

## Some recent records of Philippine birds

CRAIG ROBSON and PETER DAVIDSON

Details are given of the most interesting observations made during a visit to the Philippines from 5 March to 19 May 1994. The visit coincided with the breeding season of many species, enabling us to gather new data on breeding biology.

### RECORDS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST

**RUFIOUS-LORED KINGFISHER** *Todirhamphus winchelli* A single, calling male was observed at Tabunan, Cebu on 9 April (P.D.). This appears to be the only recent record from Cebu.

**NEGROS BLEEDING-HEART** *Gallicolumba keayi* A single bird was seen well at 1,005 m on Mount Canlaon, above Mambucal, Negros on 11 March (C.R.). It was on a small rock in the middle of a well-used trail, but soon flew downhill into cover. It was in fairly open and severely degraded forest, with a lot of dead branches lying on the ground, and with few large trees. The elevation is at the upper limit for the species (Brooks *et al.* 1992).

**FAR EASTERN CURLEW** *Numenius madagascariensis* At least 20 individuals flying north (or north-east) along the coast at Garcellano beach, Puerto Princessa, Palawan on 28 March. Not listed for Palawan by Dickinson *et al.* (1991) and presumably the first record for the island.

**COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL** *Larus ridibundus* On 30 March 20-30 birds were noted close in-shore at Bacolod Port, Negros. Not listed for Negros by Dickinson *et al.* (1991) and presumably the first record for the island.

**ROSEATE TERN** *Sterna dougallii* Several birds, including adults in breeding plumage, were seen off Tagbilaran Port, Bohol on 15 April. Not listed for Bohol by Dickinson *et al.* (1991) and presumably the first record for the island.

**LITTLE TERN** *Sterna albifrons* Two birds were seen off Tagbilaran Port, Bohol on 15 April. Not listed for Bohol by Dickinson *et al.* (1991) and presumably the first record for the island.

**ASIAN BROWN FLYCATCHER** *Muscicapa dauurica* A single was seen well on Mount Canlaon, Negros on 31 March. Not listed for Negros by Dickinson *et al.* (1991) and presumably the first record for the island.

**DARK-SIDED FLYCATCHER** *Muscicapa sibirica* One was seen at Sitio Siete, South Cotabato, Mindanao on 24 March. Not listed for Mindanao by Dickinson *et al.* (1991) and presumably the first record for the island.

**LANCEOLATED WARBLER** *Locustella lanceolata* Two or three birds were seen and heard at Balinsasayao, south Negros on 6 April. Not listed for Negros by Dickinson *et al.* (1991) and presumably the first record for the island.

**STREAKED GROUND-BABBLER** *Ptilocichla mindanensis* Recorded as high as 1,260 m elevation, at Baracatan, Davao del Sur, Mindanao on 30 April. Dickinson *et al.* (1991) recorded it up to 1,000 m only.

**BROWN TIT-BABBLER** *Macronous striaticeps* Recorded as high as 1,770 m elevation on Mount Katanglad, Bukidnon, Mindanao on 17 April. Dickinson *et al.* (1991) recorded it up to 1,200 m only.

### BREEDING RECORDS

\* = no information on breeding behaviour recorded by Dickinson *et al.* (1991)

**PHILIPPINE WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopos maculatus* Two occupied nest-holes were noted on Mount Canlaon, Negros, on 31 March and 1 April.

\***COMMON FLAMEBACK** *Dinopium javanense* A female was heard calling from an occupied nest-hole in Saint Paul Subterranean National Park, Palawan on 20 March. The nest was in a dead tree about 9 m above the ground.

**PHILIPPINE TROGON** *Harpactes ardens* A pair was excavating a nest-hole in Rajah Sikatuna National Park on 11 April. The nest was in a dead tree about 6 m above the ground.

\***WHISKERED TREESWIFT** *Hemiprocyne comata* Two nests with adult birds sitting on them were found at Minuma, Isabela, Luzon on 12 and 13 May. The nests consisted of tiny platforms attached to the upper surface of bare, more-or-less horizontal, tree branches, 7.5-9 m above the ground.

