

A BREEDING RECORD OF GREAT THICK-KNEE *ESACUS MAGNIROSTRIS* (Vieillot) ON BALI

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On April 10 1984, I found a nest-scape of the Great Thick-Knee containing one egg in Northwest Bali. Victor Mason (*pers. comm.*) states that the species has not yet been recorded breeding in Bali, and I cannot find any documented record.

The nest was found between Labuan Lalang and Tanjung Gelap (the cape marking the west point of Banyuwedan Bay), some 800 m north-east of the outfall of the permanent riverlet there. Estimated map co-ordinates are .8°08'S, 114°34'E.

The nest was a scarcely noticeable shallow scrape in the coral shingle, some 50 cm above and 5m behind the high-tide marks on a 'beach-wall' (a bare elevation of coral debris) No lining was present. The nervous behaviour of the parents confirmed the identification of the nest.

The site was open towards the sea over a length of about 25 m to either side, but thereafter enclosed by mangrove forest. Directly behind the beach-wall landwards, there was a shallow pool of seawater in open contact with the sea via the mangrove. On land the vegetation consisted of dry monsoon forest Hoogerwerf (1948) records 4 clutches in West Java, all found in sand on the high section of the beach, with little or no nest material.

Description of the egg

Shape: oblong-oval or elliptical to ovate; obtuse pole not very distinct from pointed pole but *still* discernible.

Base colour: Grey with a slightly buffy tint (or: pale stone or sand colour, closely matching *the average* colour of the coral debris).

Pattern: Primary pattern of black-brown, irregular spots and blotches, mostly much larger than those of the secondary pattern, possibly with a slight concentration towards the obtuse pole. The secondary markings were more numerous, blue-grey (grey as if covered with a light wax) streaks and speckles, with some blackish brown; regularly spaced and clearly on a deeper layer of shell.

This description matches that in Hoogerwerf (1949) and in Hellebrekers & Hoogerwerf (1967) and closely resembles the colour plate in the first reference and the b & w photograph in Hoogerwerf (1948).

For safety reasons I took measurements only from a colour-slide of the egg alongside a measuring tape. These are: 60.5 x 43.0 mm. This is slightly smaller than the measurements of 4 eggs from West Java given by Hoogerwerf (1949) and Hellebrekers & Hoogerwerf (1967), which averaged 63.6 x 45.5 mm. These are larger than the average of 60 eggs of the race *recururostris* from the Indian sub-continent, which measured 54.4 x 41.0 mm (Baker, 1935), though 15 eggs of *magnirostris* from the Andamans averaged 63.7 x 45.0 mm.

Distribution.

E.m. magnirostris ranges from the Andamans through the Sundanese region to the Philippines, the Bismark and Solomon Islands and Australia, whereas *recururostris* occurs from the Indian sub-continent through Burma and Thailand to Indo-China and Hainan (Ali & Ripley 1983, King *et al* 1975, and Delsman 1951). The two races are sometimes treated as allospecies. In Bali, Stresemann (1913) gives a sight record on 27/3/1911. and the State Museum for Natural History at Leiden holds a female collected by von

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Plessen on 1/4/1938 at Gilimanuk.

The date of this nest record does not agree with previous records in Indonesia; Hoogerwerf (1949) and Hellebrekers & Hoogerwerf (1967) record 6 dates for West Java from August through October, and Verheijen (1964) reports one clutch from W. Bores in November. The Bali date agrees with those given for the Andamans in the Northern Hemisphere, March and April (Ali & Ripley 1983).

Other pairs were also observed on nearby Menjangan Island and in Gilimanuk Bay. Although Delacour (1947) classifies the species as 'non-migratory', Pfeffer (1958) remarks that it is 'certainly migratory' on Rinca in the Lesser Sunda Islands to the east. Glenister (1974) notes *It as a 'rare vagrant' in peninsular Thailand and West Malaysia, indicating that some birds may be migrants.*

The species seems rather rare at least in Java and Bali. Bartels never found any clutches, and Hoogerwerf only six over 15 years (Hellebrekers & Hoogerwerf, 1967).

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