

## News and Notes

'News and Notes' is intended to provide a forum for up to date information on threatened species, on-going conservation work and other issues related to bird conservation. It will include pieces abstracted from other publications. Please send any contributions to BCI News and Notes Editor, BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0NA, UK, or e-mail them to Rob.Williams@birdlife.org.uk.

### **Austral Rail *Rallus antarcticus* rediscovered in Santa Cruz Province, Argentina**

A small population of the enigmatic Austral Rail *Rallus antarcticus* has recently been found in Santa Cruz Province, southern Patagonia, Argentina. Considered to be critically endangered if not extinct (Collar *et al.* 1992). It was hypothesised that the species had declined due to overgrazing by sheep and habitat change (Fjeldsã and Krabbe 1990), and it was last reported when a dead bird was found near El Bolson, Río Negro in 1959 (Collar *et al.* 1992).

On 12 and 13 January 1998, Juan Mazar Barnett, Santiago Imberti, German Pugnali and Marco della Seta recorded at least four birds calling from dense reedbeds bordering the Río Chico at Estancia La Angostura, and one individual was seen. Extensive tape recordings were obtained.

It is considered likely that the species will be found to be regular in areas of suitable habitat along the Río Chico and other areas in Santa Cruz and southern Patagonia, including adjacent areas of Chile. Future fieldwork is planned in Santa Cruz Province, in areas of suitable reedmarshes, and is being funded through the Neotropical Bird Club Conservation Awards Program. Fieldwork will include a survey of the species distribution, which will be conducted using tape recordings of the species calls, and an attempt to assess the species density and ecological requirements. Full details of the survey and rediscovery will be published in *Cotinga* (the journal of the Neotropical Bird Club).

Collar, N.J., Gonzaga, L.P., Krabbe, N. Madroño Nieto, A., Naranjo, L.G., Parker, T.A. and Wege, D.C. (1992) *Threatened Birds of the Americas*. Cambridge, UK, International Council for Bird Preservation.

Fjeldsã, J. and Krabbe, N. (1990) *Birds of the High Andes*. Copenhagen, Apollo Books.

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### **Cherry-throated Tanager *Nemosia rourei* rediscovered**

Forty-seven years after the last report and nearly 130 years after the only specimen was collected, the Cherry-throated Tanager *Nemosia rourei* has been rediscovered in Espirito Santo State, Brazil. The bird was previously known from the type-specimen collected at Muriaé, Minas Gerias State in 1870, a flock of eight seen in 1941 in the Limoeiro-Jatiboca area, Espirito Santo (Sick, 1979) and a possible sight record at Nova Lombardia Biological Reserve, Espirito Santo in 1992 (Scott, 1997). The bird was found on private land, where up to four individuals were seen and photographed on 22 and 24 February 1998. The discovery was made by six Brazilian researchers: Claudia Bauer, José Fernando Pacheco, Ana Cristina Venturini, Pedro Rogério de Paz, Mariana Pacheco Rehen and Luciano Petronetto do Carmo. A photograph of the bird can be viewed on the web-site of the Neotropical Bird Club (<http://www.neotropicalbirdclub.org>). Full details of the rediscovery will be published in due course.

Scott, D.A. (1997) *A possible re-sighting of Cherry-throated Tanager *Nemosia rourei* in Espirito Santo Brazil*. *Cotinga* 7, 61–63.

Sick, H. (1979) *Notes on some Brazilian Birds*. Bull. Brit. Orn. Club 99: 115–120.  
 José Fernando Pacheco in litt. March 1998.

### **Satanic Eared-nightjar *Eurostopodus diabolicus* rediscovery**

Bishop and Diamond (1997) report the rediscovery of the Satanic Eared-nightjar *Eurostopodus diabolicus* in Sulawesi. Previously known from the type specimen collected on the Minahassa peninsula in 1931, although there have been three possible records since 1980, none could be confirmed. Bishop and Diamond observed birds on four occasions, with two individuals thought to have been involved. The birds were found in primary hill forest at 1000 m and primary montane forest at 1735 m in Lore Lindu National Park, Central Sulawesi.

Bishop, K.D. and Diamond, J.M. (1997) *Rediscovery of Heinrich's Nightjar *Eurostopodus diabolicus**. Kukila 9, 71–73.

