

CAMBODIA RECENT BIRD REPORTS, AUGUST-OCTOBER 2011

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Thanks to all contributors. In the future, please send any records you think may be of interest (for current or earlier months) to tevens@wcs.org and fredbaksey@yahoo.com. Earlier editions can be found at www.samveasna.org. Names follow Craig Robson (2008) *A field guide to the birds of Thailand and South-east Asia*. National Park, Wildlife Sanctuary, Protected Forest, Bengal Florican Conservation Area and are abbreviated as NP, WS, PF and BFCA. *Sam Veasna Center* and *Angkor Center for Biodiversity Conservation* are abbreviated ACCB and SVC respectively.

Next digest will cover November and December 2011

GENERAL

For the third consecutive year, coordinated **White-shouldered Ibis** censuses were conducted across key sites in the country on 8-9 August, September and October (per SP). Counts at roosting sites totalled 535, 644 and 591 birds respectively. The September census is a record high, significantly above the BirdLife global population estimate of 450 mature individuals. The breakdown by site for that month was 262 birds in Western Siem Pang, 242 birds in Lumphat WS, 103 birds in the central Kratie-Stung Treng section of the Mekong and 37 birds in Kulen Promtep WS.

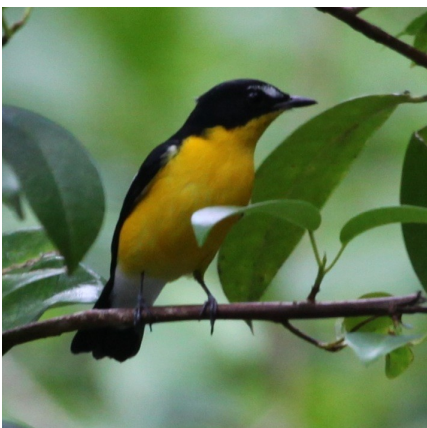
SOUTH-EAST

At Basset marshes on 15 August, there were a flock of 15 **Asian Golden Weavers**, including at least two recently fledged young being fed, at least 23 **Baya Weavers** (15+ nests under construction) and a pair of **Chestnut Munias** building a nest (TE).

An interesting site just 30 minutes north of Phnom Penh across the Prek Phneu bridge was visited on 17 August (TE, FG) and on 18 September (TE, RvZ). The floodplain area on the Mekong east bank had a roost of over 1,000 and 1,500 waterbirds on the first and second visit respectively. The majority of the birds consisted of **egrets** (mostly Cattle), **cormorants** and **Black-crowned Night-herons** (few hundreds). On the 17 August, there were at least ten **Darters**, one **Purple Heron**, several **Black** and **Yellow Bitterns**, and a couple of **Spot-billed Ducks**. A single **Little Ringed Plover**, and juveniles **Asian Pied** and **Black-collared Starlings** on the same date were also noteworthy. Additionally, a **Peregrine Falcon** was seen chasing 50+ **Oriental Pratincoles** there on 1 October (TE).

The secondary forest adjacent to Phnom Tamao zoo is another site definitely deserving regular visits from Phnom Penh-based birdwatchers. A couple of morning hours on 18 August yielded 40 species, including the first **Oriental Honey-buzzard** for the southeast, many **Zebra Doves** and forest residents such as **Puff-throated Babbler** and **Brown Prinia** (FG, CS).

Incidental birds encountered during a trip to birder-neglected Svay Rieng province nevertheless included the third and fourth inland records of **Golden-bellied Gerygone**: two birds in Svay Rumpeah Commune, Svay Teah District on 4 August and a single singing at the edge of Svay Rieng town on 5 August, both being in *Eucalyptus* tree near water (TE).



Yellow-rumped Flycatcher
at Prey Nup mangrove
4/09/2011 (Photo: Rob Overtoom)

Six **Small Pratincoles** in flooded paddies at Takeo on 8 September unveil some monsoon whereabouts of this riverine species, as there was no previous record during the August-October period. On the road to Kirivong, on 20 September, a pair of **Greater Painted-snipes** hiding half-submerged in a flooded paddy were the firsts for Takeo province and only the second south-east record (all RO).

SOUTH-WEST

At Prey Nup mangrove on 4 September, there was a great harvest of breeding records with **Black-and-Red Broadbill** at nest, a female **Copper-throated Sunbird** building a nest, juvenile **Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker** and a young **Oriental White-eye** begging for food. But passage migrants also put up a

decent show with the first record for the site of **Chestnut-winged Cuckoo**, and two **Yellow-rumped Flycatchers** (including one photographed male) – only the fourth national record of this attractive species. Several **Little Bronzed Cuckoos** were seen and heard on the same date and on 25 September. Small groups of **Painted Storks** were present through September-October, with 18 adults and eight juveniles on 25 September. Fifteen **Black-crowned Night-herons** roosting on 9 October were the first for the site (all RO).

Two **Grey-tailed Tattlers**, a single **Great Knot** and 10+ **Little Terns** were of note at Kampot estuary on 3 September, as were 24 **Bar-tailed Godwits** on 24 September. On the same date, there was a single **Long-toed Stint** at Kampot saltpans (all RO).

And last but not least, the most extraordinary news of the period is indisputably the rediscovery of **Giant Ibis** in south-west Cambodia: a single bird walking in dry deciduous forest north of Sre Ambel was camera-trapped on 30 August (per LP/Wildlife Alliance). It was long thought extirpated from the region, as there had been no sign of the species since 1918!

TONLE SAP

A single **Red-necked Phalarope**, a rare passage migrant, was photographed at Phnom Kraom on 9 September, as well as a male **Greater Painted-snipe**, a species previously exclusively known from Ang Tropeang Thmor in the north-west (AJ).



