

Northern Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus* in an agricultural field in Manipur, India.

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On 1.i.2000, I did a census of birds in the agricultural fields near Uyung Makhong village (24°28'N, 93°40'E), which lies on the periphery of the Thangjing Hill ranges in the east Himalayan state of Manipur (India). Some local boys, who were working in the field, had caught a bird with a crested head. They told me that the bird was called "Salangkhak". This is a Manipuri name for all species of the lapwing family. I took the bird from them and realised that the lapwing with the crested head was a

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*. I then looked around for more birds of this species. I found ten more individuals sitting / standing on the raised paths (locally called "loubuk louri") in the agricultural field. The mild breeze made their crests very prominent.

Locals informed me that it was common in winter and quite numerous in the month of January, particularly in this area. The bird was observed during the winter of 2001-2003, in the same field or area. Grimmett et

al. (1998) mentioned it as an erratic visitor in the area. My rescued bird was nursed and set free after 5 days.

Reference

Grimmett, Richard, Carol Inskipp, and Tim Inskipp. 1998. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 1st ed. (With the collaboration of Sarath Kotagama and Shahid Ali.) (Helm Identification Guides.) London: Christopher Helm, A & C Black.

Egg cannibalism in Jungle Babbler *Turdoides striata*

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Jungle Babbler *Turdoides striata* is a resident bird, endemic to the Indian Subcontinent. Jungle Babblers are chiefly insectivorous, augmenting their diet with fruits, seeds and nectar. They feed chiefly on the ground, hopping about and busily turning over leaves (Grimmett et al. 1998). On 2.ix.2003, we found a cup-shaped nest of dry grass and twigs of *Turdoides striata* in Kankhal area of Haridwar (29° 57'N, 78°12'E). It was about 4m above ground, on top of a bush and seemed quite exposed to predators (birds of prey) which were aplenty

in the area. On 4.ix.2003 at 08:30hrs, we observed an unusual behavior. As soon as the female laid an egg, she broke the shell of the egg and ate its contents. (Egg-eating is apparently prevalent in poultry and is supposed to result from a calcium-deficient diet. In poultry, stress is also a cause for egg-eating.) She then picked up the lovely green-coloured shell with her beak and flew away with it. She leaves the egg-shell on the roof of a nearby house.

This entire sequence was recorded in a ten-minute video which has been deposited

with the Records of Avian Biodiversity and Bioacoustic Laboratory, Department of Zoology and Environmental Sciences, Gurukula Kangri University, Haridwar (India).

Reference

Grimmett, Richard, Carol Inskipp and Tim Inskipp. 1998. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

Reviews

Birds of South Asia. The Ripley Guide. Field guide. Vol. 1; *Birds of South Asia. The Ripley Guide. Attributes and status*. Vol. 2. — By Pamela C. Rasmussen and John C. Anderton. 2005. Barcelona: Lynx Edicions. ISBN: Vol. 1: 84-87334-65-2; Vol. 2: 84-87334-66-0; Vols. 1&2: 84-87334-67-9. Copies can be ordered from: www.lynx.com. Price for the set: • 75/- [= c. Rs 4,000/-].

Vol. 1: Hardback (15.0 x 22.0cm, with illustrated cover), pp. 1-378+6, plates I-II (endpapers, front), III-IV (endpapers, rear), plates 1-180, 1,450+ maps (colour, distribution). Vol. 2: Hardback (15.0 x 22.0cm, with illustrated cover), pp. 1-683+5, endpapers [Maps (front: South Asia, physical; back: South Asia, main regional habitat zones)], 3 portraits [b&w: S. D. Ripley (p. 8), Pamela Rasmussen (p. 11), John

C. Anderton (p. 11)], text-figs. 1-5 (Fig. 1: Bird topology; fig. 2: Geographic and political names mentioned in text; fig. 3: Number of breeding species; fig. 4: Number of regional endemic species; fig. 5: sample sonagrams); 1,000+ sonagrams.

Pamela Rasmussen and John Anderton's long-awaited *Birds of South Asia* (2005) has finally arrived. This two-volume set magnificently caps a decade of high-quality ornithological publications on the avifauna of South Asia (Inskipp et al. 1996; Kazmierczak & Singh 1998; Grimmett et al. 1998, 1999; Kazmierczak 2000). The first volume comprises a field guide while the second, entitled "Attributes and status", detailed information about species. The authors include the following political areas

within the ambit of "South Asia": Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Chagos Archipelago. This is the first field guide to cover Afghanistan or Chagos Archipelago.

The field guide (vol. 1) contains over 3,400 illustrations in 180 colour plates painted especially for this book. These depict virtually all species and most distinctive subspecies and plumages, some of which appear in no other guide. The plates are largely of a very high standard and are placed on the right-hand-side (*recto*) of an open book while on facing pages (*verso*) are colour range maps, 1,450 in all, annotated as to geographic variation, status (breeding visitor, endemics, geographic variation, year-round resident, two-way migration,