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Anwaruddin Choudhury, Deputy Commissioner, Baksa. Correspondence: The Rhino Foundation for Nature in North-east India, c/o Assam Co. Ltd, Bamunimaidam, Guwahati 781 021, Assam, India. Email:badru1@sify.com

## Further significant bird records from Atauro Island, Timor-Leste (East Timor)

COLIN R. TRAINOR and PEDRO J. LEITÃO

The bird fauna of Atauro island, Timor-Leste (East Timor; 150 km<sup>2</sup>, 23.5 km north of Dili) was summarised in Trainor and Soares (2004), who listed 84 species. Atauro is the largest and highest (995 m) of two islands now administered by Timor-Leste. It is part of the volcanic Inner Banda Arc and has had a different evolutionary history to adjacent Timor island. Despite this, only the *finschi* race of Olive-brown Oriole *Oriolus melanotis* suggested any influence on the avifauna by Wetar island (18 km north-west), and no bird species characteristic of the Flores–Alor island chain was recorded (Trainor and Soares 2004). The presence of 14 restricted-range birds including the Endangered Timor Green Pigeon *Treron psittaceus* highlighted the conservation importance of the island (Trainor and Soares 2004). One site on Atauro, Mount Manucoco, has been recognised as a ‘protected wild area’ by the Timor-Leste government (UNTAET 2000) but there is limited management on the ground.

The number of resident birds known on each island in Wallacea depends on many factors including: island size, habitat diversity, elevation range, extent of disturbance and degree of isolation from source populations as well as survey effort (Trainor 2002, 2005a). Understanding patterns of species richness on islands can therefore highlight survey priorities.

### METHODS

Here we provide updated information on the birds of Atauro island collected by three ornithologists. Jan Keast (JK) visited the east coast on 1 December 2003; CRT

visited during 19–24 April 2005, mainly within 2 km of Makadade village at 500–700 m on the central plateau of the island; and PJJ visited during 21–24 December 2005, making observations mostly around Tua Koin and between Tua Koin, Mt Manucoco, Anartutu and open waters between Dili and Atauro.

To explore survey adequacy we examined the relationship between number of resident bird species and island area for Atauro and 14 other ‘Timor-group’ islands. Lists of resident birds were generated from White and Bruce (1986), Coates and Bishop (1997), Trainor (2005a) and CRT (unpublished data).

### RESULTS

We recorded 13 species new to the island, and made notable observations of nine other species.

**RAINBOW LORIKEET** *Trichoglossus haematodus*  
Three birds were seen on 22 December 2005 flying through open *Eucalyptus alba* savanna woodland, supporting the anecdotal report in Trainor and Soares (2004). The subspecific identity of this taxon is unknown, and more observations are needed to determine this.

**WHITE-THROATED NEEDLETAIL** *Hirundapus caudacutus*  
New island record. Two birds were observed on 22 December 2005 flying a few kilometres north-east of Anartutu (c.400 m altitude). Most records of this migrant in the Nusa Tenggara region occur during the period of southward migration during September–January (Coates and Bishop 1997).

**HOUSE SWIFT** *Apus affinis*

Four birds were seen on 22 December 2005 flying over Anartutu, at 500 m. This bird breeds on Timor (e.g. on the Christ statue at Dili-Cristo Rei, April 2006; CRT personal observations) and it is probably resident on Atauro.

**METALLIC PIGEON** *Columba vitiensis*

New island record. This inconspicuous forest pigeon was observed in a forested gully at 500 m, with additional observations in the same gully by F. Alves. It is well known to local hunters who call it *maram* (this name was erroneously given for Black Cuckoo Dove in Trainor and Soares 2004). Although infrequently observed, the Metallic Pigeon is known from most of the 'high' islands of the Lesser Sundas and would be expected for Atauro (Coates and Bishop 1997).

**BARRED-NECKED CUCKOO DOVE** *Macropygia (amboinensis) magna*

Restricted-range. This bird was previously noted from a voice record only. One bird was shot in a forested ravine at 500 m on 23 April 2005. The following measurements were taken: tail length: 220 mm, tarsus: 23 mm, wing: 195 mm, and bill: 18.5 mm. Barred-necked Cuckoo Dove is locally common in tropical forest and secondary forest in Timor-Leste (CRT personal observations)

**BLACK CUCKOO DOVE** *Turacoena modesta*

Near threatened; restricted-range. On 21 April 2005, the rapidly repeated *hoo wuk* call of this pigeon was heard at c. 700 m in a forested gully c. 1 km east of Anartutu. Black Cuckoo Dove is well-known to local hunters who call it 'lam dam' (F. Alves, verbally, 2005) and not *maram* as noted in Trainor and Soares (2004). This bird is widespread and frequent in tropical forest and secondary forest in Timor-Leste (CRT, pers. obs.).