Red-necked Phalarope at Phnom Kraom, 9/09/2011 (Photo: Ashish John)

NORTH-WEST

A **Bar-bellied Pitta** heard and seen near Kbal Spean on 7 August is a rediscovery for the north-west as there had been no record since the bird collected at Angkor in 1928! **Brown Wood-Owl** and **Blyth's Frogmouth** were calling there on 14 September, and a **Rufous-bellied Eagle** flew by on 30 October (all MH).

A SVC guide training (SvO *et al.*) found four **Comb Ducks** on a reservoir at Bantey Chhmar Protected Landscape (a new site for this rare species) on 9 August, and recorded a pair of **White-rumped Pygmy-falcons** at Song Rokavorn Community Forest, Oddar Meanchey on 13 August. Unseasonal **Black-naped Orioles** were again listed from the latter site, suggesting an atypical year or perhaps early migrant passage.

One **Indian Thick-knee** was photographed at Ang Tropeang Thmor on 17 August (AJ), and an **Eurasian Wryneck** was again present there, this time along the east dyke, on 20 October (SS). This is the third country record of this migrant species, all coming from this site during this year.

Amongst the 51 species recorded at Chreaw on 27 August were a single **Watercock**, at least five **Pacific Golden Plovers** (presumably on passage), two **Kentish Plovers**, four **Pied Kingfishers**, a single **Asian Pied Starling**, and three males and 15 juveniles **House Sparrows** (SS, SvO, FG, RO *et al.*).

NORTH



White Wagtail at Tbeng, 22/09/2011 (Photo: Ashish John)

A trip to the north of Phnom Kulen WS in search of Masked Finfoot took place on 19-21 August (FG). During the boat travel along the Stung Sen upstream from Takong, a total of five **Green Peafowls** were seen roosting at three locations, and a probable **Chestnut-winged Cuckoo** was flushed. The boat survey along the Stung Memay and surrounding flooded forest yielded an abandoned nest and bubbling call as the only evidences of the elusive finfoot. Three **Asian Openbills** and a starting colony of **Oriental Darters** (30+ birds and 15 nests on one tree) were of interest, as was a dark-morph **Changeable Hawk-eagle** at its nest. **Pied Fantail** was, surprisingly, a first record for the northern plains, and **Zebra Dove** was heard or seen at several places.

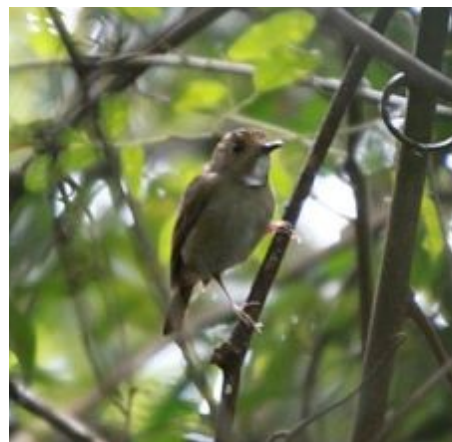
The floods around Tbeng Meanchey brought in two new species for the northern plains: a winter-plumage **White-winged Tern** and a single **White Wagtail**, both likely on passage, photographed on 21 and 22 September respectively (AJ).

At Tropeang Krous vulture restaurant (Chhep PF), there were three **Sarus Cranes** on 10-12 August, and two birds on 15 September, and up to 16 **Greater Adjutants** on 23-25 October (per SC).

NORTH-EAST

A single **Common Sandpiper** stopped over for at least three days at a quarry at Seima PF (MH). This is an addition for the site.

The most exciting records made during a SVC guide trip in Mondolkiri on 10-16 October (SvO, SS, DN *et al.*) were undoubtedly three firsts for Cambodia: three **Chestnut-fronted Shrike-babblers**, a single **Rufous-browed Flycatcher** (seen and photographed) and a single **Spot-throated Babbler**, all at 900m at Dak Dam on 15-16 October. At the same site, **Grey-chinned Minivet** is the first confirmed for the north-east as would be a claimed **White-tailed Leaf-warbler** (pending details). Also noteworthy were two **Pale-capped Pigeons** and four **Chestnut-flanked White-eyes** at Dak Dam, and a single **Dark-sided Flycatcher** on Sen Monorom plateau on 14 October. This looks like the year of reappearance for the white-eye, with fourth records in the past 12 months, after over 80 years without a sign of the species in Cambodia.



Rufous-browed Flycatcher at Dak Dam, 14/10/2011 (Photo: Yon Tony/SVC)

Greater Adjutant was present in several occasions and sites in Western Siem Pang throughout the period. At the vulture restaurant, there were five birds on 13 August, 17 birds on 20 September and five birds on 6-7 October. Additionally, four birds were at a cow carcass on 14 September and nine birds at a buffalo carcass on 20 September. Finally, three, twelve and six birds were at three different buffalo carcasses in Western Siem Pang, on 4, 11 and 23 October respectively. On the Sesan restaurant site, there were three **Giant Ibis** on 18 September (all per SC).

OBSERVERS

AJ	Ashish John
CS	Chhin Sophea
DN	Duong Nara
FG	Frédéric Goes
LP	Lesley Perlman
MH	Markus Handschuh
RO	Rob Overtoom
RvZ	Robert van Zalinge
SC	Song Chansocheat
SvO	Sambovannak Orn (Johnny)
SP	Sum Phearum
SS	Sanh Sophoan
SeV	Seng Vanna
SoV	Son Virak
SuV	Sun Visal
TE	Tom Evans