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Recent observations of birds in the Philippine Archipelago

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The observations presented relate to 48 species, including Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii* and Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*, the records of which are the first for the Philippines. In addition many species are documented for the first time for individual islands, and data on voice, behaviour, and morphology of some species are offered, while taxonomic problems are discussed briefly.

In the course of a birdwatching journey through the Philippines from mid-February to early July 1987, Stig Jensen and I made extensive notes on the birds we encountered. It was, however, not until the publication of *The birds of the Philippines* (Dickinson *et al.* 1991), which summarizes all published records of Philippine birds and presents some new research results, that it seemed practicable to write up our most interesting findings: it was evident from our field experience that duPont's *Philippine birds* (1971) would not be a satisfactory baseline for an article.

The observations laid out in this paper add to the knowledge of the distribution of birds in the Philippines as delineated by the checklist (Dickinson *et al.* 1991). In addition, some information on vocalizations, behaviour, and ecology is included, particularly where this is thought to shed light on taxonomic problems, in the hope of stimulating further research.

SPOT-BILLED DUCK *Anas poecilorhyncha* **Luzon:** five at Candaba Marsh, Pampanga Province, 19-20 February. **Mindanao:** 11 on a pond near Davao, 26 February. Dickinson *et al.* (1991) considered the species to be a vagrant to the Philippines, listing only a single record from Calayan. At Candaba Marsh direct comparison with Philippine Duck *A. luzonica* was made, ruling out confusion with that species.

RUDDY KINGFISHER *Halcyon coromanda* **Bohol:** one at Bilar on 9 April, and one near Tagbilaran on 19 May. It seems likely that one of the migrant forms, *H. c. major* or *H. c. bangsi*, is involved as breeders have been recorded only from Palawan (*H. c. linae*), and from Tawi-Tawi and Sangka-Sangka (*H. c. claudiae*). The previous, latest recorded spring date for the migrant forms is 17 May (Dickinson *et al.* 1991). These are the first published records for Bohol (Dickinson *et al.* 1991). In addition we saw a specimen in a taxidermist's home on Cebu, which had been obtained in south-east Bohol.

RUFIOUS-LORED KINGFISHER *Todirhamphus winchelli* **Bongao:** one at Bongao Peak on 23 March. **Tawi-Tawi:** one near Balimbing on 25 March. Both birds were seen in the boulder-strewn vicinity of high limestone cliffs. Dickinson *et al.* (1991) considered the species to be rare in forests (up to c.

750 m), and thought it 'may now be endangered due to rapid disappearance of lowland forests'. However, the type of habitat in which we found our birds was considered to not be under immediate threat by human activities.

PLAINTIVE CUCKOO *Cacomantis merulinus* **Luzon**: a juvenile at Bulusan Lake, Sorsogon, on 6 June was being hosted by a Grey-backed Tailorbird *Orthotomus derbiamus*. Dickinson *et al.* (1991) knew of no Philippine records of eggs or nestlings.

GERMAIN'S SWIFTLET *Collocalia germani* **Bongao**: ten near Sangka-Sangka bridge on 24 March. Dickinson *et al.* (1991) had no records of this species from the Sulus proper, the nearest known localities to Bongao being Cagayan Sulu, and north-east Borneo. Medway (1966), however, wrote of white *Collocalia* nests being found in the Sulu Archipelago and thought that the builder could be either *C. germani* (the form known from Cagayan Sulu, Palawan and Panay) or *C. fuciphaga perplexa* (of islands off eastern Borneo); Dickinson *et al.* (1991) considered that 'the origin of this record must be Cagayan Sulu'. As swiftlets are notoriously difficult (but some species not impossible, given adequate experience and dedication) to identify in the field most workers may prefer to await specimen records before accepting the presence of this form in the Sulus.

ASIAN PALM-SWIFT *Cypsiurus balasiensis* **Dinagat**: three near Panamaon on 27 May. Dickinson *et al.* (1991) had no records from Dinagat, but did list the species for nearby Mindanao and Samar.

