

NOTES AND NEW DISTRIBUTIONAL INFORMATION ON BIRDS IN WESTERN PENINSULAR THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

During visits made to five provinces in peninsular Thailand, 13-31 January 1979 and 8-20 August 1981, a total of 100 new provincial bird distribution records was gained. This included some significant northward extensions to the known ranges of resident Malaysian lowland forest species. Some identification features of less well known species are described.

INTRODUCTION

Most present distributional knowledge of the birds of the Malay Peninsula (which includes Thailand north to the Isthmus of Kra, approx. 10° N) is summarised in MEDWAY & WELLS (1976). Important recent contributions may also be found in DICKINSON (1966), HOLMES & WELLS (1975), BOSWALL (1978) and SUMMERS-SMITH (1981).

The Malaysian lowland forest bird fauna becomes increasingly attenuated with northward progression along the peninsula. However, as many of the Thai provinces, in particular those closer to Kra, have received only sparse coverage, the true northern distributional limits of many species which are common further south have yet to be determined.

This paper mainly reports observations made in wildlife sanctuaries of the Royal Forest Department which are situated in perhaps the largest remaining area of lowland, semi-evergreen forest in Thailand. This extends throughout the adjacent hilly parts of the provinces of Ranong, Surat Thani and Phang-nga and was estimated by BROCKELMAN (1975) from satellite photographs as covering perhaps 5000 sq. km. Additional observations were also made in Phuket, Krabi and Trang Provinces.

AREAS VISITED AND METHODS

During the period 8-20 August 1981, the authors spent 1-3 days at each of the following four localities searching for birds: (1) Khlong Nakha Wildlife Sanctuary, Ranong Province. (2) Khlong Saeng Wildlife Sanctuary. Although the major part of this reserve lies in Surat Thani Province, most observations were made in the

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western part of the reserve, at the northern extremity of Phang-nga Province. (3) Reserved Forest, to the west of the main road, c. 20 km north of the town of Krabi, Krabi Province. (4) Khao Banthat Wildlife Sanctuary, Trang Province.

Most observations were made in semi-evergreen forest and secondary growth at elevations of 50-100 m above sea level, usually along watercourses. Brief visits were made to areas as high as 400-800 m in each of the three wildlife sanctuaries. As area of coastal scrub and deciduous woodland in Krabi Province was also visited.

This paper also includes some observations made by P.A. Dukes and one of us (P.D.R.) during 13-31 January 1979, when in addition to Khlong Nakha and Khao Banthat, the following localities were visited: (5) semi-evergreen forest and secondary growth near the hot springs, c. 2 km east of the town of Ranong, Ranong Province. (6) Semi-evergreen forest and secondary growth at Khao Prathal Wildlife Sanctuary, near Thalang, Phuket Island. (7) Open sandy beach at Rawai, Phuket Island. (8) Open, sandy beach at Bor Muang, near the southern boundary of Krabi Province.

No mist-netting was carried out and total reliance was placed upon field observation. All observers had previously watched birds in North and Central Thailand, while skins of many of the more confusing Malaysian species from the collections of Dr. Boonsong Lekagul and the Thai National Reference Centre or on loan from the Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, were examined before departure in 1981.

OBSERVATIONS

A total of 100 new provincial distribution records, involving 81 species of birds was gained (Table 1). Notes on selected species follow.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

One, Bor Muang Beach, Krabi on 18 January. The bird was seen resting on a small rocky outcrop at the water's edge in a flock of c. 30 Ruddy Turnstones *Arenaria interpres*, a few Mongolian Plover *Charadrius mongolus*, a Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* and 3 Curlew Sandpipers *C. ferruginea*. It was easily distinguished from *C. tenuirostris* by its smaller size and shorter, straight bill and by its greyer rump in flight. The species is described by MEDWAY & WELLS (1976) as a "rare migrant visitor". This appears to be the first record for peninsular Thailand.

Cinnamon-rumped Trogon *Harpactes orrhophaeus*

A male was seen at the edge of a track through logged forest at c. 50 m, Khlong Saeng Wildlife Sanctuary, Phang-nga on 14 August. This represents a significant northward extension of the known range of this species, the only other record for Thailand being at Khao Luang, Nakhon Sri Thammarat (KING, 1966).

Helmeted Hornbill *Rhinoplax vigil*

At least one individual was heard calling from two different locations in Khlong Saeng W.S. Phang-nga, on 13 August. This species is listed (status indeterminate) in the Red Data Book (IUCN, 1979) BAIN & HUMPHREY (1982) consider it endangered in Thailand where it is threatened not only by habitat destruction but probably by poaching for its casque.

