

- Sundar, K. S. G. (2004) Group size and habitat use by Black-necked Storks *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* in an agriculture dominated landscape in Uttar Pradesh, India. *Bird Conserv. Internatn.* 14: 323–334.
- Sundar, K. S. G. (2011) Agricultural intensification, rainfall patterns, and large waterbird breeding success in the extensively cultivated landscape of Uttar Pradesh, India. *Biol. Conserv.* 144(12): 3055–3063.
- Sundar, K. S. G. & Kaur, J. (2001) Distribution and nesting sites of the Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*. *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.* 98: 276–278.

- Sundar, K. S. G., Deomurari, A., Bhatia, Y. & Narayanan, S. P. (2007) Records of Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* breeding pairs fledging four chicks. *Forktail* 23: 161–163.

Mayurdan GADHAV, Devanshi KUKADI, N. GOKULAKANNAN, Shahid DAR, Gautam TALUKDAR & K. SIVAKUMAR, Wildlife Institute of India, Post Box 18, Chandrabani, Dehradun 248 001, India.

GOPIG. V., Wildlife Institute of India, Post Box 18, Chandrabani, Dehradun 248 001, India. Email: gopigv@wii.gov.in (corresponding author)

Comments on the status of Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* in the Indian subcontinent

PRAVEEN J. & TIM INSKIPP

Forktail 30 carried a note on the occurrence of Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* in the Indian subcontinent (Zacharias & Rice 2014) and the purpose of this note is to clarify the stand on this matter taken by various publications on the regional avifauna. As reviewed by Zacharias & Rice (2014), Willow Warbler was erroneously listed for the subcontinent based on misidentified or fraudulent specimens and has been removed from the lists for the subcontinent. The authors listed two extra specimens as taken from within the limits of the region, which we review here.

The first specimen, from the American Museum of Natural History, New York, USA (AMNH 449058), was listed by the authors as taken from 'Bampur, Baluchistan, Pakistan'. However, in reality it was taken from Bampur [=Bampur] (27.20°N 60.43°E) in Sistan and Baluchestan province, Iran, by N. A. Zarudny on 13 April 1901. It must be mentioned that this record was erroneously listed for 'India: Bampur, Baluchistan' in the AMNH catalogue until one of us advised the curator concerned to cross-check and correct this error (<http://sci-web-001.amnh.org/>). This fact is also clear from the expedition dates of N. A. Zarudny, who apparently spent 13–17 April 1901 in the surroundings of Bampur (Roselaar & Aliabadian 2007).

The second specimen, from the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA (ANSP ORN 52636), is listed as taken in 'Nepal' and as 'undated', although the ANSP catalogue gives the year of collection as 1935 without details of the collector or the collection locality (http://phylo.ansp.org:8080/ipt/resource.do?r=ansp_orn). Although details are not presented, the authors apparently verified the identification. The ANSP has at least 56 other specimens of this species for comparison and we therefore treat the identification of this specimen as probably correct. However, very few collectors were allowed to operate in Nepal in 1935; the most likely is F. M. Bailey, but it is improbable that any of his specimens would have been lodged in ANSP. According to <http://portal.vertnet.org/> (which compiles specimen data from several American and European museums), only one other specimen was collected in Nepal in 1935. Among the list of bird specimens collected between 1933 and 1937, there are five specimens in the Natural History Museum, London, UK (NHMUK), all by Bailey, while there is one in the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Michigan, USA (UMMZ 157833), collected by R. L. Fleming and listed as taken in 1937. Hence, in the absence of a collection date, locality or the name of the collector, the authenticity of ANSP ORN 52636 is insufficient to be acceptable as the first for Nepal and South Asia. As an aside, the year stated on the UMMZ specimen is probably an error, as R. L. Fleming Sr only arrived in Nepal in 1949. Sometimes the sequence of catalogue numbers gives away the details of collection; however, in this case, it appears to have been sorted taxonomically, as 39 specimens around this catalogue number (52621–52659) are all *Phylloscopus* specimens from Asia and Europe, except for one *Tarsiger calliope*.

