

Compiled by Frédéric Goes

Thanks to all contributors. Observers are invited to send records they think may be of interest to [fredbaksey@yahoo.com](mailto:fredbaksey@yahoo.com). Species names follow *The Birds of Cambodia, An Annotated Checklist* (Goes 2014).

National Park, Wildlife Sanctuary, Protected Forest, Bengal Florican Conservation Area and Sarus Crane Conservation Area are abbreviated as NP, WS, PF, BFCA and SCCA respectively. Siem Reap-based *Sam Veasna Center for Wildlife Conservation* and *Angkor Center for Conservation of Biodiversity* are abbreviated SVC and ACCB.

## GENERAL

The annual dry season **Sarus Crane census** was conducted through synchronized counts across six sites in Cambodia and up to ten sites in southern Vietnam at the end of each month between December 2013 and May 2014. Numbers of cranes peaked at 671 birds on 29-30 March; of these, 599 birds were in Cambodia, with 366 at Ang Tropeang Thmor and 187 in the Anlong Pring area. It is the lowest total recorded since 2001, when the census began.

The annual **Vulture censuses** were conducted through synchronized counts across seven restaurant sites in north and northeast Cambodia on 10 and 20 June. They recorded 214 and 202 vultures respectively, the second lowest totals since the census started in 2004. Nearly 90% of the birds were concentrated at Western Siem Pang and at Veal Krous, within Preah Vihear PF (per SP). The former hosted an all-time record of 155 vultures on 10 June, including 106 **White-rumped Vultures** (census total 137 birds) and 44 **Slender-billed Vultures** (census total 52 birds), the highest numbers ever recorded at a single restaurant since the vulture conservation program started.

## PHNOM PENH

A **Common Hoopoe** was seen in front of the Royal Palace on 2 May (SSI).



Gorgeous Blue-winged Pitta found in the secondary forest of Phnom Tamao on 11 April 2014

(Photo Rob Overtoom)

## SOUTH-EAST

Around **Takeo** town, there were a tentative **Peregrine Falcon**, 10-15 **Streaked Weavers** nest-building in coconut and bamboo trees at Wat Tom and eight **Small Pratincoles** at the nearby reservoir on 10 April (FG, RO).

A morning trip to woodland/countryside at **Phnom Tamao** on 11 April yielded a good 56 species: highlights were two **Lesser Adjutants**, calling **Blue-winged Pittas** and oddities such as two **Vinous-breasted Starlings** and a lone **Common Hill Myna**, as well as a darting flight of possible **parakeets**. Last but not least, **Cambodian Tailorbird** was lured out of the forest as well as from the bush near the lake (FG, RO).

At **Prek Ksach**, a single **Blue-eared Kingfisher** was a surprise find and an addition for the site on 10 April; there were also three calling **Blue-winged Pittas** hidden in the scrub and about 12 (feral) **Alexandrine Parakeets** flying around (all SM). On 15 April, five **Chestnut Munias** were spotted as

well as an active nest of **Pied Bushchat**: a straw-made cup tucked under a ploughed soil lump (FG, RS). **Blue-winged Pitta** was again noted there on 7 June (KSR, SSI), indicating possible breeding.

A failed trip to rarely-visited **Boeng Veal Samnap** lake (Mekong east bank in front of Phnom Penh) on 10 April ended up in countryside birding, with stunning views of a **Spotted Owlet**, a single **Chestnut-tailed Starling** and two **Ashy Wood Swallows** building their nest in a palm tree (FG, HN).

## SOUTH-WEST

At **Anlong Pring SCCA** on 25-27 April, a nest with one egg, most likely belonged to a **Black-winged Stilt** and some **Long-toed Stilts** (latest national date and first for the site), were present, as well as a hundred roosting **Black-tailed Godwits** and nine **Chestnut Munias**, a new species for the area, in nearby ricefields (RvZ).

In **Bokor NP**, a study of a white-eye on the plateau on 12 April concluded on the first record of **Everett's White-eye** since the specimen collected in 1927 at the same site (FG, RO). A **Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker** at 950m on 22 April (RO) is higher than previously documented.

