
LANCEOLATED WARBLER RECORDS FROM SANGIHE ISLAND,
NORTH SULAWESI

by

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During recent survey work on the island of Sangihe, North Sulawesi, two observations of Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata* have been made on the lower slopes of Gunung Sahendaruman in the south of the island. These records represent the first records of this species for the Sulawesi sub region and only the second and third record for Wallacea the first being a single specimen collected on Halmahera on 7 December 1949 (van Bernmel & Voous 1953; Coates & Bishop 1997).

On the 15 November 1998, above the village of Kalemba (3°32'N; 125°32'E), Manganitu Sub district, JR and his colleague Iwan Hunowu heard an unfamiliar 'tik' like call coming from long along along *Imperata cylindrica* grass. After a short wait, IH briefly observed a small *Locustella* warbler with streaked brown upper parts, a pale supercilium, and a band of streaking across the breast. The bird was later identified as Lanceolated Warbler after reference to the literature.

On 16 October 1999, some 500 m above the village of Malamenggu (3°29'N; 125°34'E), Tabukan Selatan Sub district, JCW and Paul Jepson's attention was drawn to an irregularly uttered 'ruk ... tuk ... tuk.' call, like a softened knocking together of rocks, emanating from along along grass in an area of sparse, low scrub with a few coconut palms. The call was somewhat similar to that of Gray's Warbler *Locustella fasciolata*, which is a common wintering species on Sangihe, but somewhat louder and less frequently uttered. Upon approach, the bird flew a short distance onto a fallen palm frond and afforded good views for over a minute at a distance of 5 m, allowing a positive identification to be made. The following description was taken in the field: Size and structure small and rather compact with a near horizontal body stance; tail broad and rounded looking like an extension of the body. *Head* plain brown ear coverts; crown a shade darker than ear coverts with dark streaks extending onto the hind neck; pale supercilium appears strongest above and in front of the eye. *Upper parts* wings brown with paler feather fringes; longitudinal dark streaks on the brown mantle immediately noticeable and somewhat thicker than those on the hind neck with which they blend; tail plain brown; rump not observed. *Under parts* throat an unmarked off white; rest of the under parts off white with dark streaking, which is heaviest on the flanks and upper breast almost forming a 'necklace'; under tail coverts and vent not observed.

Lanceolated Warbler is considered to be a rare vagrant to the Wallacean region (Coates & Bishop 1997). However the warbler's skulking behaviour and its preference for grasslands and thickets habitats which are rarely the focus of visiting ornithologists has probably lead to the species being overlooked in the past. As this species regularly winters in the Philippines and Borneo (Coates & Bishop 1997), lying to the north and west of Sangihe respectively, these records are perhaps not unexpected. Indeed, the two records detailed above suggest that the Lanceolated Warbler may be a more regular visitor to the northern part of the Wallacea than was previously suspected.

Acknowledgements

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A PASSAGE OF STREAKED SHEARWATERS PAST THE TALAUD ISLANDS, NORTH SULAWESI

by

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On 18 November 1999, we observed a total of 18 Streaked Shearwaters *Calonectris leucomelas* flying in a southerly direction off the west coasts of Salibabu Island (03°56'N, 126°38'E) in the Talau Archipelago, North Sulawesi. All were observed within a 40 minute period between 1410-1450 hours, flying singly, in pairs or small groups, with the maximum group size being five birds. All the birds were roughly following the same line, an estimated 2 km from the shore. We observed the birds from the upper deck of an inter-island ferry and were given good views over a calm sea as the birds passed within 500m of the boat. No observations were made after 1450 hours as the ferry rounded the northern tip of Salibabu Island and entered the straight between Salibabu and Karakelang Island.

The birds were observed through 8x30 binoculars in the strong sunlight. The shearwaters appeared brown above, with pale heads and white underparts contrasting strongly with their dark upperparts. Their flight was relatively lazy and lumbering on slightly bowed wings, with birds spending less than 25% of the time gliding in the shearing fashion. The birds immediately reminded the principal author of Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* in both plumage, general shape and flight pattern.