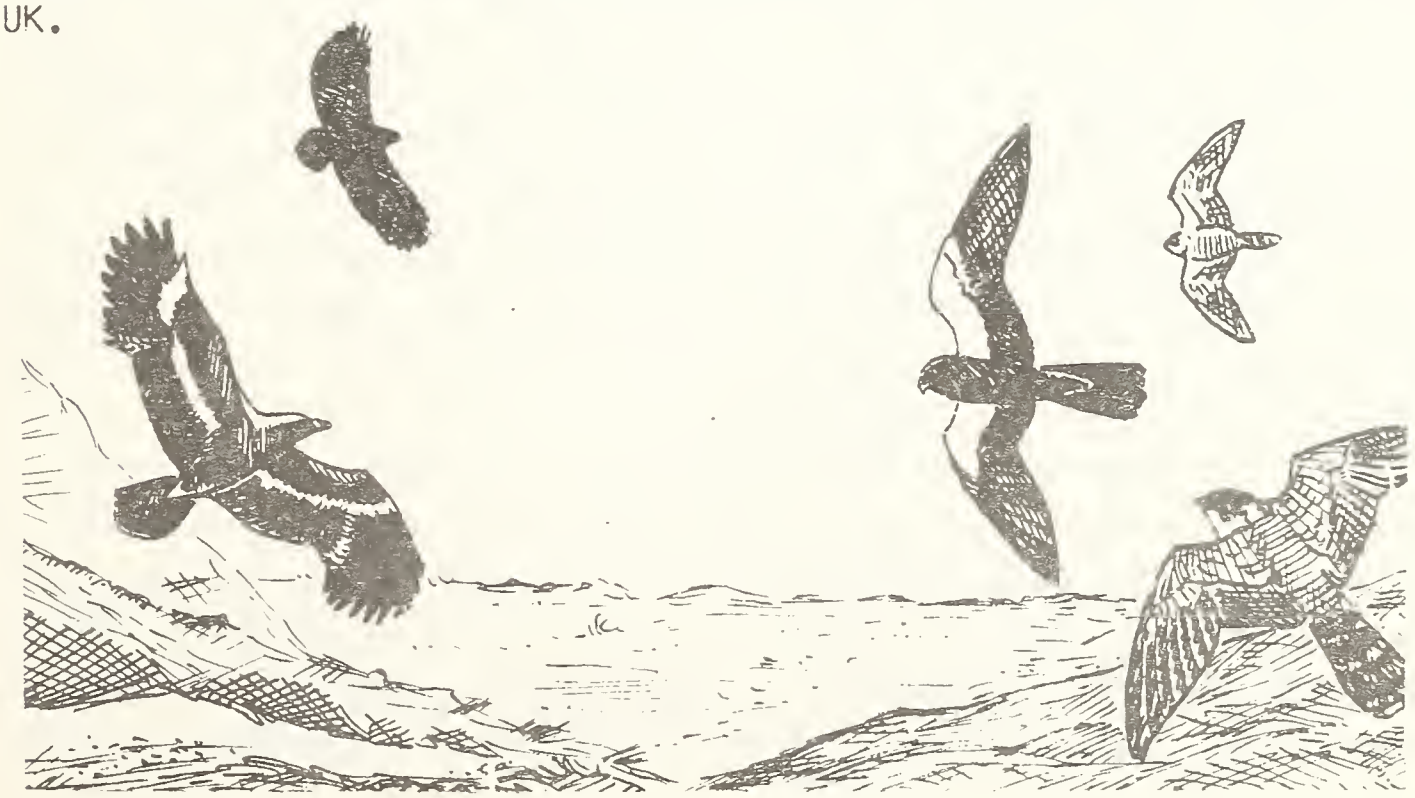
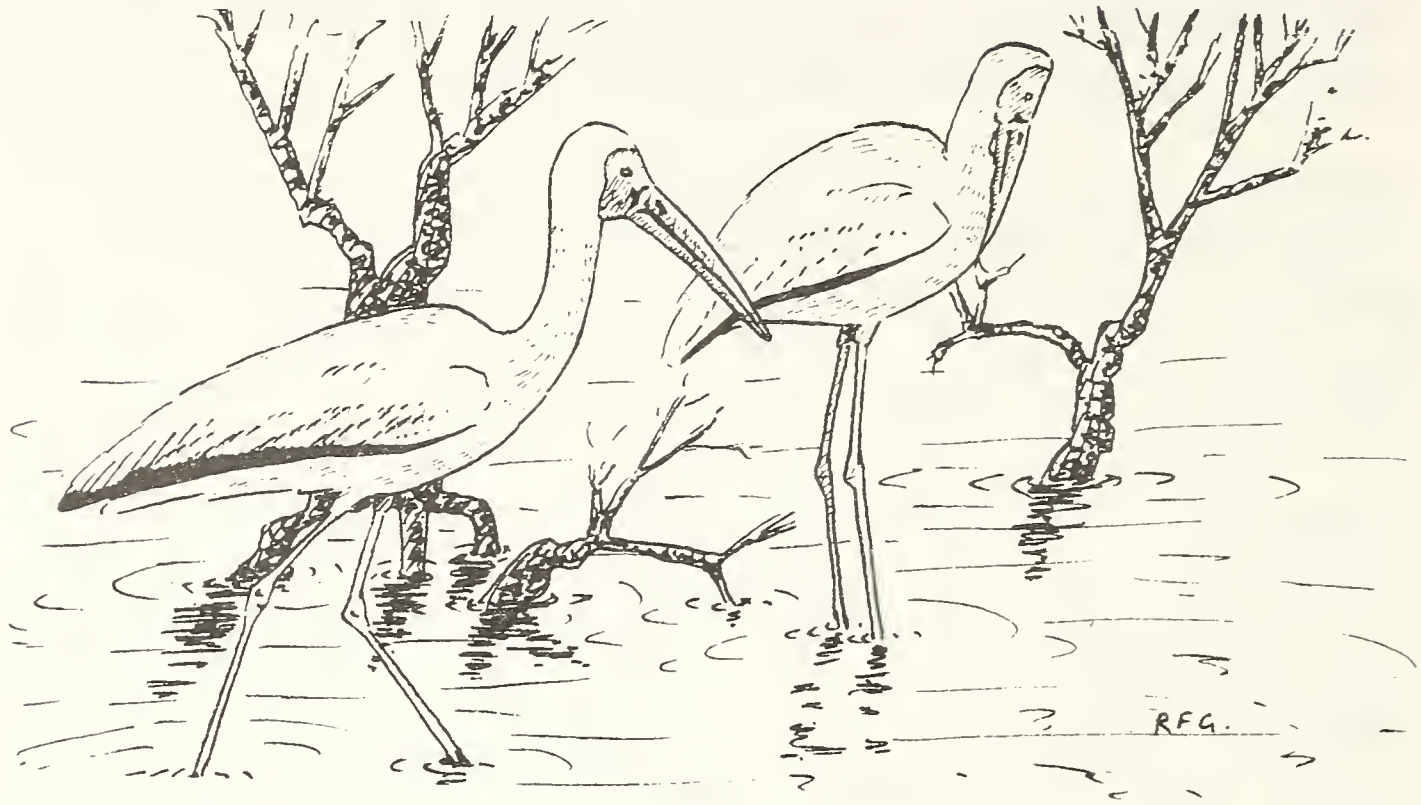


