

Fledged young observed:

*GREAT SLATY WOODPECKER *Mulleripicus pulverulentus* Saint Paul Subterranean National Park, Palawan on 20 March.

PHILIPPINE COUCAL *Centropus viridis* Balinsasayao, south Negros on 7 April.

PHILIPPINE HAWK-OWL *Ninox philippensis* Mount Makiling, Laguna, Luzon on 7 March.

PHILIPPINE SERPENT-EAGLE *Spilornis holospilus* Mount Canlaon, Negros on 1 April.

LONG-TAILED SHRIKE *Lanius schach* Mount Katanglad, Bukidnon, Mindanao on 16 April.

*CELESTIAL MONARCH *Hypothymis coelestis* Minuma, Isabela, Luzon on 11 May (pair with single fledgling).

BLACK-NAPED MONARCH *Hypothymis azurea* Minuma, Isabela, Luzon on 15 May.

*ISLAND FLYCATCHER *Eumyias panayensis* Sitio Siete, South Cotabato, Mindanao on 26 April (spotted juveniles).

WHITE-BROWED SHAMA *Copsychus luzoniensis* Minuma, Isabela, Luzon on 15 May (spotted juveniles).

SULPHUR-BILLED NUTHATCH *Sitta oenochlamys* Baracatan, Davao del Sur, Mindanao on 30 April.

ELEGANT TIT *Parus elegans* Valencias Geothermal Site, south Negros on 3 April. Sitio Siete, South Cotabato, Mindanao on 23 April. Minuma, Isabela, Luzon on 12, 13 and 14 May (all different).

PHILIPPINE BULBUL *Ixos philippinus* Minuma, Isabela, Luzon on 11 May.

YELLOWISH BULBUL *Ixos everetti* PICOP logging concession, km 36, Surigao del Sur/Davao Oriental, Mindanao on 4 May.

*PALAWAN FLOWERPECKER *Prionochilus plateri* Saint Paul Subterranean National Park, Palawan on 20 March.

*FLAME-CROWNED FLOWERECKER *Dicaeum anthonyi* Sitio Siete, South Cotabato, Mindanao on 26 April.

BICOLORED FLOWERPECKER *Dicaeum bicolor* Sitio Siete, South Cotabato, Mindanao on 25 April. Callao Caves, Cagayan, Luzon on 9 May.

RED-STRIPED FLOWERPECKER *Dicaeum australe* Near Sitio Siete, South Cotabato, Mindanao on 23 April. Callao Caves, Cagayan, Luzon on 9 May.

ORANGE-BELLIED FLOWERPECKER *Dicaeum trigonostigma* Sitio Siete, South Cotabato, Mindanao on 23 April.

Other breeding records:

PHILIPPINE TAILORBIRD *Orthotomus castaneiceps* Noted carrying nest material or food at Balinsasayao, south Negros on 6 April.

*MOUNTAIN LEAF-WARBLER *Phylloscopus trivirgatus* An adult was seen performing a distraction display at Baracatan, Davao del Sur, Mindanao on 2 May.

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Craig Robson, 63 Stafford Street, Norwich NR2 3BD, U.K.

Peter Davidson, 24 Christchurch Road, Norwich NR2 2AE, U.K.

On the breeding ecology of the Little Owl *Athene noctua* in Shaanxi Province, China.

LEI FU-MIN

Apart from the work of Yin (1964), little has been published about the breeding ecology of the Little Owl *Athene noctua* in China. The following note summarizes the results of a study of Little Owls *A. n. plumipes* conducted between March and July 1992 in central Shaanxi Province (34°4'N 107°6'E). The study site was in an area with well-forested ravines, typically 1-10 km long and 20-100 m wide, that were dominated by a few tree species: *Platycladus orientalis*, *Populus canadensis*, *Prunus armeniaca*, *Juglans regia* and *Ziziphus jujuba*. Forty-three bird species were found in an area of 75 ha, of which Great Tit *Parus major*, Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* and Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* were commonly encountered. Eight pairs of Little Owls were found in the study area, with an average distance of 189 m between nests (and a minimum of less than 100 m).

