

northern tip) in the Babuyan Islands of Cagayan Province, northern Philippines, from 20 to 26 March 2005, at which time the weather was mostly fair with a few rain showers. Northern Boobooks on Calayan were spontaneously highly vocal between c.45 minutes after sunset until c.45 minutes before sunrise. At 19°19.404'N 121°27.010'E, elevation 290 m, we tape-recorded their songs in a large patch of low primary forest (with some trees removed), interspersed with a few clearings for cultivation, and secondary forest.

The song and a call note that we recorded on Calayan are shown in Fig. 1, along with songs recorded on Taiwan and Japan. The Calayan song is similar to those recorded on Taiwan and Japan. However, the internote interval of the Taiwan and Calayan birds is longer than that of Japanese birds and could represent a difference between the two taxa (*N. j. totogo* on Taiwan and *N. j. japonica* on the main islands of Japan). However, our sample size is too small to permit analysis of variation, either within or between taxa. Further study is recommended on this question. The call (likely an alarm note), which was uttered by a very agitated bird in response to playback, was a short, thin, somewhat metallic yelp, *wuk* or *wut*, at a higher pitch than the song.

Once we tape-recorded the spontaneously vocalising Northern Boobook (only one bird was calling initially) we played back the recording 15–20 times over the course of an hour. With each playback the pair of owls became more agitated and called louder and more frequently. This strong response to playback suggests territoriality of a well-established pair of owls. As the Northern Boobook is not known to spontaneously vocalise outside its breeding grounds, this behavior strongly suggests that the boobooks breed on Calayan Island. While probable breeding does not prove residency, we expect that the Northern Boobook is resident on Calayan. A reassessment of the specimens

of *Ninox japonica* taken on Calayan might help to resolve the issues of residency and subspecific identification.

It is thus likely that breeding (and possibly residency) of the Northern Boobook in the Philippines is limited to the small islands north of Luzon (the taxon *N. j. totogo*), while migrant *N. j. japonica* is a migrant or winter visitor to the whole of the Philippines (Kennedy *et al.* 2000). The Elegant Scops Owl *Otus elegans* has a similar range to that of *N. j. totogo*, and is represented on Calayan by a resident race, *O. e. calayensis*, endemic to the Batan and Babuyan Islands, north of Luzon. This species was also spontaneously vocal during our visit.

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Records of *Rhizothera (longirostris) dulitensis* in Sabah

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The Long-billed Partridge *Rhizothera longirostris* was first collected in Sabah at Paitan, near the north-east coast, by A. H. Everett in 1892. The specimen, long overlooked by authorities such as Moulton (1914) and Smythies (1957, 1960, 1981), still resides in the American Museum of Natural History (Sheldon *et al.* 2001). In the meantime, the species was listed by Comber (1971) from Tenom, Sabah, and was recorded at Danum Valley from field observations by Showler (1993). The species is confined to the Sundaic lowlands of south Tenasserim in Myanmar, peninsular Thailand, Peninsular Malaysia, Malaysian Borneo (Sabah and Sarawak), Brunei, and Kalimantan and Sumatra in Indonesia, and is considered Near Threatened (BirdLife International 2001).

Another taxon from Borneo, *Rhizothera dulitensis*, was described as a full species by Ogilvie-Grant (1895), but demoted to subspecies level as *R. longirostris dulitensis* by Peters (1934) who was followed by subsequent authors. It is distinguished by a broader grey breast band in males (c.10 cm *vs* 6 cm broad), and in both sexes by a whitish instead of rufous upper belly, darker upperparts, and more vermiculations on the greater secondary coverts and secondaries (Davison 1999). It is known from three localities in the eastern part of Sarawak: Mount Murud, Mount Dulit and Batu Song (Smythies 1999). This taxon was raised to species rank again by Davison (1999) and by Davison in Smythies (1999), using plumage characters that would satisfy the criteria of Helbig *et al.* (2002) but

possibly not those of Collar (2004, 2006). This is because the differentiating characters, though distinctive, are few and might not reach the numerical total suggested by Collar's (2006) scoring system. The species level distinction has been accepted by Dickinson (2003). Common names used include Hose's Partridge (Davison 1999, Dickinson 2003) and Dulit Partridge (Smythies 1999).

