
AN OCCURRENCE OF RUFIOUS NIGHT-HERON AND OTHER INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS FROM BALI

By

Victor Mason

(Received 12 July 1994)

While conducting a recent survey of waterfowl at Nusa Dua Sewerage ponds (8°48'S, 115°14'E) at the behest of the Ball Tourist Development Corporation and the Regional Office of PHPA of the Ministry of Forestry, several notable observations were made, including the first record on Bali of Rufous Night-heron *Nycticorax caledonicus* (Mason 1989). The bird was clearly seen by the author and accompanying team of PHPA branch office staffers, around mid-morning and later in the afternoon of 20 October 1993, using 10x50 binoculars. It perched conspicuously on top of an acacia *Acacia auriculoformis* growing on one of the many islands which dot the decantation ponds. This individual was identical to birds seen previously by the author in Australia. Its distinctive plumage stood out still more among the ca. 1,400 Black-crowned-Night-herons *N. Nycticorax* also perched around the decantation ponds. The bird was observed standing on a flimsy platform of twigs, and may possibly have been nest-building. Only one bird was seen that day and it was not seen subsequently.

Hybridization between the two species of night-heron may occur. The subspecific status of this individual is uncertain: *N. c. hilli* is described as occurring throughout Sulawesi, Moluccas and Lesser Sundas, but the Philippine form *N. c. manillensis* may exist sympatrically (White & Bruce 1986). The Rufous Night-heron has been recorded irregularly from Java (Hoogerwerf 1966), with breeding recently noted there (MacKinnon 1988). Its status on Bali remains unclear.

Other notable observations during this census were the first breeding record of Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos* on Bali - four immature birds were seen subsequently and the first sighting since 1938 (Plessen 1938, unpubl) of Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*. One darter only was seen, an extremely pale bird, also indicating a juvenile which may possibly have been bred locally.

Observations were shared by the following members of PHPA regional office in Suwung: Abdul Mutalib, Endang Hus Nairn, Putu Ngurah Swastika, Wayan Lotreng, B.P. Susanto and Wayan Mustika.

References

- Andrew, P. 1992. *The birds of Indonesia: a checklist (Peter's sequence)*. Jakarta: Indonesian Ornithological Society.
- Hoogerwerf, A. 1966. The occurrence of *Nycticorax caledonensis* in Java. *Ardea* 54:81-87.
- MacKinnon, J. 1988. *Field guide to the birds of Java and Bali*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Mason, V. 1989. *Birds of Bali*. Singapore: Periplus Editions.
- White, C.M.N. & M.D. Bmce. 1986. *The birds of Wallacea (Sulawesi, the Moluccas and Lesser Sunda islands, Indonesia)*. London: Brit. Orn. U. Checklist No. 7.

Address: Bali Bird Walks, P.O. Box 400, Denpasar 80001, Ban.

CORRIGENDA

Bishop, K.D. New and interesting records of birds in Wallacea. *Kukila* 6 (1) (1992):25. Delete: Slender-billed Crow *Corvus enca* (under Flores).

ANNOUNCEMENT

FUNDS FOR CONSERVATION PROJECTS: BirdLife International and the Fauna and Flora Preservation Society, with support from British Petroleum, hold an annual competition for conservation exploration projects. Projects entering the competition are judged especially on the level of host country participation and the global importance of the conservation issues on which the project is focused. Proposals for 1995 expeditions must be entered no later than 31 December 1994. Now would be the time to begin formulating proposals for 1996. For further information, contact Michael K. Poulsen, BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0NA, UK. Telephone (44-223) 277318. Fax (44-223) 277200. Guidelines for applicants are available to assist in the preparation of proposals.