Zacharias & Rice (2014) also mention a recent 'sighting' of Willow Warbler from Kerala, south India (Zacharias *et al.* 1997). However, the original note stated that it was an aural report (not a sighting), identified by the second author based on his familiarity with the species's vocalisations in Europe and Kenya. There are no further details available and apparently no effort was made to see the bird and take notes of field features. This report has consequently been treated as unconfirmed by Kazmierczak (2000), excluded from the main list by Sashikumar *et al.* (2011), and ignored by Grimmett *et al.* (1998, 2011) and Rasmussen & Anderton (2005, 2012). The species is not included in the Kerala state list (Praveen 2015) or for the India national list (Praveen *et al.* 2016).

In summary, the status as 'hypothetical' should be retained for the Willow Warbler in South Asia until further unequivocal and definitive evidence emerges.

References

- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C. & Inskipp, T. (1998) *Birds of the Indian subcontinent*. London: Christopher Helm.
- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C. & Inskipp, T. (2011) *Birds of the Indian subcontinent*. London: Christopher Helm.
- Kazmierczak, K. (2000) *A field guide to the birds of India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and the Maldives*. New Delhi: Om Book Service.
- Roselaar, C. S. & Aliabadian, M. (2007) A century of breeding bird assessment by western travellers in Iran, 1876–1977. *Podoces* 2(2): 77–96.
- Praveen J. (2015) A checklist of birds of Kerala, India. *J. Threatened Taxa* 7(13): 7983–8009.
- Praveen J., Jayapal, R. & Pittie, A. (2016) A checklist of the birds of India. *Indian Birds* 11: 113–172A.
- Rasmussen, P. C. & Anderton, J. C. (2005) *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. Washington DC & Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution & Lynx Edicions.
- Rasmussen, P. C. & Anderton, J. C. (2012) *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. Second edition. Washington DC, Michigan & Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution, Michigan State University & Lynx Edicions.
- Sashikumar, C., Praveen J., Palot, M. J. & Nameer, P. O. (2011) *Birds of Kerala: status and distribution*. Kottayam Kerala: DC Books.
- Zacharias, V. J., Oelke, H. & Bhardwaj, A. K. (1997) Occurrence of the Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* (Linne) in Thekkady, Kerala, South India. *Indian Forester* 123: 975.
- Zacharias, V. J. & Rice, N. H. (2014) The occurrence of the Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* in the Indian subcontinent: notes from museum specimen records. *Forktail* 30: 134–135.

PRAVEEN J., B-303, Shriram Spurthi, ITPL Main Road, Brookefields, Bangalore 560037, India. Email: paintedstork@gmail.com

TIM INSKIPP, 1 Herneside, Welney, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE14 9SB, UK.

Status of the Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* in Sri Lanka

Dear Editors

The Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* has historically been considered a migrant to Sri Lanka (Henry 1971, Phillips 1953, 1978). However, in July 2003 an unspecified number of this species was recorded nesting on Udaccharutivu, a small islet in the Adam's Bridge area off the north-west coast (Perera 2003). Perera & Ilangakoon (2016), referring to a seabird study made by them, state that they observed Bridled Terns on the continental shelf and over deep water beyond the shelf off Beruwela and Mirissa between September 2008 and April 2009. They claim therefore that their observations contradict land-based studies of migration of Bridled Tern by De Silva (1987, 2003, 2011) as he did not record birds from Colombo after November. Although their argument is not clearly stated they seem to imply that all Bridled Terns in Sri Lanka are residents and therefore a migration does not take place.

A plausible explanation for the presence of Bridled Tern after November 2008 is that the birds are migrants wintering in offshore waters, as suggested in De Silva (2003), possibly supplemented by resident birds. Perera & Ilangakoon (2016) recorded 2,592 sightings of this species at two sites over an eight-month period; this is well within the numbers documented in migration by other studies, thus the data of Perera & Ilangakoon (2016) essentially confirms the prediction in De Silva (2003).