MILKY STORKS Ibis cinereus AND BIRDS OF THE JAVAN PLAIN



322 Milky Storks were seen in NW Java in autumn 1984. Other interesting observations were made.

Although thought to be widespread within Vietnam, Malaysia, Sumatra, Java and Sulawesi[1], the actual distribution and population size of the Milky Stork Ibis cinereus is poorly known.

Prior to the 1984 University of East Anglia (UEA)/International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP) expedition, the Malaysian population was the best known. A total of 115 birds had been recorded from Kuala Gula in north-west Peninsular Malaysia in 1983[2]. For Vietnam the data are even more sparse, with no records subsequent to 1968[3]. For Java and Sumatra the situation was similarly hazy, with anecdotal records of local populations, and a single breeding colony off the Javan Coast. Small numbers of apparently resident Milky Storks were reported from Sulawesi in 1980[4].

The main aim of the UEA/ICBP expedition, carried out from July to October 1984, was to survey the north coastal plain of west Java for Milky Storks, after a two week visit to the Malaysian population at Kuala Gula.

A minimum of 101 Milky Storks, all adults, was seen at Kuala Gula. On Java 322 $\pm$ 27 birds were seen, including a minimum of 20 breeding pairs on Pulau Rambut, whilst no birds were recorded on Pulau Dua - a former breeding location. The rumoured breeding population at Tanjung Krawang was not found. However, between January 1984, when 60 birds had been present in

the area (R. Milton pers.comm.), and the expedition's visit, approximately 1km.^{2} of mangrove and riverine forest had been cleared, presumably taking with it the stork nesting site. Prospects for a breeding population to re-establish are poor. Pulau Rambut appears to be the only remaining breeding location for Milky Storks in the area. Fortunately it is afforded official protection by the Indonesian Government.

In order to assess the overall breeding distribution, movements and population of Milky Storks, aerial surveys of the sort carried out by Interwader on Sumatra (D. Parish pers.comm.) are needed within the region, as well as on the Javan plain itself.

A number of other species of especial interest were recorded whilst surveying for Storks. The first confirmed sighting of Javan Yellow White-eye Zosterops flava for 42 years was made on Pulau Dua, following reported sightings earlier in the year (R.Milton, P.Andrew pers.comm.). Eight birds were recorded on Pulau Dua, with further groups at Tanjung Krawang and in replanted mangrove near Muara Pakis. Mangrove White-eye Z.chloris was also recorded at the latter two locations. In addition, a Stork-billed Kingfisher Pelargopsis capensis seen at Tanjung Krawang was the first recent record for Java.

Milky Storks and many waders were recorded using fishponds, especially after the dry season when low water levels produced mud areas ideal for wader feeding. An estimated 19,000 waders were on fishponds near Muara Pakis in late August. Most of the birds were Rufous-necked Stints Calidris ruficollis and Curlew Sandpipers C. ferruginea, but also included Malaysian Plovers Charadrius peronii, Ruff Philomachus pugnax, Broad-billed Sandpipers Limicola falcinellus and a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper Calidris acuminata.

Whilst at Pulau Dua in the extreme west of Java on October 6th a movement of raptors was noted, with a total of 80 Japanese Sparrowhawks Accipiter gularis, Chinese Goshawks A.soloensis, Crested Honey Buzzards Pernis (apivorus) ptilorhynchus and Peregrine Falcons Falco peregrinus recorded in an hour. During the same period 20 Milky Storks moved eastwards in a single flock. Such movements are poorly documented.

During a short visit to Guning Gede and Pangrango a number of noteworthy species were seen, including: Dusky Woodcock Scolopax saturata, Giant Swiftlet Collocalia gigas, Pygmy Tit Psaltria exilis, Lesser Forktail Enicurus velatus, Pink-necked Fruit-Dove Ptilinopus porphyrea and several sightings of probable Salvadori's Nightjars Caprimulgus pulchellus. The

Botanical Gardens, Bogor, held amongst other species, Chestnut-capped Thrush Zoothera interpres, Grey-cheeked Pigeon Treron griseicauda and the surprisingly local Java Sparrow Padda oryzivora. Yellow-throated Hanging Parrot Loriculus pusillus, and Javan Kingfisher Halcyon cyanoventris were recorded on the Green Indonesia Foundation Nature Trail on Gunung Salak. (see Recent Reports for autumn 1984 counts in Sumatra)

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Birdwatching areas

RANTHAMBHOR TIGER RESERVE

The rewards of birding in Ranthambhor Tiger Reserve are outlined. The reserve holds a wide range of birds, plus many mammal species.

