

Some additions to the birds of Nagaland, north-east India

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The state of Nagaland (25°10'–27°01' N 93°17'–95°15' E) in north-east India has a rich birdlife with 487 species listed so far (Choudhury 2001). The findings of a recent study, including an annotated checklist, have been published by Choudhury (2001). Here I report some species recorded during surveys carried out in October 2001 and February 2002 in the districts of Kohima, Phek and Tuensang that had not previously been confirmed in Nagaland.

BLYTH'S BAZA *Aviceda jerdoni*

A freshly killed bird was on sale in Kohima market on 16 February 2002. This species was listed in Choudhury (2001) on the basis of its presence in Dhansiri reserve forest of Assam, which is adjacent to Nagaland. This specimen has confirmed its occurrence in Nagaland.

ORIENTAL HONEY-BUZZARD *Pernis ptilorhynchus*

A bird was seen in flight between Khipire and Akhegwo (25°54' N 94°48' E) in Tuensang district at about 1,000 m elevation on 27 October 2001. It flew parallel to the road with steady wingbeats, and I followed it for about a kilometre. In flight, its narrow head and neck were conspicuous. The underparts, which could be observed clearly, were brown with some barring. Two black tailbands were also visible. It was similar in size to Black Kite *Milvus migrans*. Oriental Honey-buzzard had not previously been reported from Nagaland.

BOOTED EAGLE *Hieraetus pennatus*

A dark-phase bird was observed at Kiphema (25°47' N 93°55' E) between Kohima and Medzhiphema, in Kohima district at about 900 m on 28 October 2001. While in flight along a hillside, a light 'V' patch on the upperparts and wings, small white shoulder patches, and a whitish crescent across the uppertail-coverts were clearly visible. The tail was almost square-cut. This was the first record for the state.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

An immature was seen near Dzülake (=Dzülekema village: 25°38' N 93°55' E) at 1,800 m on 12 February 2002. It had rufous-brown underparts, including the underwing-coverts, which were conspicuously streaked with dark brown. The rufous-brown on the underparts separated it from adult female Hen Harrier, and the streaking differentiated it from juveniles of Pallid Harrier *C. macrourus* and Montagu's Harrier *C. pygargus*. This was the first record for Nagaland.

AMUR FALCON *Falco amurensis*

More than 20 were observed both in flight and perched on powerlines at the border between Jessami (Manipur) and Meluri (Nagaland; 25°38' N 94°36' E) at about 800 m on 23 October 2001. The birds flew over territory of

both Nagaland and Manipur, while the perched birds were all in Manipur. This was the first record for Nagaland.

WOOD SNIPE *Gallinago nemoricola*

A single bird was flushed from a small wet grassy patch in the centre of the road between Waziho and Ziphu (25°36' N 94°45' E) at 1,800 m in Phek district on 14 February 2002. When flushed, it flew slowly ahead of our vehicle for some time before turning towards dense evergreen forest. At first I thought it to be a Eurasian Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*, but rufous on the tail, the absence of a broad black tailband, and the presence of bold stripes on the upperparts made it clear that the bird was a Wood Snipe. A buffy crown-stripe and supercilium were conspicuous and contrasted with the blackish crown sides and eye-stripe, and this head pattern also readily separated it from Eurasian Woodcock, which has a very clear black-banded and buff crown and nape. The Wood Snipe is regarded as globally threatened (Vulnerable, BirdLife International 2000), and this record was the first for Nagaland.

CHESTNUT BUNTING *Emberiza rutila*

A first-winter male was seen in a *jhum* (slash-and-burn shifting cultivation) field near Fakim (25°50' N 94°55' E) in Tuensang district at 1,700 m on 26 October 2001. The crown was greyish-brown with very fine dark streaks; a yellow supercilium virtually encircled the dark ear-coverts; the back was light rufous-brown with dark brown streaks; the rump was chestnut; the throat was yellow with fine brownish malar stripes; the breast was washed with chestnut-brown; the rest of the underparts were yellow; and the flanks had a few dark brown streaks. It differed from an adult male in lacking a chestnut head and breast. Females, which are superficially similar, have a streaked breast. This species had not previously been recorded in Nagaland, but it is listed as a scarce winter visitor from nearby North Cachar in Assam, and from Manipur (Ali and Ripley 1987).

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