

More notable bird observations from Brunei, Borneo

C. F. MANN

Notable records are of birds in Brunei, 1986-1989, involve 27 species, including three first records for Borneo, an additional six first records for Brunei, one first breeding record for Borneo and Brunei respectively and one first record of a nest. The expanding Wasan Rice Scheme continues to attract waterbirds.

Some of the more interesting records of birds in Brunei in the last few years were summarised by Mann (1987a). Since then, further interesting observations have been made, and these will appear in what is hoped will be regular 'bird reports' in the *Brunei Museum Journal*, the first of which covers the period July 1986 to June 1988 (Mann in press). However, as some of these records may be of wider interest, they are presented here.

The Wasan Rice Scheme, which figures so prominently in several records and in Mann (1987a), continues to be expanded. How this will affect the birds remains to be seen. Large areas of mud are sometimes exposed and churned up by tractors prior to planting, attracting numbers of waders, ducks and marsh terns. However, other activities are less welcome: intensive netting to trap granivorous species has resulted in the deaths of small bitterns *Ixobrychus*, hirundines and warblers *Locustella* and *Acrocephalus orientalis*. Fortunately, in 1989 the netting effort was considerably reduced (although the amount of rice planted was maximised) as a result of being ridiculed in a cartoon by a visiting Japanese! Meanwhile, agricultural fungicide was believed to be responsible for the poisoning of over 30 Garganey *Anas querquedula* and perhaps other duck in November 1988, and a general lack of raptors in January 1989 was possibly the result of large amounts of poison bait being laid for rats *Rattus* and munias *Lonchura*.

An area of newly reclaimed land, used as a high-tide roost, along with a nearby rubbish-tip, at Serasa (13 km north-east of Bandar Seri Begawan), has produced some interesting sightings.

The records that follow were made by Jung Dharuvala (JD), David A. Diskin (DAD), Jen A. Elkin (JAE), Derek Harvey (DH), A. Conrad Ozog (ACO), B. Prins (BP) and myself (CFM).

SYSTEMATIC LIST

RUFIOUS NIGHT-HERON *Nycticorax caledonicus* Serasa: one adult on 29 August 1988 and subsequent dates; two pairs, each with a nest (in a *Casuarina* tree), and an immature were later present, and up to three adults and two juveniles were present until 10 November 1988, but no further

interest was shown in the nests (DAD, CFM, ACO). The species nests in Sabah (Smythies 1981, Sheldon and Marin 1985); otherwise its nearest known breeding area is in the Philippines.

BLACK-FACED SPOONBILL *Platalea minor* [Serasa: an unidentified spoonbill flew over on 25 January 1985 (Mann 1987b).] Seria: one from 6 January to the end of April 1985 (Mann 1987b and in press). This record, inadvertently omitted from Mann (1987a), is the first for Borneo. However, it is possible that the records of Royal Spoonbill *P. regia* for Borneo (e.g. Smythies 1981) in fact refer to this species.

NORTHERN PINTAIL *Anas acuta* Wasan: six, 8 January 1988; present from 9 November 1988 to 3 March 1989, with a maximum of 13 on 2 December and 10 February (DAD, CFM, ACO). The first records for Brunei. Previously known in Borneo (Sarawak and Sabah) from Bintulu, Kapit, Labuan, Padas-Damit and Mumiang (Smythies 1981; Parish and Wells 1985).

COMMON TEAL *Anas crecca* Wasan: two males from 8 January to 21 February 1988; one on 4 November, 2 and 9 December 1988 (DAD, CFM, ACO). The first records for Brunei. There is only one previous record in Borneo: Padas Damit, Sabah, on 8 December 1984 (Parish and Wells 1985).

NORTHERN SHOVELER *Anas clypeata* Wasan: an eclipse male on 13 and 20 November and 10 December 1987; a pair on 4 and 18 November 1988; three or four on 25 November 1988 (DAD, CFM, ACO). The single previous record from Brunei and all other records from Borneo are summarised in Mann (1987a).

