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## NOTE ON THE OCCURRENCE OF LITTLE CORMORANT AT NUSA DUA, BALI

by

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The ponds which treat sewage from the Nusa Dua hotel complex are located west of the road running between Buala and Tanjung Benoa, near the hamlet of Celu, coordinates: 08°48'S, 115°14'E. Divided by wide, grassy bunds, they are bounded on two seaward sides by mangroves, and elsewhere by a screen of natural greenery. Situated in the ponds are numerous small islands, supporting a growth of trees, shrubs, reeds and grasses, which in turn support teeming bird life. It is a spectacular location.

In fact six years ago the author recommended to the local office of the State Ministry of t that the site be gazetted a Wetland Reserve, considering its important population of waterfowl, including breeding Black crowned Night heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Javm Pond heron *Ardeola speciosa*, Egrets *Egretta* sp., Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*, and little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*. Unusual visitors have included Rufous Night heron *N. caledonicus*, Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilus javanicus*, Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*, Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*, and Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*. And now little Cormorant *P. niger*.

The area falls within the jurisdiction of Bali Tourist Development Corporation (BTDC), who have taken positive measures to prowl this sanctuary, such as gating the bunds, although current construction of a by pass road skirting the southern edge has, at least temporarily, tended to disturb and diminish the resident population of waterfowl.

A search of available literature (see Bibliography) reveals that Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger* (sometimes combined with Pygmy Cormorant *P. pygmaeus* of Eurasia) is known from the Greater Sundas, including Java, but has not hitherto been recorded from the island of Bali.

On a number of occasions during the latter half of 1998, while visiting the ponds, the author observed a good number of cormorants, predominantly Little Pied (which have bred in the locality), as well as one or two other all dark birds, clearly cormorants of another species. On the last such occasion, November 4, there were 22 cormorants present, all conveniently sitting together in a dead *Auricula* tree on one of the islets, and the author observed them closely over a period of 90 minutes, from 17.00 to 18.30. From time to time a group of birds would sally forth, flying low over the water, some occasionally alighting to fish, always returning to their favoured perch. Of the 22 present, 20 were Little Pied Cormorants and 2 were all dark. Most noticeably, one of the black birds was somewhat smaller than all the other cormorants, both pied and black, which were similar in size.

The larger of the two black birds was glossy with white patches on the ear coverts, rather round headed, and with a relatively long, dark, hooked bill. The smaller bird was less glossy, with no obvious white patches, head flatter rather than rounded, and bill brownish, rather short and unhooked.

After examining the various field guides, it was concluded that the all black birds were Little Black Cormorant *A. sulcirostris* and Little Cormorant *P. niger* respectively. The latter sighting constitutes a slight eastward extension to the bird's previously known range; but it is quite probable that its occurrence in Bali is regular but overlooked.

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