Nests of the Little Owl were found in steep ravines in holes or crevices 1.5-4 m deep, which were usually partially plugged by large lumps of earth. The eggs were laid on loose soil where the ambient temperature was 18-20°C. The clutch size was 5-6, with one to two eggs being laid every one or two days.

The eggs were white, weighed an average of 15.5 ± 0.24 g, and measured $34.5 \pm 0.68 \times 29.1 \pm 0.25$ mm ($n = 6$). The female alone incubated the eggs, and hatching occurred after 39 days. During incubation, females rarely left the nest. Hatching success was high with 92.7% of eggs in five clutches hatching, but only 58.3% of juveniles survived to fledge. Both adults defended the nestlings by chasing away potential predators such as Blue Magpie *Urocissa erythrorhyncha* and Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis*.

At 12 days old, nestlings began to crawl around and feed themselves, and by 32 days the nestlings were able to fly short distances from the nest, but generally stayed at or within 100 m of the nest site until September. Thirty-two pellets collected from near the nest contained 58 food items. Two species of rodent (Greater Long-tailed Hamster *Cricetulus triton* and Reed Vole *Microtus fortis*) accounted for 34% of items, whilst six types of insect (including scarabs, click beetles and wasps) accounted for 60.4%, whilst small birds accounted for only 1.7% of prey identified.

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Lei Fu-min, Institute of Zoology, Academia Sinica, PO Box 1000080, Beijing, China.

Notes on the Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler *Xiphirhynchus superciliaris* in Yunnan, China

HAN LIANXIAN

The Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler *Xiphirhynchus superciliaris* is distributed in the eastern Himalayas, southern Assam (India), western and north-eastern Myanmar, northern Vietnam, and Yunnan province in China (Sibley and Monroe 1990). Rothschild (1926) was the first to record the species in Yunnan, but he did not document the exact site, indicating only that his specimen was collected from the divide between the Salween and 'Shweli' (Longchuan Jiang) rivers in western Yunnan. There have been no further reports of the species from Yunnan.

In November 1990, during avian surveys conducted in the Dulong river area (in the western extremity of the Gaoligongshan region) in western

Yunnan, I captured three Slender-billed Scimitar-Babblers (one adult and two young) in a mist net. Subsequently, I made some field observations, and also examined specimens recently collected in Yunnan by Mr Wei Tianhao of the Kunming Institute of Ecology and by Mr Zhou Yunsheng of the Gaoligongshan Nature Reserve management bureau. Some notes on this species in Yunnan are presented below.

Habits

The species is found in forest, shrubberies, bamboo and shrubland/grassland dominated slopes near cultivated land, at elevations of 1,800–2,100 m. The specimens I collected were in shrublands at 2,100 m. They are usually found singly or in pairs, although it is also found in larger foraging groups after breeding. The only vocalization noted is a three-syllabled, deep 'do go go, do go go'.

Measurements

The subspecies found in Yunnan is *X. s. forresti*.

	Weight (g)	Length (mm)	Wing	Tail	Bill	Tarsus
Adult	25	225	72.0	81.0	46.8	32.0
Young	–	–	53.0	28.0	21.0	24.9
Young	–	–	53.0	28.0	20.3	24.2

Distribution within Yunnan

Specimens are known only from three localities: Muliwa in the Dulong Jiang area of Gongshan county in north-western Yunnan; Lengshuihe in Datang township, Tengchong county, western Yunnan; and Shuitang township in Xiping county in central Yunnan. I also saw the species in Heinitang village, Guyong township (Tengchong county). The total number of individuals observed was 11, suggesting that the species is rare in Yunnan.

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Han Lianxian, Kunming Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Kunming, Yunnan, P. R. China 650223.