



Figure 1. Song of Matinan Flycatcher *Cyornis sanfordii* in North Sulawesi, Indonesia

song, delivered at a slower rate and with greater emphasis on each note (*ti-ti-ti-tu-ti-ti-ti-tu-ti*). Individuals were observed singing for up to 30 mins, with birds rarely changing perch during singing bouts. The warbling song is not dissimilar to that of Pale Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis unicolor*, except that the latter has markedly shorter phrases (B. van Balen pers comm. 2002, commenting on recording).

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First records of Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Calidris pygmeus* in the Indian Sundarbans delta, West Bengal

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On 22 November 2001, I visited the Sagar Island in the western part of the Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve, West Bengal. At 06h15 I found a small stint foraging on the mudflats. I observed this bird for more than 20 minutes with 10x50 binoculars at a distance of c.25 m. At 06h55 another solitary individual was sighted c.500 m from the first individual, and this bird was watched for 15 minutes at a distance of 20 m.

Both individuals were easily identified as Spoon-billed Sandpipers *Calidris pygmeus* by their flattened spatulate bills and their extraordinary foraging behaviour, in which they ran quickly across the mudflat, stopping regularly to feed by sweeping the submerged bill-tip from side to side. Both were adults in winter plumage, and no plumage differences were noted

between them. They had unstreaked white underparts, and greyish-brown upperparts, with dark shaft-streaks on the wing-coverts, back and mantle. The forehead and prominent supercilium were white, the crown was streaked darker, and the ear-coverts were largely pale. The rump and uppertail-coverts were dark grey-brown, with white at the sides. The tail was dark brown with whitish fringes to the outer rectrices. A white wing-bar was prominent in flight. The second individual called twice, giving a shrill, ascending 'whoatt...whoatt'.

One of these individuals, or another, was watched for 30 minutes at a distance of 25 m at the same spot at 06h30 on 23 November. During 7–14 December 2001, I observed Spoon-billed Sandpipers on eight occasions at various locations in the Sundarbans tiger reserve

Table 1. Records of Spoon-billed Sandpiper at Sagar Island and Sundarbans Tiger Reserve, West Bengal in November–December 2001.

Date	Time	Duration (mins)	Number	Distance (m)	Location	Coordinates
Sagar Island						
22 Nov	06h15	20	1	25	Coastline	21°40'N 88°10' E
22 Nov	06h55	15	1	20	Coastline	21°40'N 88°10' E
23 Nov	06h30	30	1	25	Coastline	21°40'N 88°10' E
Sundarbans Tiger Reserve						
7 Dec	11h30	20	2	40	Duttapasu	22°10'N 88°50' E
8 Dec	13h20	15	1	30	Sunderkhali	22°15'N 88°50' E
9 Dec	16h35	20	4	50	Gajikhali	22°20'N 88°55' E
10 Dec	09h20	30	6	40	Gajikhali	22°20'N 88°55' E
11 Dec	11h15	15	2	25	Pitchkhali	22°20'N 88°40' E
12 Dec	16h40	25	4	30	Kusumkhali	22°25'N 88°40' E
13 Dec	10h20	25	2	30	Kalirchar	22°10'N 88°10' E
14 Dec	11h30	35	14	30	Chererchar	22°35'N 88°20' E

(Table 1). The largest flock was of 14 birds at Cherarchar on 14 December, which were observed for 35 minutes at a distance of c.30 minutes. All were identified as adults in winter plumage. Most groups formed loosely dispersed flocks, with all individuals within a c.50 m radius, but six on 14 December formed a tight flock within a c.15m radius. All birds were observed on the mudflats, close to the water's edge. Further observations of these birds were limited by the risk of tigers *Panthera tigris* in this area.

The Spoon-billed Sandpiper breeds on the Chukotsk peninsula and southwards down the Isthmus of the Kamchatka peninsula, in north-eastern Russia. It migrates down the western Pacific coast through eastern Russia, Japan, North and South Korea, mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan to its main wintering ground in South and South-East Asia, where it is recorded from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, peninsular Malaysia and Singapore, with unconfirmed reports from the Maldives (BirdLife International 2001). It has a very small population which is declining as a result of habitat loss in its breeding, passage and wintering grounds, compounded by disturbance and hunting, and hence it is currently classified as Vulnerable (BirdLife International 2001). Tomkovich *et al.* (2002) estimated that the global population now numbers <1,000 pairs.

In India it is an uncommon to rare winter visitor recorded mainly on the east coast (BirdLife International 2001). It has been recorded from: Assam (Sibsagar district and Deepor beel); West Bengal (two records from Calcutta market, presumed to have been obtained from within 40 km of the city); Orissa (Chilka lake); Tamil Nadu (Point Calimere); and Kerala (Kadalundi estuary). Ali and Ripley (1987) noted this species as occurring in the Sundarbans in West Bengal, and the range maps in Grimmett *et al.* (1998) and

Kazmierczak (2000) also appear to show this, but confirmed records at this site have not been traced, and the species is not included in the Fauna of West Bengal (Majumdar *et al.* 1992). However, the main wintering area of this species is believed to be in the Bangladesh part of the Sundarbans area where the largest non-breeding concentrations have been recorded (with flocks of up to 202 birds; BirdLife International 2001). Hence these records in Indian Sundarbans are not entirely surprising, and the area may hold significant numbers of this species in winter.

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