ZEBRA DOVE *Geopelia striata* **Bohol**: 23 at Chocolate Hills on 8 April; five on 10 April and one on 20 May at Bilar; and two at Loboc on 21 May. **Dinagat**: two near Panamaon on 28 May. **Palawan**: one at Iwahig paddies on 20 April. The species is possibly introduced in the Philippines, and was not listed for any of the three above-mentioned islands by Dickinson *et al.* (1991).

CREAM-BELLIED FRUIT-DOVE *Ptilinopus merrilli* **Luzon**: one at Bulusan Lake, Sorsogon Province, on 6 June. This record constitutes a significant extension of the known range of this endemic which Dickinson *et al.* (1991) considered rare and local, and it may prove that an undescribed subspecies is involved. As we noted 1-5 birds almost daily at Mt Palanan, Isabela Province, on 20-26 June, and 1-4 daily at Quezon National Park on 1-5 July, it may be that the species is better regarded merely as uncommon, not rare.

GREY IMPERIAL-PIGEON *Ducula pickeringii* **Ursula**: c. 20 on 5-7 May, with nine departing in the morning of 6 May. Any record of this rare and local small-island species is worthy of note.

PIED IMPERIAL-PIGEON *Ducula bicolor* **Ursula**: 9,190 arrived to roost from c. 16h00 on 5 May, with departures commencing before first light on the following morning. Our count may serve future workers as a reference point.

JACK SNIPE *Lymnocyptes minimus* **Palawan**: one at Iwahig paddies on 20 April. The only other Philippine record is from Luzon, where one was

collected at Apalit, Pampanga, on 23 November 1930 (Dickinson *et al.* 1991). It has not been recorded from Borneo (Smythies 1981) or Indonesia (Andrew 1992). While the species is notoriously difficult to flush and hence likely to be overlooked, its status as a rarity in Japan, Taiwan, southern China, and southern Indochina (Brazil 1991, Cheng 1987, King *et al.* 1975) indicates that it would be really no more than an accidental visitor to the Philippines.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus* **Siasi**: five on 22 March. Of the Sulus only Bongao and Sangka-Sangka were listed for this long-distance migrant by Dickinson *et al.* (1991).

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus* **Mindanao**: one at Times Beach, Davao, on 25 February. This is apparently the first record for the Philippines (Dickinson *et al.* 1991). As there are at least 13 records from northern Borneo (Smythies 1981), though none for Indonesia (Andrew 1992), it is hardly a very surprising addition to the national list. The similar Common Redshank *T. totanus* is an uncommon winter visitor to the Philippines, including Mindanao (Dickinson *et al.* 1991, pers. obs.), extending to Indonesia and, as a vagrant, Australia and New Guinea (Beehler *et al.* 1986; Hayman *et al.* 1986). The slightly drawn-out, whistled 'tu-et' call, lack of white secondaries, and more elegant appearance (head smaller, bill longer) identified this red-legged *Tringa* as a Spotted Redshank, a species with which we are both thoroughly familiar. We failed to relocate the bird on a subsequent visit on 5 March.

LONG-TOED STENT *Calidris subminuta* **Palawan**: four at Iwahig paddies on 8 May. The latest spring record for the Philippines given by Dickinson *et al.* (1991) is 26 April.

BROAD-BILLED SANDPIPER *Limicola falcinellus* **Mindanao**: three at Times Beach, Davao, on 25 February. This record precedes the one given by Redman (1993), 14 March 1990, as the first for Mindanao; it was not listed for that island by Dickinson *et al.* (1991).

MALAYSIAN PLOVER *Charadrius peronii* **Bongao**: a pair was near Sangka-Sangka bridge on 24 March. **Dinagat**: one at Acoje on 29 May. Dickinson *et al.* (1991) list neither island for this widespread, resident species (which we also encountered on Palawan and Ursula).

POMARINE JAEGER *Stercorarius pomarinus* **Mindanao**: five were seen at sea from a ferry between Zamboanga and Dipolog on 29 March. Three of these were associating with a flock of 57 Streaked Shearwaters *Calonectris leucomelas*. There are apparently only six previous records (involving a total of eight birds) from the Philippines (Dickinson *et al.* 1991).