In an attempt to encourage and protect its country's existing Tiger Panthera tigris population, the Indian Government designated Ranthambhor as one of nine new reserves in 1972. Established under the auspices of Project Tiger, it is an area of undulating, rocky hills and plateaux on the fringe of the Vindhya Range, Rajasthan. Much of the reserve's 400 sq. kilometres is covered with dry deciduous forest, largely composed of Dhok Anogeissus pendula and Roja Acacia leucophloea trees. The reserve's eastern margins slope downwards to the

Chambal river valley and the state border with Madhya Pradesh. To the west lies the plain of Sawai Madhopur.

A direct rail route links Sawai Madhopur to Delhi (10 hours by train) and Bharatpur (5 hours by train). Convenient accommodation is difficult to find, and although there is a forest lodge within the park itself, this must be reserved in advance through the state tourist office. Otherwise it is necessary to stay in Sawai Madhopur, twelve kilometres from the reserve. There is a wide range of hotels in the city, though those at the cheaper end of the scale tend to be rather spartan.

There is a regular bus service to the park, catering mainly for pilgrims destined for Ranthambhor's Ganesh Temple. Buses leave from the Sawai Madhopur railway station, starting at 6am and take an hour to reach the park boundary.

Bicycles can be hired in the town at nominal rates, and afford greater independence, although the road to the park is a chaotic patchwork of gravel and tarmac, and is most uncomfortable.

Ranthambhor is open to the public from November until June (most Indian reserves close during the monsoon), but it is advisable to visit in winter or early spring in order to avoid Rajasthan's notoriously fiery summer temperatures. However, whatever time of year one visits, access to much of the park is limited to organised jeepruns laid on by park staff. The jeepruns are fairly expensive; unless one is hoping to see mammals most species of bird can be found in the vicinity of the forest lodge and the entrance. This area is dominated by a magnificent eleventh century fort, built on the the top of a 600m plateau - the highest point in the park. The base of the rock from which the fort rises is girdled with mixed jungle, and this area, together with the forest flanking the approach road are the best birding habitats. Near the fort it is possible to find the park's specialities: Painted Spurfowl Galloperdix lunulata and Jungle Bush-Quail Perdicula asiatica, although like all forest-dwelling gamebirds they are retiring and can be difficult to see. Other noteworthy birds include White-naped (Black-backed) Woodpecker Chrysocolaptes festivus, Tawny-bellied (Rufous-bellied) Babbler Dumetia hyperythra, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher Cyornis tickelliae, Jungle Prinia Prinia sylvatica, and Crested Bunting Melophus lathami. Sulphur-bellied Warbler Phylloscopus griseolus and White-capped Bunting Emberiza stewarti are winter visitors to the area, while Ultramarine Flycatcher Ficedula superciliaris is a passage migrant. A few Palearctic species reach here in winter: notably Oriental Turtle-Dove Streptopelia orientalis, Lesser Whitethroat Sylvia

curruca, Common Chiffchaff Phylloscopus collybita, Greenish Warbler P. trochiloides, Olive Tree- (Olive-backed) Pipit Anthus hodgsoni, and Yellow-hooded (Citrine) Wagtail Motacilla citreola.

The reserve's complex of tourist accommodation overlooks a lake which holds Mugger Crocodiles Crocodylus palustris. There are a number of other pools and waterholes which attract a range of common migratory waders, plus breeding Greater Painted-snipe Rostratula benghalensis. The largest lake holds wintering duck including Falcated Teal Anas falcata, as well as Brown Fish Owl Ketupa zeylonensis and Stork-billed Kingfisher Pelargopsis capensis. This is also an ideal place to watch game going to drink. Ranthambhor has two species of deer: Sambar Cervus unicolor and Chital C. axis, plus two antelopes, Nilgai Boselaphus tragocamelus and Chinkara Gazella dorcas. Together with Wild Boar Sus scrofa, these species support a good stock of large carnivores, including both Tiger and Leopard Panthera pardus. As in all tiger parks, it is unwise to disregard the rules about access, and activities should be limited to well-defined paths, preferably not alone.

Before the road leaves the Sawai Madhopur plain and ascends to the reserve gates, there is an interesting area of cultivated semi-desert, well worth investigation. The avifauna is completely different from that within the park and includes Yellow-wattled Lapwing Vanellus malabaricus, Indian Courser Cursorius coromandelicus, Painted Sandgrouse Pterocles indicus, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse P. exustus, Sirkeer Cuckoo Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii, and Long-billed Pipit Anthus similis. Both the semi-desert and the reserve attract wintering raptors including Tawny Eagle Aquila rapax, Greater Spotted Eagle A. clanga and Lesser Spotted Eagle A. pomarina. There are also Crested Serpent Spilornis cheela, Booted Hieraaetus pennatus and Short-toed Eagles Circaetus gallicus, while Bonelli's Eagle H. fasciatus almost certainly breeds.

Ranthambhor is chiefly famous for its large carnivores and, perhaps for this reason, has not previously attracted large numbers of amateur ornithologists. However, it supports a rich avifauna, including species difficult to see elsewhere, such as Painted Spurfowl, Painted Sandgrouse and White-naped Woodpecker. All Indian reserves holding potentially dangerous mammals have restricted visitor access, and this can at times cause frustation. Yet few parks can boast such a magnificent setting as Ranthambhor. The spectacular panoramas of eastern

Rajasthan from the walls of the ancient Rajput fort are in themselves full reward for anyone who makes the effort to visit the reserve.

Mark Cocker, 75 Stafford Street, Norwich, UK.