Hooded Pitta *Pitta sordida*

A bird of the race *P.s. cucullata* was seen in low stature secondary forest and bamboo along a streamside, Khlong Saeng W.S. Phang-nga, on 14 August. It was first located by its voice which was similar in quality to that of the Blue-winged *P. moluccensis*. However, while that species has a disyllabic call, *taew-laew, taew-laew*, *P. sordida* was heard to give a monosyllabic *tlaew, tlaew*. Like *P. moluccensis*, the notes were uttered in couplets.

Grey-bellied Bulbul *Pycnonotus cyaniventris*

One bird was seen in mixed forest and secondary growth at c. 200 m, Khlong Nakha W.S., Ranong, on 10 August. This appears to be the first record of the species north of Nakhon Sri Thammarat.

Blyth's Babbler *Trichastoma rostratum*

Two birds were seen in sparse, low bushes by a rocky streamside in dense forest at Khlong Nakha W.S., Ranong, on 9 August. They were easily identified by the long, thin bill, moderately long tail and silky-white underparts with a greyish suffusion on the sides of the breast. The upperparts appeared uniformly dull brown. They were heard to call with a four-note whistle *tee, too, twee, teeoo*, the last note falling in tone. A short *prrrp* was also heard.

Ferruginous Babbler *Trichastoma bicolor*

Two were seen in the lower storey of dense forest along a valley bottom at Khlong Nakha W.S., Ranong, on 9 August. The combination of bright orange-rufous upperparts and clean, whitish underparts render this species easily identifiable. This appears to be the only record of this species north of Nakhon Sri Thammarat.

Streaked Wren Babbler *Napothera brevicaudata*

One in semi-evergreen forest at less than 50 m above sea level, Krabi, on 16 August. The bird was feeding on the forest floor where jagged rocks protruded, at the base of a high, limestone crag. MEDWAY & WELLS (1976) simply describe the habitat of this species as "ground storey of hill and montane forest" though both BOONSONG & CRONIN (1974) and KING et al. (1975) specifically stress its association with rocky areas. The bird was first located by its call, a high, whistled *pew-eee*, the second syllable perhaps half an octave higher than the first. A monosyllabic *peew* note was also uttered at times.

Fluffy-backed Tit Babbler *Macronous pilosus*

Two birds were seen in disturbed forest with clumps of bamboo along a trailside, Krabi, on 16 August. The only previous records for peninsular Thailand appear to be in Surat Thani and Narathiwat Provinces (MEDWAY & WELLS 1976).

Grey-eyed Fulvetta *Alcippe poiocephala*

The only previous records of this species for peninsular Thailand appear to be in Surat Thani, Nakhon Sri Thammarat and Trang Provinces, although we found it fairly common on forested slopes in Ranong and Phang-nga. MEDWAY & WELLS (1976) state that it is found from 1200–4000 ft (360–1200 m), though at Krabi we encountered it at less than 50 m above sea level in semi-evergreen forest on level ground. Here, we failed to find the similar Brown Fulvetta *A. brunneicauda* which is a strictly Sundaic species and which is apparently recorded at lower elevations than *A. poiocephala*. Whether these species co-exist or whether they are segregated by range or habitat in peninsular Thailand appears to be unrecorded. *A. poiocephala davisoni*, the race in the Malay Peninsula, differs from the races found elsewhere in Thailand by its lack of blackish head stripes. It is, nonetheless, easily separable from *A. brunneicauda* by its buffy, instead of whitish, underparts. We also found that *A. brunneicauda*, which we later saw in Trang Province, had a diagnostic, metallic *swit* call in addition to various buzzing notes which were roughly similar to the calls of *A. poiocephala*.

White-throated Rock Thrush *Monticola gularis*

A male, seen in the middle storey of disturbed, rather open semi-evergreen forest near the hot springs in Ranong on 31 January, appears to be only the second record for peninsular Thailand.

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*

Individuals seen at Rawai Beach, Phuket and in the town of Phamla, near Ranong, on 15 and 30 January respectively were presumed to have been wintering birds. The race which is resident in the Malay peninsula, *M.s. madoci*, has been recorded as far north as Phang-nga (HOLMES & WELLS, 1975) but is probably indistinguishable in the field from one of the wintering races.

Olive-becked Jungle Flycatcher *Rhinomyias olivacea*

This species is not listed in Table 1 because no new distributional information was obtained. However, because it is little known and absent from peninsular Malaysia, it seems worthwhile to include the following notes made from birds observed at Khao Banthat W.S. during 18-20 August.