Perera & Ilangakoon (2016) base their assertion on the migration studies of De Silva (1987, 2003, 2011) but do not consider other significant land-based studies by Hoffmann (1975, 1978) which recorded migration in August and September 1972, 1973 and 1974. He estimated that over 100,000 Bridled Terns passed the Galle Buck lighthouse, Colombo, southwards between 14 and 22 August 1974 and suggested that the birds could be migrating from breeding grounds in the Laccadive Islands (Lakshadweep) to their wintering grounds. Between 10–15 September 1978, van den Berg *et al.* (1982) observed migration at Galle Buck lighthouse, estimating that 45,360 birds moved south in five days and suggesting that at least 250,000 Bridled Terns migrate annually off Colombo in September. De Silva (1987, 2003, 2011) observed the migration from 1981–1994 and estimated that in peak years more than 400,000 Bridled Terns migrate southwards in sight of land.

Ali & Ripley (1983) stated [Bridled Terns] 'Disperse after breeding over the Arabian Sea to the coasts of Pakistan, western India and Sri Lanka'. Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) commented, 'A marked southbound passage [of Bridled Tern] occurs in late summer/early fall off west coast of [Sri Lanka]'. In a newspaper article de Silva Wijeyeratne (2015) stated, 'One of the biggest passages of seabirds is the southward movement off the west coast of Sri Lanka which

peaks around August and September'. It is clear therefore that southward migration of Bridled Tern occurs annually off the west coast of Sri Lanka, and that two distinct populations of Bridled Tern, one migratory, the other resident (numbers unknown), may be seen around Sri Lanka.

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to the British Ornithologists' Union for a small grant which supported part of my migration study, Chinthaka Kaluthota and Rohan Wijesinha for comments on a draft manuscript and Arnoud van den Berg for his note on the Bridled Tern migration in Sri Lanka and other relevant publications on seabirds.

References

- Ali, S. & Ripley, S. D. (1983) *Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan*. Compact edition. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- van den Berg, A. B., Bosman, C. A. W. & Rozendaal, F. G. (1982) Notes on seabirds 67. Mass movement of Bridled Terns *Sterna anaethetus* and Wilson's Petrels *Oceanites oceanicus* off Colombo, Sri Lanka. *Ardea* 70: 81–82.
- De Silva, R. I. (1987) Observations on the mass migration of Bridled Terns *Sterna anaethetus* off the coast of Colombo. *Ibis* 129(1): 88–92.
- De Silva, R. I. (2003) The mass migration of Bridled Terns (*Sterna anaethetus*) off the coast of Sri Lanka 1981–1994. *Loris* 23(3 & 4): 25–31.
- De Silva, R. I. (2011) Observing oceanic birds in Sri Lanka. *Indian Birds* 7(3): 58–62.
- Henry, G. M. (1971) *A guide to the birds of Ceylon*. Second edition. London: Oxford University Press.
- Hoffmann, T. W. (1975) Notes from the Ceylon Bird Club 1974. *Loris* 13: 276.
- Hoffmann, T. W. (1978) *Ceylon Bird Club Notes* September 1978: 55–57.
- Perera, L. (2003) *Ceylon Bird Club Notes* August 2003: 127.
- Perera, L. D. & Ilangakoon, A. D. (2016) Results of the first systematic boat-based seabird survey in Sri Lanka. *Forktail* 32: 58–61.
- Phillips, W. W. A. (1953) *A (1952) revised checklist of the birds of Ceylon*. Colombo: The National Museums of Ceylon.
- Phillips, W. W. A. (1978) *Annotated checklist of the birds of Ceylon (Sri Lanka)*. Revised edition. Colombo: Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Ceylon.
- Rasmussen, P. C. & Anderton, J. C. (2012) *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. Second edition. Washington DC, Michigan & Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution, Michigan State University & Lynx Edicions.
- de Silva Wijeyeratne, G. (2015) See the seabirds. Accessed at <http://www.sundaytimes.lk/151227/plus/see-the-seabirds-176272.html>.

Rex I. DE SILVA, *Seabird Watch (Sri Lanka)*, 31 Dampe, Madapatha 10306, Sri Lanka. Email: reefcomber@gmx.com