Reviews

ALI, S. and RIPLEY, S.D. 1983. A pictorial guide to the birds of the Indian subcontinent. Pp.177; 73 colour & 33 monochrome plates. Delhi & Oxford: Bombay N.H.S. & Oxford Univ. Press. 120Rs/£22.50

It is perhaps surprising that until now no single volume has attempted to illustrate completely the rich and diverse avifauna of the Indian subcontinent. The welcome publication of this book adequately fills this niche. It is not intended to be a field guide in the traditional sense, differing in its larger format (although quite slim) and very brief text. Nevertheless, the publishers are to be congratulated on producing an eminently portable, if not actually pocketable, book with almost every species illustrated in the very attractive series of plates by John Henry Dick.

After a very short introduction there is a lengthy Systematic Index of all the species covered. Each species (or subspecies) is numbered, enabling quick reference to the monumental Handbook[1] or the Synopsis[2]. The sequence in the Systematic Index follows these two works, but the plates do not correspond exactly. The book concentrates largely on species although a number of well-marked subspecies are included and illustrated.

After the Systematic Index the rest of the book is devoted to the plates, most of which are in colour. On the whole they are bold and well-executed and very pleasing to the eye. A variety of plumages is shown, where appropriate. Several groups such as raptors and waders are illustrated in flight, as well as perched. The majority of species should be identifiable without too much difficulty, but my main criticism is the lack of feather detail, particularly in the case of the smaller passerines. Having used the book in the field, I found the colour representations to be reasonably accurate, although in a few cases a little misleading.

Each plate is faced by a page of text, usually just two or three lines per species, which briefly details size, habitat and range within the subcontinent. Sadly no information at all is given on identification. Whilst appreciating that the inclusion of identification points would have considerably increased the bulk of the book, for certain groups of difficult species the plates by themselves will prove inadequate.

It is claimed that all species found in the subcontinent are included. Comparing this book with the Synopsis[2], I found 33 full species omitted. Admittedly half of these are vagrants to the region and their omission is not likely to detract from the book's usefulness. Several other species omitted occur only marginally in the region. It would appear this was not deliberate as some vagrants and marginal species are included. The recently described Enigmatic Shortwing Brachypteryx cryptica from Arunachal Pradesh has been omitted, whilst several extinct species are included. I regard the omission of six species to be more serious, all are regular breeding or wintering birds: Rufous-necked Stint Calidris ruficollis, Saunders's Tern Sterna saundersi, Oriental Cuckoo Cuculus saturatus, Hume's Short-toed Lark Calandrella acutirostris, Blunt-winged Warbler Acrocephalus concinens and Blyth's Pipit Anthus godlewskii. It is interesting that all six are notoriously difficult to identify in the field. Even if this were the reason for their omission, users of the book should have been made aware of these potential pitfalls.

There is considerable variation in the choice of English names compared with the standard textbooks of peripheral regions. Readers outside the subcontinent will recognise up to 16 taxa which elsewhere are often considered to be full species, and which are 'lumped' in the Pictorial Guide. For example, Saker Falco cherrug and Laggar Falcon F. jugger are regarded as subspecies of the extralimital Lanner F. biarmicus. Several species listed as extralimital have been recorded at least once or twice within the region. A few inconsistencies or errors occur in the book, but most are unlikely to cause serious confusion. For example, the plate numbers of Brown-winged Pelargopsis amauroptera and Stork-billed Kingfishers P. capensis are transposed and the Ashy-throated Warbler Phylloscopus maculipennis is illustrated but there is no accompanying text. In several instances the names used in the Systematic Index differ from those used in the text. It is a shame that two species, in different genera, have to have the same English name: Chinese Bush Warbler.

I have tried to highlight some of the shortcomings of the book. I have not wished to undermine the tremendous value of it to anyone birding in the Indian subcontinent. It is the most complete illustrative work to date on the region and I recommend it highly.

References

1. Ali, S. and Ripley, S.D. 1968-1975. Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan, 1-10. Oxford University Press, Bombay and London.

2. Ripley, S.D. 1982. A Synopsis of the Birds of India and Pakistan: together with those of Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Second edition. Bombay Natural History Society, Bombay.

Nigel Redman.

DE SCHAUENSEE, R.M. 1984. The birds of China Pp.602; 38 colour plates; 39 wash drawings. Oxford: Oxford University Press. £35.

I was glad indeed to receive a copy of this new book only days before leaving for a month long visit to China last year. Although my initial pleasure was somewhat diminished once the various shortcomings became apparent, I still regard this book as an invaluable asset and an essential acquisition for anyone with a serious interest in the birds of China.

With so few works on the birds of China currently in print, let alone in English, it is good indeed to see the entire avifauna covered by a single volume. The bulk of the book is taken up by a systematic section covering the nearly 1200 species recorded in China to date. Under each species the text is largely devoted to a short description of the species and an account of the distribution both inside China and elsewhere. Very brief additional details of habitat, nest sites and sometimes altitudinal distribution and behaviour are also given. The descriptions of the species are supplemented by 38 colour plates and 39 wash drawings depicting some 550 species. The remainder of the book consists of a short introductory section, which includes a concise summary of the history of ornithology in China, a brief bibliography, a list of variant names, a checklist and indexes.

Users of this book will undoubtedly be concerned most with the information concerning distribution and habitat. In general the concise verbal descriptions are accurate and, providing one has learnt the locations of China's many provinces (as well as both old and new spellings), not too difficult to visualise. It

is a pity, however, that for such a high price the amount of information could not have been increased, perhaps through an expansion of the size of the volume. Surely it might also have been possible to produce range maps for most species? There are quite a number of errors and omissions, some quite glaring. Thus, for example, the latitude and longitude given for Sukatschev's Laughing-thrush Garrulax sukatschewi, a species known only from one area in Gansu, refers in actual fact to an area on the borders of Yunnan and Sichuan hundreds of kilometres south of the correct locality.