It was found at elevations of 100-800 m. In size, shape and actions this species closely resembles the *Cyornis* flycatchers. It shows a similarly long bill, a comparatively short wing-to-tail ratio and has the habit of sometimes slightly cocking and fanning its tail. Like the *Cyornis* spp., it inhabits forest understorey. The upperparts are unmarked brownish with a strongly rufescent tail while the sides of the head appear slightly greyish. There is a neatly-defined white throat and brownish breast band while the remainder of the underparts appear whitish. The eye and bill are dark and the legs pale flesh. One bird was heard to give a sweet, metallic warbling song. One recently-fledged juvenile, with speckled breast and upperparts and buff-tipped greater coverts, was also seen.

Chocolate Flycatcher *Muscicapa williamsoni*

Sightings of single individuals, probably of this species, were made at Khao Banthat W.S., Trang, on 25 January and 16 August. In size, shape and actions they were identical to the Brown Flycatcher *M. latirostris* but were distinguished by the blurred, heavy streaking on the breast and the slightly rufescent-tinged rump and folded wing. In addition, most wintering *M. latirostris* show an extensive, diffuse whitish area in front of the eye which these birds lacked. However, the taxonomy of the "brown flycatcher group" is poorly known and apparent intergrades between *M. williamsoni* and *M. latirostris* occur (D.R. WELLS, in litt.). It is not known with certainty whether *M. williamsoni* is resident in the peninsula or whether it is a passage migrant or winter visitor (MEDWAY & WELLS, 1976; D.R. WELLS in litt.).

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

Single birds were recorded in secondary growth or in gardens at the Ranong hot springs, at Khlong Nakha W.S., Ranong, at Khao Prathal, Phuket Island and at Khao Banthat W.S., Trang, during 15-31 January. The species is listed in MEDWAY & WELLS (1976) as a scarce migrant on the basis of records from three Malaysian provinces. It has probably been hitherto overlooked in peninsular Thailand.

Rufous-throated Sunbird *Anthreptes rhodolaema*

A male bird was seen in a clearing, close to the forest edge near the headquarters of Khlong Nakha W.S., Ranong, on 11 August. It was distinguished from the similar Brown-throated Sunbird *A. malacensis* by the extensive area of maroon-red on the wing coverts and by the maroon-red rather than brownish sides of head. In Thailand, this species has hitherto been recorded only in Trang Province.

Thick-billed Spiderhunter *Arachnothera crassirostris*

At least two birds were recorded visiting a flowering tree in a small garden area, close to the forest edge, by Khlong Nakha W.S. headquarters, Ranong, on 27 and 28 January. In Thailand, it appears to have been previously recorded only in Krabi Province.

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Table 1. New distributional records of birds in western peninsular Thailand. Province names are abbreviated as follows: Ranong = RAN; Phang-nga = PHA; Phuket = PHU; Krabi = KRA; Trang = TRA. X = new provincial record; M = record published elsewhere by DICKINSON (1966), HOLMES & WELLS (1975), MEDWAY & WELLS (1976) BOSWALL (1978) or SUMMERS-SMITH (1981).

Common name	Latin name	Province				
		RAN	PHA	PHU	KRA	TRA
Crested Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>	X			M	M
Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	X		M	M	M
Crested Goshawk	<i>Accipiter trivirgatus</i>	M	X	M		M
Rufous-bellied Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus kienerii</i>	M	X			M
Black-thighed Falconet	<i>Microhierax fringillarius</i>		X	M		M
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>			M	X	M
Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	M	M		X	
Mongolian Plover	<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	M	M	M	X	
Greater Sand Plover	<i>Charadrius leschenaultii</i>	M		M	X	M
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>			M	X	M
Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>				X	
Great Knot	<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>				X	M
Red-necked Stint	<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	M		M	X	M
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	M		M	X	
Black-bellied Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus diardi</i>	X	X		M	M
Green-billed Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus tristis</i>	M	M		X	M
Raffles' Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus chlorophaeus</i>	M	X		M	M
Red-billed Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus javanicus</i>	M	X	M	M	M
Lesser Coucal	<i>Centropus bengalensis</i>	M	X	M		M
Giant Spinetail Swift	<i>Chaetura gigantea</i>	X	X	M		M
Silver-rumped Spinetail Swift	<i>Chaetura leucopygialis</i>	M	X			M
Grey-rumped Tree Swift	<i>Hemiprocne longipennis</i>	M	X		M	M
Lesser Tree Swift	<i>Hemiprocne comata</i>	M	X		X	M
Cinnamon-rumped Trogon	<i>Harpactes orrhophaeus</i>		X			
Orange-breasted Trogon	<i>Harpactes oreskios</i>	M	X	M	M	M