Whether or not it is given species rank, it was recently found that this taxon is also represented by museum specimens from Sabah collected by A. H. Everett, in this case on Mount Kinabalu in October 1895 (Davison 2007). The two relevant specimens, in The Natural History Museum, U.K. (BMNH), are BMNH 98.12.8.75, an immature female, and BMNH 1969.29.18, an immature male labelled as a female.

I recently located a third specimen of *R. dulitensis* from Sabah in the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH). This is AMNH 541976, a fully adult male, also collected by A. H. Everett on Mount Kinabalu in October 1895. The specimen shows the diagnostic broad grey band on the upper breast, below which the remainder of the breast and abdomen are silky off-white. No exact dates are given on any of these three skins, but considering the low frequency with which such birds are encountered, and that they were all collected in the same month and at the same locality, it is possible that all were members of a family group out of which the two immatures in BMNH were offspring of the bird now in AMNH.

AMNH 541976 resolves any doubt over the identity of the two BMNH immatures (as immature plumage of this taxon had not been described before), and confirms the presence of this taxon in Sabah. In spite of Kinabalu Park being one of the most intensively visited sites in South-East Asia by birdwatchers, the species has not been recorded there since 1895. This suggests it occurs in areas of the mountain not visited by birdwatchers (presumably lower than the height of the park headquarters at 1,600 m), or that birdwatchers have not been able to detect its call, which is still unknown.

Adult males of this taxon, exemplified by AMNH 541976, are very distinctive, by virtue of the 10 cm wide grey breastband, with silky off-white lower breast and abdomen. Adult females show no breastband, and differ from *R. (l.) longirostris* in having orange confined to the upper breast, fading to off-white lower breast and abdomen. Both sexes also differ from *R. (l.) longirostris* in a range of subtle colour differences on the wing coverts and flight feathers (Davison 1999).

The two specimens registered at BMNH are both immature, at a very similar or identical stage of growth (shown both by measurements and by stage of moult), collected in the same month (conceivably the same day, as the date was not recorded) and at the same locality. It can be inferred that they are siblings from one brood or family party. The very different museum accession dates (1898 and 1969, based on their registered numbers) do not relate to the field collection dates, and presumably reflect the different dispersal history of skins from Everett's collections, the 1969 accession having been obtained by BMNH via the Hewitt skin collection.

Specimen 98.12.8.75 is a female as labelled. The feathers of the chin and throat are light ginger chestnut (female character), each feather having a buff shaft streak, stronger on the throat (immature character). This colour

pattern continues uniformly down the breast, breaking up into scattered plain orange-buff feathers on the flanks and there is no trace of grey below (female characters). At the sides of the breast some feathers have differing amounts of dark brown vermiculations (immature character). The centre of the lower breast, abdomen and the lower flanks are silky textured creamy buff (species character).

Specimen 1969.29.18 is probably an immature male (not female as labelled). The chin and throat are as above, but duller and greyer (male character). The feathers at the sides of the breast each have more (immature character) and greyer, not dark brown vermiculations (male character). The orange-buff feathering extends less far down the breast and is paler, duller and dirtier-looking, giving way higher up the abdomen to uniformly pale, sullied, smoky grey flanks, belly and vent (species character).

The immature state of these two specimens is demonstrated by their measurements, given below, and by the following plumage characters. In both, the supercilium above and behind the eye is broken into dark brown feathering with buff shaft streaks. Buff shaft streaks continue from the sides of the throat and breast round to the hind neck and become wider. (In adults of both *R. longirostris* and *R. dulitensis* these buff shaft streaks are fewer, are not present on the hind neck, and tend to form two braces down the mantle.) In both specimens the bill appears to be rosy, paler towards the tip, with a dark line along the ridge of the culmen. Both specimens have the outer primary (P10) plain brown; P9 and P8 are increasingly vermiculated with buff on the outer web.

