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New and noteworthy bird records from Sumatra, Indonesia

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During 1999–2003, I carried out fieldwork in South Sumatra province, Indonesia, at the following locations: Pemulutan, Ogan Komering Lebak (November 1999); Lebak Pampangan (June 2000, March 2001, February 2002, April 2002); Lebak Pedamaran (August 2001); Lebak Tanjung (April–March 2003), Napalicin area, Rawas river, Kerinci Seblat National Park (December 1999), Dempo mountain (February 2000) and Resort Air Muara Padang, Padang-Sugihan Wildlife Reserve (November 1999). During fieldwork I made observations of a number of species of significance, which are described below.

Coordinates of sites mentioned in the text are as follows: Lebak Pemulutan (03°09'S 104°45'E), Lebak Pampangan (03°21'S 104°95'E), Lebak Tanjung Aur (03°19'S 104°92'E), Resort Air Muara Padang (02°09'S 105°101'E), Napalicin (02°42'S 102°21'E), Dempo mountain (04°00'S 103°07'E).

COTTON PYGMY-GOOSE *Nettapus coromandelianus*

While carrying out fieldwork at Ogan Komering Lebak, I observed Cotton Pygmy-goose on a number of occasions. On 8 June 2000 at 09h40, I saw two flocks of ten and five birds at Lebak Kuro Pampangan, and local people reported that they had previously caught three young birds of this species (which they knew as *bebek alas*) in a tree nest-hole. On 24 March 2001, I saw at least six birds at Lebak Deling Pampangan, including a male flying at a distance of 10–12 m. On 29 August 2001, I saw two separate pairs at Lebak Teluk Toman Pedamaran. On 5 February 2002, I saw a flock of four birds at Lebak Sungai Bungin Pampangan, and a local guide showed me a tree-hole said to be used by the species for nesting. On 16 April 2002, several flocks totaling c.50 birds were observed at Lebak Deling Pampangan. A young bird killed by local people was greyish above, creamy below, with dark legs, a dark eye-stripe, a long whitish supercilium from the forehead to the nape and whitish cheeks. Finally, on 27 March 2003, I saw a pair at Lebak Tanjung Aur.

This species is resident in South and South-East Asia. Its status in Sumatra is uncertain (MacKinnon *et al.* 1998), although it is apparently resident (Holmes

and Nash 1999), being recorded commonly in small numbers, e.g. at North Lampung (Holmes and Noor 1995), Ogan Komering Lebak (Verheugt *et al.* 1993), Air Hitam Dalam (Holmes 1996) and Way Kambas (Parrot and Andrew 1996). These observations confirm that Cotton Pygmy-goose breeds in Sumatra.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

On 29 August 2001, two birds were seen at Lebak Teluk Toman, Ogan Komering Lebak. The birds were seen flying low over the water at distance of 20–50 m, landing in the water, and then diving, and were observed through 7×50 binoculars for five minutes. One bird was black with contrasting white belly and flanks; the second was brown with a white belly; both had dark upperwings with a broad white wing-bar, and they gave a noisy call *ker-r-rrr, ker-r-rr*.

This species breeds widely in the northern Palearctic, wintering from Africa to the Indian subcontinent, southern China, Japan and the Philippines. It is scarce to uncommon in Myanmar and Thailand, and a vagrant to Peninsular Malaysia (Sonobe and Usui 1993, Robson 2000). Although noted as occurring in Sumatra by MacKinnon *et al.* (1998), this species was not listed for Sumatra by Andrew (1992, 1993) or Kukila (2000).

LESSER YELLOWLEGS *Tringa flavipes*

On 30 December 1999 at 06h30, I observed a single conspicuous slim wader on the bank of the Rawas river in Kerinci Seblat National Park, Rawas Ulu district, South Sumatra province. Good views were obtained at a distance of 7–10 m. The bird had a pale greyish head, neck, mantle, back and wings, white underparts with faint streaking on the breast, a dark slim bill and long yellow legs. The bird was taller than a nearby Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*, which it behaved aggressively towards, giving a *twi-twi-twi* call. In flight, the square white rump was seen clearly. The bird was identified as a juvenile or non-breeding Lesser Yellowlegs using Marchant *et al.* (1986). It was distinguished from Grey-tailed Tattler *Heteroscelus brevipes*, Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*, Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* and Nordmann's Greenshank *T. guttifer*

by the combination of long yellow legs, square white rump, and slim straight bill. Wood Sandpiper *T. glareola* was eliminated by its shorter legs and stronger supercilium, especially behind the eye). Greater Yellowlegs *T. melanoleuca* was eliminated by its larger size and longer, thicker bill (Marchant *et al.* 1986).