GULL-BILLED TERN *Sterna nilotica* **Bongao**: a minimum of three on 24 March. Although the species has been collected on nearby Simunul, there appear to be no previous records for Bongao. In Borneo 'it is common in

suitable localities round the coast as a passage migrant and winter visitor, mostly between 6 September and 13 April' (Smythies 1981). In marked contrast, all dated records (save one in August) from the Philippines have been in October (Dickinson *et al.* 1991), and, as our birds would be either the first southern autumn record of *S. n. macrotarsa* or the first northern spring record of *S. n. affinis*, firm evidence that either form winters in the country remains lacking.

BLACK-NAPED TERN *Sterna sumatrana* **Tawi-Tawi:** along the coast near Balimbing we saw this species on 24, 27 and 28 March (15, 25, and 130 birds respectively). **Dinagat:** c. 40 at Panamaon on 27 May, and c. 40 at Acoje on 29 May. These are the first records for Tawi-Tawi and Dinagat (Dickinson *et al.* 1991). The paucity of previous records suggests that a range extension may have taken place.

SOOTY TERN *Sterna fuscata* **Ursula:** one flew north on 6 May. **Dinagat:** c. 20 in Panamaon Bay on 27 May, and four at Acoje on 29 May. Dickinson *et al.* (1991) do not record this species from either island.

BROWN NODDY *Anous stolidus* **Dinagat:** one seen from the inter-island ferry near Loreto on 28 May. A very local resident on isolated islets and reefs, the species is only a vagrant to the main islands, and had not previously been recorded for Dinagat (Dickinson *et al.* 1991).

ORIENTAL HONEY-BUZZARD *Pernis ptilorhyncus* **Luzon:** what were almost certainly two different pairs were in display on 23 and 25 June at Mt Palanan, Isabela Province. A further five or six birds (one near Mt Palanan on 20 June; one at Angat Dam on 28 June; one on 1 July, and three on 4 July at Quezon National Park) were most likely also the resident subspecies *philippensis* rather than migratory *orientalis*. The sympatric occurrence of this species with Barred Honey-buzzard *P. celebensis* on several Philippine islands, including Luzon, remains puzzling, and the above records are included here to confirm the relative scarcity (Dickinson *et al.* 1991) of the latter. Subsequent observations of Barred Honey-buzzard in Sulawesi (pers. obs.) confirmed that we saw none in the Philippines. If Barred Honey-buzzard really proves to occur at lower elevations than its congener, as suggested by Dickinson *et al.* (1991), it must be a threatened bird in the Philippines.

CHINESE GOSHAWK *Accipiter soloensis* **Bohol:** five migrating on 9 April, and two seen on 11 April, at Bilar.

Occurring during the main period of northward migration, these records, the first for Bohol (Dickinson *et al.* 1991), are no surprise.

RUFIOUS-BELLIED EAGLE *Hieraaetus kienerii* **Bohol:** one juvenile at Bilar on 23 May. This appears to be the first record for Bohol; Dickinson *et al.* (1991) list the species for nearby Leyte and Mindanao, where this bird may have originated.

CHANGEABLE HAWK-EAGLE *Spizaetus cirrhatus* **Mindanao:** one (a pale morph, and probably immature) on Mt Katanglad, Bukidnon Province, on 14 March. Dickinson *et al.* (1991) list Busuanga, Culion, Lubang, Mindanao, Mindoro and Palawan as the Philippine range, suggesting that the sole Mindanao specimen (taken 19 July 1889) should be re-examined as the locality represents an outlier in the distribution pattern. Our record serves to confirm the presence on Mindanao of Changeable Hawk-Eagle.

PHILIPPINE HAWK-EAGLE *Spizaetus philippensis* **Bohol:** one at Bilar on 22 May. While known from nearby Samar, Leyte, Negros, and Mindanao, there appear to be no previous records from Bohol (Dickinson *et al.* 1991).

