

CAMBODIA RECENT BIRD REPORTS, JANUARY-FEBRUARY 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 tevans@wcs.org and fredbaksey@yahoo.com. Earlier editions of the digest can be found at www.samveasna.org. Names follow Craig Robson (2008) *A field guide to the birds of Thailand and South-east Asia*.

Next digest will cover March-April 2011

GENERAL

The coordinated dry season **Sarus Crane** censuses began again in mid January, resulting in 579 cranes across eight sites in Cambodia and Vietnam, including 304 at Boeung Prek Lapeuv and 127 at Ang Trapeang Thmor (many observers per RvZ). At this season a large proportion of the population is usually still scattered at sites away from the main count locations. The February count produced an impressive 869 birds at 11 sites across the two countries, with most of the Cambodian birds at Ang Trapeang Thmor and Kampong Trach (plus the contiguous Phu My in Vietnam). This is the second highest regional count since records began in 2001. Perhaps the March count will produce an all-time record?

Sixteen active **vulture nests** were under surveillance across the country, mainly in Preah Vihear Protected Forest, Western Siem Pang and Mondulkiri Protected Forest - six Red-headed, nine White-rumped and one Slender-billed (many observers per SC).



Black-faced Spoonbills near Boeung Prek Lapeuv
Photo: J. Eames

SOUTH-EAST

Ground observers finally tracked down the **Black-faced Spoonbills** that had first been recorded visiting Cambodia using satellite technology (see previous digest for details). A group of four birds was photographed on 12-13 February near Boeng Prek Lepeuw (JE, FL, Vanna and the Local Conservation Group). At Boeung Prek Lepeuw itself several **Asian Golden Weaver** nests were found in at least two locations on 3 and 20 February with 130 **Painted Storks**, 12 **Black-headed Ibis** and five **Glossy Ibis** also seen on the latter date (RvZ, AJ and family).

On 29 January Basset Marshes held 84 **Little Grebes** and six **Chestnut Munias** (TE).

SOUTH-WEST

Single **Far Eastern Curlews** seen and photographed on the Kampot estuary mudflats on 29 January and 20 February were the first two records for Cambodia (RO). Other notable records included repeated observations of **Great Knot** (six on 1 January, four on 9 January and 20+ on 20 February) plus a **Ruddy Turnstone** and a **Gull-billed Tern** on 20 February (all RO, with TE on 1 January).



Far Eastern Curlew, Kampot, 20/2/2011 (with Grey Plovers)
Photo: R. Overtoom



Nordmann's Greenshanks at Koh Kapik
Photo: R. Overtoom

At least 1000 shorebirds were recorded on 28 February during the first documented ornithological visit to the Koh Kapik Ramsar site¹ since 1996 (RO, FL, VE, PE). The highlight was undoubtedly at least 24 **Nordmann's Greenshank**, the first record of this globally Endangered bird for Cambodia since the original Koh Kapik records in 1996. Other notable records included at least 80 **Broad-billed Sandpipers**, 150+ **Bar-tailed Godwits** and about 20 **Great Knots**, whilst **Ruddy Kingfishers** were commonly heard in the mangroves.

An ornithologist (HN) joined a multi-disciplinary team from Fauna and Flora International surveying Mount

Samkos during 10-22 December 2010 from two camps at 970 and 1280 m altitude. The highlight was undoubtedly a male **Silver Oriole** on two consecutive days at about 960m. There have only been a handful of Cambodia records, all from the southwest. Other notable records included three contacts with **Chestnut-headed Partridges**, at least one group of **Cambodian Laughingthrushes**, one **Jerdon's Baza**, small numbers of **Great Hornbills**, two **Wreathed Hornbills** on a single date and one **Green Cochoa**. **Grey-bellied Tesia** was common above 800 m and **Pygmy Wren-babbler** above 1280 m. A full account of the trip will be published elsewhere.

Three **House Sparrows** were seen at the Prek Chak-Ha Tien border crossing on 2 January (TE).

The first **Little Bronze Cuckoo** of the year was heard at Prey Nup Mangroves on 30 January, and a **Greater Spotted Eagle** was photographed (RO).

Six **Alexandrine Parakeets** in the grounds of the Independence Hotel, Sihanoukville on 12-13 February, were one of only a handful of records for the Southwest (RvZ). A **Lesser Frigatebird** were seen and photographed (with a second unidentified frigatebird seen) just off the coast of Sihanoukville on 25 February (FD).

TONLE SAP

The most exciting record from the florican grasslands was the discovery in January of an occupied **White-shouldered Ibis** nest in Baray Bengal Florican Conservation Area, the first confirmation of breeding in the area despite recurrent dry season records for almost a decade. Guarding was attempted but the nest sadly failed (per RvZ). **Indian Spotted Eagles** have been seen in the vicinity of last year's nest site near to Thnori village but do not seem to have begun breeding yet (per RvZ).

