

Black-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata*: a new species for Pakistan

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On 11 January 1995 at 09h45 I was leisurely scanning a mangrove creek on Sandspit, just outside Karachi, southern Pakistan. On a fallen branch about 80 m away was a kingfisher that I immediately realised was a Black-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata*, a species not included in Roberts (1990) and new for Pakistan.

The shape and size of the bird were very like that of White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*. However, the bright red bill was heavier, and the lower mandible was more curved near the tip. The following description was taken: head deep black to below the level of the black eyes and forming a point like a wide V on the back of the neck; collar white; chin and throat white, becoming buffy on lower breast; belly buff; back appeared dark grey in the

prevailing light; a white patch at the base of the primaries seen in flight.

During a period of 16 minutes it changed perches several times and eventually disappeared round a bend in the creek about 0.5 km away.

The species is widespread in India, where some birds wander in winter and it is, therefore, not unexpected in Pakistan.

REFERENCE

Roberts, T. J. (1990) *The birds of Pakistan*, 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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Notes on winter birds at Shuangtaihekou National Nature Reserve, Liaoning Province, China

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Shuangtaihekou National Nature Reserve, covering some 80,000 ha at the head of Liaodong Bay, Liaoning, China is situated at about 40°52' to 41°03'N and 121°35' to 121°55'E. It experiences cold winters with an average temperature of -7.8°C, the lowest temperature recorded in Panjin being -29.3°C on 3 February 1964. In mid-winter the ground freezes to a depth of more than 1 m, and the sea freezes for up to several km offshore (Lanzhou Institute of Glaciology and Geocryology 1988). It is thus not surprising that few birds are recorded from the Reserve in mid-winter.

Information on the birds of the Shuangtaihekou National Nature Reserve was summarized by Brazil (1992), based on his observations between 20 April and 30 July 1991, and previous literature. Kanai *et al.* (1993) provide additional information for some species, based on summer observations in the period 1989-1993. Few observations have been made in mid-winter.

The following notes relate to brief observations made on 16, 17 and 20 January 1996 and include northward winter range extensions for a number of species, and one new record for the Reserve. The following list includes all species recorded in January 1996, but should not be considered to be comprehensive because of the very limited amount of time spent in the field.

JAPANESE QUAIL *Coturnix japonica*

Two birds in the West Reserve on 17th and one in the East Reserve on 20th. Cheng (1987) does not record this species wintering north of Shandong. Jin *et al.* (1989, 1991) previously recorded this species as a passage migrant and summer visitor respectively, while Anon. (1991) recorded it as resident. In Liaoning Province it is recorded as a summer visitor and migrant (Liaoning Ornithological Survey Team 1986, Zhao 1988).

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Single birds in the East Reserve on 16th and 20th, and at least three in the West Reserve on 17th. All birds were 'ringtails'. Cheng (1987) does not record this species north of the Yangtze valley in winter, except in eastern and north-eastern Qinghai. It is recorded only as a migrant in Liaoning (Liaoning Ornithological Survey Team 1986, Zhao 1988). Jin *et al.* (1989) recorded this species as resident in the Reserve, but this was subsequently revised to summer visitor (Jin *et al.* 1991), while it was recorded as a passage bird by Anon. (1991). Brazil (1992) noted only three sightings, all in April.

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD *Buteo lagopus*

At least three in the East Reserve on 16th. Although not recorded for the Reserve by Anon. (1991) and Jin *et al.*