

FIRST SIGHTING OF *TACHYBAPTUS NOVAEHOLLANDIAE* ON BALI

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While birding in the surroundings of Benoa village, Nusa Dua peninsula, Bali (approx. coordinates 115°13' E and 8°47' S), we discovered four Little Grebes *Tachybaptus* sp in a small fishpond. We observed them in bright sunlight for three quarters of an hour, with the use of a 20-45 x 60 tripod-mounted telescope. Three of them were readily identified as *Tachybaptua ruficollis* Red-throated Little Grebe, in immaculate breeding plumage. The following description was taken:

Small size. Forehead, crown and sides of breast were black, the sides of the face and the foreneck were dark chestnut; the rest of the non-immersed part of the body and the folded wings were black, apart from the grey vent. The yellowish-white spot at the base of the bill was fairly large, compared to that of the other small grebe nearby. The eye was dark red.

The other little grebe looked very much the same. AS it was having black cheeks, we noticed that it could not be a Red-throated Little Grebe, for this species always has chestnut cheeks in breeding plumage. The following description was taken:

Size: as large as, or perhaps slightly smaller than the other grebes. Forehead, crown and sides of face black. Sides of neck chestnut. The yellowish white spot at base of the bill was clearly smaller than in the other grebes nearby. Lower foreneck dark grey-brown, somewhat lighter in the centre. The rest of the upper body-the parts above the water surface-was blackish. Upperwing grey-brown, with a conspicuous broad stripe over the end of the secondaries, merging into a point on the base of the primaries. Bill black with white tip; iris pale yellow to white; feet black.

This single specimen could be identified as Black-throated Little Grebe *Tachybaptua novaehollandiae* on account of the black cheeks. In the present context, the conspicuous wing-stripe may be regarded as diagnostic for *T. novaehollandiae* for the subspecies of *T. ruficollis* having white wing-stripes may be excluded on the basis of their known range, the subspecies *T. r. capensis* occurring no nearer than Burma (Harrison 1983). It seems that the pale yellow to white eye is a diagnostic feature of this species, as *T. ruficollis* is stated to have a brownish red eye (Harrison 1983).

The Black-throated Little Grebe did not associate with the three other grebes, which were swimming close to each other. None of the birds were very shy; the fishpond where we observed them was surrounded by fishermen and children. During the observation we did not hear any of the birds uttering sounds.

Our observation does not allow a subspecific identification of the species concerned, which, for *T. ruficollis*, is based mainly on size measurements, the colour of the underparts and the exact location of the border of chestnut and black near the eye.

There is only one published record of a small grebe for Bali, viz. two female Red-throated Little Grebes shot at Batu Meringgit, 9-10 October 1928 (Rensch 1931). A further six specimens of this species from Bali rest in the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden, The Netherlands (Mees 1985 S 1986, in litt). There are numerous published records of the

Red-throated Little Grebe for Wallacea, but only one from Java (White « Bruce 1986); the RNMHL has another two specimens of this species from East Java (Mees 1986 in litt).

The Black-throated Little Grebe has never been recorded for Bali, though there are numerous records from Java (*T.n. javanicus*), and from Flores, Alor, and Timor (*T.n. novaehollandiae*).

The simultaneous occurrence of both species in breeding plumage may confirm sympatry over the Lesser Sunda Islands (cf Mayr 1943). White & Bruce questioned this sympatry and suggested only limited sympatry in northern New Guinea.

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Ringkasan

Sekelompok burung yang terdiri dari 4 ekor *Tachybaptus* terlihat di desa Benoa, di semenanjung Nusa Oua, Bali. Tiga ekor diantaranya, yang berukuran besar hitam pada dasar paruhnya, adalah *T. ruficollis*. Seekor lagi, yang pipinya hitam dan bergaris putih yang tidak jelas pada sayapnya, adalah *T. novaehollandiae* yang untuk pertama kalinya tercatat ditemukan di Pulau Bali.

References

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