**PINK-HEADED IMPERIAL PIGEON** *Ducula rosacea*

Near threatened; restricted-range. Eight birds were seen on 22 December 2005 in a small area of *Eucalyptus alba* savanna at around 300 m, suggesting that the species is locally common, *contra* Trainor and Soares (2004) who stated that this species was uncommon.

**WHITE-BREASTED WATERHEN** *Amaurornis phoenicurus*

New island record. An immature was observed and video-recorded at the edge of agricultural land on 21 April 2005, where it fed on drying corn. The bird was slaty-grey with a streaked white chest, white cheeks and wings, buff undertail-coverts, black bill and dark grey legs.

**EASTERN CURLEW** *Numenius madagascariensis*

New island record. One bird was observed near Tua Koin on 1 December 2003. In Timor-Leste this species occurs regularly in small numbers, either staging for short periods, or wintering on mangrove-backed mudflats (Trainor 2005b).

**SANDERLING** *Calidris alba*

New island record. One individual was observed on 1 December 2003 on the beach near Beloi harbour. This species appears to occur uncommonly along the coast of Timor-Leste (Trainor 2005b) but more survey effort is needed along beaches and exposed reefs.

**MALAYSIAN PLOVER** *Charadrius peronii*

Near Threatened. Two pairs were present on the Tua Koin beach on 24 April 2005. These were aggressively territorial, with birds raising their head feathers, giving loud *pip* calls and forcing intruders back to their territory. One pair was present between 21 and 24 December 2005. This species remains relatively common along the Timor-Leste coast (Trainor 2005b).

**ORIENTAL PRATINCOLE** *Glareola maldivarum*

New island record. One bird was seen on 1 December 2003 on a beach c. 1 km south of Beloi. This species stages in small to large numbers in Timor-Leste during the period of southward migration (mostly September–December; Trainor 2005b).

**LITTLE TERN** *Sterna albifrons*

New island record. One bird was seen on 22 December 2005, feeding over coral reefs off Tua Koin. The species is a regular but uncommon breeding visitor to Timor-Leste (Trainor 2005b).

**BROWN NODDY** *Anous stolidus*

New island record. Up to eight birds were seen during 21–24 December 2005, actively feeding over corals reefs off Tua Koin.

**WHITE-BELLIED SEA EAGLE** *Haliaeetus leucogaster*

One bird was seen flying over Mount Manucoco on 22 December 2005. This confirms previous anecdotal reports that the species occurs on Atauro (Trainor and Soares 2004).

**GREAT EGRET** *Casmerodius albus*

New island record. One individual was observed on a beach c. 4 km south of the northern tip of the island on 1 December 2003. This species is frequent in Timor-Leste, particularly along mangrove-backed mudflats (Trainor 2005b).

**GREAT FRIGATEBIRD** *Fregata minor*

Two records of Great Frigatebird confirm the anecdotal report in Trainor and Soares (2004). A male flew over the Atauro–Dili ferry on 21 December 2005 and a female was seen c. 20 km south of Beloi harbour during the crossing on 24 December 2005.

**WHITE-FACED STORM-PETREL** *Pelagodroma marina*

New island record. Two groups of eight and four birds were observed flying parallel to the Atauro–Dili ferry c. 10 km and 5 km south of Beloi harbour respectively on 21 December 2005. They had white underparts, medium-dark brown upperparts, white rump, black primaries, dark tail-sides and a characteristic facial pattern with a white supercilium and a dark band from the eye to the ear-coverts. Seabirds are poorly known in the region and this is one of the few observations of this species in Wallacea. Coates and Bishop (1997) suggested that this species was probably a regular winter visitor to Wallacea, but this is the first record for the Timor region.

**WHITE-BREASTED WOODSWALLOW** *Artamus leucorhynchus*

A flock of around 20 birds was observed on 22 December 2005 flying over *Eucalyptus alba* savanna woodland, near

Vila, suggesting that it is locally common rather than rare (see Trainor and Soares 2004).

#### ORANGE-SIDED THRUSH *Zoothera peronii*

Near threatened; restricted-range. One bird was seen perched on a mangrove tree south of Vila on 21 December 2005. Trainor and Soares (2004) recorded this species at 700–850 m, but it clearly occurs from sea level to the mountains on Atauro.

