

notes of the original bird, I ascended the hill to confirm that the singing bird was indeed the same species as that which I had just been observing. This individual proved to be more difficult to observe well as it was singing from the centre of a dump of ferns. Eventually however, it did come out into the open and gave good but brief views. It appeared to be identical to the original bird apart from the throat which appeared to be whiter; perhaps an impression created by the feathers being fluffed out as the bird held its head back while singing.

Discussion

The plumage and song of this *Bradyptus* warbler was extremely similar to that associated with *B. seebohmi* in southern China. While this species does exhibit regional variation in its song throughout its range, it does seem remarkable that the birds on Bali, whatever their final identity is proven to be, should look and sound so similar to *B. seebohmi* whose nearest population occurs in northern Thailand, some 3500km to the northwest.

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REVIEWS

BIRDS OF JAVA AND BALI

Java has a long and distinguished ornithological history. It is the type locality for many species widespread in the Indo-Malayan region and has a massive ornithological bibliography. But still surprisingly little is known about the ecology of its birds. The monumental, two volume work of Kuroda (1933, 1936 *The birds of the island of Java*) was pedantic in its synonymy, descriptions and references, but dealt more with specimens than species; it did not, for instance, describe a single call. For the last fifty years, whilst ornithologists elsewhere were concentrating on the habits and habitat of species, Java was an ornithological backwater. And yet, the island has a fascinating avifauna; set on the edge of the Sunda Shelf and the first of the Greater Sundas to be separated from the continental landmass it possesses a host of endemic forms and the study of its fauna is crucial to an understanding of the biogeography of the whole region.

Unfortunately, this fauna is already much depleted. The changes wrought on the island in the latter half of this century have been massive: the population has exploded to 95 million, the lowland rain-forest has all but

vanished, and guns and pesticides have removed a good portion of the bird-life from the countryside. The message is bleak; if the avifauna is not appreciated soon by the local people much of it will disappear. The pressing need for a guide to the birds of Java has been answered in different but complimentary ways: MacKinnon (1988 Field Guide to the Birds of Java and Bali) has condensed the massive and scattered literature into a convenient handbook; Holmes and Nash (1989 The Birds of Java and Bali) have produced an accessible book aimed at the local population. The former should be in every library and the latter in every class-room in Indonesia. To this end, both books will appear in English and Indonesian editions, an important precedent considering how little of the ornithological literature is in the local language. (*The Indonesian edition of MacKinnon is scheduled to be published by Gadjah Mada University Press in December ?S89.Ed.*).

MacKinnon, J. 1988. *Field guide to the birds of Java and Bali*. Jogjakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press. xiii+390pp.+V+40pTI.

The 45 page introduction covers topics as diverse as bird identification, bird photography, bird calls, taking notes and an outline guide to avian families. The more erudite sections cover some aspects of climate, vegetation and biogeography. The only map is found in the endpapers and defines the faunal region covered by the book, an area that besides Java and Bali, includes a host of islands in the Java Sea. A few more maps might have been used, particularly to emphasise the extent of forest destruction or the connection between rainfall and vegetation types, though these topics are briefly discussed in the text.

The 45 plates are bunched between the introductory section and the main text. The first five (I-V), of raptors and waders in flight, are in black and white, the remainder (1-40) in colour. Every species is illustrated though some are reduced to their bare essentials: the Streaked and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters are respectively a disembodied head and a disembodied tail. The colour plates are the work of three Indonesian artists and have been based on specimens rather than field sketches. There are obvious problems with this approach. It is hard to gauge from a specimen which features should be emphasised to best represent a bird in life, and often the artists have picked the wrong ones. The best character on the White-breasted Babbler *Stachyris grammiceps* is not its dark crown but its bright chestnut upper-parts, probably a difficult feature to appreciate on a faded specimen. Also, some species that are quite distinctive in the field, because they look rather similar on the bench, look similar in the plates; the Sunda Whistling-thrush *Myophonus glaucinus* is structurally quite unlike the Malaysian Cochoa *Cochoa azurea* but the differences are not apparent in the illustrations. Fortunately most of the plates are technically fairly accurate and with judicious use in the field most species should be identifiable, though the author should have named the subspecies being illustrated, at least when the species is represented by distinct populations, as is the Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus*, or

when the subspecies represented, as appears to be the case with the Scaly-crowned Babbler *Malacoptaron cinereum*, is not the very distinct, red capped Javan race *rufifrons*. It is to be hoped that amongst the first to use the book will be the artists themselves as with a feel for the bird rather than the specimen the next edition will be much improved.

