

birds' feet dangled in the water, apparently 'hovering-stirring' or a bird rested or swam, duck-like on the water, for a few seconds (up to 16 s) before flapping up again. Chinese Pond Herons have also been recorded diving from perches up to 10 m high, and belly-flopping from a stone slab 1 m above the water (Hancock and Elliott 1978), whilst 'aerial feeding' has also been recorded in the Indian Pond Heron *A. grayii*. Although prolonged flying bouts were presumably energetically costly, the birds had a relatively high success rate with on average, one in five or six forays ending in the successful capture of a fish (>100 observations). Birds were less successful in late January and

February, perhaps because in colder weather fish were deeper and there were far fewer dead and dying fish than in the autumn. Feeding at the lake edges was not favoured because of the steep-walled banks, lack of vegetation and high levels of disturbance by people.

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The call of Sykes's Nightjar *Caprimulgus mahrattensis*

TOM ROBERTS and BEN KING

The territorial call (or song) of Sykes's Nightjar *Caprimulgus mahrattensis* is described in Roberts (1991) as comprising bouts of long continuous churring. Compared to the call of the race of European Nightjar breeding in Pakistan *Caprimulgus europaeus unvini*, the calls carry less far (200–300 m vs. 500–600 m) and lack the changes in pitch that characterise the calls of European Nightjar. Here we expand on these differences with reference to sonagrams.

The calls of both species consist of long series of hard, knocking notes rapidly repeated, producing a hard churr (it could also be called a trill or rattle; Fig. 1). The churr may continue for between 1–2 seconds and several minutes. The individual notes of Sykes's Nightjar are all roughly equal in pitch and rate: c.0.65–1.35 kHz and c.34 notes/second. The call of the European Nightjar differs in having regular and readily discernible rate shifts and changes in pitch. The more

slowly delivered notes are given at a rate of c.26 notes/sec at 1.0–2.5 kHz, while the faster notes are repeated at a rate of c.44 notes/sec at 1.0–2.2 kHz. The calls of European Nightjar in Pakistan and Europe appear to be similar (Fig. 1).

Sykes's Nightjar breeds in Afghanistan, Pakistan and north-western India (Peters 1940). The European Nightjar breeds in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but apparently not in India (Ripley 1982). Whilst the breeding ranges of the two species overlap, they are unlikely to be found together in the breeding season. Sykes's Nightjar prefers 'semi-desert open tracts with scattered dry tropical thorn scrub such as occurs in the remnant uncultivated patches of the Indus plains and in the sand dune and clay, flat, extensive deserts of Sibi, Cholistan and the Thar' (Roberts, 1991). The European Nightjar prefers 'hilly country with stony slopes and rocky ridges but usually rather sparse vegetative cover' (Roberts 1991).

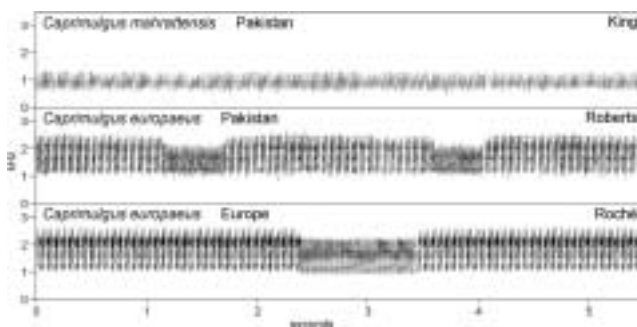


Figure 1. Comparison of the calls of Sykes's Nightjar *Caprimulgus mahrattensis* and European Nightjar *C. europaeus*. Note the regular rate changes (accompanied by a slight pitch shift) shown by European, but not Sykes's Nightjar.

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New and noteworthy bird records from Sumatra, Indonesia

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During 1999–2003, I carried out fieldwork in South Sumatra province, Indonesia, at the following locations: Pemulutan, Ogan Komering Lebak (November 1999); Lebak Pampangan (June 2000, March 2001, February 2002, April 2002); Lebak Pedamaran (August 2001); Lebak Tanjung (April–March 2003), Napalicin area, Rawas river, Kerinci Seblat National Park (December 1999), Dempo mountain (February 2000) and Resort Air Muara Padang, Padang-Sugihan Wildlife Reserve (November 1999). During fieldwork I made observations of a number of species of significance, which are described below.