#### SUNDA THRUSH *Zoothera andromedae*

New island record. This inconspicuous forest bird was observed once in a forested gully at 670 m near Anartutu on 22 April 2005. It was also seen later by T. Soares at the same location and it or another was seen by F. Alves at a nearby gully on the same day. Both this species and Orange-sided Thrush are called *manglolometar* in the Makadade language, with the latter species considered to represent the female.

#### TREE MARTIN *Hirundo nigricans*

New island record. Two birds were seen on 22 December 2005 over an area of open *Eucalyptus alba* savanna between Tua Koin and Mount Manucoco. This species is resident on Timor, with additional migrants arriving during the Australian winter (Coates and Bishop 1997); it is probably a visitor to Atauro.

#### ORIENTAL REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus orientalis*

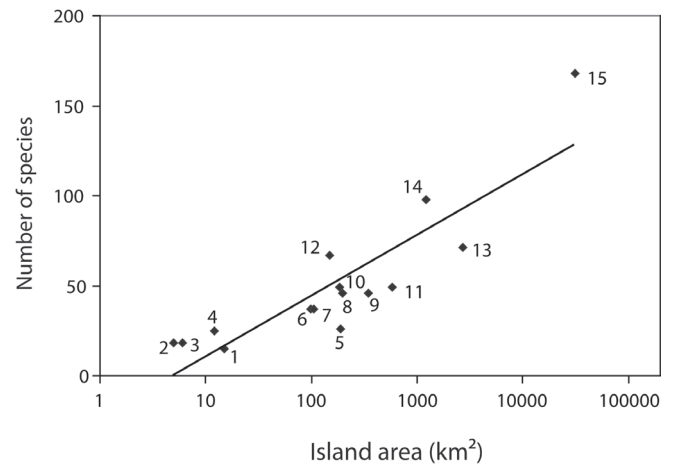
New island record. One individual was observed on 22 December 2005 a few kilometres north of Anartutu (c.300 m) in mixed woodland-scrub in a valley, c.400 m uphill from the nearest stream. The bird was singing with loud and harsh grating and churring notes as described by Coates and Bishop (1997). This appears to be the first record of the species for the Timor region since specimens were collected from Dili in April 1932 (Mayr 1944).

#### TRICOLOURED PARROTFINCH *Erythrura tricolor*

Restricted-range. Two fledglings were observed in forest trees among gardens at 670 m on 22 April 2005. Each bird had a half-grown tail, yellow lower mandible, dark grey upper mandible, light grey-brown breast and belly, green wings and back and a red rump. During the 12 km walk from Anartutu to Tua Koin on 24 April two other immatures were seen and several birds heard calling at the edge of three forested ravines at 500–600 m. The call is a single note, high-pitched rising *swik*. These records confirm the previous anecdotal report (Trainor and Soares 2004) and indicate that this species is relatively common in forests of the central plateau. There is a single previous breeding record for this species from Timor, with egg-laying extrapolated to have occurred in May (Noske 2003), but our record suggests laying in February or early March. The Tricolored Parrotfinch is considered locally moderately common on Timor (Coates and Bishop 1997); on mainland Timor-Leste its status is poorly known, but it appears to be highly local (CRT personal observations).

## DISCUSSION

Four of the new island records are residents, including inconspicuous species such as Metallic Pigeon, White-breasted Waterhen and Sunda Thrush, giving a revised



**Figure 1.** Relationship between number of resident bird species and island area for 14 islands in the ‘Timor-group’: 1= Luang, 2= Terbang Utara, 3= Terbang Selatan, 4= Jaco, 5= Sermata, 6= Kisar, 7= Leti, 8= Damar, 9= Moa, 10= Romang, 11= Babar, 12= Atauro, 13= Wetar 14= Roti, 15= Timor.

total of 67 residents out of the 97 bird species known for the island. Most of the new island records are of migrant shorebirds and seabirds, and none was of restricted-range species. Our observations add significantly to information on the birds of Atauro, and indicate that the composition of the bird fauna is increasingly well known. However the taxonomic status and abundance of some species requires further investigation (e.g. Timor Green Pigeon, Rainbow Lorikeet and Olive-brown Oriole).

