

at Rawal Lake, Pakistan (Mallalieu 2003, this issue). Our record therefore represents only the second for India and the third for the Indian subcontinent.

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Some observations on the breeding biology of birds on Great Nicobar Island, India

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Great Nicobar Island is located between 6°45'N–7°15'N and 93°38'E–93°55'E in the Bay of Bengal, India. Although previous studies on the avifauna of the Andaman and Nicobar islands described the ecology and/or status of several species (Hume 1874, Butler 1899, Osmaston 1906, Abdulali 1979a,b, Sankaran 1995, 1998), I present here new information on the breeding biology of seven endemic subspecies and one endemic species (Nicobar Parakeet *Psittacula caniceps*) to Great Nicobar Island.

An intensive study was carried out on the coast at the southern tip of the island in a narrow strip of forest between 40 m and 300 m wide, bounded by the beach to the east and by wetlands and forests to the west. Observations were made between December 1995 and May 1998, during three dry seasons (the breeding season for most of the birds in this area) and part of one wet season. Nests were located and observed with binoculars, and monitored until chicks fledged. Where possible, nest trees were climbed and the eggs were measured with Vernier callipers and, in some cases, weighed using a 100 g spring balance. Nest height was estimated using a clinometer, and the tree species and nest materials were recorded. Conservation status is taken from BirdLife International (2000).

NICOBAR PARAKEET *Psittacula caniceps* (Near Threatened)
Two nests were located in March 1997 and 1998 in *Syzygium samarangense* and *Terminalia bialata* trees respectively. The nests were located at a height of 19.5 m and 20 m and both had clutches of two eggs. Both parents attended the nest during incubation (the male entered the nest hole but it was uncertain whether it actually carried out any incubation), and both parents fed the chicks.

LONG-TAILED PARAKEET *Psittacula longicauda* (Near Threatened)

Four nests were located between February and April in 1997–1998, in *Syzygium samarangense* (N=3) and *Terminalia bialata* (N=1) trees. The mean \pm SE nest height was 15.6 \pm 2.7 m (range: 9.5–21 m). Clutch size was two (N=1) to three eggs (N=3). Food gathered by the male was fed to the female which in turn fed it to the nestlings. The female was invariably sighted near the nest, while the male was often absent. Three nests fledged young successfully, but the fate of the fourth could not be observed.

GREEN IMPERIAL PIGEON *Ducula aenea*

Three nests were located between January and February in 1997–1998 in the canopy or subcanopy of *Terminalia catappa*, *Alstonia kurzii* and *Cocos nucifera* trees. Mean \pm SE nest height was 36 \pm 4.9 m (range: 26–39 m). Clutch size was two eggs (N=3), and mean egg size was 36.2 \times 48.6 mm (N=4).

POMPADOUR GREEN PIGEON *Treron pompadora*

Five nests were located in February and March in 1996–1998 in the subcanopy of *Syzygium samarangense* (N=1) and *Macaranga peltata* trees (N=4). Mean \pm SE nest height was 6 \pm 0.8 m (range: 3.6–7 m). Nest diameter in one case was 14.3 cm. Clutch size was two eggs (N=5); mean egg dimensions were 2.7 \times 3.4 mm (N=2) and mean mass was 12.3 g (N=2). Both the male and female incubated the eggs, and in one case the incubation period was 18 days. At one nest, a Nicobar Sparrowhawk *Accipiter butleri* attacked a week-old chick, which fell out of the nest and subsequently disappeared (its nest-mate survived).

BLACK-NAPED ORIOLE *Oriolus chinensis*

Two cup-shaped nests were located during January and March 1997 in the subcanopy of *Alstonia kurzii* and *Syzygium samarangense* trees at a height of 40 m and 42 m. The first pair built three incomplete nests and one complete nest during a 13 day period until the first egg was laid. Clutch size was two eggs (N=2), and mean egg size was 20.4 x 28.7 mm (N=2). On 11 February 1997 an Asian Glossy Starling *Aplonis panayensis* (of which many nested in tree-holes in the same tree) was observed apparently sitting on the oriole nest for a few seconds. Once the adult oriole returned, it immediately left, and no further interactions were noted.

GREATER RACKET-TAILED DRONGO *Dicrurus paradiseus*

Eight nests were located between February and March 1997–1998 in the subcanopy of *Terminalia bialata* (N=2), *Celtis timorensis* (N=1) and *Macaranga peltata* (N=5) trees. Mean \pm SE nest height was 17.3 \pm 8.1 m (range: 8–35 m). Clutch size was two eggs (N=8), and mean egg size was 19.9 x 27.6 mm (N=2). Osmaston (1906) recorded mean dimensions of 20.8 x 28.7 mm for this species in the Andaman Islands.

HILL MYNA *Gracula religiosa*

Four nests were located during March and April 1998 in holes in *Terminalia bialata* (N=3) and *Terminalia catappa* (N=1) trees. Mean \pm SE nest height was 18 \pm 0.9 m (range: 17–20 m). Clutch size was two eggs (N=4), and mean egg size was 24.9 x 36.8 mm (N=8).

OLIVE-BACKED SUNBIRD *Nectarinia jugularis*

Six pendulous nests were located between February and September in 1997–1998 in a variety of bushes and trees including *Syzygium samarangense* and *Celtis timorensis*. Mean \pm SE nest height was 3 \pm 0.8 m (range: 1–5 m). Mean \pm SE clutch size was 2.2 \pm 0.2 eggs (range: 2–3 eggs); mean egg size was 15.3 x 11.8 mm (N=2), and mean \pm SE egg mass was 8 \pm 0.6 g (N=3).

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Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla* in Malaysia: the first record for Asia

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On 1 April 2000 we visited a power station on the west coast of peninsular Malaysia near the small town of Kapar (3°07'N 101°20'E), approximately 25 km south of Kuala Selangor and 40 km west of Kuala Lumpur. The cooling ponds of the power station are well known among local ornithologists as a roost for waders. We arrived around 16h30, timing our visit to coincide with high tide, when the highest concentration of birds is to be expected. In addition to a large number of waders, a flock of terns (Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*, Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia* and White-winged Tern

Chlidonias leucopterus) was also present on the pools. Amongst them we noticed a single gull. Even a brief look was sufficient to reveal that it was neither of the two species listed in our field guides (Jeyarajasingam and Pearson 1999, Robson 2000a) as occurring in Malaysia. Our initial thought was that the bird was a Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla*, a species with which we are very familiar, but in the absence of any other literature we were unable to eliminate the possibility that it was a species unknown to us. We thus observed the bird for about an hour, taking careful notes. The