The book does not claim to be a field guide and certainly the brief and simplistic descriptions of each species can in no way act as a comprehensive field guide text. There are only rarely details of immature or non-breeding plumages and no reference at all to voice and 'jizz'. Nevertheless, when used with field guides to surrounding regions, the book is helpful in the field, especially in so far as those species endemic or virtually endemic to China are concerned. I have most criticism for the colour plates - not with their execution (which is mostly of a good standard, although not up to the level found in European and North American field guides), but with what they portray (or rather fail to portray). Here, surely, was an opportunity to provide accurate, illustrations of China's many endemic or near-endemic species, many of which have rarely been illustrated. It is these species which the birder/ornithologist visiting China will be most interested in seeing and consequently will most want to find illustrated. Sadly a wonderful opportunity has been wasted - instead of a comprehensive coverage of the endemics and near-endemics, plus difficult-to-identify species of wider distribution, we find the plates illustrating a hodge-podge of species ranging from those which are common and widespread all over Eurasia at one end of the scale to highly localized Chinese endemics at the other. Not only have a considerable number of endemic and near-endemic species been omitted from the plates altogether, but far too many of those sepcies which are illustrated are depicted in a single plumage - presumably in order to increase the total number of species depicted in the number of plates available. At this price, one would have liked to see more plates, but failing that a much more careful choice of illustrations.

This book partially fills a yawning gap in the ornithological literature of Asia. It is the first book in English to cover the entire avifauna of China since the communist revolution and, as such, the author and publisher are

to be congratulated. There is a great deal of interest these days in the avifauna of China and this book will help to stimulate this still further. Even so we are unlikely to see a succession of books on the birds of China and the present work is likely to remain the standard for some considerable time (in English at least). Given the high price, one could have expected something rather more comprehensive, with more plates (and a better choice of illustrations), range maps and a more detailed text.

Mark Beaman.

Announcements - Requests

A Field Guide to the Bird Songs of South-East Asia, a set of two cassettes, compiled and edited by Terry White is available from the British Library National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, London SW7 2AS. Price £10, incl. p & p in UK (plus £1 for overseas).

Interwader: East Asia Wader Migration Project. Interwader is an International Research Programme launched in 1983 to identify key wetland areas in East Asia of importance to migrating waders, and to study their ecology and conservation status. In 1983/1984 surveys were mainly conducted in Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines and Hong Kong. Important sites for hundreds of thousands of waders have been located and more remain to be discovered in the next two years. Rarities found include Asian Dowitcher Limnodromus semipalmatus and Spoon-billed Sandpiper Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus. The Interwader programme is to be expanded in 1985/87 to cover the entire East Asia - Pacific Region, with major field seasons from July - November and February - May.

There is currently very little information on East Asian wetlands; the Interwader co-ordinators (Duncan Parish and David Wells) would like to encourage biologists to conduct studies on them. The co-ordinators can arrange local contacts and in some cases provide facilities or part-funding for such studies.

Interwader is also looking for biologists with wader/wetland experience who would like to help with the existing programme for periods exceeding two months during 1985. Such assistants would conduct ground surveys, organise ringing operations or assist in the co-ordinating office. The majority of the posts are voluntary, but a limited number of grants are available which will cover the local costs of

successful applicants. In the future, these posts may develop into long term positions. Those interested should send personal details, a statement of relevant experience and dates available. For birdwatchers visiting the region Interwader will happily supply information on good sites in return for completed wader survey forms.

For further information contact: Duncan Parish and David Wells, co-ordinators, Interwader Project, c/o World Wildlife Fund Malaysia, P.O.Box 19769, Wisma Damansara, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Brown Dippers. We are currently researching the ecology of the White-throated Dipper Cinclus cinclus gularis on the Wye catchment in Wales (see Bird Study 32:33-40). Comparable information is now sought for other Cinclus species, especially the Brown Dipper C. pallasii including its association with C. cinclus in sympatric areas. Details of diet, breeding biology, movements and distribution, moult, biometrics, behaviour etc. are required for a review. Full acknowledgements will be given to those providing information. Please contact : Dr S.J.Tyler and S.J.Ormerod, c/o R.S.P.B. Wales Office, Frolic St., Newtown, Powys, Wales, U.K.

Indian National Parks and Sanctuaries. The Department of the Environment, India is currently undertaking a preliminary survey of Indian National Parks and Sanctuaries. Data on all aspects of these areas, including the flora and fauna, are sought to supplement official records. Anyone who can help should contact Shri Shekhar Singh, Indian Institute of Public Administration, Indra Prastha Estate, New Delhi 110 002, India and ask for a questionnaire. Please state name and address, areas visited and dates of visits in your letter.

An Atlas of the Distributions of Oriental Birds. Launched in 1984, its purpose is to use precise locality records and their relation to habitat type, etc., to attempt (a) to uncover patterns of geographical speciation repeatable from group to group (b) to redefine the Oriental avifauna at the levels of superspecies and species group.

The area to be covered is the Indian subcontinent with Sri Lanka, north to the Indus valley and the southern face of the Himalayas to an altitude at which broad-leaved woodland becomes deciduous in response to a winter; east through South-east Asia as far as, but not including, islands standing on the

Australo-Papuan (Sahul) continental shelf; north into China, including Taiwan, as far, roughly as the Yangtze. At both the Australasian and Palearctic interfaces there will be a need for some selectivity of species to be treated. This is being decided upon as work through the various groups progresses, and will be up for regular review.

The primary sources of information must inevitably continue to be museums. It will take many years, and much collaboration to cover them adequately. Even so, with its rather different - and difficult - recent political past, tropical Asia has never been collected with anything like the evenness of cover apparent within the Afrotropics. In trying to supply as complete as possible a picture of what still exists, or has until recently, therefore, it would be senseless to ignore the now rapidly expanding body of competence of field identification in this area. We have accordingly opted for judicious use of sight and sound records - which means of course that the launch of the OBC as an organised repository of quality field informaton is a serendipitous event.

