Birds Recently Sighted in Hkakaborazi Region, Northern Myanmar

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Introduction

Hkakaborazi region is a narrow strip of the western escarpment of Yunnan Province in China, once part of a continuous land formation comprising the Tibetan Plateau to the east (Kingdon-Ward 1944). At the most northern extremities of Myanmar is a sparsely populated, little-explored region that is generally referred to as the icy mountains —containing some lesser-known Himalayan peaks, including Mount Hkakaborazi, estimated at 5,881m high (Figure 9).

Designated as a protected area in 1996, the Ministry of Forestry declared the area north of the Nam Tami River to the Chinese border as Hkakaborazi National Park in 1998 (Figure 9) and submitted a proposal for upgrading Hkakaborazi to the status of a World Natural Heritage site to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

This report is the outcome of data collected during two surveys that were carried out by biological expeditions of Myanmar Forest Department supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society, New York.

Objectives

- · To assess the presence and distribution of avifauna
- · To find unrecorded bird species and Sino-Himalayan bird species
- To make recommendations for the active management and protection of Hkakaborazi National Park.

Methods

The data on bird presence were obtained by observations with binoculars and telescopes, netting with mist nets, and examination of hunters' kills in villages. In March / April 1997, we travelled and observed birds on the main trail from Putao to Rasang Camp (28° 19' N, 97° 39' E) (Figure 9). A second bird survey was carried out between 25 April and 24 May 1998, and started at Putao Town. We walked and observed birds along the main trail to Gawle via Naungmon Town and back to Putao via Babaw and Machanbaw. During this survey, mist netting was carried out in the Nanhti Camp and Naungmon Town areas.

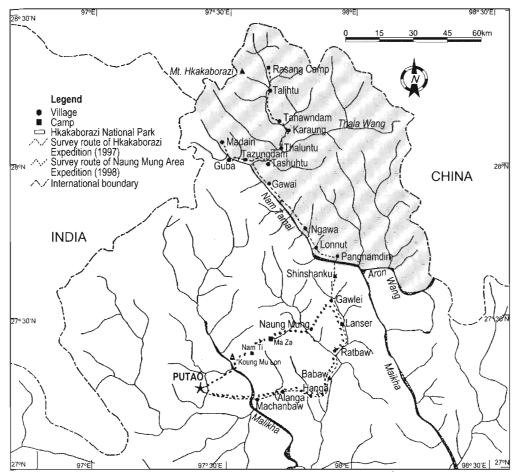


Figure 9: North Myanmar showing the Khakaborazi Protected Area (shaded), survey route and villages visited during the 1997 and 1998 expeditions

Survey Route

Between 2 March and 13 April 1997, the first bird survey was carried out by a biological expedition of Myanmar Forest Department into far northern Myanmar, starting at the town of Putao (27° 16' N, 97° 24' E) and reaching as far north as Rasang Camp (28° 19' N, 97° 39' E) (Figure 9). For the purpose of bird watching, nearly 290 km were covered. During the second bird survey, we travelled from Putao and observed birds on the main trail. We also set up the bird netting (for detailed identification) at two places (Nanhti and Natmgmon).

Results

A quick assessment of bird presence and distribution was made during the two bird surveys; the total bird count was 160 species and out of that 33 Himalayan species were recorded. Although the presence of many species of birds is expected in this area, a lower number than expected was recorded due to the weather conditions and time limitations. Two white georgette flycatchers, one grey-cheeked fulvetta and one golden babbler were captured in two days by mist netting in Nanhti Camp. One active nest of wreathed hornbill was seen 2.4 km away from

Nanhti Camp. One blue-rumped pitta captured in a snare was seen near the cultivated area near Nanhti Camp. Three red-vented bulbul, two oriental white-eye, four grey-cheeked Fulvetta, one common tailorbird, one red-whiskered bulbul, and one puffthroated babbler were netted in three days near Naungmon Town. One red-whiskered bulbul nest with three eggs was found near Naungmon and one greater-coucal nest with three eggs was found by the stream near Gawle. One (live) captured kalij pheasant was seen in Alanga Village. During the survey, the songs of the large hawkcuckoo, the great barbet, the golden-throated barbet, and the blue-throated barbet were heard every day. Although there are many wetland habitats including streams, rivers, and lakes, no migratory birds were found during the survey. Although their habitats are still in good shape, few birds of prey and hombill species were seen, presumably because it was their breeding season.