The bulk of the book, three hundred pages worth, is devoted to the systematic text. Each family is introduced with a short account and a key to the member species. The species accounts include a description, notes on voice, distribution and status, habitat, diet, breeding, and indigenous race. I doubt that the keys will help much in the separation of difficult species and the descriptions do not always confront the identification problems the birdwatcher faces on Java. It would have been more useful if diagnostic features were discussed more fully, perhaps in a comparative section on similar species. However, this would have required a great deal of original field work and MacKinnon candidly admits that much of the text is derivative. In fact, the heavy reliance on just a couple of earlier works (acknowledged in the Foreword) has meant that mistakes which could have been uncovered through a better search of the literature have been repeated. On the whole though, the text is succinct, fairly accurate and informative. It is a particular treat to find in one place some notes on habitat, diet and breeding that are otherwise scattered in the literature and rarely in English. The notes on calls are likely to prove very useful too. Most of them are given in English syllabic mnemonics but in some cases an attempt to indicate changes in pitch and duration is made using graphics. This method can be very helpful, particularly with whistled calls, and it is a pity it is not used more often: a page dedicated to the whistles of the Javan cuckoos would have saved everybody a lot of time.

The species' accounts end with a taxonomic note, in most cases a list of the subspecies that occur on Java. Taxonomy is always a contentious topic and MacKinnon quite reasonably opts for a conservative approach, though the Javan Owlet *Glaucidium casta-nopterus* (Mees, 1971. *Zoo 1. Meded.* 45:231) should have been afforded species status. Perhaps the author should not be blamed for not anticipating the revised status of the Javan Cochoa *Cochoa azurea* (Collar and Andrew, 1987. *World Birdwatch* 9(4):5), the Javan Scarlet Sunbird *Aethopyga mystacalis* (Mees, 1986. *Zoo?. Verhand.* 232:140), the Sunda Coucal *Centropus nigrorufus* (van Marle and Voous, 1986. *Birds of Sumatra* :114) or the White-opilared Babbler *Stachyris thoracica* (*ibid.* :171), all now considered endemic. But this does lead to my main criticism of the book, that it is already a decade out of date. The Preface is dated 1984 but the comments on status and distribution indicate that the text must have been finished even earlier. This is particularly noticeable in Appendix 3 where some of the less common resident species are listed, along with an obsolete (and happily, pessimistic) evaluation of their current status. Perhaps I should add that this does not make the book less welcome, but that it would have been even more useful had it appeared ten years ago. In short, there are a lot of

mistakes in this book and it should be cited with caution. It is nonetheless an essential guide to a fascinating avifauna and will be welcomed by the visiting birdwatcher.

Holmes, D.A. and Nash, B.V. 1989. *The Birds of Java and Bali*. Singapore: Oxford University Press. (Images of Asia Series). 11-xi + 109pp. + [i] + 24p11.

Each volume in the 'Images of Asia' series "combines an introductory text, written for the non-specialist by an authority on the subject, with extensive illustrations both in colour and black-and-white". In this instance at least, the promotion is warranted and the authority Holmes and the artist Nash are to be commended for a significant contribution to the conservation of the birds of Java.

In this slim volume the author manages to introduce the reader to the birds of Java by way of a family synopsis and a short description of some representative members in a narrative text that conveys a great deal of information without daunting the reader. Although the book covers less than half of the five hundred odd species recorded from the two islands, by dealing largely with resident birds that are encountered in a walk through forest and countryside -it provides a feel for the birds of Java hard to find in more academic tomes. The lucid accounts simply and economically put each species into an ecological perspective, give descriptions of calls, and warn of the threats faced by some; the last particularly pertinent on an island where the cage-bird trade has driven some species close to local extinction.

In the 24 colour plates 112 species are illustrated, and by the inclusion of a few fine drawings at least one member of each family and most of the more frequently encountered species are included. The plates are scattered through the book and there is no cross-reference from a figure to the text but fortunately the index is easy to use. The quality of the illustrations are variable; some are quite excellent but some might confuse the inexperienced observer. The frontispiece is a delightful plate of the Javanese Wattled Lapwing *Vanellus macropterus*, positioned on the opening page to remind the Indonesian reader of something he was responsible for and lost. A few of the plates, in comparison, look wooden and some species, the Bar-winged Prinia *Prinia familiaris* for example, are frozen in an uncharacteristic pose;