In this first OBC bulletin we are taking the opportunity of alerting members to what is going on, and asking for records to collected with ADOB in view; almost any good identification coupled with locality, co-ordinates and adequate site data stands a high chance of becoming a point on a map. Some areas can only be mapped by special fieldwork, indeed one of the most obvious immediate spin-offs of foraging in museum collections has been to order priorities for fieldwork (quite a lot of it urgent or critical in some way or other).

At the same time, the chance in big museums to oversee entire taxon groups against a background of modern biogeographical ideas has tended to throw up fewer actual answers in taxonomy than questions and counter-hypotheses, demanding the kinds of extra information (on behaviour, vocalisations, habitat selection, etc) that can only be collected from the living animal on site. Member ornithologists intending to visit critical areas might thus be in unique positions to help pin down biological species limits/identify allospecies.

There are many problems to be resolved. If the idea catches on we intend to advertise projects in future issues of the Bulletin.

D.R.Wells: Zoology Department, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
E.C.Dickinson: Chemin du Chano 8, 1802 Corseaux, Switzerland.

Recent Reports

These are largely unconfirmed reports. We urge that full details be supplied to relevant regional organisations in due course.

INDIA

Bharatpur was very dry during the winter of 1984/85. 41 Siberian Cranes Grus leucogeranus arrived in late December. An impressive Harrier roost of 500-700 birds was observed at the Vellavadar Blackbuck Sanctuary, Gujarat on the 23 December. The roost was estimated to comprise about 75% Montagu's Harriers Circus pygargus and 25% Pallid Harriers C. macrourus, but included some Marsh Harriers C. aeruginosus (AP,SR).

NEPAL

The second Forest Wagtail Dendronanthus indicus for Nepal occurred at Chitwan(NP) in April 1984. In May the 2nd or 3rd record of Hill Blue Flycatcher Cyornis banyumas for Nepal was seen in the Marsyandi Valley(JC). October brought the 1st record of Baikal Teal Anas formosa, when a pair was seen at Kalopani in the Kali Gandaki valley. Several days later the same group of birdwatchers located a pair of Baer's Pochards Aythya baeri (3rd record) on Phewa Tal, Pokhara (RB,SC,MH,FR). (See C.Inskipp's article for details of exceptional raptor numbers logged in autumn 1984, Eds.)

CHINA

The Birdquest tour to Xizang Zizhiqu, Heilongjiang and Sichuan produced a number of interesting records in the late spring of 1984. A female Scaly-sided Merganser Mergus squamatus at Dailing in n.e. Heilongjiang (Manchuria) on 3/4 June and a single Black-throated Robin Erithacus obscurus at Jiuzhaigou, n.e. of Sungpan, n.Sichuan on 13 June, being most noteworthy (SM). Two Asian Dowitchers Limnodromus semipalmatus were seen at the Zhalong reserve near Qiqihar, Heilongjiang on 5/6 June. 2 Large Hawk-Cuckoos Cuculus sparverioides were heard calling at Badaling (Great Wall, n.w. of Beijing) on 23 May and another two were seen at Xiangshan, Beijing on 1 June. This species is only mentioned as a straggler to Hebei Province. 3 Chestnut-flanked

White-Eyes Zosterops erythropleura were seen on 12 June with 5 on the 13 June at Jiuzhaigou, n.Sichuan (MB,SM). At Lake Poyang, Jiangxi Province, this January, wintering crane numbers were up again. The following counts were made: Siberian Crane 1350, White-naped Crane Grus vipio 1165, Hooded Crane G. monacha 105. Also of interest wintering here were 100+ "Eastern" White Storks Ciconia ciconia boyciana, 500+ Great Bustards Otis tarda and large numbers of Swan Geese Anser cygnoides. 200-300 Red-crowned Cranes G. japonensis were counted at the coastal Yan Cheng reserve in Jiangsu Province (GA).

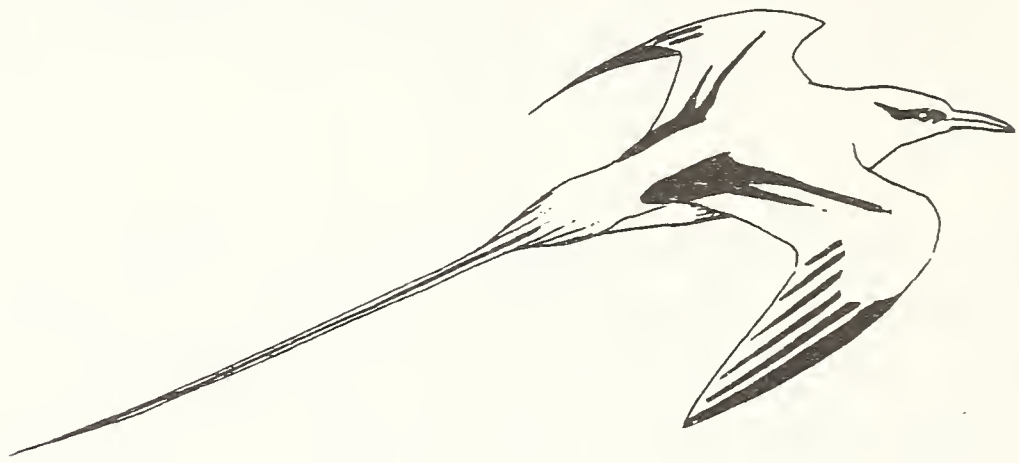
HONG KONG

April and May 1984 produced exceptional wader numbers, with 325+ Asian Dowitchers, 5 Spoon-billed Sandpipers Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus and 3 Nordmann's Greenshanks Tringa guttifer. Chinese Egrets Egretta eulophotes were seen in May, but apparently did not nest at Yim Tso Ha. Spot-billed Ducks Anas poecilorhyncha bred for the first time and Black-naped Terns Sterna sumatrana nested for the second year running on a small islet in Tolo Harbour. Sadly the first definite breeding attempt by Crested Kingfishers Ceryle lugubris in Hong Kong failed, apparently due to human interference. Autumn wader passage was, as usual, light, but good number of ducks over wintered (1984/85). with record counts of Falcated Teal Anas falcata. In January 1985 Hong Kong's 2nd Ruddy Shelduck T. ferruginea was recorded, along with a male Baikal Teal. Other winter highlights included 2 Rose-coloured Starlings Sturnus roseus (1st Hong Kong record), Black Stork Ciconia nigra and up to 24 Dalmatian Pelicans Pelecanus crispus. Small numbers of Saunders's Gulls Larus saundersi were present from mid-December (DM).