Discussion

The Hkakaborazi region is the only place that contains Sino-Himalayan subtropical forests and Sino-Himalayan temperate forests, which provide habitats for Sino-Himalayan avifauna. From the two surveys in 1997 and 1998, we were able to identify 33 Himalayan species that indicated it was a transition zone between the Indo-Malayan and Sino-Himalayan region. Although few bird species were recorded during the survey, considerable numbers of threatened species were listed (Appendix 1). There was no evidence of migratory birds in the wetland habitats, which might be explained by the fact that the survey was carried out of the migratory season, which is between mid-October and late March. Although there was no illegal bird trade in the region, large species such as birds of prey and hornbill were shot by crossbow and some birds that live on the ground, such as pitta pheasant, were captured by snares for subsistence purposes.

Hkakaborazi National Park adjoins the neighbouring countries of India and China. We therefore need to cooperate with them in transboundary conservation matters.

Recommendations

- A systematic ornithological survey should be carried out to study the presence and abundance of existing bird species.
- The endangered, endemic, Himalayan bird species should be categorised and the Hkakaborazi region should be designated an 'important bird area for biodiversity conservation'.
- Detailed identification of avifauna should be conducted and the species so far unrecorded should be studied.

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Appendix 1: Birds recorded in the Hkakaborazi region

ahundam (6300')			×	×				×	×															
Babaw Pangnandim Tazungdam Tahundam (1700') (3670') (4730')			×	×																×				
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Babaw (1700')			×	×									×	×					×	×				
Alanga (1520')	×									×		×	×	×		×	×	×	×				×	×
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Namti (2050')			×	×									×			×	×	×	×				×	×
Putao (1342')																			×	×			×	×
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Scientific Name	Butorides striatus	Ciconia nigra	Milvus migrans	Spilornis cheela	Circus melanoleucos	Falco subbuteo	Arborophila rufogularis	Ithaginis cruentus	Lophophorus impejanus	Lophura leucomelanis	Phasianus colchicus	Gallus gallus	Polyplectron bicalcaratum	Vanellus indicus	Ibidorhyncha struthersii	Treron apicauda	Ducula aenea	Ducula badia	Streptopelia chinensis	Streptopelia orientalis	Chalcophaps indica	Psittacula alexandri	Cuculus sparveriodes	Cuculus micropterus
English Name	Little heron	Black stork	Black kite	Crest serpent-eagle	Pied harrier	Northern hobby	Rufous-throated partridge	Blood pheasant*	Himalayan menal	Kalij pheasant*	Common pheasant	Red jungle fowl	Grey peacock-pheasant	Red-wattled lapwing	lbisbil *	Pintailed pigeon*	Green imperial pigeon	Mountain imperial pigeon*	Spotted dove	Oriental turtle-dove	Emerald dove	Red-breasted parakeet	Large hawkcuckoo*	24 Indian cuckoo
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Appendix 1 Cont.....

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S	R/M	CR	R/M	S.	~	CR	~	CR	S	~	~	œ	~	œ	~	<u>~</u>	~	CR	~	~	S	~	
Cacomantis merulinus	Surniculus lugubris	Centropus sinensis	Clamator coromandus	Otus spilocephalus	Collocalia brevirostris	Cypsiurus balasiensis	Harpactes erythrocephalus R	Alcedo atthis	Halcyon smyrnensis	Halcyon pileata	Upupa epops	Aceros nipalensis	Aceros undulatus	Anthracoceros albirostris	Buceros bicornis	Megalaima virens	Megalaima franklinii	Megalaima asiatica	Picus flavinucha	Dinoplum shorii	Dinopium javanense	Picoides canicapillus	
25 Plaintive cuckoo	Drongo cuckoo	Greater coucal	Chestnut-winged cuckoo	Mountain scopsowl *	Himalayan swiftlet *	Asian palm-swift	Red-headed trogon	Common kingfisher	White-throated kingfisher	Black-capped kingfisher	Common hoopoe	Rufous-necked hornbill	Wreathed hornbill	Oriental pied hornbill	Great hornbill	Great barbet	Golden-throated barbet	Blue-throated barbet	Greater yellownape *	Himalayan goldenback *	Common goldenback	Grey-capped woodpecker	

Appendix 1 Cont...