Lesser Yellowlegs breeds in North America and winters largely in Central and South America. It is a rare visitor to East Asia (Sonobe and Usui 1993). This is the second record for Sumatra and Indonesia, following one in North Sumatra (Ollington and Parish 1989, Andrew 1992, Kukila 2000).

PIED HARRIER *Circus melanoleucos*

On 29 November 1999 at 13h30, I saw a male Pied Harrier flying over a swampy floodplain at Ogan Komering Lebak, Pemulutan district, South Sumatra province. The bird seen flying slowly 5 m above the ground, and good views were obtained down to 10–15 m for several minutes. The bird was a large pale grey raptor, with a black head, throat, and back. The upperwing and underwing was pale grey with black outer primaries; there was a white lesser-covert patch on the leading edge of the wing, and the underparts were pale grey or white.

This was the first record of Pied Harrier in Sumatra (Andrew 1992, 1993, Holmes 1996, Kukila 2000), although an undocumented record is included in the bird list for Kerinci Seblat National Park revised by J. Holden in Anon. (2002). The species breeds in the east Palearctic, north-east China and north Korea, wintering in the Indian subcontinent, southern China, Borneo and the Philippines. It has been recorded as a vagrant in Singapore (Robson 2000, Ferguson-Lees and Christie 2001).

FERRUGINOUS FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa ferruginea*

On 25 February 2000 at 07h30, I observed a Ferruginous Flycatcher on the edge of secondary forest between 700 m and 1,000 m on Dempo mountain (4°00'S 103°07'E), Pagar Alam regency, South Sumatra province. The bird was watched at a distance of 5 m for about two minutes in fairly poor light conditions. The bird was perched on low branches up to 1 m above the ground. It was a small flycatcher with a grey head, chestnut upperparts, darker wings and tail, rufous fringes to the greater coverts and tertials, brighter rufous tail, rump and uppertail-coverts compared to the back, white throat and belly, rufous breast and flanks, dark eye with a white eye-ring, and dark bill and legs.

Ferruginous Flycatcher breeds in Nepal, north-east Indian subcontinent, China and Taiwan, and winters in the Philippines and at 500–1,500 m in northern Sumatra and Kalimantan (MacKinnon *et al.* 1998, Robson 2000). Marle and Voous (1988) noted that it is probably overlooked, and Holmes (1996) did not list it for Sumatra (although Andrew 1992 did).

UNCONFIRMED RECORD

SILVERY PIGEON *Columba argentina*

On 27 November 1999 at 09h30, while travelling by *pompong* (a large motorised boat) along the Muara

Padang river at Resort Air Muara, Padang-Sugihan Wildlife Reserve, I saw three white imperial pigeons perched in a palm tree at a height of c.20 m. Good views were obtained at a distance 20–40 m and a height of c.10 m from the upper deck of the boat. One bird appeared paler than the other two and significantly smaller when all three flew off. All three birds were white, with a black tail and flight feathers. I tentatively identified the smaller bird as Silvery Pigeon, and the larger ones as Pied Imperial Pigeon *Ducula bicolor*. The two species are very difficult to distinguish (Gibbs *et al.* 2001: Silvery is smaller (but overlaps in overall length), generally more creamy-white than silvery bluish-grey, has a broad straight-cut tail-band rather than a triangular or wedge-shaped apical tail-band, extensive reddish orbital skin (rather than less extensive and blue-grey), pale greenish bill with a purplish-red base (rather than uniform blue-grey). Unfortunately I was not able to see any of the diagnostic features and confirm the identification.