PEREGRINE FALCON *Falco peregrinus* **Tawi-Tawi:** one in the vicinity of Balimbing on 27 March of the distinctive subspecies *ernesti*. There are no previous records of this subspecies from anywhere in the Sulus proper, and Dickinson *et al.* (1991) suggest that sight records from Cagayan Sulu and Mindanao may have been (but probably were not - E. C. Dickinson *in litt.* 1994) assigned to *ernesti* in error.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea* **Palawan:** sightings of singles, most likely involving the same individual, were made at Iwahig paddies on 26 April and 8-9 May. This is the first record for Palawan (Dickinson *et al.* 1991), and is considerably later than the previous latest spring date for the country, 23 March (Redman 1993). As the species is an occasional (but probably regular) winter visitor to Borneo (Smythies 1981), its occurrence in Palawan is not unexpected.

BLACK BITTERN *Dupetor flavicollis* **Palawan:** one in mangroves near St Paul's National Park on 21 April. This constitutes the first record for Palawan. It is listed for most of the other main islands by Dickinson *et al.* (1991). The suggestion that northern birds may migrate (Payne 1979) is supported by the presence in Sulawesi and nearby islands of the nominate subspecies from October to March (White and Bruce 1986). There was a typhoon-related influx in Hong Kong during late May and early June 1989 (Chalmers 1990). Our Palawan bird may thus have been a winter visitor or passage migrant rather than a breeding bird.

BULWER'S PETREL *Bulweria bulwerii* **At sea:** one on 5 May between Rio Tuba, Palawan, and Ursula. The species is not listed by Dickinson *et al.* (1991) and this record appears to be the first for the Philippines. This species is regular off Japan's southern islands from May to October (Brazil 1991) and occurs, sometimes in good numbers, off northern Borneo (Smythies 1981), returning in April (Shuntov 1974) to its East China Sea breeding grounds (off Fujian province, China). Its wintering grounds are undetermined but probably include the Indian Ocean (Marchant and Higgins 1990), which would explain its occurrence off Borneo. This species was a predictable addition to the Philippine list.

The bird was seen from a moving pumpboat, making swift gliding progress very low over the surface of the sea, and soon being lost from view. However, all similar species could be ruled out by the combination of size (estimated to be somewhat smaller than Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*), wedge-shaped tail, overall sooty-brown colour (similar to the colour of the upperparts of Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*), relieved only by a pale inner-wing panel. It had a short bill, and a stout body. The noddies *Anous stolidus* and *A. minutus* are larger and tern-shaped with long bills and no pale wingbar, and they have a tern-like flight. Tristram's Storm-Petrel *Oceanodroma tristrami* is almost as large as Bulwer's Petrel, and shows a pale upperwing bar, but it has a deeply forked tail. The congeneric Jouanin's Petrel *B. fallax*, which has been recorded off south-west Sumatra (van Marle and Voous 1988) but apparently no nearer to the Philippines, is larger than Bulwer's Petrel and lacks the pale wingbar.

WEDGE-TAILED SHEARWATER *Puffinus pacificus* **At sea:** one flew south on 7 May between Ursula and Rio Tuba, Palawan; four on 11 May between Cuyo and San Jose, Panay; four on 24 May between Ubay, Bohol and Maasin, Leyte (with 18 Streaked Shearwaters *Calonectris leucomelas* being noted on the same crossing). Dickinson *et al.* (1991) list the species only for Luzon, Mindanao, Catanduanes, Leyte and Samar, with records from 10 April to 8 August; they consider it to be a vagrant (beached by typhoons) but to be more common offshore, with peak passage in May. Our records indicate that the species could turn up anywhere in the archipelago.

AZURE-BREASTED PITTA *Pitta steerii* **Bohol:** a minimum of 18 individuals was noted at Bilar on 9-11 April, and 20-23 May, with up to five seen in a day, and six singing around one clearing on 23 May. The song is typical of pittas, a loud 'kWEIOo' repeated at 2½ sec intervals. The alarm call is a 4-6 note, frog-like rattle 'kva-kva-kva-kva-kva'. We were alerted to the presence at Bilar of this magnificent bird by Mr Liao, a Cebu city taxidermist, to whom we were introduced by Ms Perla Magsalay. Mr Liao kept a mounted specimen prominently displayed in his home, and gave a perfect rendition of the alarm call (which we later heard within half an hour of entering the forest at Bilar), but he was apparently unfamiliar with its song.