49	Rusty-naped pitta	Pitta oatesi	8		×							
22	Blue-rumped pitta	Pitta soror	~		×							
21	Bam swallow	Hirundo rustica	Σ	×								
25	Nepal housemartin	Delichon nipalensis	L				×					
23	Large woodshrike	Tephrodornis gularis	CR			×	×	×				
4 2	Rosy minivet	Pericrocotus roseus	~		×		×	×				
22	Long-tailed minivet	Pericrocotus ethologus	~	×	×	×	×	×			×	
26	Scarlet minivet	Pericrocotus flammeus	S.	×	×	×	×	×	×			
22	Common iora	Aegithina tiphia	光 (공									×
82	Orange-bellied leafbird*	Chloropsis hardwickii	~				×	×	×			
23	Black-crested bulbul	Pycnonotus melanicterus	CR				×					
99	Red-whiskered bulbul	Pycnonotus jocosus	CR	×	×	×	×	×	×	×		
61	Red-vented bulbul	Pycnonotus cafer	~	×	×	×	×	×	×			
62	Black bulbul	Hypsipetes leucocephalus	~		×	×	~	×	×			
63	63 White-throated bulbul*	Alophoixus flaveolus	~				×	×	×			
64	Mountain bulbul	Hypsipetes mcclellandii	CR		×		×					
65	Black drongo	Dicrurus macrocercus	CR	×	×	×	×	×	×			
99	Ashy drongo	Dicrurus leucophaeus	CR	×	×	×	×	×			×	
29	Bronzed drongo	Dicrurus aeneus	CR		×	×	×	×	×			
89	Spangled drongo	Dicrurus hottentottus	CR				×	×	×			
69	Greater racket-tailed drongo	Dicrurus paradiseus	S.		×		×	×		×		
70	Maroon oriole*	Oriolus traillii	~		×	×	×	×	×			
71	71 Asian fairy bluebird	Irena puella	CR		×					 		
72	72 Green magpie*	Cissa chinensis	~	×								
				1								

Appendix 1 Cont.....

74 G		0	_			<		×	<		
	Grey treepie	Dendrocitta formosae	~	×	×	×	×	×	×		
	Collared treepie*	Dendrocitta frontalis	~			×	×	×	×		
76 . H	House crow	Corvus splendens	~			×					
77 Li	Large-billed crow	Corvus macrorhynchos	85		×		×	×	×		
78 C	Collared crow	Corvus torquatus	~							×	
79 S	Sultan tit*	Melanochlora sultanea	~		×			×	×		
9 08	Great tit	Parus major	~							×	×
81 Ye	Yellow-cheeked tit*	Parus spilonotus	<u>~</u>							×	
82 C	Chestnut-vented nuthatch*	Sitta nagaensis	∝				×				
83 C	Chestnut-bellied nuthatch	Sitta castanea	<u>~</u>					×			
84 Ve	Velvet-fronted nuthatch	Sitta frontalis	œ					×	×		
85 B	Brown dipper*	Cinclus pallasii	~		×		×				
86 P	Puff-throated babbler	Pellorneum ruficeps	8			×		×			
87 W	White-browed scimitar-babbler*	Pomatorhinus schisticeps	25					×			
9 88	Golden babbler	Stachyris chrysaea	~		×		×		×	×	
9 68	Grey-throated babbler	Stachyris nigriceps	~		×						
№ 06	White-necked babbler	Stachyris leucotis	~		×			×			
91 W	White-crested laughing thrush	Garrulax leucolophus	S.		×	×	×	×	×		
92 R	Red-tailed laughing thrush	Garrulax milnei	<u>~</u>								×
93 (4	Greater necklaced laughing thrush	Garrulax pectoralis	~		×	×		×	×		
94 C	Chestnut-backed laughing thrush Garrulax nuchalis	Garrulax nuchalis	æ			×					
95 S	Silver-eared mesia*	Leiothrix argentauris	~		×	×	×	×	×		
၁ 96	Cutia*	Cutia nipalensis	2		×		×	×			

Appendix 1 Cont.....