unfortunate as it is the noisiest and most ubiquitous of the garden birds on Java and likely to be the first the Jakarta resident tries to look-up. Following the systematic narrative is an eighteen page checklist of the birds of Java and Bali. The checklist is abridged in that it does not list vagrants or some species found only on offshore islands normally included in the Javan fauna, but nonetheless is the most up-to-date synopsis of the taxonomic standing of Javan birds. The inclusion of the Malay Sandplover

eharadrius peronii is questionable as it is at best a vagrant and the use of *ruficeps* for the Ashy Taitorbird is wrong; there are two 'Ashy Tailorbirds' on Java and they must be treated as *Orthotomus aopium ruficeps* and nominate *O. s. s* or as distinct species; either way, the bird 'found in gardens from Jakarta to Cibodas' should be *septum*, as *ruficeps* re restricted to mangroves on Java. However, it denotes all 31 species now treated as endemic to the two islands and is a useful reference in Its own right.

The book might be aimed -at the layman but it is hardly less relevant to the visiting ornithologist. It deals with those species most likely to be encountered and paints an accurate and vivid picture of the avian scene on Java. But most importantly, and this is the primary goal of Holmes and Nash, it will generate « local interest in a much neglected fauna and make a major contribution to its preservation.

P.A.

Lambert, F. 1988. **Th» status of th9 Hhite-wingad Wood Duck in Sumatra, Indonesia: a preliminary assessment.** PHPA-AWB/Interwader Report No. 4. Oecanber 1986.
Available from AWB/Interwader-Iitdonesia, P.O.Box 254/BOO, Bogor 16001, Indonesia. \$9.50 plus mailing costs.

The White-winged Mood Duck is one of the most endangered waterfowl in the world, but very tittle was known about the isolated Sumatran population until the first observation in recent decades was made in Jambi in 1975. Interest in the bird increased subsequently, culminating in this survey of its status funded by the Wildfowl Trust and Van Tienhoven Foundation. The survey confirms earlier impressions that the Sumatran population appears to be more tolerant of habitat disturbance than its mainland cousins and seems to survive, provided there is access to open freshwater swamp (including swampland ricefields) for feeding, and large trees in the forest remnants for 'breeding. What the survey could not show, being by necessity no more than a more comprehensive reconnaissance than hitherto, "is the extent of habitat degradatation that will be withstood-, which can be determined only by monitoring over time. Nor could.the survey establish whether the bird will utilize peat swamp forest or mangroves, except as a temporary refuge. The report emphasizes the inherent difficulties of monitoring and protecting any large non-colonial wetland species (Storm's Stork is another) which is thinly distributed over a wide area.

An estimated total was made of between only 66 and 91 birds from 34 visited or reported sites, situated in the downstream areas of

Lampung and South Sumatra provinces, which are the areas having the widest extent of suitable habitat. Nothing is known of its occurrence further up-river, or of its distribution in Jambi and northwards, and indeed there is only one known record from Sumatra from north of the equator, in 1909.

The surveyed area appears to be the main centre of distribution, and unfortunately this lies in the forefront of massive population overspill from Java, which is accompanied by extensive habitat destruction. Hitherto, the large *Rengas* trees used by the duck have been protected by the poisonous sap they contain, but even these trees are now being felled as other sources of timber become used up, and this is regarded as one of the major threats. Way Kambas reserve, and the northernmost region of the surveyed area, appear to carry the best potential for conservation, but if the duck becomes exterminated throughout its unprotected range, it seems questionable how long the isolated remnants can remain viable. However the report does not recommend a captive-breeding programme of Sumatran birds at the present time, preferring to concentrate on habitat and multi-species conservation.

D.A.H.

Erfteimeijer, P. & Edi Djuharsa. 1988. Survey of coastal wetlands and waterbirds in the Brantas and Solo Deltas, East Java (Indonesia). PHPA-AWB/Interwader Report No. 5, Bogor. Price \$10 (plus mailing costs) from Asian Wetland Bureau, Bogor.

This AWB report covers important wetland habitats in East Java that have been neglected in recent decades, and it is pleasing to find that despite extensive destruction of the mangrove habitats, in a very densely populated region, a total of 10 breeding colonies was discovered, comprising over 17,500 nests of 13 waterbird species. One colony, with some 10,000 nests, is the most important colony in Java (the only other major colonies known in Java are Pulau Rambut and Pulau Qua in West Java, reported elsewhere in *Kukila*). All the colonies are located in brackish-water fish-ponds, which together with the wood-chip industry represent the gravest threats to mangroves in Indonesia, and it is remarkable that this bird population has survived heavy disturbance. Opinions among fish farmers differ over whether the colonies are beneficial or detrimental to fish production. It is encouraging that some farmers actively protect the colonies.