WATTLED BROADBILL *Eurylaimus steerii* **Bohol:** up to ten daily 9-11 April, and 20-23 May at Bilar. The song, delivered from a well-concealed canopy perch, is typical of its genus: an insect-like 'tik, tik, t-rrrrrrr' given twice in quick succession within 2 or 2" sec. Dickinson *et al.* (1991) considered this attractive endemic to be an uncommon and local inhabitant of forest understorey. Our observations suggest that it may be locally quite common.

GOLDEN-BELLIED GERYGONE *Gerygone sulphurea* **Palawan:** two at St Paul's Subterranean National Park on 21 April. There are apparently no previous records from Palawan (Dickinson *et al.* 1991), the nearest known localities being northern Borneo and the Sulus.

PHILIPPINE LEAFBIRD *Chloropsis flavipennis* **Mindanao:** one at Bay View Hills, Bislig on 11 March. This record is included here as information on the distribution of this unobtrusive species is very fragmentary (E. C. Dickinson *in litt.* 1992).

SCARLET MINIVET *Pericrocotus flammeus* **Bohol:** four on 9 April, and one on 11 April at Bilar. There are no previous records from Bohol (Dickinson *et al.* 1991). The subspecies likely to be involved is *P. f. leytensis* of nearby Leyte and Samar.

EYEBROWED THRUSH *Turdus obscurus* **Siquijor:** several birds at Bandila-an Peak (c. 650 m) on 7 April. Neither Dickinson *et al.* (1991), nor Evans *et al.* (1993), list the species for Siquijor, but its occasional occurrence on the island is to be expected as it reaches Mindanao and Sulawesi in the non-breeding season (White and Bruce 1986, Dickinson *et al.* 1991). We recorded up to 75 daily on Mt Katanglad, Mindanao, on 13-17 March.

ASHY-BREASTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa randi* **Luzon:** one juvenile at Mt Palanan, Isabela Province on 23 June. This rare endemic form, related to Asian Brown Flycatcher *M. dauurica* of mainland Asia and to Sumba Brown Flycatcher *M. segregata*, was described as recently as 1970, and there was no previous breeding evidence from Luzon (Dickinson *et al.* 1991).

BLUE-BREASTED FLYCATCHER *Cyornis herioti* **Luzon:** a female of this rarely-encountered species was observed flycatching from lower branches in logged-over forest at Mt Palanan on 24 June. Although within the known range of the nominate race (Dickinson *et al.* 1991), this bird differed markedly from the description given by duPont (1971); details are included here in order to alert future observers. Our bird had a pale rufous supra-loral mark extending across the forehead; a pale 'lower eyelid' (= broken eye-ring); faint pale grey supercilium on an otherwise dark grey head; olivish mantle; dull, dark brown wings and tail; pale rufous throat; olivish brown breast-band, darker in colour than throat and belly; and an off-white belly. duPont (1971) described the female as having 'top of head and hind neck gray-brown; back brown; wings and tail rufous; lores dark brown; throat and breast pale rufous; belly and under tail coverts white'. Thus our bird differed in mantle colour (olivish, not brown); wing and tail colour (dull, dark brown rather than rufous); and by having a breast-band (olivish-brown in colour). The female of the congeneric Mangrove Blue-Flycatcher *C. rufigastra* has the upperparts dull blue (duPont 1971, Smythies 1981) and would be unlikely to occur away from the lowlands. White-browed Jungle-Flycatcher *Rhinomyias insignis*, a Luzon montane endemic, is unknown from the Sierra Madre range (Dickinson *et al.* 1991), is large (wing 95 mm *contra* 79 mm in Blue-breasted Flycatcher), and has 'superciliary stripe, chin, and central throat white; sides of throat dark reddish brown....flanks burnt orange' (duPont 1971), i.e. quite different from the bird we saw.

YELLOW-WATTLED BULBUL *Pycnonotus urostictus* **Negros**: four on 1 April, and three on 2 and 3 April at the Valencia geothermal site near Dumaguete. A single 1870s record from Negros was considered dubious by later workers (Dickinson *et al.* 1991). Our records confirm the species's presence on the island. As Rabor collected fairly extensively around Dumaguete (E. C. Dickinson *in litt.* 1992) without finding this vocal and quite conspicuous bird I am tempted to speculate that its occurrence on Negros may be seasonal or erratic. This would seem to be supported by the failure of Brooks *et al.* to find the species during surveys over some five weeks (which included a day, 26 Aug, in the geothermal area) on the island in 1991 (Brooks *et al.* 1992; G. Dutson *in litt.* 1994). The song of this species is a distinctive, short 'pü-i-(u)ii'.