Table 1 (continued)

Common name	Latin name	Province				
		RAN	PHA	PHU	KRA	TRA
Deep Blue Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo meninting</i>		X	M	M	M
Black-backed Forest Kingfisher	<i>Ceyx erithacus</i>	M	X	M		M
Helmeted Hornbill	<i>Rhinoplax vigil</i>	M	X		M	M
Lineated Barbet	<i>Megalaima lineata</i>		M	M	X	M
Rufous Woodpecker	<i>Micropternus brachyurus</i>	X	X	M	M	M
Fulvous-rumped Woodpecker	<i>Meiglyptes tristis</i>	M	X	M	M	M
Buff-necked Woodpecker	<i>Meiglyptes tukki</i>	X			M	M
Grey-and-buff Woodpecker	<i>Hemicircus concretus</i>		X		M	M
Maroon Woodpecker	<i>Blythipicus rubiginosus</i>		X		M	M
Golden-backed Four-toed Woodpecker	<i>Chrysocolaptes lucidus</i>	M	X	M	M	M
Black-and-Yellow Broadbill	<i>Eurylaimus ochromalus</i>	M	X		M	M
Hooded Pitta	<i>Pitta sordida</i>	M	X		M	M
Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	M	X	M	M	M
Lesser Green Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis cyanopogon</i>	M	X		M	M
Grey-bellied Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cyaniventris</i>	X			M	M
Red-eyed Brown Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus brunneus</i>	X	M	M	M	M
Lesser Brown Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus erythropthalmos</i>	M	X	X	M	M
Ochraceous Bulbul	<i>Criniger ochraceus</i>	X	X	M	M	M
Yellow-bellied Bulbul	<i>Criniger phaeocephalus</i>	M	X		X	M
Hairy-backed Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes criniger</i>	X	X		M	M
Crested Olive Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes charlottae</i>	X	X		X	M
Streaked Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes malaccensis</i>	X	X		M	M
Bronzed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus aeneus</i>	M	M		X	M
Crested Jay	<i>Platylophus galericulatus</i>		X		M	M
Blyth's Babbler	<i>Trichastoma rostratum</i>	X			M	M
Ferruginous Babbler	<i>Trichastoma bicolor</i>	X				M
Moustached Babbler	<i>Malacopteron magnirostre</i>	X	M	M	M	M
Lesser Red-headed Babbler	<i>Malacopteron cinereum</i>	X	M		M	M

Table 1 (continued)

Common name	Latin name	Province				
		RAN	PHA	PHU	KRA	TRA
Greater Red-headed Babbler	<i>Malacopteron magnum</i>	X	M		M	M
Streaked Wren Babbler	<i>Napothera brevicaudata</i>				X	M
Grey-throated Babbler	<i>Stachyris nigriceps</i>	X			M	M
Fluffy-backed Tit Babbler	<i>Macronous ptilosus</i>				X	
Grey-eyed Fulvetta	<i>Alcippe poioicephala</i>	X	X		X	M
White-bellied Yuhina	<i>Yuhina zantholeuca</i>	M	X	M		M
Siberian Blue Robin	<i>Erithacus cyane</i>	X		M	M	M
Chestnut-naped Forktail	<i>Enicurus ruficapillus</i>	M	X		M	M
White-throated Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola gularis</i>	X			M	
Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	X	M	M	M	M
White-throated Flycatcher- Warbler	<i>Abroscopus superciliaris</i>	X	X		M	M
Yellow-browed Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	X		X	M	M
Eastern Crowned Leaf- Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus coronatus</i>	X		M	X	M
Long-tailed Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	X			M	M
Rufescent Prinia	<i>Prinia rufescens</i>	X	X		M	M
Yellow-bellied Prinia	<i>Prinia flaviventris</i>	M	M		X	M
Chocolate Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa williamsoni</i>		M		M	X
Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	X		X		X
Tickell's Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>				X	M
Maroon-breasted Monarch	<i>Philentoma velatum</i>	M	X		M	M
Chestnut-winged Monarch	<i>Philentoma pyrrhopterum</i>	M	X		M	M
Plain Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes simplex</i>	X	M			M
Rufous-throated Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes rhodolaema</i>	X				M
Van Hasselt's Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia sperata</i>	X	M	M		M
Little Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera longirostra</i>	M	X	M	M	M
Thick-billed Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera crassirostris</i>	X			M	
Grey-breasted Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera affinis</i>	M	X		M	M
Yellow-throated Flower- pecker	<i>Prionochilus maculatus</i>	M	M		X	M