

Luang, Prachuap Khiri Khan province at c. 11°40'N. Among these was a Mangrove Whistler *Pachycephala grisola* reported as having been taken at an elevation of 3,400 feet! Deignan, therefore, concluded that the collectors had falsified their data. It seems virtually certain, therefore, that Meyer de Schauensee's unsupervised collectors did likewise at Khao Phanom Bencha, simply pretending that certain specimens had been collected from the upper elevations of the mountain in order to avoid the exertion and discomfort of a wet-season ascent.

This paper thus provides some bad news, as well as some (qualified) good news. The bad news is that the fate of Gurney's Pitta continues to be entirely dependent on the fate of remaining lowland forest fragments within its range. The good news is that there may be reason to suppose that Gurney's Pitta nests in south Tenasserim (Mon State), as well as in Thailand, and efforts to survey remaining forests there should be accorded priority as part of any integrated package aimed at its conservation. Even if Gurney's Pitta should be proved to nest in south Tenasserim (Mon State), it will almost certainly be similarly at risk there, since Thai logging companies have been ravaging Burmese forests over the past few years. There are anecdotal reports of huge areas in Pakchan having been clear-cut since 1988. In addition, Myanmar lacks the kind of protected area infrastructure which exists in Thailand.

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## Moustached Hawk-Cuckoo *Cuculus vagans* and Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* in Laos: two species new for Indochina

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During a four-month wildlife survey of the Xe Piane proposed protected area in southern Laos (Thewliis *et al.* 1996), I found two bird species new to Indochina (Laos, Cambodia and Viet Nam). Xe Piane is a large area (2,400 km<sup>2</sup>) of mainly undegraded semi-evergreen forest on gently-rolling terrain.

### Moustached Hawk-Cuckoo *Cuculus vagans*

On 10 December 1992 I was sitting quietly in an extensive area of bamboo-dominated forest (14°32'N 106°14'E. 150 m a.s.l.) when an evident cuckoo *Cuculus* crash-landed in a clump at eye level only 10 m away. Although in quite dense bamboo, the head and foreparts were completely unobscured. The distinctive face pattern was immediately striking: the crown was dark, contrasting with the pale cheeks, into which intruded a bold dark moustachial stripe and a dark crescent to the rear of the ear-coverts (vaguely reminiscent of a Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*). The white underparts were thickly streaked black on the breast. Also noticeable were a bright yellow eyering, yellow legs and the dark grey-brown upperparts, reminiscent of a female Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*. After two minutes concentrating on what was visible, I shifted slightly to get a better angle on the bird, but it flew off out of sight.

The species is generally rather elusive and is not considered common anywhere within its known range - Java, Borneo, the Malay peninsula and south-east Thailand (King *et al.* 1975). A record in south-west Laos is not unexpected as the country is so poorly known. It is impossible to guess at the status of the species there, but in neighbouring Thailand it is thought to be an 'uncommon resident' (Lekagul and Round 1991).

### Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus*

Around noon on 5 January 1993 I detected a distant medium-large raptor flying south-west at a height of perhaps 60 m over rice paddies near the village of Ban Phalay-bok (14°40'N 106°07'E). It passed lazily almost overhead in a blue sky with very strong sunlight. On first sighting it, I considered Eastern Marsh-Harrier *Circus spilontotus* and Black Kite *Milvus migrans*, but was rapidly strongly reminded of African Hawk-Eagle *H. spilogaster*. The proportions were rather average and the silhouette lacked striking features; among raptors of this size, the wings were relatively narrow for the length and

rather parallel-sided, and the tail was fairly long. The plumage was, however, distinct and somewhat recalled Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*. The entire underparts and underwing-coverts were pale whitish (lacking heavy markings), contrasting with the flight-feathers. The latter were mostly dark, but several inner primaries presented a very striking pale wedge, which in the harsh light appeared almost white. The underside of the tail also appeared pale.

A pale-phase Booted Eagle is distinctive among the numerous raptors known or likely to occur in Laos. Rufous-bellied Eagle *H. kienerii* is a congener of similar size, shape and flight actions. However, it shows much more extensive pale, of a different pattern, on the primaries and the rest of the flight-feathers never appear blackish (Clark and Schmitt 1993). The bold underside pattern in flight is sufficient to eliminate all other species; White-bellied Fish-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* is the only species at all similar.

Booted Eagle is a long-distance migrant with a wide breeding range from Spain to China and wintering chiefly in Africa and India (Cramp and Simmons 1980). In South-East Asia it is known from Peninsular Malaysia and Myanmar (King *et al.* 1975) and there are several recent passage or wintering records from Thailand (Lekagul and Round 1991). Wintering birds are typically known from a handful of records from each country across their range (Cramp and Simmons 1980). Thus, it was to be expected in Indochina.

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## Russet Bush-Warbler *Bradypterus seebohmi*; a new species for Bhutan and the Indian subcontinent

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Whilst listening to some tape-recordings of birds made by Scott Connop in Bhutan I heard, in the background of one of the recordings, a Russet Bush-Warbler *Bradypterus seebohmi* singing. The song was familiar to me and I have tape-recorded the species in China, Thailand and Vietnam. The recording was made at Damji (2,200 m elevation) in Jigme Dorji National Park, south-west Gasa on 23 May 1994.

The song of this species consists of a repetitive series of buzzing prinia-like 'zreee-ut' or 'zree-ut' notes. Each sequence may contain up to 20 individual notes, each of about 300-320 msec duration, and usually given at a rate of one note per 0.5-0.9 sec (Round 1992).

This record appears to be the first for Bhutan and the Indian subcontinent. However, *Dumeticola mandelli*, described by Brooks (1875) from Sikkim, and subsequently synonymized with *Tribura* (= *Bradypterus*) *l. luteoventris* by Baker (1930), seems more likely to refer to *B. seebohmi*. It was described as having an ash-grey breast, often marked with a few distinct spots, and with a larger bill than in *luteoventris*, the lower mandible dusky not yellow. Unfortunately, the type specimen cannot now be traced.

It should be noted that the song of Russet Bush-Warbler was mistakenly attributed to Brown Bush-Warbler *B. luteoventris* by King *et al.* (1975), causing some confusion in the subsequent literature. The song of Brown Bush-Warbler, in south-west China at least, is a long, continuous, reeling 'tic-tic-tic-tic-tic-tic' etc.

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