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## First record of Demoiselle Crane *Grus virgo* for the Philippines

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On a trip to Calayan Island in northern Philippines in May 2009, we received information that a grey heron-like bird was being held captive by a local resident. On 22 September 2009 on a subsequent trip to the island we visited the residence of Conrado Duerme in Tugod, Barangay Centro II (19°16.0'N 121°28.1'E) and found a crane foraging around his backyard. The bird was less than 1 m tall, had an overall grey body, black head and neck, white crown, white stripe behind eyes with plumes extending beyond the head, and red-orange iris, which are unmistakable characteristics of Demoiselle Crane *Grus virgo*. Photographs and video of the crane were taken on that day and on 30 September 2009 (one photograph being submitted with this note).

The crane was first seen in July 2008 foraging in Mr Duerme's rice field with two other cranes. Mr. Duerme captured the crane with the use of a snare attached to a long stick. The two other cranes flew away and were not sighted again. Mr Duerme initially clipped the wing feathers of the captured bird but allowed them to grow back after some time. Since then, the bird has been observed to fly around Mr Duerme's rice field but it has always returned to his backyard, where it remains at the time of writing (C. Duerme verbally September 2009).

Demoiselle Crane breeds across Europe and Asia. The East Asian population winters in India but rare visitors have been recorded in Japan (Meine & Archibald 1996). The date the bird was captured on Calayan Island is unusual and may indicate that the cranes were very early migrants or overwintering birds or that the captor may have recalled the date of capture incorrectly. No rings or any identifying marks were found on the bird and we are unaware of reports of Demoiselle Cranes escaping from captive populations in nearby areas. Thus, the Demoiselle Crane found on Calayan Island is likely to be wild in origin, and we assume that the two birds found with it were of the same species. This record from the Philippines is the southernmost

observation of the species in East Asia. Sarus Crane *Grus antigone* is the only crane species previously known to occur in the Philippines but it may have been extirpated in the country (Kennedy *et al.* 2000).

The occurrence of vagrant birds in the small typhoon-prone islands north of Luzon is quite usual. Recent vagrants in the area include Cinereous Vulture *Aegyptius monachus* on Batan Island, Pied Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus* on Dalupiri Island, Orange-flanked Bush Robin *Tarsiger cyanurus* and the mainland Asian subspecies of Variable Dwarf Kingfisher *Ceyx erithacus erithacus* on Calayan Island (van der Ploeg & Minter 2004, Allen *et al.* 2006, Oliveros *et al.* 2008).

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