[**MALLARD** *Anas platyrhynchos* Two ducks at Seria Beach on 22 September 1987 were thought to be females or immatures of this species – a blue speculum was noted (JAE, BP). The locality is most unlikely for domestic ducks, which are uncommon in Brunei and mostly white or khaki. Mallards have not been recorded in Brunei, and the only previous records for Borneo are from Sundar, Tarikan and Niah (Sarawak) and Kota Belud (Sabah) (Smythies 1981).]

EURASIAN WIGEON *Anas penelope* Wasan: one, 9 and 25 November and 2 December 1988 and 19 February 1989 (DAD, CFM, ACO). The first record for Brunei, with apparently just three previous records for Borneo: Tampassuk Plains and Papar (Sabah) and Bintulu (Sarawak) (Smythies 1981).

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula* Wasan: an immature on 18 and 20 November and two on 25 November 1988 (DAD, CFM, ACO). The single previous record from Brunei and all other records from Borneo are summarised in Mann (1987a).

[**COMMON BUZZARD** *Buteo buteo* A probable at Rampayoh on

18 September 1987 (CFM, ACO). This species is unrecorded on Borneo, but occurs on Java and the Philippines, so its occurrence is not unlikely. The date here, however, is early.]

[**ORIENTAL HOBBY/NORTHERN HOBBY** *Falco severus/F. subbuteo* Wasan: an immature was seen briefly on 18 October 1987 (DAD). The former is rare and the latter unrecorded in Borneo (Smythies 1981).]

BULWER'S PHEASANT *Lophura bulweri* Belait District: a nest with one egg, among the buttress roots of a large tree on a forested ridge not far from a river, on 17 November 1985 (DH). The female was flushed from the nest at the observer's feet. This is the first known nest in the wild of this Bornean endemic.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus* Wasan: one on 11 and 25 March 1988 (DAD). There are only two previous records from Borneo: Talang Island, Sarawak, 20 December 1956 (Smythies 1981) and one at Sg. Seria, Brunei, 18 September 1980 (Vowles and Vowles 1985).

COMMON RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula* Serasa: two immatures, clearly distinguished from Semipalmated Plover *C. semipalmatus*, on 21 October 1988 (DAD, CFM, ACO). The birds were seen down to about 30m with 40× telescopes. The facial pattern and breast-band were plainly seen. [A probable on 6 November 1988 (DAD).] The previous two records from Borneo, both from Brunei, are summarised in Vowles and Vowles (1985).

[**LONG-BILLED PLOVER** *Charadrius placidus* Sg. Seria: a record of one on 11 December 1982 (Vowles and Vowles 1985), included in Mann (1987b), has been withdrawn at the request of one of the observers.]

LITTLE CURLEW *Numenius minutus* Wasan: one on 14 October 1988 (DAD, CFM, ACO). Previous Bornean records are: Kuching, Sarawak, 5 October 1900, two on 15 November and six on 23 November 1965; Miri, Sarawak, three on 25 October 1976; Brunei airport, 10 December 1976; west coast of Sabah, 26 April, 7 and 19 September (Smythies 1981; also Burton 1978).

BLACK-WINGED STILT *Himantopus himantopus* and **WHITE-HEADED STILT** *H. leucocephalus* Wasan: recorded in small numbers (up to 12) from August to January (now recorded annually at this locality). Smythies (1981) lists only *leucocephalus* for Borneo; while it has not been easy to distinguish between the two species in most cases, three *himantopus* were present on 2 September 1988, and seven *leucocephalus* on 30 September 1988 (CFM, ACO). The adult *himantopus* were identified by either a white head and neck or a combination of grey-black on the crown and a greyish hind neck.

ORIENTAL PRATINCOLE *Glareola maldivarum* Wasan: it is thought that perhaps three pairs attempted to breed in 1988 and raised two young (DAD, ACO). Previous Bornean breeding records are given in Mann (1987a).

COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus* Serasa: one in almost adult winter plumage on 8 December 1987 (JAE). Bandar Seri Begawan: one on 3 January 1989 (DAD). These are the first records for Brunei, although the species winters in small numbers in Sarawak and Sabah (Smythies 1981).

LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons* Serasa: display was first noticed on 15 July 1988 over the reclaimed area; by early August probably 25 or more pairs had begun nesting, and some eggs were found; at least one nest still contained eggs on 9 September, when four or five flying juveniles were seen; another nest with a single egg was found on 11 September, when at least 10 juveniles were seen; juveniles were still being fed in October. The total number of young successfully reared was difficult to judge, as a considerable influx occurred in early October, but probably about 12 young were raised (DAD, CFM, ACO). These would appear to be the first breeding records for Borneo.

JAVAN FROGMOUTH *Batrachostomus javensis* Lamunin Forest: now known to occur at two separate sites, having first been discovered there on 27 January 1987 but not identified until captured the following December (CFM, ACO). Smythies (1981) states that it is known from only six specimens in Borneo, scattered in Kalimantan, Sabah and Sarawak. Nash and Nash (1988) have recently found it in Kalimantan.

HOOPOE *Upupa epops* Serasa: one in September 1988 (*per* Lord Cranbrook). The five earlier records for Borneo are summarised in Mann (1987a).

CHESTNUT-CAPPED THRUSH *Zoothera interpres* Mumong: one flew into a window at night in July 1985. The bird was photographed and released next day (JD). This is apparently a very uncommon rainforest species, and this record suggests that it may be a nocturnal migrant, since the nearest forest (peat swamp) is a few kilometres distant.

ASIAN BROWN FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa latirostris* Labi: one or two with characteristics of *williamsoni* seen on 23 December 1987 (CFM, ACO). Earlier Bornean records are summarised in Mann (1987a).

[LEMON-BELLIED WHITE-EYE *Zosterops chloris* Serasa: descriptions of the plumage and call of a bird seen on 25 September 1987 (CFM) and suspected of being this species were sent to John McKean for confirmation, which was forthcoming. In its known distribution it comes no closer to Brunei than the Karimata Islands, off south-west Kalimantan, and Sulawesi (Smythies 1981, White and Bruce 1986). Despite further searches, the bird was never relocated. Attempts to call it up by imitating its call only lured a Ruddy Kingfisher *Halcyon coromanda*, whose call is similar but much louder and more strident. The following brief description of the bird was taken at the time: size, about that of Copper-throated Sunbird *Nectarinia calcostetha*, with a similarly proportioned tail; predominant colour yellow, brighter on breast, greener on back and wings; tail yellow when seen from below with

sun shining through it; bill narrow but not particularly long; face-pattern obscured. It drew attention to itself by its fairly loud, persistent 'chew' or 'chewp' call. *Zosterops* was not considered at the time, probably because the head was obscured, and the call was unusual for the genus. Since the views obtained were less than adequate, it is preferable to regard this record as unconfirmed.]

WHITE-SHOULDERED STARLING *Sturnus sinensis* Bandar Seri Begawan: one feeding with a party of Common Mynas *Acridotheres tristis* on 10 November 1988 (CFM). It is possible that this individual was an escape, but the species does winter in Peninsular Malaysia and the Philippines. Smythies (1981) accepts one previous record from Borneo: Satang Island, Sarawak, on 5 October 1962.

YELLOW-BREASTED BUNTING *Emberiza aureola* Wasan: an immature or female was seen on 10 January 1988 (DAD), a male on 2 and 9 December 1988 (DAD, CFM, ACO). These are the third and fourth Bornean records (see Mann 1987a).

[RED-HEADED or BLACK-HEADED BUNTING *Emberiza bruniceps* or *E. melanocephala* Wasan: an immature or female was seen on 4 November 1988. The following brief description was taken: pale, washed out; rather lark-like, until bunting-type bill seen; quite a large bird for a bunting. Pale, greyish-brown above, with slight, very indistinct streaking. Almost no discernible head-pattern, although cheeks and crown slightly darker than chin and throat. Underparts pale greyish-white with some yellowish on breast. No white on tail. In flight looked rather sandy, contributing to its initial lark-like appearance. Observed on the ground, perched and in flight at close range through binoculars and a 40× telescope (CFM, ACO). The bird was very similar to that seen previously (Mann 1987a), except that the latter showed some yellow around the vent and possibly on the upper tail-coverts. There are no other records of either species in Borneo.]