**WHITE-EARED BROWN-DOVE** *Phapitreron leucotis* A nest-building pair was noted in Quezon National Park, Luzon on 12 March.

**PHILIPPINE FALCONET** *Microhierax erythrogenys* An occupied nest-hole was found at Minuma, Isabela, Luzon on 13 May.

\***PHILIPPINE FAIRY-BLUEBIRD** *Irena cyanogaster* A female (accompanied by a male) was seen nest-building at Angat Dam, Bulacan, Luzon on 15 March. The nest was situated against a tree trunk at the base of a branch, hidden amongst leaves and twigs, about 9 m above the ground. A male carrying nest material was noted at Minuma, Isabela, Luzon on 12 May.

\***SCARLET MINIVET** *Pericrocotus flammeus* A pair was seen attending a nest with young at Sitio Siete, South Cotabato, Mindanao on 23 April. The nest conformed with the description given in Ali and Ripley (1987) and was situated about 12 m above the ground. On 26 April a bird carrying food was noted at another location in the same area.

**HAIR-CRESTED DRONGO** *Dicrurus hottentottus* An adult was noted nest-building at Sitio Siete, South Cotabato, Mindanao on 25 April. The nest

conformed with the description given in Ali and Ripley (1987) and was situated about 10-11 m above the ground.

**BLACK-NAPED MONARCH** *Hypothymis azurea* A nest with an incubating adult was seen in Saint Paul Subterranean National Park, Palawan on 20 March. A pair attending a nest with two young was seen at Callao Caves, Cagayan, Luzon on 9 May. Both nests were of the usual type for the species.

**ISLAND THRUSH** *Turdus poliocephalus* A pair (and particularly the female) were noted attending a completed, but apparently empty, nest at Baracatan, Davao del Sur, Mindanao on 1 May. The nest was constructed mainly of green moss and lined with strips of dead leaves; it was situated amongst epiphytes and plants covering the trunk of a large tree, and about 4.5-6 m above the ground.

**APO MYNA** *Basilornis miranda* A pair was seen attending a nest-hole at Baracatan, Davao del Sur, Mindanao on 1 May. The hole was in a dead tree about 15 m above the ground.

**PHILIPPINE BULBUL** *Ixos philippinus* A nest containing two well-grown young was noted at Minuma, Isabela, Luzon on 12 May. The nest was a small, deep cup-shaped structure, constructed externally of dead grass leaves, and was situated in tall grass by a track, 1.5 m above the ground.

**STRIATED GRASSBIRD** A nest containing four young was found at Candaba Marsh, Rizal, Luzon on 6 March.

**STREAKED GROUND-BABBLER** *Ptilocichla mindanensis* A nest containing one egg was found by P.D. in Rajah Sikatuna National Park, Bohol on 11 April (and subsequently examined on other days until 14 April). The nest was a small, semi-domed, cup-shaped structure with a diameter of 70 x 50 mm and was 30 mm deep. It was constructed of dead leaves, loosely lined with roots and small plant twigs, and was wedged among the leaf stalk bases of a small, spiny palm, 33 cm above the ground. The single egg appeared to constitute the full clutch in this case, as it was being incubated on all of the four days in which the nest was examined. The egg was long-oval in shape, smooth and slightly glossy, and white tinged bluish; it was marked overall with medium-sized mid-brown blotches and lines, particularly around the broader end, where they formed a cap, and with underlying shell markings in the form of light, purple-tinged brown smears. The dimensions of the egg were 23.6 x 16.3 mm. This is the first documented nest of this species.

**BLACK-CROWNED BABBLER** *Stachyris nigrocapitata* A pair was observed nest-building in Rajah Sikatuna National Park, Bohol on 14 April. The nest was being constructed of fine black plant fibres, bits of moss and white cotton-like gossamer. It was taking on the shape of a cradle, roughly 80 mm in diameter and 60 mm in height and was slung from the fork of a sapling, sheltered by the large leaf of a nearby palm-like plant, 1.25 m above the ground. Two individuals from different pairs were seen carrying nest material elsewhere in the park on 11 and 12 April. A birds was also seen collecting nest material in Quezon National Park, Quezon, Luzon on 12 March. Dickinson

*et al.* (1991) do not mention any nests having been found for the species, and appear to have overlooked Rand and Rabor's (1960) description of a nest, found on Bohol, containing pale greenish-blue eggs.

