Recent Literature: Ornithology

Abdulali, H.


1970. Occurrence of the Great Snipe Capella media (Latham) in Burma and India.

Three previously mis-identified specimens in the BNHS collection come from India (2) and Burma (1). These are the 4th & 5th records from India, and the first for Burma. This latter bird came from Moulmein, so the species should also be looked out for in Thailand in winter.

Amandon, D.

1970. Taxonomic categories below the level of genus: theoretical and practical aspects.

A useful summary of a Zoological point of view.

Davis, T.A.


About 0.3% of colonies of Ploceus phillipinus observed in a survey of over 1300 sites were on buildings, often in busy places.

Foo Juat Chin & Medway, Lord.

1970. Nest records of the Yellow-vented Bulbul and the Magpie Robin.

Analysis of the 83 cards for Pycnonotus goiavier and the 27 for Copsychus saularis in the University of Malaya nest record scheme. The bulbul's breeding season is mostly February to May in Singapore, but nests with
Mathew, D.N.


Mostly data from the years 1959 to 1969. Recoveries are reported from various species of duck (Anatidae), several waders (Scolopacidae), 2 wagtails (Motacilla), 2 sparrows (Passer hispaniolensis and P. domesticus) and a bunting (Emberiza melanocephala). The recovery rates are very low; most foreign reports are from Russia (Kazakhstan etc.), Pakistan and East Bengal. The recoveries in Russia of migratory sparrows are interesting. (Note: There is a further list of recoveries in the same issue, pp. 249-273).

Medway, Lord & Lim, R.P.


A report on 55 recoveries from 7450 nesting Nycticorax nycticorax ringed at Kuala Gala, Perak, the only colony in Malaya. Most birds reported were caught or killed by Man, only 7 of the 55 being reported as "found dead". 80% of the recoveries occurred in the first 6 months after ringing, indicating that the very young birds are native and easily caught. 75% of the birds were found within 80 km of the colony, mostly in the rice growing areas on the coastal plain of northwest Malaya.

Medway, Lord & Yong Ghong Chong


Barn owls Tyto alba on an oil palm plantation fed entirely on rats Rattus spp., probably R. rattus, the major pest species on the plantation. The rats were decapitated before being eaten, not swallowed whole as is usual in Barn Owls.

... eggs or young were found in all months from January to September in Malaya. Eggs hatched in 82% of bulbul nests, young flew in 52% of those in which some hatched. The breeding season of the Magpie Robin extends from January to July. Eggs hatched in 82% of nests, but in only 62% of these did young fly. The figures for fledging success are given as 77% and 86% respectively in the paper, but this does not agree with the figures in the tables.

Futhally, Z.


A summary of the papers given and decisions taken at the Delhi Congress, with special emphasis on those referring to India. "The failure of the Government of India to protect its forests and vegetation... is largely due to the triumph of the short-term over the long-term. The politician pacifies his more ignorant voter at the cost of all the unborn". (Dr. B.D. Deshmukh). Other Asian countries differ little; the Government of Thailand should take note. The rapid decline of the Tiger (Panthera tigris) populations received considerable attention at the assembly. The Bangkok trade in skins must play a very important part in this decline. The assembly passed declarations urging governments to accept conservation and protection of long-term values as a basic principle of development.

Kahl, M.P.


Breeding dates, behaviour, ecology, morphology and taxonomic relationships of the 6 species of Ciconiidae nesting in the area are discussed. The author recommends some name changes by uniting similar genera: Ibises in Mycteridae (which has priority), Dissourea in Ciconia and Xenorhynchus in Ephippiorhynchus. Visitors to Wat Phai Lom should study the section on the Openbill Anastomus oscitans.
Mathew, D.N.  
1971. A review of the recovery data obtained by the Bombay Natural History Society's bird migration study project.  

Mostly data from the years 1959 to 1969. Recoveries are reported from various species of duck (Anatidae), several waders (Scolopacidae), 2 wagtails (Motacilla), 2 sparrows (Passer hispaniolensis and P. domesticus) and a bunting (Emberiza melanoccephala). The recovery rates are very low; most foreign reports are from Russia (Kazakhstan etc.), Pakistan and East Bengal. The recoveries in Russia of migratory sparrows are interesting. (Note: There is a further list of recoveries in the same issue, pp. 249-273).  

Medway, Lord & Lim, R.P.  
Bird Banding 41 (4): 265-274.  

A report on 55 recoveries from 7450 nestling Nycticorax nycticorax ringed at Kuala Gula, Perak, the only colony in Malaya. Most birds reported were caught or killed by Man, only 7 of the 55 being reported as "found dead". 80% of the recoveries occurred in the first 6 months after ringing, indicating that the very young birds are native and easily caught. 75% of the birds were found within 80 km. of the colony, mostly in the rice growing areas on the coastal plain of northwest Malaya.  

Medway, Lord & Yong Ghong Chong  

Barn owls Tyto alba on an oil palm plantation fed entirely on rats Rattus spp., probably R. tiomanicus, the major pest species on the plantation. The rats were decapitated before being eaten, not swallowed whole as is usual in Barn Owls.
Recent Literature: Reptilia

Whitaker, R.

1970. Slight reaction from bites of the rear-fanged snakes Boiga ceylonensis (Gunther) and Dryophis nasutus (Lacépède).

Personal experience of the bites of these snakes shows that only mild swelling or itching occurs. D. nasutus is the long thin bright green snake with a sharp nose often on sale at the Bangkok weekend market.

A.S. Cheke

Mukherjee, A.K.

1971. Food habits of water birds of the Sundarban, 24-Parganas district, West Bengal, India—II: Herons and Bitterns.

Stomach analyses from 6 species: Ardea cinerea (76 specimens), A. purpurea (70), Butorides striatus (26), Ardeola grayii (105), Nycticorax nyticorax (78) and Ixobrychus cinamomeus (8).

Rajasingh, S.G. & I.V. Rajasingh

1970. Birds and mammals eating the fruit of the Yellow Oleander
Thevetia peruviana.

Thevetia contains glycosides which are very toxic to man, but goats Capra were observed eating the fruit without ill effect. Domestic fowl Gallus gallus and 5 species of wild bird have been recorded as feeding on this species, as have rats and bats. The editors add that it is known that Rattus norvegicus can tolerate up to 50 times the dosage fatal to man of these glycosides.

Rao, T.R. & P.K. Rajagopalan

1970. Arthropod fauna of the nests of some common birds in Poona, India, with special reference to blood-sucking forms.

Nests of Corvus splendens (56), Ploceus philippinus (35), Sturnus tristis (14), Passer domesticus (4), Hirundo concolor (4) and Copsychus saularis (1) were studied. Among blood-suckers, mites (Ornithonyssus bursa, Pello-
yxus sp., & Lealaps spp.), ticks (Hamophysalis & Argas), flies (Culexoides (4 spp.) & a sandfly), a louse and 2 anthocorid bugs were found. Infestation rates were very variable: up to 10,000 mites were found in some nests, while numbers of Anthocoridae and Culexoides were up to 50 per nest. No steeas (Siphonaptera), Cimicids or Hippoboscsids were found.

A.S. Cheke