On 17 January 6 **Greater Adjutants** were seen with 12 **Lesser Adjutants** at a pool east of O Ta Teng in Baray (per RvZ). On 26-27 February a visit to Krous Kraom produced 40 **Yellow-breasted Bunting**², two **Zebra Doves** and in a hay rick far from nearest village, 30 **House Sparrows** (RvZ).

A **Masked Finfoot** was seen on 7 January at Prek Toal along the Prek Preah Daemchheu (SS, DS /Rockjumper Tours). Despite heavy coverage there are only occasional records of this very rare species at the site.



White-shouldered Ibis chicks, Baray
Photo: Sin Sienglay

¹ Prospective visitors can now contact Paul Everingham at the newly established Centre for Wildlife and Environment byroncanoe@hotmail.com

² We wish to collate all records of this increasingly threatened species and would encourage other observers to submit sightings from anywhere in Cambodia.



NORTH-WEST

A **Wryneck** was seen and photographed on 15 February 2011 along the Prey Mwan road towards Ang Trapeang Thmor, just 2.5 km from the main road, and found again at the same site using a tape on 2 March. These are the first records for Cambodia (SS, NB).

The Ang Trapeang Thmor **Painted Stork** colony holds 17 nests this year, and hatching began on 30 January (per HC). An SVC tour group on 31 January recorded c.800 **Comb Ducks**, two **Greater Spotted Eagles**, two **Black Kites** and 6-8 **Black-eared Kites** (Thai Raptor Group per CK). The resident population of Black Kites in Indochina is now very small and all Cambodian records of this form are worth reporting. Observers should be especially alert for signs of breeding.

An **Orange-headed Thrush** at Kbal Spean on 25 February was a first for the North-west (SM).

In mid-January a **Black-headed Ibis** was seen in the possession of bird trappers in Battambang province, intended for use as a decoy to catch others (PJ). Three **Spot-billed Pelicans** and a mixed flock of 75-100 **Asian Openbills** and **Painted Storks** were seen feeding in Moung Russei district some 30 km south of Battambang town on 9 February (PJ, CKi). On 14

February, two juvenile **Brown Fish Owls**, caught locally about two weeks earlier, were seen captive in a village near Phnom Tapaday, Battambang province (PJ).

NORTH

On 6 January five **Sarus Cranes** were seen flying across the main road near Skun (CP).

A **Himalayan Griffon** was recorded at a vulture restaurant in Preah Vihear Protected Forest on 28 January (per SC) with two **Indian Spotted Eagles** nearby on 2 February (Thai Raptor Group per CK)

Tmatboey in Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary produced an **Indian Spotted Eagle** and two **Rufous-bellied Eagles** on 1 February (JEa/Birdtour Asia). Elsewhere in the sanctuary a **Coral-billed Ground-cuckoo** camera-trapped on 22 January was the second record for the Northern Plains (per HR and RV).

NORTH-EAST

At least three, probably four pairs of **Sarus Cranes**, three of them with one-two associated juveniles, remained through the dry season in Mondulkiri Protected Forest. A **White-shouldered Ibis** over Mereuch on 7 February and single **Black-necked Stork** and **Giant Ibis** there on 27-28 February were also notable. A kayak trip along the Srepok from the Vietnamese border to Piem Ou Rove during 1-4 March produced about one **Grey-headed Fish-eagle** per 3 km but only seven **Mekong Wagtails** and eight **Oriental Darters**, plus one **Red-headed Vulture** and one **White-shouldered Ibis** (all TNEG).

On 8 January a group of 5-10 **Pale-capped Pigeons** was noted at at c 650 m along the O Romis valley near Sen Monorom, with three there on the next day, then 10+ and one bird on 15 and 16 January respectively. A **Brown-throated Sunbird** on 8 January was also a notable record for this high altitude (all TNEG).

Up to two **Orange-necked Partridges** responded to playback (but were not seen) on three mornings on 9, 10 and 12 Feb in forest very close to the Seima Protected Forest HQ (TE). An **Oriental Turtle-dove** there on 5 March (SM, MH) was a rare record for the site.

Western Siem Pang produced a **Short-toed Eagle** on 4 February and one, possibly two, **Himalayan Griffons** on 20 February (HW).

OBSERVERS

AJ	Ashish John
CK	Chaiyan Kasorndorkbua
CKi	Chor Kimshalen
CP	Colin Poole
DS	Dave Shackleford
FD	François Dufour
FL	Frank Lambert
HC	Hong Chamnan
HN	Howie Nielsen
HR	Hugo Rainey
HW	Hugh Wright
JE	Jonathon Eames
JEa	James Eaton
MH	Markus Handschuh
NB	Nick Bray
PE	Paul Everingham
PJ	Priscilla Joyner
RO	Rob Overtoom
RV	Rours Vann
RvZ	Robert van Zalinge
SC	Song Chansocheat
SM	Sang Mony
SS	Sanh Sophoan
TE	Tom Evans
TNEG	Tom Gray
VE	Vittoria Elliot