LONG-TAILED BUSH-WARBLER *Bradypterus caudatus* **Mindanao**: one to two almost daily at Baracatan, Mt Apo, 24 February-2 March; 14 on Mt Pasian, Davao Oriental Province, on 8 March; and one to 16 daily on Mt Katanglad 13-17 March. **Luzon**: at least four around Banaue on 12-13 June, and a total of 30 in the Mt Polis pass area on 12, 15, and 17 June. This skulking species, like many of its congeners, has a very distinctive song: $\overset{1}{\curvearrowright} \overset{2}{\curvearrowright}$ the first part thin, piercing, and metallic, like an insect, the second part fuller, and not piercing; it proved to be much commoner than was suggested by reports of earlier visitors (D. Gibbs *in litt.* 1986, G. Speight *in litt.*, Tim Fisher verbally), who must have been unfamiliar with its vocalizations. The species may well be awaiting discovery away from Mts Apo, Katanglad, Pasian, and Malindang, the only Mindanao localities given by Dickinson *et al.* (1991).

PHILIPPINE TAILORBIRD *Orthotomus castaneiceps* **Dinagat**: six (an adult with juveniles) at Panamaon on 27 May, and seven there on 28 May; 6-11 daily at Acoje 29 May - 1 June. It seems worth drawing attention to the song of *O. c. frontalis* on Dinagat: it is consistently a drawn-out but near-perfect imitation of the song of Wattled Broadbill, lacking only the hard 'drive' of that species: 'de, de, drer-r-r-rw', often given in forced series of five or more, reminiscent of a ping-pong ball bouncing to rest on a hard surface.

BLACK-HEADED TAILORBIRD *Orthotomus nigriceps* **Bohol**: a minimum of ten birds was noted at Bilar on 10-11 April, and 20-23 May. **Dinagat**: a total of c. 15 birds was noted at Panamaon and Acoje 28 May - 1 June. Dickinson *et al.* (1991) followed Mayr (1947) in treating the Yellow-breasted Tailorbird *O. samarensis* (of Bohol, Leyte and Samar) and the Black-headed Tailorbird *O. nigriceps* (of Mindanao, Dinagat and Siargao) as two species within a superspecies. However, their songs are identical: a distinctive, initially metallic and sharp, but quickly decelerating to end in a long series of evenly spaced whistles, indicating that it may be better to regard the two species as conspecific. For the sake of completeness it may be added that the call is an equally distinctive 'key-e ei', recalling the song of Long-tailed Bush-Warbler *Bradypterus caudatus*.

STRIATED GRASSBIRD *Megalurus palustris* **Palawan**: two at Iwahig paddies on 9 May. Dickinson *et al.* (1991) do not list Palawan or any of its outlying islands within the range of the species. This record predates the 8 March 1991 sighting by N. Redman (1993) given as the first for Palawan. The species has recently become established in northern Borneo (Redman 1993) and it is conceivable that these birds originated in Palawan.

PYGMY BABBLER *Stachyris plateni* **Mindanao**: one on Mt Katanglad on 15 March. The species is apparently previously unrecorded from this major and comparatively well-visited locality, although it is already known from Bukidnon Province, and from nearby Mt Piapayungon, Lanao del Sur Province (Dickinson *et al.* 1991).

NEGROS STRIPED-BABBLER *Stachyris nigrorum* **Negros**: one near Mambucal, Mt Canlaon, on 15 May. This record was incorrectly cited as concerning 'some birds' by Brooks *et al.* (1992). Previously known only from Cuernos de Negros and surrounding mountains (Dickinson *et al.* 1991), where we had noted 2-8 daily on 1-3 April at the geothermal site near Dumaguete. There the birds favoured the lower storey but, on one evening, were seen to ascend to c. 20 m in the canopy to catch the last sunlight of the day, and once were noted associating with Elegant Tit *Parus elegans*. The song is a very distinctive, loud, pure whistle: 'plea-he plea-hü plea-he plea-hü'. This is clearly different from the 'single burst of song' heard by Brooks *et al.*, transcribed as 'tu-tu, tutu soo' (Brooks *et al.* 1992).