The shorelines of the deltas are confirmed as major wader grounds with up to 50,000 birds, including about 1000 Asian Dowitchers *Limnodromus semipalmatus* (see Silvius & Erfteimeijer, 1989, *Kukila* 4 (1-2): 49-50).

The breeding site of one stork species remains conspicuously absent from any of these surveys, that of the Woolly-necked Stork

Ciconia episcopus, whose breeding habitat in Java remains unknown.

The extreme scarcity of the Brah-iny Kite *Haliastur indus* in this apparently favourable habitat-, and the absence of records from Segara Anakan (see below), confirm impressions that this raptor has become endangered in Java. It would be instructive, and perhaps urgent, to investigate the cause of this substantial decline.

D.A.H.

Erftemeijer, P., Bas van Balen Edi Djuharea. 1988. ***The importance of Segara Anakan for nature conservation, with special reference to its avifauna.*** PHPA-AWB/INTERWADER Report No. 6, Bogor. Price \$9 (plue mailing costs) from Asian Wetland Bureau.

Sagara Anakan is an estuarine lagoon on the south coast of the ornithological ly ne'glected province of Central Java, surrounded by the most extensive mangrove forests remaining on Java. The survey was necessary in view of land use changes and proposals that are being made. Although no breeding colonies of waterbirds were located, the site is important for non-breeding storks and waders, and for the avifauna of the mangroves, which includes the Sunda Coucal *Centropus nigrorufus*. Proposals for conservation are made. The area is threatened by very rapid sillation, consequent upon deforestation in the watersheds of Central Java, and it has bean forecast even that most of the lagoon will disappear by the year 2000 (*Jakarta Poet*, IS June 1969).

D.A.H.

Scott, Oerek A. (ed). 1989. *A dictionary of Aeian wetlands*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland, ft Cambridge, UK. xiv + 1181pp., 33 imps. Available from: IUCN Publs. Unit, 2i9c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge C83 OOL, UK. ICSP, 32 Cambridge Road, Girton, Cambridge C83 OPJ, UK. IWRB, Stimbridge, Gloucestershire GL2 7BX, UK.

The publication of this massive Directory completes the compilation of Asian wetlands, over a space of only four years. It covers 947 sites in 24 countries from Mongolia and Pakistan to Papua New Guinea. It has been prepared through support from WWF, US Fish & Wildlife Service, IUCN, IC6P and IWRB.

The Indonesian Wetland Inventory was reviewed in our previous issue. The number of locations has been reduced in the Directory from 231 to those 137 that are considered to have international importance. The remaining sites are listed in an Appendix. The text for the selected sites is mostly reproduced in full, though with some corrections and consolidation of groups of sites. Some errors still appear; for example, the important and much threatened Rawa Aopa site in SE Sulawesi is still omitted, and Wasile Bay (site 104) is still wrongly located on the map. The selection of sites that are considered to have international

importance is inevitably somewhat arbitrary, and those concerned

with Indonesian wetlands would still be recommended to use and to expand upon the national inventory. The role of the Asian Directory is to impress upon planners, both the national governments and the international funding agencies, the importance of wetland sites, and the need now is to ensure that this compilation is available to them.

D.A.H.

Also received:

"The Hong Kong Bird Report 1987. 114pp. **The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, G.P.O. Box 12460, Hong Kong.**

It is always a pleasure to receive this well presented annual report from a very active society. Apart from the customary presentation of the year's records, this report contains features on the identification of Marsh, Pied and Hen Harriers, and notes on moult in the Japanese White-eye'. Once again we have a glimpse of Mainland China, this time with a preliminary list of birds of Wuyanling Natural Reserve in Zhejiang, though one who is unfamiliar with the region is left to ponder on the significance of the fact that 88 of the 117 species are listed as either rare or uncommon.

D.A.H.

Bombay Natural History Society - Endangered Birds Project Third Annual Report (1986-87). The Bengal Florican, Status Ecology. 1988. 148pp., 18 B&W plates. By Asad R. Rahmani, Goutam Narayan, Ravi Sankaran & Lima Rosalind.

The four chapters describe the ecology and status of the Bengal Florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis*, with recommendations for its conservation, in the states of Assam, West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The appendices include checklists of the birds and plants of Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (Assam) and the birds of Oudwa National Park (Uttar Pradesh).

D.A.H.