THAILAND

April 1984 produced an unprecedented 400 Asian Dowitchers at Samut Sakhon in the inner Gulf of Thailand (1). May saw the arrival of 4 Spot-billed Pelicans Pelecanus philippensis at Bung Boraphet Reservoir, one of which was later shot (MRPV). Grey Peacock-Pheasants Polyplectron bicalcaratum were heard calling in the Ban Thai Salao Reserve Forest, Phetburi Province in mid-August (UT). Field-work in northern Chumphon Province in late September produced range extensions of several Malaysian birds, including Cinnamon-rumped Trogon Harpactes orrhophaeus and Large Wren-Babbler Napothera macrodactyla (KK,PR,UT). The autumn wader passage began with single Asian Dowitchers and

Grey-tailed Tattlers Heteroscelus brevipes at Bangpoo on 19 August (JS). On 2 September 10 000 Oriental Pratincoles Glareola maldivarum were counted in the fields between Samut Sakhon and Bangkok (JJ). 2 Slender-billed Gulls Larus genei were at Samut Sakhon from 1 September into October (BBCN). The mudflats off Phetburi held 7 Painted Storks and 3 Spot-billed Pelicans in early October (I), but pride of place goes to the mudflats off the Pattani Campus of the Prince of Songla



White-tailed Tropicbird Phaethon lepturus CR.

University which was the site of Thailand's 1st White-tailed Tropicbird Phaethon lepturus, 7 Spoon-billed Sandpipers (2nd record) and a single Asian Dowitcher, all in late October (EM,KS,JS). There were several high wader counts at Samut Sakhon in early November with 1100 Marsh Sandpipers Tringa stagnatilis, 343 Broad-billed Sandpipers Limicola falcinellus and 593 Curlew Sandpipers Calidris ferruginea (PR,JS). An immature Painted Stork was seen near Phimai in early November (PR). Other interesting October records were a Jerdon's Baza Aviceda jerdoni at Sai Yok Noi, Kanchanaburi (PR), and a Slaty-legged Crake Rallina eurizonoides which was rescued from children in a Bangkok suburb on 27 October (UT,MRPV,SV). A Black-tailed Crake Porzana bicolor was found in an open marshy area on Doi Inthanon in late January 1985 (PD). Subsequent examination of the area revealed at least 3 territories on 31 January (BK,PR). A Lesser Whitethroat Sylvia curruca was seen near Nakhon Phathon, west of Bangkok on 16 January 1985 (BK). 2 Pin-tailed Parrotfinches Erythrura prasina were found at Khao Yai on 25 January 1985 (BK). No exceptional numbers of thrushes occurred this winter, but a few Grey-sided Thrushes Turdus feae with Eye-browed Thrushes T. obscurus were seen on Doi Inthanon on 31 January 1985 (PR). A male Grey-winged Blackbird Turdus boulboul was seen on Doi Pui on 25 January (AW). On Doi Inthanon a Long-tailed Thrush Zoothera dixoni was seen from 28

January to 1 February 1985 with a Black-headed Greenfinch Carduelis ambigua on 31 January 1985 (AW).

PENINSULAR MALAYSIA

1984 produced a number of interesting breeding records. A female Malaysian Peacock-Pheasant Polyplectron malacense was found incubating a single egg on 4 August at Kuala Lompat. Unfortunately the nest had been predated when it was visited on 20 August. A nest of the Jambu Fruit Dove Ptilinopus jambu with one egg was found at Kuala Lompat on 3 July. Both sexes were still incubating on 13 July but the nest was deserted on 14 July. A nest of the Large Wren-Babbler, also found at Kuala Lompat, on 6 May contained 2 eggs. On the slopes of Gunong Tualong Rabong (3,500ft) on 16 June, the nest of an Eye-browed Wren-Babbler Napothera epilepidota was found, containing two juveniles. Two Dusky Warblers Phylloscopus fuscatus seen at Kuala Selangor on 27 November were presumably over-wintering. There are no previous documented records for Peninsular Malaysia. A single Ruff Philomachus pugnax was seen near Kuala Selangor on 4 November. An adult Rufous-bellied Eagle Hieraaetus kienerii at Gombak on 18 July was apparently the first July record for the peninsula (FL). Also seen in September and December in the same area were Peregrine Falcons (dark birds, probably of the race Falco peregrinus ernesti) at the Batu caves in October 1984 and at Templar Park during January 1985 (FL,AH,DW). Mating was observed on 1 January 1985 and their nest located in mid-February. This is the first breeding record for the peninsular. The Crested Argus Rheinardia ocellata was recorded for the first time on Gunong Tualong Rabong (Kelantan/Pahang border, at the edge of Taman Negara) on 14 June 1984, when three birds were seen (ad female and two probable immatures) and males heard calling (FL,GWHD). The species was expected to occur on this mountain.