Coordinates of sites mentioned in the text are as follows: Lebak Pemulutan (03°09'S 104°45'E), Lebak Pampangan (03°21'S 104°95'E), Lebak Tanjung Aur (03°19'S 104°92'E), Resort Air Muara Padang (02°09'S 105°101'E), Napalicin (02°42'S 102°21'E), Dempo mountain (04°00'S 103°07'E).

COTTON PYGMY-GOOSE *Nettapus coromandelianus*

While carrying out fieldwork at Ogan Komering Lebak, I observed Cotton Pygmy-goose on a number of occasions. On 8 June 2000 at 09h40, I saw two flocks of ten and five birds at Lebak Kuro Pampangan, and local people reported that they had previously caught three young birds of this species (which they knew as *bebek alas*) in a tree nest-hole. On 24 March 2001, I saw at least six birds at Lebak Deling Pampangan, including a male flying at a distance of 10–12 m. On 29 August 2001, I saw two separate pairs at Lebak Teluk Toman Pedamaran. On 5 February 2002, I saw a flock of four birds at Lebak Sungai Bungin Pampangan, and a local guide showed me a tree-hole said to be used by the species for nesting. On 16 April 2002, several flocks totaling c.50 birds were observed at Lebak Deling Pampangan. A young bird killed by local people was greyish above, creamy below, with dark legs, a dark eye-stripe, a long whitish supercilium from the forehead to the nape and whitish cheeks. Finally, on 27 March 2003, I saw a pair at Lebak Tanjung Aur.

This species is resident in South and South-East Asia. Its status in Sumatra is uncertain (MacKinnon *et al.* 1998), although it is apparently resident (Holmes

and Nash 1999), being recorded commonly in small numbers, e.g. at North Lampung (Holmes and Noor 1995), Ogan Komering Lebak (Verheugt *et al.* 1993), Air Hitam Dalam (Holmes 1996) and Way Kambas (Parrot and Andrew 1996). These observations confirm that Cotton Pygmy-goose breeds in Sumatra.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

On 29 August 2001, two birds were seen at Lebak Teluk Toman, Ogan Komering Lebak. The birds were seen flying low over the water at distance of 20–50 m, landing in the water, and then diving, and were observed through 7×50 binoculars for five minutes. One bird was black with contrasting white belly and flanks; the second was brown with a white belly; both had dark upperwings with a broad white wing-bar, and they gave a noisy call *ker-r-rrr, ker-r-rr*.

This species breeds widely in the northern Palearctic, wintering from Africa to the Indian subcontinent, southern China, Japan and the Philippines. It is scarce to uncommon in Myanmar and Thailand, and a vagrant to Peninsular Malaysia (Sonobe and Usui 1993, Robson 2000). Although noted as occurring in Sumatra by MacKinnon *et al.* (1998), this species was not listed for Sumatra by Andrew (1992, 1993) or Kukila (2000).

LESSER YELLOWLEGS *Tringa flavipes*

On 30 December 1999 at 06h30, I observed a single conspicuous slim wader on the bank of the Rawas river in Kerinci Seblat National Park, Rawas Ulu district, South Sumatra province. Good views were obtained at a distance of 7–10 m. The bird had a pale greyish head, neck, mantle, back and wings, white underparts with faint streaking on the breast, a dark slim bill and long yellow legs. The bird was taller than a nearby Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*, which it behaved aggressively towards, giving a *twi-twi-twi* call. In flight, the square white rump was seen clearly. The bird was identified as a juvenile or non-breeding Lesser Yellowlegs using Marchant *et al.* (1986). It was distinguished from Grey-tailed Tattler *Heteroscelus brevipes*, Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*, Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* and Nordmann's Greenshank *T. guttifer*