### **First Captive Breeding of the Endangered Small Kauai Thrush (Puaiohi) *Myadestes palmeri***

With a population currently estimated to be about 200 individuals, the endangered Small Kauai Thrush (Puaiohi) *Myadestes palmeri* will soon benefit from a captive breeding programme aimed at bolstering the wild population. In co-operation with the Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey, the State of Hawaii's Division of Forestry and Wildlife, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Peregrine Fund has successfully bred, hatched and reared the Puaiohi. The Puaiohi, one of only two extant Hawaiian Thrushes, is only found in the Alakai Wilderness Area on the north-west quadrant of Kauai. Never known to be common since it was first described to science in the late 19th century, the Puaiohi population fell to less than 50 in 1981 and was

nearly undetectable following Hurricane Iniki in 1992. It is a highly sedentary species that lives in the steep river valleys in montane rainforest. The goal of the captive breeding program is to establish new, disjunct populations of Puaiohi within the species' historical distribution where suitable habitat persists and the Puaiohi is absent.

Currently, there are five pairs of adult Puaiohi at The Peregrine Fund's Keauhou Bird Conservation Center that originated from eggs collected from the wild population in 1996 and 1997. Thus far, three pairs are laying eggs and two chicks have hatched from two of these pairs. Eggs are collected from the breeding pairs, artificially incubated, and the chicks are subsequently hand-reared. The pairs lay replacement clutches. In the wild, the breeding pairs have been known to lay as many as five clutches in one season. The chicks produced this breeding season will be 'hacked back' to the Alakai Wilderness Area in late 1998 or early 1999. Appropriate release sites are now being evaluated. The Puaiohi will be released using the same successful techniques developed in 1996 for releasing the Hawaii Thrush (Omao), *Myadestes obscurus*, a non-endangered endemic congener.

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### **Stripe-headed Tanager Genus *Spindalis* splits – implications for Caribbean conservation priorities**

A paper by Garrido *et al.* (1997) examines the taxonomy of the Stripe-headed Tanager Genus *Spindalis* in the West Indies. The study recommends that the birds which were previously considered one species should be considered to involve four allospecies, resulting in the creation of additional endemics in Jamaica, Puerto Rico and Hispaniola and Gonave Islands and a fourth species with five sub-species

inhabiting the Bahamas and Cozumel Island. This is likely to be only one of a number of forthcoming revisions of conventional avian taxonomy in the Caribbean, which will result in the recognition of additional endemic and potentially endangered species.

Garrido, O.H., Parkes, K.C., Reynard, G.B., Kirkconnell, A. and Sutton, R. (1997) *Taxonomy of the Stripe-headed Tanager, Genus Spindali (Aves: Thraupinae) of the West Indies*. Wilson Bull., 109(4) 561–594.

### New site for White-necked Rockfowl *Picathartes gymnocephalus* discovered

A new site has been discovered in Ivory Coast for the globally threatened White-necked Rockfowl *Picathartes gymnocephalus*. Restricted to only five countries in West Africa, the little-known species is regarded as declining throughout its range. Nesting sites have now been located on rocky inselbergs in Mont Peko National Park in western Ivory Coast. This is the fourth locality where the species has been found in the country, although one was apparently destroyed by land clearance some years ago.

The new record for Mont Peko emerged during preparation for a new project by BirdLife International in support of the Direction pour la Protection de la Nature. In Sierra Leone, local communities have strong cultural ties with the *Picathartes* nesting sites, which augurs well for the future of the population there.

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### Monserrat Oriole *Icterus oberi* rescue plan

The Soufriere Volcano, which has been highly active in the last two years, threatens the endemic Monserrat Oriole *Icterus oberi*. Eruptions have damaged

large areas including much of the forest habitat needed by the oriole. The core of the population, 100–200 birds, survives in the less affected Centre Hills. A rescue plan has been put together by the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (BirdLife Partner in the UK) and World Wide Fund for Nature. The plan will involve establishment of a captive breeding population and assessment and monitoring of the population in the Centre Hills.

Oryx 32(2), 104.

### Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* winter range revelation by Satellite

A male Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* fitted with a satellite transmitter has been recorded wintering for two successive winters in Zambia. The species had previously been known to winter only north of the Equator with the most southerly records being single sightings from Kenya and Uganda. The bird which was trapped during the breeding season in Biebrza National Park in Poland returned to exactly the same area in the north-east of South Luangwa National Park in two successive years. While migrating the eagle covered approximately 350 km a day. The bird also crossed Tanzania from which there had been no previous records of the species.

Meyburg, B-U., Meyburg, C., Mizera, T., Maciorowski, G. and Kowlaski, J. (1998) *Greater Spotted Eagle wintering in Zambia*. Africa – Birds and Birding 3(1), 62–68.