**WHITE-BELLIED MUNIA** *Lonchura leucogastra* Nest-building about 12 m above the ground was noted at Balinsasayao, south Negros on 7 April. A nest containing three eggs was found in Rajah Sikatuna National Park on 14 April. An occupied, but empty, nest was seen on Mount Katanglad, Bukidnon, Mindanao on 19 April and, finally, nest-building was noted at Minuma, Isabela, Luzon on 12 May. All the nests were of the usual type for the species.

**BLACK-HEADED MUNIA** *Lonchura malacca* Nest-building was noted on Mount Katanglad, Bukidnon, Mindanao on 21 April, and at Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, Mindanao on 23 April. A nest containing four eggs and one tiny chick was found at Baracatan, Davao del Sur, Mindanao on 2 May, and an occupied nest was seen at Callao Caves, Cagayan, Luzon on 10 May. All the nests were of the usual type for the species.

*Species observed collecting/carrying nest material:*

**AMETHYST BROWN-DOVE** *Phapitreron amethystina* Rajah Sikatuna National Park, Bohol on 14 April (carrying a large twig).

**LONG-TAILED SHRIKE** *Lanius schach* Near Balinsasayao, south Negros on 7 April.

**YELLOW-BELLIED WHISTLER** *Pachycephala philippinensis* Minuma, Isabela, Luzon on 13 May (female).

\***BLACK-AND-CINNAMON FANTAIL** *Rhipidura nigrocinnamomea* Baracatan, Davao del Sur, Mindanao on 30 April (collecting and transporting what appeared to be thin, fibrous strips of lichen).

**COLETO** *Sarcops calvus* Quezon National Park, Quezon, Luzon on 11 March.

**MOUNTAIN WHITE-EYE** *Zosterops montanus* Mount Katanglad, Bukidnon, Mindanao on 17 April (bits of seeding grass-heads). Baracatan, Davao del Sur, Mindanao on 1 May (pieces of light grey-green lichen).

\***WHISKERED FLOWERPECKER** *Dicaeum proprium* Baracatan, Davao del Sur, Mindanao on 30 April to 2 May (carrying what appeared to be thin twiglets to the top of a 20 m tree).

*Species observed carrying food:*

**BLUE ROCK-THRUSH** *Monticola solitarius* Near Tabunan, Cebu on 9 April.

\***RUFIOUS-HEADED TAILORBIRD** *Orthotomus heterolaemus* Mount Katanglad, Bukidnon, Mindanao on 17 April (two different areas).

