

Observations on the breeding of the Palawan Blue-Flycatcher *Cyornis lemprieri*

D. G. VRETTOS

The Palawan Blue-Flycatcher *Cyornis lemprieri* is a Philippine endemic which has been treated either as a subspecies of the Hill Blue-Flycatcher *C. banyumas* (Watson *et al.* 1986), or as a full species (Dickinson *et al.* 1991).

DESCRIPTION AND MEASUREMENTS

Previously published descriptions of this species are incomplete and, therefore, full details are provided:

Male: forehead light blue; crown, nape, back, wings, mantle, sides of head, ear-coverts and rump dark blue; lores black; chin off-white, changing to pale orange on the breast; belly white; under tail-coverts off-white; flanks and under wing-coverts grey; tail dark blue; eye dark brown; legs blue-grey; bill black.

Female: crown and nape blue-grey; lores black; white supercilium and malar stripe; ear-coverts greenish-grey; back, mantle and rump olive-brown; tail rufous-brown; chin white, changing to dull orange on the breast; belly white; under tail-coverts and under wing-coverts off-white; wings and flanks dark brown; eye dark brown; legs blue-grey; bill black.

The average measurements of three males caught in mist nets at the end of July were: wing 79 mm, tail 63.3 mm, bill 15.3 mm, tarsus 21.3 and weight 22.062 g. One of the males netted on 27 July was in moult. Two females caught at the same time averaged: wing 77 mm, tail 58 mm, bill 15 mm, tarsus 21 mm, weight 21.2 g.

BREEDING BEHAVIOUR

Observations on the breeding of this flycatcher began on the 14 April 1987 when, what was thought to be an old empty nest was found, in a hollow tree-stump, by members of the Palawan Wildlife Expedition. The team was mist-netting on the east slope of Mount Mananangob (9°46'N 118°41'E), in the central mountain range of the island, at an altitude of approximately 370 m. Mount Mananangob is in a watershed reserve near the village of Irawan,

which is 11 km from Puerto Princesa city on the southbound road.

There is a limited amount of disturbance from illegal logging, hunting by villagers, and also collecting of honey. Resin from the Almaciga tree *Agathis dammara* is collected seasonally by the Tagbanuwa people, who employ a system of shifting cultivation.

The following day (15 April) an egg was discovered in the nest, and an observation hide was therefore constructed from fish-tail palm *Arenga* fronds, between the buttress roots of a large tree which was about 3 m from the nest site. The nest, which was constructed from dried grasses, and measured 50 mm deep by 60 mm inside diameter, was not visible from the hide as it was set back in the 1 m high stump.

Early the next morning (16 April) I took up position in the hide and settled down to wait. About 15 m from the hide was a stream which ran down the hillside and, since it was still the dry season, this was visited by a variety of birds and mammals. Some of these, such as Crab-eating Macaque *Macaca fascicularis*, Sunda Civet *Viverra zibetha*, Common Palm Civet *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*, Palawan Treeshrew *Tupaia palawanensis* and Palawan Hornbill *Anthracoceros marchei*, were potential predators. Just after midday a small brown passerine appeared on a nearby branch and then flew into the nest. This was later identified as a female Palawan Blue-Flycatcher.

The Mangrove Blue-Flycatcher *C. rufigastra* occurs in that area of Palawan, and the male is very similar to that of the Palawan Blue-Flycatcher; however, the female *rufigastra* is mainly blue like the male, whereas the female *lemprieri* is brown. Both adult Palawan Blue-Flycatchers were seen together on numerous occasions, facilitating positive identification of the species.

On checking the nest in the late afternoon it was noted that there was still only one egg.

At 06h00 the next morning (17 April) I again settled down in the hide. The female appeared about 20 minutes later and flew to the nest. During subsequent observations it was not always possible to be sure that the female was sitting because her approaches and departures were very rapid. Later that day a snake, possibly a cobra *Naja*, about 2.5 m long, passed the nest site at about 2 m distance. At 17h00 I left the hide and found that a second egg had been laid when I checked the nest.

The following day (18 April) the male Palawan Blue-Flycatcher was seen for the first time. It appeared on a branch about 2 m from the nest, and then chased off a male Blue-and-white Flycatcher *Cyanoptila cyanomelana* which came close to the nest. Later that day both the adults mobbed two juvenile Palawan Tree-shrews which wandered close to the nest. The female left the nest several times to feed. At 17h00 there were still two eggs in the nest.