INDONESIA (Sumatra)

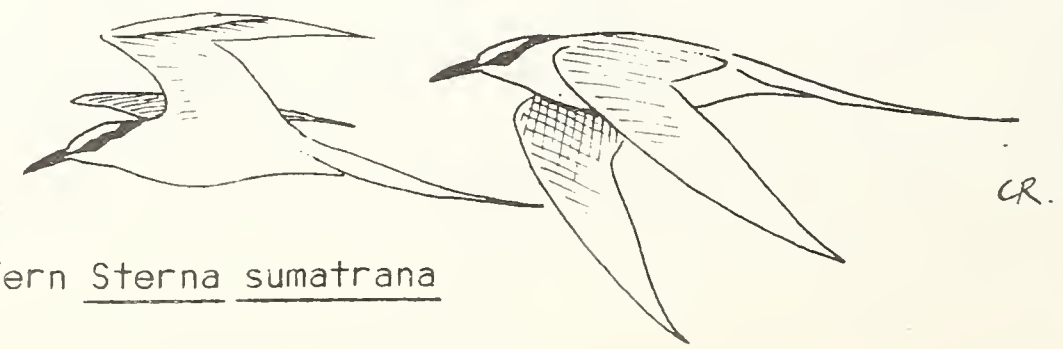
The recent survey of the s.e.Sumatran coastline (17 October - 27 November) proved very successful, recording large numbers of wintering waders (100 000) including 1500 Asian Dowitchers. The most abundant wader species were: Black-tailed Godwit Limosa limosa (18 747), Mongolian (Lesser Sand-) Plover Charadrius mongolus (15 396) and Common Redshank Tringa totanus (12 391). Herons and storks were also well represented, the most remarkable find being 3 000 Milky Storks Ibis cinereus, including 5-10% immatures. One breeding site was discovered.

Otherwise, the commonest species were Great Egret Egretta alba (1370), Lesser Adjutant Leptoptilos javanicus (634) and Black-headed (Oriental White) Ibis Threskiornis melanocephalus (854). Other sightings by the survey team included 2 Pomarine Jaegers (Skuas) Stercorarius pomarinus off-shore near Tanjung Jabung, Jambi Province (18 October), 8 Caspian Terns Hydroprogne (Sterna) caspia near Tanjung Jabung (24 November), a further 4 near Desa Camera, Berbak Game Reserve (27 October) and 7 Spot-billed Pelicans near Pulau Birit, Sumatra Selatan Province (22 October)(MS,WV).

INDONESIA (Java)

A single Javan Owlet Glaucidium castanopterum was seen near Palenbuhan Ratu (West Java) on 19 July 1984 (FL). Birds had been located here earlier in the year (PA). Two Dusky Woodcock Scolopax saturata were seen at Kadang Badak Cibodas on 28 November 1984 (PA,FL). They had been seen here on several occasions in the past (PA). Five Javan Blue Cochoas Cochoa (a.) azurea were found at Cibodas, two on the loop trail on 23 November 1984, one near the waterfall on 26 November and two at Kadag Badak on 28 November (FL). Four White-breasted Babblers Stachyris grammiceps were located in a small patch of forest near Wyncoops Bay (West Java) on 20 November 1984. Finally up to 70 Giant Swiftlets Collocalia gigas were counted at the Cibodas Waterfalls from 25-29 November (PA,FL).

Records were collated by Craig Robson from observations and contributions by the following:- Paul Andrew, George Archibald, Bangkok Bird Club Newsletter, Mark Beaman (Birdquest Ltd), Rob Bijlsma, Steen Christensen, Jack Cox Jr., G.W.H. Davidson, Philippe Dubois, Mogens Henrikson, Interwader, Andrew Helbig, June Jeans, Ben King, Kamol Konolphalin, R.M. and D. Lafontaine, Frank Lambert, Steve Madge, Eric Marteyn, M.R. Parcharjakorn Voravan, Ray Pierce, Neil Powell, Annette Preece, Frank de Roder, Steve Rooke, Phil Round, M.J.Silvius, Jon Starks, Kees Swennen, Uthai Treesucon, W.J.M. Verheught, Shane Voravorn, David Wells, Andrew Whittaker. We welcome recent reports for future issues of the Bulletin.



Black-naped Tern Sterna sumatrana

ADVICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

THE BULLETIN OF THE ORIENTAL BIRD CLUB provides a forum for news, notices, recent publications, expedition results, reviews, and preliminary or interim publication of studies on Oriental Birds by contributors from all parts of the world. Publication of interim results in the OBC Bulletin does not preclude or pre-empt publication of final results as journal papers either by the OBC or elsewhere. Contributions are considered by the Editor and an Editorial committee, with contributions accepted subject to editing and refereeing where appropriate. Copies of new journals, books or reports for mention or review are always welcomed. Contributions or enquiries should be sent to the Editor, Dr. T.M.Reed, Oriental Bird Club, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds., SG19 2DL, UK.

PREPARATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS

Whilst the Editor is always pleased to discuss possible contributions with potential authors, and to advise on preparation, it would be helpful if the following guidelines could be adhered to:

1. Articles These should be written clearly, preferably typed, on one side of the page, with all lines double-spaced, leaving wide margins.

Articles for publication in the Bulletin should be no longer than 2000 words, accompanied in all cases by a concise summary. Scientific names should appear at the first mention of each species or, if all species appear in a table, they may be given there instead. Scientific names should, where possible, follow King et al. 1975 'A Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia'.

Any tables to accompany articles should be prepared on separate pieces of paper, and be thoroughly checked. Titles of tables should be self-explanatory. Diagrams should be clearly drawn, in ink, with appropriate captions given on an accompanying piece of paper, ideally to fit a single column width of 11cm.

References should be cited in alphabetical order at the end of the paper in the same style used in this Bulletin.

It would be helpful if two copies of each contribution could be submitted.

2. Recent reports These should follow the format in the current edition of the OBC Bulletin, and be sent to C.Robson, OBC, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds. SG19 2DL, UK.

3. News/Information Contributions should be sent to R.Grimmett, OBC, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds. SG 19 2DL, UK.

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