

the nostril shape could not be determined. After we approached near enough to flush it, the underwing pattern was seen clearly as it flew around us. The pale brown underwing coverts and darker flight feathers it showed were typical of the Lesser Spotted Eagle. Both Tawny and Steppe Eagles were eliminated from consideration by observed characters; both would show longer leg feathers and different underwing patterns. Tawny would show darker secondaries that contrast with paler inner primaries, and Steppe would show paler secondaries with a dark subterminal band, as well as whitish streaks on the greater underwing coverts (shown in figs. 31 and 32 in Porter *et al.* 1981). Greater Spotted Eagle *A. clanga* was considered and rejected because it is almost always overall a darker brown and has a noticeably larger head with shaggy nape feathers; features lacking on the eagle in question. Khan has several colour photographs showing this bird in flight at a distance.

The senior author is extremely familiar with Lesser Spotted Eagles of the race *hastata* from many sightings in India; and also of the nominate race from more than five years of field work in Israel, including handling live eagles.

The only previous sight record of the Lesser Spotted Eagle in Pakistan was one seen on 3 March 1988 at Rawal Lake near Islamabad by Hirschfeld *et al.* (1988). Clark visited this lake on 27 January 1993 and observed a bird of this species soaring around over the lake. It was identified by its wing shape and underwing pattern; identity was later confirmed by distant colour photographs. At the same time there were several Steppe Eagles and many Black Kites *Milvus migrans* soaring also. The Lesser Spotted was not seen close to the Steppe Eagles but was seen with Black Kites. It appeared somewhat bigger than them, but not as much larger as did the soaring Steppes, when compared later to nearby Black Kites.

Clark found three specimens of Lesser Spotted Eagle in the Museum of Natural History, Tring (Nos. 85.8.19.1192; 85.8.19.1193; 85.8.19.1194) that had been collected in Pakistan. All had been taken by W. H. Unwin in May 1870 in the Agro valley of North West Frontier Province; two were labelled as adult male and adult female, presumably a mated pair.

An adult female **Pied Harrier** was observed in flight for approximately 5 min on 24 January 1993, approximately 50 km west of Dera Ismail Khan. It was first seen harassing a Western Marsh-Harrier *C. aeruginosus*, compared to which it was somewhat smaller. We noted that its uppersides were brownish-grey with a noticeable white patch on the uppertail-coverts and that its underwings were very whitish with faint dark markings, lacking wide black markings on the wingtips. Its underbody was whitish with dark markings on the breast, but its belly was rather unmarked. The wingtips were rounded, quite unlike the pointed appearance of those of Pallid Harriers *Circus macrourus* and Montagu's Harriers *C. pygargus*. The above characters eliminate all age and sex classes of the other five species of harriers that occur in the Indian subcontinent and fit exactly the adult

female of this species. We have several colour photographs showing this bird in flight at a distance.

The senior author is familiar with Pied Harriers from repeated sightings during autumn migration at Beidaihe, China and a small number of sightings in India and Nepal.

There are two previous records for the Pied Harrier in Pakistan: a male at Lahore on 27 December 1973 (Vittery 1993), and an adult male seen in December 1985 and January 1986 at Uchchali lake in the Salt Range (Roberts 1991).

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## Horned Grebe *Podiceps auritus*: a new species for India

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On 28 December 1993 I noticed a small grebe swimming on the Kosi River near Ramnagar in Uttar Pradesh, northern India.

The bird was easily identified as a winter-plumaged Horned Grebe *Podiceps auritus* by its small size, flat crown, black cap sharply demarcated from the white cheeks, pale lores, and its stubby, pale-tipped bill.

Subsequently it was also observed by D. van den Schoor and photographed by G. Bellens and R. van der Elst (*O.B.C. Bull.* 19: 66).

This constitutes the first record of Horned Grebe for India and only the fourth or fifth for the Indian subcontinent. The other records were all in Pakistan: one (unconfirmed) on Zangi Nawar lake, Baluchistan on 17

January 1984; two on Band Kushdil Khan lake, Baluchistan on 20 January 1984; one on Kund lake, Hab Chowki, Lasbela in March 1986; and two on Khabbaki lake, Salt Range in January 1987 (Roberts 1991).

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## Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus*: a new species for Sri Lanka

OLE F. JAKOBSEN

On 5 February 1994 I observed an Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus* when visiting Victoria Park in Nuwara Eliya Town (6°58'N 80°55'E), Sri Lanka. The observation was made from 17h00 to 17h30 on the east side of the Park near Park Road at 1900 m. The thrush, observed at a distance of 6-7 m, was first moving around on the ground (10 minutes), and thereafter perching on a branch (5 minutes). The weather was overcast with a soft drizzle of rain. I used Bushnell 9x36 binoculars. Notes were taken and the bird described as follows: size like that of Pied Thrush *Zoothera wardii* (seen 15 minutes earlier in the Park); upperparts uniform pale brown; supercilium, which extended from bill to side of nape, white and very prominent; lores dark with a short white line underneath; malar stripe grey with a white line above; side of head uniform pale grey; chin white and throat uniform pale grey like side of head; upper breast, sides of breast and flanks uniform pale reddish brown; belly white; tarsus yellowish; bill yellowish and iris dark.

I had no doubt that it was a thrush and was right from the beginning aware of the significance of the observation. I am familiar with Eyebrowed Thrush from several observations in Malaysia and the Philippines. However, to rule out any possible confusion with other thrushes, Ali and Ripley (1983) was consulted on the spot and the other references below after having returned home. From the literature it was obvious that no other thrush has the combination of uniform pale grey throat and uniform reddish brown breast together with a prominent white supercilium.

This is the first record of Eyebrowed Thrush for Sri Lanka. The species is a common winter visitor from the breeding-grounds in Siberia (Yenisey east to Sea of Okhotsk, south to Lake Baikal) to southern Japan, southern China, north-east India, the Philippines, South-East Asia and the Greater Sundas. Eyebrowed Thrush has also straggled to Europe, Arabia, Alaska

(Cramp 1988), north-east Sulawesi and Flores (White and Bruce 1986), and elsewhere in the Indian subcontinent: South Andaman Island and north Karnataka (Ali and Ripley 1973), Nepal (Inskipp and Inskipp 1991), Madras, Tamil Nadu (Santharam 1985) and the Maldives (Ash, this issue).

The species was feeding on open ground free of herbs, but with some leaf litter, in the same area as an Indian Pitta *Pitta brachyura* and a Spot-winged Thrush *Zoothera spiloptera* (though not seen together). This habitat was shaded by dense trees and bushes and some parts of it were used as a dump for garden compost. The thrush was turning over dead leaves, probably in search for invertebrates.

The bird was seen later by other observers and remained until at least 28 February (T. Loseby).

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## Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda*: a new species for Thailand

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On 3 August 1990 I was going by motorboat from Laem Phra Nang 8°00'N 98°51'E to Krabi Town, Krabi Province, Thailand, when I observed a Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda*.