The next day (19 April) it quickly became apparent that the birds were uneasy because the hide no longer provided adequate concealment. The hide

was abandoned but the nest was subsequently checked every 2-3 days. On 21 April a check revealed that the female was temporarily absent and the opportunity was taken to measure the eggs. One was 24x16 mm and the other was 22.5x15.5 mm. They were pale blue and with reddish-brown blotches concentrated towards the blunt end.

Two chicks were discovered in the nest on 2 May. The nest had been checked on 30 April with no sign of the eggs hatching, giving an incubation period of 15-16 days, assuming that the second egg was laid on 17 April and that incubation started then.

The hide was hastily repaired on 3 May and observations were resumed at 05h30 on 4 May. Both parents made frequent visits to the nest, but as they flew directly into the nest it was difficult to see what food they were carrying. Feeding took only 3-4 seconds each time and the adults collected most of the food close to the nest. The female spent several periods of about 30 mins in the nest, presumably brooding the young. Over the next four days the frequency of feeding increased but on the morning of 9 May both young had disappeared. Both adults were still in the area but there was no sign of any fledglings.

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Dennis G. Vretos, Basil Corner, Lower Basildon, Berkshire, RG8 9NL, U.K.

Blyth's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus reguloides* found breeding in Thailand

PER ALSTRÖM and URBAN OLSSON

This note describes the first confirmed breeding of Blyth's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus reguloides* in Thailand, namely at Doi Inthanon in the north-west. It is suggested that Blyth's Leaf-Warbler is breeding rather commonly on Doi Inthanon, and that it has been overlooked before.

In early April 1991 P.A. observed several Blyth's Leaf-Warblers on the summit of Doi Inthanon, north-west Thailand (18°35'N 98°29.5'E). Some of the birds were singing, but it could not be established whether they were on migration or breeding (*Phylloscopus* warblers frequently sing during spring migration; pers. obs.). In the second week of March 1992 Blyth's Leaf-Warbler was found to be locally common on Doi Inthanon, and breeding was confirmed. This species has not previously been proved to breed in Thailand (Boonsong *et al.* 1991; Philip D. Round *in litt.*).

On 8 March 1992 a pair of Blyth's Leaf-Warblers were seen nest building, beside the trail at the summit bog on Doi Inthanon, at an altitude of c. 2,560 m. The following day the nest was abandoned, probably as a result of human disturbance. On 11 March possibly the same pair was seen building a nest some 30-40 m from the first nest site. On 9 March 1992 a nest of Blyth's Leaf-Warbler with nearly fully grown young was found at c. 1,650 m ('km 37') on Doi Inthanon. Two days later the young fledged. On 8 April 1992 Johan Wallander and Eva Helgesson (pers. comm. 1992) saw a nest-building pair of Blyth's Leaf-Warbler near the summit bog on Doi Inthanon.

At the summit of Doi Inthanon, especially in the vicinity of the bog, Blyth's Leaf-Warbler was fairly common and outnumbered White-tailed Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus davisoni* by roughly 2:1 (based on a count of singing males). At c. 1,650 m ('km 37') Blyth's Leaf-Warbler seemed to be slightly less numerous than White-tailed Leaf-Warbler, and at c. 1,500 m ('km 34.5') White-tailed appeared to be more numerous than Blyth's (based on counts of singing males).

It is quite possible that some or even most of the Blyth's Leaf-Warblers that we observed were on migration. This may be supported by the fact that several singing males did not respond to play-back of their own song. However, there could be other explanations for that (cf. Alström and Olsson 1992). On the other hand, several males (other than those whose nests we found) were evidently territorial and responded vigorously to play-back, and at least one of these appeared to have a mate. Even if some of the Blyth's Leaf-Warblers that we observed were on migration, it would still appear that Blyth's Leaf-Warbler is a fairly common breeding bird on Doi Inthanon.

It may be of some interest to point out that we did not find any Blyth's Leaf-Warblers on Doi Suthep-Pui in early March 1992, only White-tailed Leaf-Warblers.

On plumage (mainly tail pattern) as well as on geographical grounds the Blyth's Leaf-Warblers on Doi Inthanon seem to match the subspecies *assamensis*. This extension of the known range of Blyth's Leaf-Warbler reveals that Blyth's and White-tailed Leaf-Warblers are sympatric in four disjunct areas: Doi Inthanon (*P. r. assamensis* and *P. d. davisoni*), Sichuan Province, China (*P. r. claudiae* and *P. d. disturbans*), Fujian Province, China