

## Streaked Weaver *Ploceus manyar*: a new species for Bhutan

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On 10 June 2000, at Daifam in the south-east corner of Bhutan (26°54'N 92°05'E), I observed a few Streaked Weavers *Ploceus manyar*, including a male in breeding plumage and a female. There were at least three other individuals that I did not observe in detail, as I concentrated on the first two for confirming their identification. The birds were in a maize field at the base of the hills at an elevation of 200 m. Just below the field, there was wet paddy cultivation spanning the border with India. I observed the birds with a 14x spotting scope.

The male, which was noticed first, had a golden-yellow crown with contrasting dark brown sides of head and throat. There were conspicuous heavy streaks on the breast and upperparts. The upperparts looked dark brown with fulvous streaks. The bill was brownish-black, short and stout. The tail was short and slightly rounded. The buffy underparts were streaked with dark brown, more noticeably on the breast and absent on the belly and undertail-coverts. Breeding male Baya Weaver *P. philippinus* has an unstreaked yellow breast, while breeding male Black-breasted Weaver *P. benghalensis* has a white or light grey face and black breast-band.

The female also had heavy brown streaks on the buffy throat, breast and flanks. The crown was also heavily streaked. The dark-brown ear-coverts and yellowish supercilium were conspicuous. There was a yellow patch on the side of the neck, which was, however, slightly smaller than the equivalent patch shown by non-breeding males. The yellowish supercilium almost encircled the brownish ear-coverts as it touched the yellow patch on the side of the neck and continued as a sub-moustachial stripe. The chin, upper throat and belly were whitish. The bill was like that of the male but was pale flesh-coloured. Both sexes of the Streaked Weaver can easily be distinguished from other weavers, even in non-breeding plumage, by the heavily streaked breast and flanks, which none of the other weavers shows. Some lightly streaked males in non-breeding plumage may be confused with Baya Weavers, but the yellow patch on the side of the neck differentiates them.

There was a breeding colony of c.45 nests of Baya Weaver in Daifam about 1 km away. While these were

in a busy inhabited area near shops and houses in semi-urban surroundings, the Streaked Weavers were observed in typical countryside habitat at the edge of habitation.

Daifam is at the edge of the Khaling Wildlife Sanctuary in Samdrup Jongkhar district, Bhutan. Although the Streaked Weaver is usually resident within its range, its seasonal or breeding status in Bhutan is not known. There is no potential breeding site in the immediate vicinity in the form of a reedbed or area of tall grassland. This constitutes the first record of Streaked Weaver in Bhutan. Earlier works on the birds of Bhutan do not list the species (Ludlow and Kinnear 1937, Clements 1992, Ali *et al.* 1996, Tymstra *et al.* 1996, Bishop 1999, Inskipp *et al.* 1999). The Streaked Weaver occurs as a resident in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, eastern Nepal, Bangladesh and Assam, with scattered records from other parts of India (Grimmett *et al.* 1998). It is a common resident in nearby Assam (Choudhury 2000).

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