At **Kampot**, a report of **Eastern Water Rail** reached the reviewer in early April, but nothing further could to be traced (this species has never been observed in the wild in Cambodia, and is only known from Battambang market records). On 11-12 April, best amongst the series of usual shorebirds on the salt pans was an **Asian Dowitcher**, (FG, RO). Kampot river estuary had a **Little Tern** on 13 April (FG, RO, NE) and ten **White-winged Terns** in breeding outfit on 9 May (RO), only the second coastal record for the latter species. On 25 June, areas of mangroves reclaimed for development hosted juveniles of **Black-winged Stilts** and **Oriental Pratincoles**, and a pair of (presumably **Oriental White-eyes** with a fledgling (RO).

A bird survey team visited the **Areng valley** on 4-7 April and recorded 129 species. Of conservation note were regular sightings of **Great** and **Wreathed Hornbills**, calls/sights of **Green Peafowls**, single **Grey-headed** and **Lesser Fish Eagle** along the river, as well as a lone **Oriental Darter**. Other appreciated species were a male **Yellow-rumped Flycatcher**, several **Black-and-red Broadbills** preparing their nests along the river, two appearances of **Indochinese Green Magpie** and female then male **Blue-and-white Flycatchers** (all FG, HN, SSL, KSR, AS).

A birding trip to higher ranges of **Phnom Aural WS** on 13-16 April confirmed the presence of **Rusty-naped Pitta**, heard calling thrice near the summit on 15 April although frustratingly no bird could be brought into view (HN).

## NORTH-WEST

At **Ang Tropeang Thmor Sarus Crane Reserve**, **Spotted Wood Owl** seems established, with a pair seen on 1 and 5 April (DN, VT) and three birds on 14 June (SMA, CK). On 1 April, there were also two **Indian Thick-knees** (DN). Three **Greater Spotted Eagles** on 2 April, two individuals on 5 April and a single on 23 April (SC) are the latest dates recorded at the site. Single **Common Coot** on 2 April (SC), 12 and 15 April (SSo) are latest national dates. On 26 April, one male **Bengal Florican** was a reassuring sight and single **Short-toed Snake Eagle** and **Pheasant-tailed Jacanas** in breeding dress were also of note; the latter was present until 1 May (DN). A dozen **White-winged Terns** on 6 May (DN) represented the first spring record for the site. **Black-necked Stork** faithfully visited, with a single on 21 April (CK), two birds on 14 May (SSo) and four individuals on 15-17 May (RvZ). On the latter dates, a **Short-toed Snake Eagle** flew over, while a male **Bengal Florican** persisted in the ricefields; although actively ploughed, the fields hosted an **Oriental Pratincole** nest with one egg (see photo on [www.cambodiabirdingnews.blogspot.fr](http://www.cambodiabirdingnews.blogspot.fr)) (all RvZ). **Small Buttonquail** had chicks on 20 May (SMo).

In **Oddar Meanchey**, the most significant record from camera-trap surveys between December 2013 and April 2014 at Sorng Rokavorn Monk Community Forest is undoubtedly a single **Giant Ibis** on 31 March (per BH). This Critically Endangered species and Cambodia's national bird was considered extinct in the northwest.

In **Phnom Kulen NP**, two male **Blue-and-white Flycatchers** were photographed on 11 April (SMA). This is the first record of this uncommon passage migrant for the northwest region.

## TONLE SAP

At **Phnom Kraom**, spring passage of the little known **Blue-throated Bee-eater** was noticed for the third year in a row, with a single on 9 April (DN) followed by an unstated number on 25 April, when some **White-winged Terns** were also present (VT). On 13 May, there was a single **Milky Stork** (SC) and on 1 June two hybrid **Milky Storks** (OSv).



The likely overlooked **Everett's White-eye**, found on **Bokor plateau** on 12 April 2014  
(Photo Rob Overtoom)



Rufous-rumped Grass Babbler, a species localised to Tonle Sap grasslands in Pursat Province

At Pursat grasslands, Manchurian Reed Warbler was still around on 8 May (SS, Mo) and a trip on 21-23 May recorded (numbers not noted) Asian Golden Weavers, Chestnut Munias, Red Avadavats and 'numerous' Rufous-rumped Grass Bblers (SM, SVC team).

Ricefields at the southern edge of Chikreng BFCA held a Chestnut Munia on 20 April (RvZ).