OLIVE-BACKED FLOWERPECKER *Prionochilus olivaceus* **Luzon**: one at Bulusan lake, Sorsogon Province, on 6 June, showed the characters of *P. o. samarensis*. Dickinson *et al.* (1991) included Sorsogon in the range of *P. o. parsoni* (of the rest of Luzon) without recognizing that the East Visayan race might occur in Luzon south of the central Luzon form (E. C. Dickinson *in litt.* 1992).

APO SUNBIRD *Aethopyga boltoni* **Mindanao**: one on 8 March, and two on 9 March on Mt Pasian, Davao Oriental Province. This constitutes a significant extension of the known range of this montane, Mindanao endemic which Dickinson *et al.* (1991) record from Mts Apo, McKinley, Katanglad, Matutum and Malindang.

I am very grateful to my companion Stig Jensen whose enthusiasm and travel craft did much to ensure an enjoyable trip. We both remain grateful to the large number of Filipinos who helped us in countless ways; to Tim Fisher and Perla Magsalay for the very substantial assistance and hospitality offered; and to Ron Krupa, whose unrivalled experience in Philippine conservation enabled him to help us in many practical ways. Particular thanks are also due to Edward Dickinson whose generous urgings were the necessary catalyst to the writing of this article, and who kindly commented on a first draft.

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The status of the Green Peafowl *Pavo muticus* in Laos

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The Green Peafowl *Pavo muticus* was once widespread in Laos. Recent surveys involving field searches and interviews indicate that there has been a widespread and serious decline. Only remnant populations remain. The largest populations are thought to occur in southern Laos, mainly in the basin of the Xe Kong (Se Kong) and possibly also in Phou Xiang Thong National Biodiversity Conservation Area on the east bank of the Mekong. Hunting is thought to be the chief reason for the decline, compounded by habitat loss and the human colonisation of most areas of suitable peafowl habitat. Local populations continue to die out and without energetic protection the species will probably become extinct in Laos in the foreseeable future. Action to stop illegal hunting and collecting of eggs and chicks is urgently required. This action should concentrate first on known populations within and near existing and proposed protected areas in Chasmpasak, Sedone, Attopu (Attopeu), Salavan (Saravane) and Vientiane Provinces. The governmental body responsible for management of the protected areas network may require additional external funding and technical support to achieve this. Additional populations could probably be located by further surveys. The trade in peafowl feathers should be investigated further.

INTRODUCTION

Visually, the Green Peafowl *Pavo muticus* must number amongst the most impressive birds in South-East Asia. It was formerly found from south-eastern Assam, through Myanmar (Burma), southern China and Indochina, to Java, though it was absent from Sumatra (Delacour 1951). Collar *et al.* (1994) reviewed the available data on numbers and threats and listed Green Peafowl as having a high risk of global extinction in the medium-term future, mainly as a result of habitat loss and excessive hunting.

Green Peafowl are probably extinct in Malaysia, Bangladesh and north-east India (Collar *et al.* 1994). In Thailand there is a population of about 300 in Hwai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary and unconfirmed reports from three other sites (Collar *et al.* 1994). In Java, van Balen *et al.* (1995) reported at least 915-1,149 birds, including two populations of 200 or more, and stated that significant unsurveyed populations may also exist on the island. Information from the remaining five range states, Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar and China (in the southern state of Yunnan) is much less detailed. In Viet Nam there were records of small remnant populations at three sites in central Viet Nam and at least 17 calling birds at Nam Cat Tien National Park in the south (Robson *et al.* 1993a, b). From Cambodia and Myanmar there is no recent information other than a report from a single site in Cambodia in 1994 and reports that it was locally common in the early 1980s in Myanmar (Collar *et al.* 1994). In Yunnan the range has contracted and the population declined so that it is now restricted to about ten sites (Collar *et al.* 1994).