The measurements of the three specimens (in millimetres) are as follows. The immature female BMNH 98.12.8.75 has wing 182, tail 47, tarsus 53, culmen c.21 and gape c.31 mm. The immature male BMNH 1969.29.18 has wing 184, tail 48, tarsus 53, culmen c.21 and gape c.31 mm. The adult male AMNH 541976 has wing 204, tail 86 and tarsus 60 mm, the bill not having been measured.

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A re-evaluation of the status of Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* in South-East Asia

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Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* is usually listed as occurring widely, if rarely, in South-East Asia, primarily the northern parts. Robson (2005) considered the species (as *A. r. vindhiana*) to be a vagrant to North, Central and South Myanmar, North-West Thailand and West and East Tonkin. Interpretation of past records of '*A. rapax*' is hindered by the wide former treatment of Steppe Eagle *A. nipalensis* as a subspecies of *A. rapax* (e.g. Vaurie 1965). Moreover, review of the status of Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraetus fasciatus* in South-East Asia (Duckworth *et al.* in press, where the relevant specimens are depicted) found that the two published historical specimens purportedly of *A. r. vindhiana* from South-East Asia east of Myanmar were both Bonelli's Eagles. This accords with the statement of Rasmussen and Anderton (2005) that Tawny Eagle has been 'reported as vagrant SE Asia (but non-migratory, so confirmation needed; some specimens misidentified)'. This note, therefore, reviews the status of Tawny Eagle in South-East Asia.

Occurrence in Thailand is based solely on the specimen of Meyer de Schauensee (1930), collected at Chiang Mai (18°47'N 98°59'E; at an elevation of 900 feet [c.300 m]) on 20 December 1928, and housed at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (ANSP 87531). This is a juvenile (first-plumage) Bonelli's Eagle. Presence in West Tonkin is based on the specimen reported by Delacour (1930a, 1930b), a male collected at Sa Pa (= Chapa, 22°20'N 103°50'E) on 14 December 1929, housed at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris (MNHN CG1931-151). This is also a Bonelli's Eagle, in its first winter. Various secondary sources citing occurrence of the species in West Tonkin are not explicitly based on this record (e.g. Delacour and Jabouille 1940, Dang Huy Huynh and Hoang Minh Khien 1995), but we have traced no other original record from West Tonkin.

Occurrence in East Tonkin was based upon a sight record of H. Stevens (in Kinnear 1929: 121–122) that 'a magnificent eagle observed in heavy forest at Bao-Ha could only have been *Aquila nipalensis*', about which Delacour and Jabouille (1931: 78) opined, without giving reasons, that 'we think rather that it was an *A. r. vindhiana*' [original in French]. This cannot now be accepted as any species. There has never been any claim of occurrence in Laos or Cambodia, although '*A. rapax*' is sometimes listed predictively (e.g. McNeely 1975).

The Central Myanmar record is based upon Macdonald (1906), who wrote that the species was 'rare. The eggs were brought to me in December'. The lack of explicit mention of a specimen of the bird itself urges caution over this record and indeed Smythies (1940) wrote that '*Aquila rapax vindhiana*...is the commonest eagle of India, but there is no proof that it occurs in Burma, apart from one record based on eggs alone. For the present therefore it is not admitted to the Burma List'. He later removed his caveat over Macdonald's information, giving no explanation, but probably because after his first edition he added that 'there is one record from near Thayetmo' (Smythies 1953, 1986, 2001). This latter, the source of listings for South Myanmar, is based on Blanford (1895) who stated that it 'occurr[ed] in Upper Burma near Thayet Myo [19°19'N 95°11'E], as there are specimens collected by Oates in the British Museum'. One such specimen, BMNH 1882.1.9.16 (December 1871), is still there, but has been re-identified as a Steppe Eagle, as have two other Oates specimens once labelled as '*A. vindhiana*', from around Pegu (= Bago; 17°20'N 96°29'E), BMNH 1882.1.9.17–18 (27 February 1877 and 20 November 1876); these latter presumably caused Blanford's mention of multiple specimens from Thayetmyo through Oates. Apparently the only other published historical mention