In Stoung BFCA, a single Himalayan Swiftlet was spotted on 3 April (DN). At Prolay on 19-20 April, there were 30+ Comb Ducks on a pond and two chicks of Small Buttonquails. On 18 May, about 50 Comb Ducks (largest flock recorded on the Tonle Sap) were seen feeding on rice spill in harvested dry season ricefield and a female Greater Painted-snipe was displaying (all RvZ). Seven Blue-breasted Quails found there on 15 June (SMA, CK) are digest-worthy.

## NORTH

In southern Preah Vihear, a pool in BeTreed forest, Sangkum Thmey district, hosted a single Giant Ibis in May or June (BD). It is a new site for the species which may only be a visitor to the area given the very dry condition of the forest.

## NORTH-EAST

Along the Mekong channel complex around the Kratie-Stung Treng provincial boundary, intermittent field work on riverine-nesting birds was conducted between 28 February and 5 May. Of interest were a nesting pair of Indian Thick-knees on a sandbar at the north end of Koh Preah, with the adults and three young chicks seen on 24 March, 25 Streaked Weavers at Koh Preal (?) on 26 March, a nest of Oriental Pied Hornbill was found and a parent feeding fruits to three chicks on 6 April, and a 5-nest colony of Baya Weaver on east Koh Preah on 1 May. Blue-winged Pitta was first noted on 8 April and Grey Tits occasionally seen in the riverine flooded forest, an atypical habitat for this dry deciduous forest species (all AC).

Birds of distributional or status interest recorded on Sen Monorom plateau and Dak Dam highlands during 16-20 April included a Bar-backed Partridge heard at the international border post, Pale-capped Pigeon and Grey-headed Parakeet found fairly common around Sen Monorom, Speckled Piculet at O'Ramis and near Dak Dam, and calls matching those of Ratchet-tailed Treepie heard on two occasions but birds of this enigmatic and localised resident (single record in 2000) never showed for confirmation. A grey morph Black-headed Bulbul was also noteworthy. Unexpected was a Streaked Wren Babbler (ssp *rufiventer*) near Sen Monorom, the first for Mondolkiri and only the second record for the northeast. Localised subspecies included *klossi* Blue-throated Flycatcher, *germaini* Black-throated Laughingthrush (O'Ramis), *johnsi* Black-throated Sunbird (O'Ramis) and possibly the first confirmation of *nigricapillus* Burmese Shrike, and supposed *peracensis* Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo (racket extending up to mid-shaft). The form of Ashy Bulbul looked more like the *hildebrandi* than the expected (based on distribution given in Robson's guide) *remotus* subspecies (all FG, RS, SSL).

At Seima PF, Black-naped Monarch was nesting in a tree next to the park headquarters on 20 April (SSL, FG, RS). The much sought-after and tricky Orange-necked Partridge gave an untickable view on the ONP trail after call playback on the afternoon of 21 April (FG).

On the same day, motorbike drivers attempting to smuggle out to Vietnam 54 live White-rumped Shammas, sewed into their inner coat, were intercepted at Seima check post by Forestry Administration staff (per KH/WCS).



One of the White-rumped Shammas, trapped in Mondolkiri and rescued on its way to Vietnam bird markets, on 21 April 2014 (WCS Cambodia)

These dapper and melodious singing birds are sought out by cagebird amateurs, and this incident is worrying, as such trade might contribute to quick decline of some Cambodian forest species.

**OBSERVERS** (\* = SVC guides)

AC	Andrea Claassen	RS	Roland Seitre
AS	Adrian Stoeger	RvZ	Robert van Zalinge
BD	Ben Davis	SC *	Seab Chea
BH	Ben Hayes	SM	Simon Mahood
CK *	Chhun Kunthea	SMa *	Sean Mardy
DN *	Duong Nara	SMo *	Sang Mony
FG	Frederic Goes	SP	Sum Phearun
HN	Howie Nielsen	SSi *	San Sikol ( <i>Srum</i> )
KH	Kez Hobson	SSl	Suy Senglim
KSR	Kong San Ratanak	SSo *	Sanh Sophoan
OSv *	Orn Sambovannak ( <i>Johnny</i> )	VT *	Vanh Tharath
RO	Rob Overtoom		



**The White-rumped Shama smuggling coat, as discovered at Seima PF's checkpoint on 21 April 2014** (Photo WCS Cambodia)