

The observation was made 8 km south-west of Krabi Town at 17h00. Notes were taken and used for the description below. The bird came towards the boat and passed within 12-15 m at a height of 7 m above the sea. It was seen in good light for about 20 seconds, but without binoculars because of the very rough sea and a strong south-west monsoon wind. My attention was attracted by its relatively large size and the big red bill, reminding me of Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*. I quickly realised that it was a tropicbird, having seen them previously in South America and Africa. I immediately realised the significance of this record.

The bird, which was about the size of a Caspian Tern, looked all white except for the rather strong, deep red bill and a distinct black eye-stripe which extended from in front of the eye to the nape. The pointed tail lacked elongated central tail feathers. It flew with active wingbeats and some gliding.

The identification as Red-tailed Tropicbird was checked by consulting King *et al.* (1975) and Harrison (1983) was consulted on my return home. There is no other large, nearly all white species with a deep red bill, black eye-stripe and wedge-shaped tail. The white plumage without black barring on the upperparts and black primaries ruled out all species of gulls, terns and other tropicbirds.

The Red-tailed Tropicbird inhabits the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and is mainly pelagic outside the breeding season. The nearest breeding sites are the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Christmas Island, and Manuk and Gunung Api in the Banda Sea (MacKinnon and Phillipps 1993). A straggler has previously reached the Bay of Bengal (Harrison 1983).

This is the first record of Red-tailed Tropicbird for Thailand and the Malay Peninsula. The species might have been overlooked due to its pelagic habits; it is probably found near to the coast only after severe storms.

I wish to thank Philip D. Round for his comments.

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Japanese Thrush *Turdus cardis*: a new species for Thailand

GRAHAM FINCH and MARTIN KENNEWELL

On 3 February 1993, at 07h00, we arrived at the junction of the jeep track at km 37.5 just past the checkpoint on the main road leading to the summit of Doi Inthanon. An obvious feature was a small party of Eyebrowed Thrushes *Turdus obscurus* feeding in fruiting trees. The majority were in a tree on the corner of the road to Mae Chaem. Knowing that several other species of thrush *Turdus* frequently joined the Eyebrowed Thrushes, it seemed pertinent to check through these birds.

Almost immediately M. K. had brief views of a thrush which appeared all dark and showed a grey wash on its flanks. It soon took flight and crossed the road, showing a white belly and a dark breast; it landed in the tall trees around the entrance to the jeep track.

G. F. soon relocated the bird in another fruiting tree, where it became more cooperative, and both of us took down a description. The bird appeared strikingly marked: the upperparts and head were completely black and this colour extended down to the upper breast where it was broken by several pale spots; the belly was unmarked white; the white lower breast and the grey-washed flanks were liberally marked with black spots, which were similar in appearance to those on the underparts of a Song Thrush *T. philomelos*; the eye appeared dark and no orbital ring was noted; the bill was yellow, with a small amount of black on the tip of the culmen; the legs and feet were also yellow, but of a slightly paler colour than the bill. It was similar in size to the accompanying Eyebrowed Thrushes but appeared to have a shorter tail.

Reference to Boonsong and Round (1991) led us to the conclusion that it was a species not described in that book. We then read through the descriptions of thrushes in King *et al.* (1975) and soon established that it was a male Japanese Thrush *T. cardis* and presumably the first record for Thailand.

The bird remained until 11 February and was seen by several other observers, including Mr Daengrassani and Uthai Treesucon (Thailand), Clive Viney (Hong Kong), Jim Chance (U.S.A.), Paul and Mark McManus (U.K.) and Raf Drijvers (Belgium).

Many thanks to Philip D. Round for his helpful comments on the manuscript.

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Rosy Starling *Sturnus roseus*: a new species for Thailand

GRAHAM CLARK

On Friday, 28 March 1986 I was driving north along the shore road at Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park, Prachuab Khirikhan province (12°08'N 99°59'E). I stopped to look at some waders on the lagoons and, whilst scanning with my binoculars, examined a line of starlings Sturnidae on a telephone wire some 40 m away. The small flock was comprised of about 30 Common Mynas *Acridotheres tristis*, six Asian Pied Starlings *Sturnus contra* and another individual which immediately caught my attention because it was bright pink.

I observed the bird for about 30 secs before it took off and flew east with the rest of the flock. I obtained the following brief description: size and structure similar to those of the Asian Pied Starlings alongside, but perhaps a little smaller; head, throat and upper breast, wings, tail and undertail-coverts black; mantle, upper breast and belly bright salmon-pink; bill yellow.

From this brief observation I concluded that it was an adult Rosy Starling *Sturnus roseus*. Although I searched for 15 minutes amongst the dunes in which the bird had disappeared it was not seen again.

An adult Rosy Starling, presumed to be a different individual, was seen by P. D. Round, in mid-May 1986, in the aviary of Siam Farm, an animal trading company in Bangkok. The proprietor of the company mentioned that the bird had been trapped in Langsuan district, Chumphon province, c. 200 km south of Khao Sam Roi Yot.

The species breeds from central and south Russia, and occasionally in south-east Europe, across central Asia to the Altai mountains and south to northern Afghanistan (Sibley and Monroe 1990). It winters in the Indian subcontinent (Ali and Ripley 1987). It is nomadic in its behaviour, frequently

occurring outside of its normal range and, since it migrates on a north-west to south-east axis, its occurrence in Thailand is perhaps not surprising.

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Plain Sunbird *Anthreptes simplex* feeding on arils of acacia seeds

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Three Plain Sunbirds *Anthreptes simplex* were seen on the edge of the Universiti Pertanian Malaysia forest reserve near Ayer Hitam, c. 20 km south-west of Kuala Lumpur, Peninsular Malaysia on 20 July 1993. They were identified by their olive upperparts, grey throat, dull yellow underparts, red eyes and short dark bills. Only one bird had a dark patch on the forehead, which I did not see reflecting light. As they moved amongst the phyllodes of acacia trees (*Acacia mangium*) they behaved more like warblers than sunbirds. When I watched them more closely I realised that they were taking the orange-red arils which attach the seeds to the pods. Although they were swallowing the arils I could not see if they also consumed the seeds. One bird was present for at least 20 minutes.

The aril in acacias is a fleshy appendage which has grown from the apex of the ovule along the seed stalk. It is often brightly-coloured and is frequently consumed by insects such as ants; it can contain high concentrations of fat and protein (Glyphis *et al.* 1981). Honeyeaters (Meliphagidae) and a few other birds in Australia consume the red or yellow funicles of several acacia species (Forde 1986). *Acacia cyclops* has been introduced into South Africa from Australia and its arils and seeds are eaten by a variety of birds there (Middlemiss 1963). *Acacia mangium* is native to northern Australia and has been planted widely in South-East Asia for timber and pulp.

I know of no account of birds consuming acacia arils in South-East Asia, nor of sunbirds eating them anywhere. However, Plain Sunbirds and