

plumage) alighted closer to me, at about 100 m distance and proceeded to feed in the 10-15 cm deep water. They stood facing each other about 1 m apart, with their bills immersed in the water at the same spot. They seemed to be searching for small prey. Periodically they quickly circled by running sideways, but keeping their bills in the centre, and continuing to face each other. They appeared to be feeding during this time, judging by their bill movements. On several occasions after this circling, one of them would dash off to one side for 1-4 m, bill in the water, apparently chasing a prey item which had been disturbed by their activity but had escaped their circle. They also performed occasional mutual preening and bill-rubbing while standing opposite each other. However, the overall behaviour mentioned above did not appear to be a stereotyped mating ritual, as no movements appeared to be exaggerated beyond that expected purely for feeding. The birds flew off at about 18h00. Unfortunately, I was not aware of the sexual differences of this species at the time, and have not been able to determine the sex of the two individuals. The birds were observed with a Nikon Fieldscope ED78A with a 19X eyepiece, so that, although they began at dusk and continued into what for the naked eye was darkness, they were still clearly visible. Roseate Spoonbills *Ajaia ajaja* have been observed chasing after prey, but this behaviour is poorly documented. No behaviour of the kind observed above is described for Black-faced Spoonbills in Hancock *et al.* (1992), despite their extensive literature search. A winter study in Taiwan in 1993 (Yen 1994) revealed that they spent most of the daytime in the Tsen-wen estuary roosting, and they were rarely seen foraging in the mudflats; however, the study was not continued after dark. More recent research in North Korea during the breeding season indicates that the male mainly feeds nocturnally (Chong *et al.* 1996) and collects food for the female, which alone incubates between 19h00 and 07h00. Perhaps this feeding technique is regularly employed after dusk for nocturnal prey items. Much surely remains to be learned about this species.

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## Some additions to the list of birds of Vietnam

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This short note documents records of 10 species of bird not listed for Vietnam by Delacour and Jabouille (1931), King *et al.* (1975), Vo Quy (1983) and Mlikovsky and Inskipp (in prep.), which I subsequently recorded between 1993 and 1996 and are therefore judged to be new for the country. Seven of the species listed (Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*, Little Stint *Calidris minuta*, Pallas's Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*, Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*, Buff-throated Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii*, Sooty Babbler *Stachyris herberti* and Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*) were included in a recent list of the birds of Vietnam on the strength of the records listed below (Vo Quy and Nguyen Cu 1995).

The following records refer to observations made by myself in the company of others, and I would like to acknowledge the following individuals who are referred to by their initials in the text: Shanthini Dawson (SPD), Noritaka Ichida (NI), Le Trong Trai (LTT), Frank Lambert (FRL), Nguyen Cu (NC) and Anita Pedersen (AP). To substantiate the authenticity of the records, additional data were obtained whenever feasible. Thus, sound recordings were made of two of the species (*Numenius madagascariensis* and *Stachyris herberti*), *Phylloscopus armandii* was trapped and photographed in the hand and a specimen of *Stachyris herberti* was obtained. For each record, date, locality (including province) and geographical coordinates are given. Those diagnostic features of plumage and call used to determine the specific identification are mentioned where relevant.

### EASTERN CURLEW *Numenius madagascariensis*

A single individual was observed and its call recorded at Cam Ranh Bay, Khanh Hoa Province (11°51'N 109°07'E) on 18 February 1993 by NC and myself. The bird was roosting on a drained shrimp-pond together with three Eurasian Curlews *N. arquata*. It was identified at rest by the extensive pink on the basal half of the lower mandible and absence of a white rump. In flight the bird showed a uniformly dark grey-brown underwing and a brown rump. It gave a "clear" call in flight.

### LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

A single individual was recorded on Luu Island in Xuan Thuy Nature Reserve, Nam Ha Province (20°16'N 106°34'E) on 8 January 1996 by FRL and myself. The bird was found roosting amongst Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*, Common Redshank *T. totanus* and Nordmann's Greenshank *T. guttifer* and was also observed feeding on the falling tide. Readily identified

as an American dowitcher (either this species or Short-billed Dowitcher *L. griseus*) by a combination of its jizz, (recalling a snipe *Gallinago* rather than a godwit *Limosa*) together with small body size and short stature, being smaller and shorter than the three aforementioned *Tringa* species. In flight it showed a white lower back and a uniformly dark upperwing, which contrasted with a narrow white trailing edge to the primaries and secondaries. Identified as *L. scolopaceus/griseus* in winter plumage by a combination of uniformly dark grey brown upperparts with narrow white (rather than chestnut) fringes to the wing-coverts and tertials. Identified as *L. scolopaceus* by the *kick* call heard once in flight and the tail pattern, where black predominated over white. Additional supporting features included fairly abrupt demarcation between grey breast and white belly, and dark grey throat with no speckling on the throat or breast.

A dowitcher species, probably *L. scolopaceus*, and indeed possibly even the same individual, was recorded briefly again amongst roosting Spotted Redshanks on a saline marsh between the Van Uc and Thia Binh River Mouths, Haiphong Province (20°39'N 106°41'E) by JCE and NC on 5 February 1996.

#### LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

An adult in summer plumage was observed on Luu island, Xuan Thuy Nature Reserve, Nam Ha Province (20°16'N 106°34'E) on 23 April 1995 by SPD, NC and myself. It was extremely confiding, feeding no more than 5 m away along the high-tide line in the company of several Red-necked Stints *Calidris ruficollis* (showing summer, transitional and winter plumages), Sanderling *C. alba*, Spoon-billed Sandpiper *C. pygmaeus*, and Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*. This bird was identified from summer plumage Red-necked Stint by the following combination of features: Although body-size was similar, the longer tarsus and longer stride, combined with a longer, finely-tipped bill, suggested a more slender and less compact appearance. The tertials and wing-coverts showed black centres and were broadly edged with chestnut. The throat was white with greyish markings across the chestnut breast. The legs were black rather than blackish.

#### PALLAS'S (GREAT BLACK-HEADED) GULL *Larus ichthyaetus*

An adult in winter plumage was observed in flight at Xuan Thuy Nature Reserve, Nam Ha Province (20°16'N 106°34'E) on 24 October 1994 by SPD, NC and myself. It was identified by a combination of its large size, black mask through the eye and along the side of the head, white wing tips with a black sub-terminal band, large yellow bill with a black sub-terminal band and yellow legs and feet, which were clearly visible when it flew directly overhead.

#### EURASIAN SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia*

A single individual was recorded roosting together with 12 Black-faced Spoonbills *Platalea minor* on 6 January and with 71 on 7 January 1996 on Luu Island, Xuan Thuy Nature Reserve, Nam Ha Province (20°16'N

106°34'E) by FRL and myself. The bird was identified at rest by its slightly larger size, white-feathered face with black loreal line, small yellow nail to the otherwise black bill and yellow skin between the mandibles (black spotted with flesh in Black-faced Spoonbill).

#### LESSER FRIGATEBIRD *Fregata ariel*

A single adult female was observed at Dat Mui, Minh Hai Province (08°36'N 104°44'E), on 14 September 1993 by NC and myself. Good views were obtained as the bird flew parallel with our boat at a distance of c. 200 m. It was identified by the diagnostic white spurs on the underwing and the inverted white 'v' on the breast. The following day a distant frigatebird sp., possibly the same individual was observed at the same locality.

#### ROSY STARLING *Sturnus roseus*

An adult was found roosting with Crested Myna *Acridotheres cristatellus* in mangroves at the Thai Binh river mouth (20°37'N 106°35'E), Thai Binh Province on 8 April 1996 by NI, LTT, NC, AP and myself. Being an adult, this individual did not present an identification problem.