**PHILIPPINE LEAF-WARBLER** *Phylloscopus olivaceus* Sitio Siete, South Cotabato, Mindanao on 23 April.

*Fledged young observed:*

- \*GREAT SLATY WOODPECKER *Mulleripicus pulverulentus* Saint Paul Subterranean National Park, Palawan on 20 March.
- PHILIPPINE COUCAL *Centropus viridis* Balinsasayao, south Negros on 7 April.
- PHILIPPINE HAWK-OWL *Ninox philippensis* Mount Makiling, Laguna, Luzon on 7 March.
- PHILIPPINE SERPENT-EAGLE *Spilornis holospilus* Mount Canlaon, Negros on 1 April.
- LONG-TAILED SHRIKE *Lanius schach* Mount Katanglad, Bukidnon, Mindanao on 16 April.
- \*CELESTIAL MONARCH *Hypothymis coelestis* Minuma, Isabela, Luzon on 11 May (pair with single fledgling).
- BLACK-NAPED MONARCH *Hypothymis azurea* Minuma, Isabela, Luzon on 15 May.
- \*ISLAND FLYCATCHER *Eumyias panayensis* Sitio Siete, South Cotabato, Mindanao on 26 April (spotted juveniles).
- WHITE-BROWED SHAMA *Copsychus luzoniensis* Minuma, Isabela, Luzon on 15 May (spotted juveniles).
- SULPHUR-BILLED NUTHATCH *Sitta oenochlamys* Baracatan, Davao del Sur, Mindanao on 30 April.
- ELEGANT TIT *Parus elegans* Valencias Geothermal Site, south Negros on 3 April. Sitio Siete, South Cotabato, Mindanao on 23 April. Minuma, Isabela, Luzon on 12, 13 and 14 May (all different).
- PHILIPPINE BULBUL *Ixos philippinus* Minuma, Isabela, Luzon on 11 May.
- YELLOWISH BULBUL *Ixos everetti* PICOP logging concession, km 36, Surigao del Sur/Davao Oriental, Mindanao on 4 May.
- \*PALAWAN FLOWERPECKER *Prionochilus plateri* Saint Paul Subterranean National Park, Palawan on 20 March.
- \*FLAME-CROWNED FLOWERECKER *Dicaeum anthonyi* Sitio Siete, South Cotabato, Mindanao on 26 April.
- BICOLORED FLOWERPECKER *Dicaeum bicolor* Sitio Siete, South Cotabato, Mindanao on 25 April. Callao Caves, Cagayan, Luzon on 9 May.
- RED-STRIPED FLOWERPECKER *Dicaeum australe* Near Sitio Siete, South Cotabato, Mindanao on 23 April. Callao Caves, Cagayan, Luzon on 9 May.
- ORANGE-BELLIED FLOWERPECKER *Dicaeum trigonostigma* Sitio Siete, South Cotabato, Mindanao on 23 April.

*Other breeding records:*

- PHILIPPINE TAILORBIRD *Orthotomus castaneiceps* Noted carrying nest material or food at Balinsasayao, south Negros on 6 April.

\*MOUNTAIN LEAF-WARBLER *Phylloscopus trivirgatus* An adult was seen performing a distraction display at Baracatan, Davao del Sur, Mindanao on 2 May.

## REFERENCES

- Ali, S. and Ripley, S. D. (1987) *Compact handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan*. New Delhi: Bombay Natural History Society.
- Brooks, T. M., Evans, T. D., Dutson, G. C. L., Anderson, G. Q. A., Asane, D. C., Timmins, R. J. and Toledo, A. G. (1992) The conservation status of the birds of Negros, Philippines. *Bird Conservation International* 2: 273-302.
- Dickinson, E. C., Kennedy, R. S. and Parkes, K. C. (1991) *The birds of the Philippines, an annotated checklist*. Tring: British Ornithologists' Union (Check-list no. 12).
- Rand, A. L. and Rabor, D. S. (1960) Birds of the Philippine islands: Siquijor, Mount Malindang, Bohol and Samar. *Fieldiana, Zool.* 35: 225-441.

Craig Robson, 63 Stafford Street, Norwich NR2 3BD, U.K.

Peter Davidson, 24 Christchurch Road, Norwich NR2 2AE, U.K.

## On the breeding ecology of the Little Owl *Athene noctua* in Shaanxi Province, China.

LEI FU-MIN

Apart from the work of Yin (1964), little has been published about the breeding ecology of the Little Owl *Athene noctua* in China. The following note summarizes the results of a study of Little Owls *A. n. plumipes* conducted between March and July 1992 in central Shaanxi Province (34°4'N 107°6'E). The study site was in an area with well-forested ravines, typically 1-10 km long and 20-100 m wide, that were dominated by a few tree species: *Platycladus orientalis*, *Populus canadensis*, *Prunus armeniaca*, *Juglans regia* and *Ziziphus jujuba*. Forty-three bird species were found in an area of 75 ha, of which Great Tit *Parus major*, Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* and Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* were commonly encountered. Eight pairs of Little Owls were found in the study area, with an average distance of 189 m between nests (and a minimum of less than 100 m).

Nests of the Little Owl were found in steep ravines in holes or crevices 1.5-4 m deep, which were usually partially plugged by large lumps of earth. The eggs were laid on loose soil where the ambient temperature was 18-20°C. The clutch size was 5-6, with one to two eggs being laid every one or two days.