

describe easily but was liquid-like in the manner of a thrush and lasted for several seconds.

Later reference to the standard field guides of the adjacent regions proved confusing. Not unexpectedly, there were no birds of this description north and «fe»t of the Wallace's Line, but on examining books of the south and east side of this line, there were close similarities with the 'Northern Scrub Robin *Drymodes superciliaris*, in particular with 'the unusual oblique black stripe through the oval white face patch, the rufous back, black wings and prominent white wing spots. However, the call of the Scrub Robin was quite dissimilar, its habits secretive and its known disjunct distribution confined to New Guinea, the Aru Islands in eastern Maluku and the northern tip of Cape York and western Arnhem Land in Australia: it is also non-migratory.

Lengthy correspondence ensued at the instigation of the Editor of (*Kukila*. in an attempt to identify this most distinctive bird. Ultimately, given away by its song which is so unlike that of the Scrub Robin, David Bishop and Paul Andrew were able to home in on what we had called the "Northern Scrubwink". Two photographs taken by Paul Andrew on G. Mutis, Timor, showed that the bird is in fact a Chestnut-backed Thrush *Zoothera dochertyi*, a WaUacean endemic of Lombok, Sumbawa, Fibres, Sukba and Timor. It is noteworthy that these two quite different species have such similar markings and it is interesting to speculate on the significance of the facial pattern.

AdknowledgBnient

I am most grateful to Paul Andrew for the loan of his excellent photographs.

Address

The British Embassy, Jakarta.

Editor's note: A description of *Zoothera dochertyi* is given in *The birds of Wallaces* (White & Bruce, BOU Checklist No. 7, 1986). This account emphasizes the great need for an authoritative and illustrated field guide for Wallacea.

BIRD OBSERVATION AT DANAU KURUMOI, IRIAN JAYA

by Paul L.A. Erftemeijer & Gerald R. Alien
(Received It 11 November 1989)

On 31 March 1989 the authors visited Danau Kurumoi, a small, uninhabited freshwater lake in the Masikeri mountains of Irian Jaya at an elevation of about 600 m. This site is situated in the middle of the narrow isthmus that connects the Bird's Head or Vogelkop Peninsula with the remainder of Irian Jaya, at approx. 2°10'S, 134°05'6. The lake was characterized by relatively

turbid water and a soft mud bottom, except for occasional patches of rocky shoreline. A single aquatic plant *Ceratophyllum demersum* was present. The lake is approximately 500 m x 800 m and surrounded by extensive primary rainforests. The water level of the lake has dramatically decreased in recent years according to local people from Yakati (the nearest village, about 15 km to the south). Although it is part of the Yakati River system the present water level is far below the lake's former outlet and there was no visible outflow.

Two duck species dominated the lake's avifauna, the Wandering Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna arcuata* and the Spotted Whistling Duck *O. guttata*. A total of about 150 duck was counted, with *guttata* being dominant. Both species were observed with young, which, indicates that they breed here. Other birds observed at the lake included White-headed Shelduck *Tadorna radjah* (two), Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* (eight), Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* (one), Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* (two) and Brahminy Kite *HaHastur indus* (two adults and one imm.). Birds of Paradise, Biyth's Hornbill *Rhyticeros plicatus*, megapodes, parrots and cockatoos were common in the surrounding forests.

The aquatic habitat at Lake Kurumoi appeared to be greatly affected by a large population of introduced African Tilapia *Oreochromis mossambica*. This fish ingests mud and benthic algae resulting in high turbidity levels. Unlike many New Guinea lakes which lack introduced fish, there was a scarcity of aquatic vegetation and much of the shoreline was composed of soft mud. The small size of males exhibiting nuptial colours indicated stunted growth due to overcrowding. This phenomenon has been reported for populations of tilapia in other areas (BT-uton et al. 1962). The only other fish species present were an unde-scribed species of Rainbowfish *Melanotaenia* sp. and the Gudgeon *Oxyeleotris fimbriata*. The origin of the introduction of the tilapia remains unknown, but the species might have been introduced as a food fish by local villagers from Yakati.

Eventually, the large population of introduced tilapia might pose a threat to the aquatic birds of the lake. Increased turbidity levels might seriously affect food plant availability to the herbivorous whistling duck, and considerably reduce foraging success by the piscivorous grebes. Future visits to the lake by ornithologists should monitor these effects. The present observations were made during a joint wetland survey by the Indonesian Directorate General for Forest Protection and Nature Conservation and the Asian Wetland Bureau (Erftemeijer et al., 1989), which was made possible by a financial grant from the New Zealand Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia.

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**A RECORD OF A *Bradypterus* WARBLER
PROBABLY BREEDING IN BALI**

by Peter R. Kennerly
(Final draft received 4 OKtear 1989)

Late evening on 20 June 1989, while birdwatching near Lake Bratan, Bali, I heard a bird in song which sounded very similar to the song of *Bradypterus seebohmi* from southern China. Knowing that there were no records of any *Bradypterus* warblers from Bali, although *B. (seffbohmi) mentis* occurs in eastern Java, I dismissed the song as being that of some other species with which I was unfamiliar.

At dawn on 21 June, I was ascending a tree-covered hillside close to where I heard the song the previous evening when I heard the same song again. The song, a very distinctive and monotonous "zeeurt zeeurt" repeated at intervals of approximately 0.5 seconds, was being delivered from a higher up the hill. While the song was very similar to that given by *B. Seebohmi* in southern China, with which I am familiar, it was slightly less piercing and rather more buzzing.

I started to climb the hill to the point where the song was coming from but almost immediately, I disturbed a bird from underfoot which, as it moved, uttered a quiet "tuk" call. The bird moved into a clump of ferns and although rather skulking, it did eventually give good prolonged views and was watched continuously for some 15 minutes. This bird was clearly a warbler and greatly resembled *Bradypterus seebohmi* from southern China.

Plumage description

Upperparts

The whole of the upperparts including the mantle, wings, rump and tail were a dark russet brown colour, lacking any contrast. The dorsal wing was quite uniform and did not exhibit any fringes to the feather edges. The tail was quite long and noticeably graduated.

Head

The nape and crown were dark russet brown, similar in colour to the