#### YELLOW-STREAKED WARBLER *Phylloscopus armandii*

Two were observed and one trapped and photographed (Figure 1) by AP and myself on Mo Island off the Day River mouth, Nam Ha Province (19°57'N 106°N09'E) on 26 April 1994. Both birds were medium-sized *Phylloscopus* warblers, showing olive-brown upperparts, no wing-bars, a pronounced supercilium and eye-stripe, and buff under-tail coverts. This combination of features is only additionally shared by Radde's Warbler *P. schwarzi* and Dusky Warbler *P. fuscatus*. However, in the field both individuals were heard to give the diagnostic bunting-like *tsic* call. The trapped individual showed yellow streaking on the otherwise off-white throat and breast, sullied yellow-buff flanks and belly with a cinnamon vent. Additionally, these birds appeared structurally less robust and with a finer bill than Radde's Warbler. Dusky Warbler lacks the cinnamon vent and is never so buff below (Boonsong and Round 1991, Leader 1995).

#### SOOTY BABBLER *Stachyris herberti*

This species was discovered in Vietnam, and a specimen collected at Phong Nha Nature Reserve, Quang Binh Province (17°25'N 106°E) in July 1994. A full account of the discovery and notes on the biology of the species are published elsewhere (Eames *et al.* 1995).

#### BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

A flock of at least 40 feeding amongst conifers in Sa Pa, Lao Cai Province (22°20'N 103°50'E) on 25 December 1994 and 11 January 1995 by SPD, NC and myself. Heard flying over the forest canopy on Fan Si Pan on various dates between 29 December 1994 and 4 January 1995. Unmistakable, this species shows a combination of black and orange plumage and a diagnostic white rump.

### EURASIAN SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

A flock of 8 seen together with Bramblings in Sa Pa, Lao Cai Province (22°20'N 103°50'E) on 25 December 1994. A small yellowish-green finch, separated from Black-headed Greenfinch *C. ambigua* by the combination of yellow rump, two yellow wing-bars and yellow sides to tail.

Subsequently, R. Eve (*in litt.* to T. Inskipp) found and described a male Eurasian Siskin singing in Hanoi zoo on 14 May 1995.

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## Records of Blunt-winged Warbler *Acrocephalus concinens* in northern Vietnam

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Between 6 April and 3 May 1995, in the Cuc Phuong National Park (north-west Bac Bo, or south Tonkin), around 100 km SSW of Hanoi, I trapped a total of 189 birds belonging to 54 species, which were thoroughly

examined for chewing lice (Phthiraptera: Ischnocera and Amblycera) infestation, then released. The detailed ecological and taxonomic results will be discussed elsewhere; a general report has already been published (Mey 1995). During this study five Blunt-winged Warblers *Acrocephalus concinens* were trapped in two nets c. 5 km apart, two of the birds on 11 April and three on 21 April. Both locations were in semi-open country with dense shrubby undergrowth. Three of the birds had flown along the edge of secondary woodland bordering forestry plantations, which were partly open and partly overgrown with *Imperata cylindrica*.

Identification of the warblers was confirmed using wing formulae from King *et al.* (1975). One individual, which was recovered freshly dead on 11 April, is retained as a skin in the Museum of Natural History, Rudolstadt, Thuringia, Germany.

Blunt-winged Warbler is described by Vo Quy and Nguyen Cu (1995) as a passage migrant of uncertain abundance and occurring only in Vung Nam bo, or Cochin China, based on 'several birds, believed to be this species, were observed at close range in Nam Bai Cat Tien National Park, on 31 December [1989]' (Robson *et al.* 1993). Vo Quy and Nguyen Cu (1995) do not list any records for the other six districts of Vietnam. However, Kinnear (1929) reported that three clutches of eggs, possibly from this species, were collected by H. Stevens in northern Tonkin in 1923-1924. Nearby, in Laos, Dickinson (1970) reported that A. David-Beaulieu collected a specimen at Savannakhet on 13 November 1944. It is also recorded as a winter visitor in southern and eastern Myanmar, and north-west and south-east Thailand (King *et al.* 1975). It may be a more common passage migrant and/or winter visitor in eastern Indochina than has previously been ascertained.

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