### New White-winged Flufftail *Sarothura ayresi* site found

A site with over 200 pairs of the globally threatened White-winged Flufftail *Sarothura ayresi* has been found in Ethiopia. The African Bird Club has provided a grant for a project at the site and further

details will be published in the *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* in the future.

Bulletin of the African Bird Club 5, 9.

### Low Shoebill *Balaeniceps rex* numbers in Uganda survey

A two week survey of wetland sites in Uganda found only 19 Shoebills *Balaeniceps rex*. Uganda had been thought to have up to 600.

Naturalist (Quarterly Newsletter of the East African Natural History Society – Uganda) 2.1, 3.

### California Condor *Gymnogyps californicus* reintroduction news

The reintroduction of California Condors *Gymnogyps californicus* in Arizona is proceeding with four more birds due to be released soon. The first six were released at the site in December 1996 and followed by another nine in May 1997. Of the first 15 birds released 13 survive, one having been lost in a collision with a power line and one to a Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*. The birds have ranged widely and are successfully finding food.

Endangered Species Bulletin. November/December 1997, XXII (6), 22.

### Attwater's Greater Prairie Chicken *Tympanuchus cupido attwateri* Release

The endangered subspecies of Greater Prairie Chicken *Tympanuchus cupido attwateri* is known from three sites with a total population of less than 100 birds. Nearly 70 birds were released in 1996 at two localities in Texas, The Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge and the Nature Conservancy's Galveston Bay Prairie Reserve. At least 40% survived to the 1997 breeding season when released birds built ten nests and six successfully fledged chicks.

Endangered Species Bulletin. November/December 1997, XXII (6), 23.

### Kirtland's Warbler *Dendroica kirtlandii* increase

The 1997 annual census of Kirtland's Warblers *Dendroica kirtlandii* recorded the second highest ever numbers since it began in 1951, with 733 singing males recorded. The survey found 19 birds singing in Michigan's Upper Peninsula where they were first found breeding in 1995 and five birds singing in Wisconsin, though no evidence of breeding was found.

Endangered Species Bulletin. November/December 1997, XXII (6), 27.

## BOOKS

Stattersfield, A.J., Crosby, M.J., Long, A.J. and Wege, D.C. (1998) *Endemic Bird Areas of the World: Priorities for Biodiversity Conservation*. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International (BirdLife Conservation Series no. 7), pp 846.

This latest book in BirdLife International's conservation series describes 218 Endemic Bird Areas (EBAs), which contain some 2,500 bird species of restricted range, 25% of all bird species. Introductory chapters describe the processes involved in identifying EBAs and provide a global analysis of the results. The majority of restricted-range species are associated with forests, while most EBAs are in the tropics. EBAs are virtually absent in regions such as North America and Western Europe, where funding for conservation is strongest. Clearly BirdLife International must act as a vehicle for the transfer of funding and know how to ensure that a network of protected areas is developed in these EBAs.

The bulk of the book is given over to a description of EBAs, presented by region. Each EBA is shown with a clear map, summary tables are provided of the EBA and its restricted-range species, while the

text describes the general characteristics of each site, its birds, and threats and conservation. The book is well illustrated with photographs (and some paintings) of birds and habitats, mostly in black and white. The habitat pictures are extremely clear, giving an enticing flavour of these wonderful areas.

This is truly magnificent enterprise. It will have begun to achieve its aims if the next edition contains much less on threats to EBAs and much more on conservation.

Chris Mason

**Nicholson, C.P. (1997) *Atlas of the breeding birds of Tennessee*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 426pp, \$45**

This book provides distribution data on 170 confirmed breeding species in Tennessee, based on surveys conducted between 1986 and 1991. There are introductory sections on the methodology of the survey, a history of ornithology in Tennessee, and Tennessee environments and landscapes. An overview of the results is provided, along with a brief discussion of historical changes in the avifauna. The bulk of the book is given over to the species accounts. Each species has

a distribution map, with the county boundaries superimposed, while many species also have abundance maps. The text describes the distribution of each species, documenting any known changes in range or population. Each account has a section on breeding biology, with attractive vignettes showing birds at the nest. The author, his field surveyors and publisher are to be congratulated on producing such a comprehensive, readable and clearly laid out atlas of breeding birds.

Chris Mason

**Grup Balear d'Ornitologia i Defensa de la Naturalesa (1997) *Atles dels Aucells Nidificants de Mallorca i Cabrera***

This paperback provides the details of a recent distribution survey of breeding birds of Mallorca, with maps in the usual 10km x 10km format. As well as the detailed maps there are also figures showing the habitats, nest sites and nesting times of the breeding species of the island – about 100 in all. There is a selection of photos showing typical habitats.

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