Thanks go to the observers listed above for their records. Much gratitude is expressed to Dr D. R. Wells for useful criticism of earlier drafts, and also to Dr D. A. Holmes and John McKean for their help.

REFERENCES

- Burton, P. J. K. (1978) Notes on some waders and kingfishers in Sarawak. *Sarawak Mus. J.* 26(47): 195–204.
- Mann, C. F. (1987a) Notable bird observations from Brunei, Borneo. *Forktail* 3: 51–56.
- Mann, C. F. (1987b) Checklist of the birds of Brunei. *Brunei Mus. J.* 6(3): 170–212.
- Mann, C. F. (in press) Bird report for Brunei, 1986–1988. *Brunei Mus. J.* 6(4).
- Nash, S. V. and Nash, A. D. (1988) An annotated checklist of the birds of Tanjung Puting National Park, Central Kalimantan. *Kukila* 3: 93–116.
- Parish, D. and Wells, D. R. (1984) Interwader Annual Report 1984.
- Sheldon, F. H. and Marin, A. M. (1985) The sympathy of night herons in Borneo. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club* 105: 76–79.

- Smythies, B. E. (1981) *The birds of Borneo*. Third edition. Kota Kinabalu and Kuala Lumpur: The Sabah Society and the Malayan Nature Society.
- Vowles, R. S. and Vowles, G. A. (1985) Some notes on the birds of Borneo. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club* 105: 71-73.
- White, C. M. N. and Bruce, M. D. (1986) *The birds of Wallacea (Sulawesi, the Moluccas and Lesser Sunda Islands, Indonesia): an annotated check-list*. London: British Ornithologists' Union (Check-list no. 7).

Clive F. Mann, P. O. Box 2359, Bandar Seri Begawan 1923, Brunei Darussalam.

A review of smaller Philippine swiftlets of the genus *Collocalia*

EDWARD C. DICKINSON

The species of smaller Philippine swiftlets *Collocalia* are here judged two in number, with both White-bellied Swiftlet *C. esculenta* and Pygmy Swiftlet *C. troglodytes* being widespread. *C. esculenta* is represented by four races, *septentrionalis* and *marginata* with rump feathers clearly edged with white, *isonota* and *bagobo* with such markings faint or absent. The white-rumped *C. troglodytes* evidently does not build edible nests.

In a separate paper (Dickinson 1989) all the larger Philippine swiftlets have been reviewed. The smaller ones, dealt with here, are the white-bellied forms *esculenta* and *marginata*, which are treated here as conspecific, and the white-rumped *troglodytes*. This paper, unlike that on the larger swiftlets, is not arranged with separate texts for each subspecies.

Many museums cooperated in providing material for this study. In the text they are indicated by the following abbreviations: British Museum (Natural History), Tring, BMNH; Carnegie Museum of Natural History, CM; Delaware Museum of Natural History, DMNH; Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, FMNH; Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MCZ; United States National Museum, Washington, D.C., USNM.

WHITE-BELLIED SWIFTLET *Collocalia esculenta*

Synonymy

- Collocalia [sic] linchi*: McGregor (1904a).
- Collocalia cebuensis*: Kutter (1882).
- Collocalia esculenta*: Parkes (1960), Alcalá and Sanguila (1969), Alcalá and Alviola (1970).
- Collocalia esculenta bagobo*: Hachisuka (1930), Hachisuka (1934), Peters (1940), Delacour and Mayr (1945), Ripley and Rabor (1958), Rand and Rabor (1960), Medway (1966), duPont and Rabor (1973a).
- Collocalia esculenta isonota*: Hachisuka (1934), Peters (1940), Delacour and Mayr (1945), Rabor (1955), Medway (1966).
- Collocalia esculenta marginata*: Stresemann (1925), Manuel (1939), Delacour and Mayr (1945), Rabor (1952), Rabor (1954), Rand and Rabor (1960), duPont and Rabor (1973b), Parkes (1973), Rabor (1977), Salomonsen (1983).
- Collocalia esculenta mindanensis*: Hachisuka (1941).
- Collocalia esculenta septentrionalis*: Delacour and Mayr (1945).
- Collocalia isonota*: McGregor (1909).