A comparison of island area and bird diversity shows a clear dichotomy between recently versus historically surveyed islands (Fig. 1). Most recently surveyed islands fell above the regression line (e.g. Terbang Utara, Terbang Selatan, Jaco, Atauro, Roti and Timor islands), indicating that they have richer than expected resident bird faunas and therefore may have been relatively well surveyed. Islands that have not been surveyed in the past 30 years (e.g. Wetar, Babar, Moa and Sermata) have fewer resident species than expected, suggesting that they have been relatively poorly surveyed. For example, Wetar (2,684 km<sup>2</sup>) is almost 20 times larger in area than Atauro, but on current information has only four more resident species.

The identification and management of key natural areas on Atauro must be a high priority, given its unique evolutionary history and complement of birds and other wildlife. We found that coastal, savanna and forest habitats on Atauro maintain a rich natural heritage in spite of historically intensive use of some landscapes for agriculture. Forests on the volcanic geology of Mt Manucoco have in particular been heavily converted to agriculture, whereas *Eucalyptus* savanna on limestone is mostly intact. Active management of forests on Mt Manucoco would be valuable for both wildlife and maintaining catchments of water sources in the south of the island.

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- Pedro J. Leitão, *Centro de Ecologia Aplicada 'Prof. Baeta Neves', Portugal; and Centre for Environmental Sciences, University of Southampton, Highfield, Southampton, SO17 1Bf, U.K. Email: p.leitao@soton.ac.uk*
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# New island records and new elevational records of birds from South Maluku, Indonesia

FRANK E. RHEINDT and ROBERT O. HUTCHINSON

During an expedition to the islands of Buru (3°S 126–127°E) and Seram (2–3°S 127–130°E), South Maluku, from 29 August through 20 September 2006, new island records were made for two bird species. Furthermore, we recorded a number of species at elevations higher or lower than previously reported. In the following account, we give details of these new records. Island endemic races are identified by their subspecific name.

### RUFIOUS-NECKED SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter erythrauchen ceramensis*

This raptor was seen once in Buru and twice in Seram, the last sighting being of an adult flying by at close distance in the vicinity of the village of Solea near Wahai, Seram, on 17 September 2006, at c.150 m. This species has previously not been recorded below 650 m on Seram (Coates and Bishop 1997), and it has been suspected to be replaced by the Variable Goshawk *Accipiter novaehollandiae* at lower elevations (Verbelen 1994). Our identification was based on the clearly visible rufous sides of the neck, which contrasted with the pale grey breast that is so typical of the subspecies *ceramensis* of South Maluku, and that readily sets this form apart from the local race of Variable Goshawk *A. novaehollandiae hiogaster* and from Chinese Sparrowhawk *A. soloensis*.

### GURNEY'S EAGLE *Aquila gurneyi*

We saw this eagle on two occasions in Seram, both times significantly above the upper altitudinal limit of c.900 m given by Coates and Bishop (1997) for Maluku. The first sighting was of an adult circling overhead along higher parts of the highway from Masohi to Wahai on 7 September 2006 at c.1,200 m. The second sighting was also of an adult seen from the trail that traverses Kobipoto Ridge in

Manusela National Park on 15 September 2006 at c.1,200 m. During both observations, the birds were seen well and the clear structural and plumage differences (e.g. shorter tail, dark cere, all-black plumage) that distinguish this species from the common Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis* and immature White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* were noted.

### ASIAN DOWITCHER *Limnodromus semipalmatus*

We saw and photographed two individuals of this Near Threatened Eastern Palearctic shorebird on Seram: one was found in mangrove mudflats at Air Besar, c.3 km east of Wahai (Seram) on 8 September 2006 (Plate 1), and the second one was seen on Pulau Sawai off the northern coast of Seram on 20 September 2006. These two birds constitute the first record of this species in Maluku Province. The birds were clearly recognisable as this species and could be told apart from godwits *Limosa* spp. by plumage details (e.g. lack of wing-bar) and the distinctly-shaped all-black bill (Plate 1). In Wallacea, Asian Dowitcher has previously been recorded only once each in Sulawesi and West Timor (Coates and Bishop 1997). More recently, Trainor *et al.* (2006) recorded an individual of this species during passage in Sumba. The species winters from north-western Australia to Sumatra and is therefore probably a regular but widely overlooked passage migrant in Maluku.

### GREAT CUCKOO DOVE *Reinwardtoena reinwardtii*

On 11 September 2006, we recorded and photographed an individual on Mt Binaya (Seram) at c.1,600 m (Plate 2). Subsequently, on 19 September 2006 we repeatedly saw a single individual in coconut plantations and mangrove habitat at sea level near Air Besar, c.3 km east