This Critically Endangered species has a dispersed yet highly constricted range on the islands off the west and east coasts of Sumatra, extending onto the Malaysian islands west of Borneo (BirdLife International 2001). There have been no confirmed records for 70 years, although there were unconfirmed records in Padang-Sugihan Wildlife Reserve in November 1984 and June 1985 (Nash and Nash 1985), and unconfirmed records of 'large numbers' along the Sembilang River in March 1989 (Verheugt *et al.* 1993). Further searches at Padang-Sugihan Wildlife Reserve are therefore urgently needed to clarify the status of this species.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank BirdLife Indonesia for giving me an opportunity to carry out bird observations on Dempo Mountain and supporting fieldwork in Ogan Komering Lebak, in particular I thank Ria Saryanthi, Hidayat, William Rombang, Yusuf Cahyadin, Dian Agista, Irma Susilawati and Arif Budiman. Thanks are also to Kak Cek Sul, Ridwan, Guluk, Indra and Basith for their kind cooperation during my work on Ogan Komering Lebak. Survey work in Kerinci Seblat National Park was funded by PHPA-World Bank-Yayasan KEHATI Indonesia. I thank Ahmad Zulfikar, Horison, Kurniawan, Suryadi, Kak Syahrial, Pak Damiri and Bapak Muhammad Nur for their help and companionship in the field, and Dr Ani Mardiasuti for support. I thank FMIPA Bio UNSRI and BKSDASS, especially Dr Agus Purwoko for the opportunity to visit Resort Air Muara Padang. Thanks also to Dr Christian Goener and Ferry Hasudungan (Wetland International Asia Pacific Indonesia Programme) for their support. Finally, I would like to thank my partners in KPB-SOS (Kelompok Pengamat Burung Spirit of South Sumatra): Rina Sari Suryana, Ali Imron and Fadly Takari.

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Nesting of Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni* and Black Baza *A. leuphotes* in Buxa Tiger Reserve, West Bengal, India

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Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni* and Black Baza *A. leuphotes* have similar distributions in south, east and north-east India to South-East Asia and China (Grimmett *et al.* 1998, Ferguson-Lees and Christie 2001). Their breeding biology is relatively poorly known, although some information has been published e.g. Baker (1935), Grossman *et al.* (1965), Ali and Ripley (1987), Ferguson-Lees and Christie (2001).

We studied the nesting biology of both species in Buxa Tiger Reserve, Jalpaiguri district, West Bengal, India during 1999–2000. The reserve is located at 26°30'–55'N 89°20'–55'E and covers an area of 760 km², with a core area of 385 km² and a buffer zone 375 km². It borders Bhutan to the north, and Assam to the east. The elevation ranges from 60 m to 1,750 m. Most of the reserve lies in the plains; the northern tracts are hilly. The main habitat is moist tropical forest dominated by sal *Shorea robusta*. There are also plantations of sal, teak *Tectona grandis*, jarul *Lagerstroemia reginae*, and mixed plantations of native trees. The temperature range is 12–32°C and the average annual rainfall is c.4,100 mm.

METHODS

Nests of bazas were found by searching during the early part of the breeding season in the Dhamanpur, Rajabhathkawa, Buxaduar and Jainty Ranges of the reserve, following birds in aerial display or with nest materials. At the Jerdon's Baza nest, observations were made from the ground using a 20–60× telescope

during first week of nestling period. A small (1.5×1 m) platform was constructed 30 m up a tree c.30m from the nest, and this was used for observations for the rest of the nestling period. We usually attempted to enter the hide before sunrise and leave after sunset to avoid disturbance to the breeding birds. Casual observations were carried out at Black Baza nests. In addition, focal observations were carried out for 680 minutes at nest 2 during the incubation period (six, ten and fourteen days after laying), 360 minutes when the chicks were five days old at nest 2, and 315 minutes when the chicks were 21 days old at nest 3. Observations were made from ground by using a 20–60× telescope and 8×40 binoculars from a sufficient distance to avoid disturbing the birds.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Jerdon's Baza

One nest was found on 20 May 2000 at a height of 30 m in a 35 m tall sal tree (160 cm girth at breast height). The nest tree was in the middle of a small (150×50 m) sal plantation at 26°33'53"N 89°32'07"E and was one of the largest trees in the plantation. The nest was found during incubation, but the eggs were not checked to avoid disturbance.

Three nestlings hatched on 1 June. During 121 hours of observations through the nestling period, 116 prey items were delivered: 62 insects (mainly larvae), 13 frogs, 25 reptiles (23 common garden lizards *Calotes*