THE FIRST BREEDING RECORD OF THE PACIFIC BLACK DUCK ON JAVA

by

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During 12-15 March 1991, the author visited the small mountain lakes on the northern slopes of Mount Semeru in the southern part of the Bromo/Tengger National Park in East Java.

The lake of (Ranu) Pani was surveyed in the late afternoon of 12 March, where a single Pacific Black Duck Anas superciliosa was observed. The bird appeared rather tame, allowing close observation for several minutes. Its light buffy head contrasting with the darkish body, and well marked stripes or bars on the sides of the head, were diagnostic. In addition, a group of six Little Grebe Tachybaptus ruficollis was exhibiting courtship behaviour (this is a very rare bird on Java, see White & Bruce 1986, MacKinnon 1988)

At noon on 13 March, the lake of (Ranu) Kumbolo was visited, c.13 km south-west of Lake Pani. This lake lies at c.2500 m elevation, and was devoid of floating vegetation and reed beds. The banks consisted of meadows alternating with low Casuarina trees. On arrival from the north, a group of five adult ducks was observed dabbling along the western shore under the cover of trees that lay half down in the water. The shape of the body, white underwings, lightish head, grey bill and legs suggested Pacific Black Duck. A closer look revealed the presence of four ducklings, c. one week old, with an indistinct (partly due to the distance) down pattern of light yellowish-brown and dark brown. One of the adults kept the young somewhat separated, by driving the other birds away if they approached.

The Pacific Black Duck is a widespread species in Australasia and the western Pacific (Madge & Burn 1988). In Java, the species occurs mainly on mountain lakes, but recently has been recorded at only a few localities, eg. Dieng (Central Java - MacKinnon 1988, J. Errard in litt. 1989) and Telaga Patengan (West Java - author's observation). Although listed as a resident species for Java and Sumatra, no reliable breeding records were previously known for either island (Hellebrekers & Hoogerwerf 1967, MacKinnon 1988, van Marie & Vouw 1988).

References


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- 19 Sept 1989. From dawn to c.14.00 h numerous (c.200 total) dark morph birds flying east to west c.2 km off the north coast of Sumbawa and Komodo.
- 24 Sept 1989. Scattered individuals (c.30 total) between the islands of Obi and Ternate to the west of Bacaen and its satellite islands.
- 15 June 1990. 2-3 dark morph birds with a large mixed fishing flock (see under Streaked Shearwater) in the south Banda Sea off NW Wetar.

Wilson's Storm-petrel Oceanites oceanicus
- 15 June 1990. A group of 2-3 birds with the mixed fishing flock described above. Thereafter, scattered individuals observed regularly c.5 km off the south coast of Flores and more frequently along the south coast of Komodo and Sumbawa, occasionally in groups of 5-10.

There are few published records of this species for Wallacean waters. Current information indicates that it is a passage migrant and that large numbers may winter in the region (see Cadée 1985).

White-faced Storm-petrel Pelagodroma marina
- 18 June 1990. Seven individuals seen well, albeit briefly, flying very close to the ship, off the south coast of Sumbawa (HA, BC, FL). These observations represent the first published record of this species in Wallacea and only the second record (the first since 1930) in Indonesia (see Marle & Vouw 1988). The dispersal of the species is imperfectly known and these birds were presumably Australian breeders which had drifted off course from what is thought to be their normal route north-west to the rich up-wellings in the Arabian Sea (Harrison 1983).

Matsudaira’s Storm-petrel Oceanodroma matsudaira
- 15 June 1990. At least three birds seen well as they followed in the wake of the ship, off the south coast of Sumbawa (HA, BC, FL). Although the first published record of this species in the Banda Sea, these observations together with previous records (see W&B 1986) suggest that Wallacean waters may be important non-breeding feeding grounds for this little known pelagic species.

Red-footed Booby Sula sula
- 19 Sept 1989. c.15 individuals (75% immatures) recorded from dawn to 14.00 h along the north coast of Sumbawa.
- 12-19 June 1990. Individuals and loosely associated groups (<20 per group) observed daily between Gunungapi and the island of Wetar, for about two hours. Although the first published record of this species in the Banda Sea, these observations together with previous records (see W&B 1986) suggest that Wallacean waters may be important non-breeding feeding grounds for this little known pelagic species.

Red-necked Phalarope Phalaropus lobatus
With the exception of the Sulawesi region (see Kukila 1990), there are few published records of this species in Wallacea.
- 24 April 1984. >25 in various plumage states midway between Ternate and Sidangoli, Halmahera (0°25'N, 127°23'E).
- 22 Oct 1987. A group of >10 in basic plumage at the same location.
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Part I - Seabirds

Species Accounts

**Bulwer's Petrel** *Bulweria bulwerii*
- 14 June 1990. One bird seen at close range in the south Banda Sea. (BC & FL). This is only the fourth record of this little known species in Wallacean waters (W & B 1986, Kukila 1990).

**Streaked Shearwater** *Calonectris leucomelas*
- 19 Sept 1989. c.40 individuals moving mainly east to west c.2 km off the north coast of Sumbawa.
- 15 June 1990. A flock of c.100 - 150, with c.150 Short-finned Pilot Whale *Globicephala macrorhynchus*, Wilson’s Storm-petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*, Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus*, Red-footed Boobies *Sula sula*, and Greater and Lesser Frigatebirds *Fregata minor* and *F. ariel*, was observed attending a large shoal of fish in the rich upwellings off the NW coast of Wetar.

**Wedge-tailed Shearwater** *Puffinus pacificus*
Although apparently present in Wallacean waters throughout the year, there are surprisingly few published records of this species for the region.