6	97 Grey-cheeked fulvetta	Alcippe mornisonia	CR		×							
86	Nepal fulvetta	Alcippe nipalensis	85		×							
66	Long-tailed sibia	Heterophasia picaoides	~		×	×	×	X	×			
100	100 Rufous-vented yuhinia	Yuhina occipitalis	~		×							
101	101 Black-chinned yuhinia*	Yuhina nigrimenta	~		×							
102	102 Orange-flanked bush-robin	Tarsiger cyanarus	ш.								×	×
103	103 Oriental magpie robin	Copsychus soularis	ಜ	×	×	×	×	×	×			
5	104 White-rumped shama	Copsychus malabaricus	CR		×						×	
105	105 Daurian redstart	Phoenicurus auroreus				×						×
106	106 Plumbeous water redstart	Rhyacornis fuliginosus	~				×			×	X	
107	107 Slaty-backed forktail	Enicurus schistaceus	~				×					
100	108 White-crowned forktail	Enicurus leschenaulti	~		×			×				
103	109 Stonechat	Saxicola torquata	~							×	×	×
110	110 Grey bushchat	Saxicola ferrea	~									×
111	111 River chat	Thamnolaea leucocephala	æ					×				
112	112 Blue rock thrush	Monticola solitarius	_	×			-					
113	113 Blue whistling thrush	Myophonus caeruleus	CR&M				×					
114	114 Chestnut thrush	Turdus rubrocanus	W				×		×			
115	115 Dusky warbler	Phylloscopus fuscatus	CM					×	×			
116	116 Greenish warbler	Phylloscopus trochiloides	M							×	×	×
117	117 Striated grassbird	Megalurus palustris	R					×	×		×	×
118	118 Hill prinia	Prinia atrogularis	Z.				,				×	×

ppendix 1 Cont....

tailorbird Orthotomus atrogularis CR llorbird Orthotomus cuculatus R l tesia Fresia olivea R h warbler Bradypterus M tacsanowskius CM ltycatcher* Muscicapa dauurica CM tted flycatcher* Ficedula monileger R ycatcher Ficedula monileger R d flycatcher Ficedula westermanni F d flycatcher Cyornis rubeculoides R canary flycatcher Cyornis banyumas F canary flycatcher Culicicapa ceylonensis CR ed niltava* Miltava sundara R d fantail Rhipidura albicollis CR ed fantail Rhipidura albicollis CR Imonarch Hypothymis azurea CR ise flycatcher Tersiphone paradisi R	×	
lesia Tesia olivea R X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X		•
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il Motacilla alba CM X X X X X X X	×	
	×	×
137 Grey wagtail Motacilla cinerea M X	×	×
138 Yellow wagtail Motacilla flava M X X	×	
139 Yellowhooded wagtail or citrine Motacilla citreola M X X Wagtail	×	
140 Richard's pipit Anthus richardi CR X X		

Appendix 1 Cont....

141	141 Ashy woodswallow	Artamus fuscus	CR	×							
142	142 Brown shrike	Lanius cristatus	≨			×	×	×			
143	143 Burmese shrike	Lanius collurioides	~	×		×	×				
144	144 Grey-backed shrike*	Lanius tephronotus	Σ	×				×			
145	145 Long-tailed shrike	Lanius schach	~	×	×		×				
146	146 Chestnut-tailed starling	Sturnus malabaricus	<u>م</u> د	×	×						
147	147 Common myna	Acridotheres tristis	ಜ	×		×	×	×	×		
148	148 Collared myna	Acridotheres albocinctus	~	×							
149	149 Purple sunbird	Nectarinia asiatica	~					×	×		
150	150 Green-tailed sunbird*	Aethopyga nipalensis	~			×					×
151	151 Black-throated sunbird*	Aethopyga saturata	~					×		×	
152	152 Crimson sunbird	Aethopyga siparaja	~	×				×			
153	153 Streaked spiderhunter*	Arachnothera magna	~		×		×		×		
72	154 Plain flowerpecker	Dicaeum concolor	~				×	×			
155	155 Oriental white-eye	Zosterops palpebrosus	∞	×	×			×			
156	156 Eurasian tree sparrow	Passer montanus	S	×	-	×		×	×		
157	157 House sparrow	Passer domesticus	~			×	×		×		
158	158 White-rumped munia	Lonchura striata	~	×				×	×		
159	159 Scaly-breasted munia	Lonchura punctulata	~			×					
160	160 Crested bunting	Melophus lathami	2								×
*	40	11 T T T T T T T T T T T T T T T T T T									

* = Himalayan species; R = resident; CR = common resident; F = found, M = migrant
Note: 38 Himalayan species out of 160 recorded during 2 survey trips (Hkakaborazi Expedition 1997 and Naungmung Expedition 1998)