

A Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* in Flores: second record for Indonesia

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Ringkasan. Konfirmasi *Tringa flavipes* di Flores diperoleh melalui pengamatan di kota Maumere Kabupaten Sikka, Flores. Ketika diamati spesies ini sedang mencari makan di kolam ikan bersama dengan spesies yang lain: *Tringa glareola*, *Tringa nebularia*, dan *Pluvialis fulva*. Pada saat diamati spesies ini tidak terdengar bersuara. Namun demikian, deskripsi morfologis dicatat dan disajikan dalam catatan ini.

On 17 September 2003 I visited the Tambak Koliaduk fish and shrimp ponds (8°37'S, 122°13'E), 2 km east of the city of Maumere, Sikka Regency, East-Central Flores. During this visit an unusual wader was observed feeding in an exposed fishpond, accompanied by various other familiar waders including five Wood Sandpipers *Tringa glareola*, two Common Greenshanks *T. nebularia* and 19 Pacific Golden Plovers *Pluvialis fulva*. The bird was observed in good light for c. 25 min from a distance of c. 50 m with 10 x 50 binoculars. Its bright yellow legs were discernible with the naked eye from 50 m away. It had dark grey upperparts with mottled whitish dots on the wings and lower back, a white belly which stood out sharply against the dark grey upperparts and wings, and a moderately long, straight, stout, black bill. The head and face were of a lighter shade of grey than the upperparts. The folded wings extended behind the tail and the primaries were a dark blackish-grey. A white eyebrow stripe, which extended from the bill to just behind the eye, and a whitish eyering, were clearly visible. The tips of the tail feathers were slightly barred and a narrow white bar on the rump clearly showed in flight. No wing bar was seen. The neck and breast were streaked light brown/grey. Although the bird flew off several times, the under wings were seen only briefly and seemed whitish with brown/grey streaks and with darkish primaries and secondaries.

I was able to make direct size comparisons between the bird and other species in its vicinity. It was slightly larger than the Wood Sandpiper, considerably smaller than the Common Greenshank and about the same size as the Pacific Golden Plover. It foraged in a quick fashion, making high stilt-like steps. It also made several bobbing movements with its tail and was seen making thrusts with the head 34 times. It flew off several times to land again close to the previous feeding spot, mixing in with the other wading birds. No vocalisations were heard.

The only other species with yellowish legs that occurs at this location is the Grey-tailed Tattler *Heteroscelus brevipes* which has a shorter bill and uniformly unspotted grey upperparts, and lacks a white rump. The Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* has orange-yellow legs but its bill is clearly upturned. The Marsh Sandpiper *T. stagnatilis* has a longish, needle-like bill, a whitish face, a white rump which extends to the lower back, and its legs are greenish-yellow instead of the bright yellow of the Lesser Yellowlegs. Its folded wings

do not extend beyond the tail. Nordmann's Greenshank *T. guttifer* also has a white rump which extends to the lower back, lacks bright yellow legs, is larger and has a lighter coloured and upturned bill. The Green Sandpiper *T. ochropus* has a narrow white rump bar but has a different tail pattern. It also lacks the bright yellow legs, has a shortish bill and its eyestripe does not extend behind the eye. The Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus* is larger, has a much longer dark bill, and a white rump that extends well up to the back. Finally, the Greater Yellowlegs *T. melanoleuca*, which is a vagrant to Japan (Hayman *et al.* 1986), can be eliminated as it is larger (slightly smaller than the Common Greenshank) than the Lesser Yellowlegs (2933 cm and 23-25 cm, respectively), and the bird noted at these mudflats was noticeably smaller than the two Common Greenshanks that were present.

There seems little doubt that the bird was a Lesser Yellowlegs, a species which normally breeds in North America and "winters" in South America. It is also a rare vagrant to Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand (Higgins & Davies 1996). In Indonesia the species is known from only one previous record, which is of a bird seen on 27 September 1983 during its southward migration on 'shallow pools' near Lhokseumawe in Aceh province, northern Sumatra (Ollington & Parish 1989). Coates & Bishop (1997) speculated that the Lesser Yellowlegs could reach Wallacea occasionally, and this sighting confirms that claim.

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References

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