

Compiled by Frédéric Goes

Thanks to all contributors. In the future, please send any records you think may be of interest to fredbaksey@yahoo.com. Earlier editions can be found at www.samveasna.org. Species names follow Craig Robson (2008) *A field guide to the birds of South-east Asia*.

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

GENERAL

A **vulture census** was for the first time conducted in September to improve the monitoring data sample. A total of 204 vultures – exactly the same number as the June census – were counted across six restaurant sites in four provinces on 20 September. The totals for Red-headed Vulture (34 birds) and White-rumped Vulture (115 birds) were lower than the mean, but 55 Slender-billed Vultures are the highest count since the start of the program (per SM).

PHNOM PENH

A male **Asian Golden Weaver** at Boeng Pumpey, at the outskirts of town, was a nice find of this Globally Near-Threatened species on 8 August (NE). A male **House Sparrow** with a flock of Eurasian Tree Sparrows in central town behaved like a proper city colonist in 11 September (SM). A male **Yellow-rumped Flycatcher** was photographed at Wat Phnom on 16 September (AJ). This was followed by other colourful birds rather unexpected in the city center: a **Blue-winged Pitta** flying through street 19 into the Royal Palace compound, and a flock of 11 **Blossom-headed Parakeets** at Wat Phnom on 22 September, confirming a feral population of the latter is established (SM).

SOUTH-EAST

The amazing Takeo **Blue-eared Kingfisher** saga (see previous digests) continued during this period, with some melodramatic accents. In the observer's absence, the house guard noted Blue-eared Kingfisher(s) roosting near the garden pond almost daily in July. However in late July, he found one sick bird along the nearby road. Despite care, it died soon after and was disposed of. The remaining loner (the male) came to roost almost daily at the pond, until a karaoke parlor started its activity in early September. It nevertheless still regularly came to feed in the pond during the day, when karaokes sleep! (RO).

The Prek Ksach area continues to yield good finds, building an impressive collection of species. On 5 August, three **River Lapwings** were seen again there, together with three **Lesser** and two **Greater Sand-plovers**, both being scarce on inland passage. More surprising were four **Alexandrine Parakeets**, probably feral birds but nonetheless the first record of this rare species from the southeast since historical times. Still on the same day and site, a **Greater Painted-snipe** was also noteworthy (all SM, CP, AJ). A single **Small Pratincole** was seen on the ground there on 2 September (CP), perhaps the first record during August-October, when whereabouts of this riverine species are largely unknown.

SOUTH-WEST

Of interest on 2 July at Kampot river estuary were 15 **Red-necked Stints** and eight **Curlew Sandpipers**, while three **Marsh Sandpipers** provided the first record outside the wintering months, and a flock of 50 **Whimbrels** is one of the national high counts (SM, SB).

A **Brown Prinia** fitting the subspecies *P.p. cooki* was seen at the foothills of Bokor NP on 25 August, a first for the park, while the hyperkinetic **Black-throated Sunbird** is always a pleasant sight on the 1000m plateau (RO).



Black-throated Sunbird on Bokor plateau
25 August 2012 (Photo: Rob Overtoom)

Wonderful sightings made in Sihanoukville are at least four **Purple-backed Starlings**, and two **Asian Glossy Starlings**, both feeding together on fruiting tree on 26 August (Seng Lim). This is only the fourth field record of the former, a rare passage migrant, whereas the latter, a sundaic coastal species, is an unexpected addition to the Cambodian list, so presumably a vagrant.

At the Rainbow Lodge on the lower Tatai river, a female **Yellow-rumped Flycatcher** was noted on 20 August and then a male on 11 September (GC).

There was also a female **Yellow-rumped Flycatcher** at *Les Manguiers* guest house in Kampot on 16 September. On the same day, there were six **Great Knots** and two **Black-tailed Godwits** (few coastal records) at Kampot salt pans (SM, RO, SB). On 30 September, an immature **Peregrine Falcon** was spectacularly chasing a sand-plover on the salt pans (RO).



Asian Glossy Starling feasting on fruits at Sihanoukville

26 August 2012

(Photo: Seng Lim / SVC)

TONLE SAP

A **Black-capped Kingfisher** present at Chreaw, on the Tonle Sap floodplain edge near Siem Reap, on 4 August is the earliest returnee on record, probably on passage (SS).

NORTH-WEST

Ang Tropeang Thmor reservoir hosted its regular pair of **Black-necked Storks** on 7 July (SM, HC, CP), and the Sarus Crane Reserve continued to treat birders with numerous records of great interest during this period. Two successive SVC guide trainings added eight species to the site birdlist counting now 275 species!

On 1 September, 78 species were recorded with a single **Oriental Plover**, a species previously only known on spring passage, being the highlight shared with a series a staging shorebirds rarely or never previously recorded inland: a single **Greater** and six **Lesser Sand-plovers**, five **Broad-billed Sandpipers** (apparently the first inland record in Southeast Asia) and ten **Red-necked Stints** (first for the northwest) while a single **Marsh Sandpiper** (earliest returnee date) and five **Black-tailed Godwits** were also noteworthy. Amongst the regular threatened large waterbirds were 10 **Greater Adjutants** and two **Milky Storks** (all SS, OSv *et al.*).



The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at Ang Tropeang Thmor, 9 September 2012 (Photo: Rob Martin)

On 9 September, the 23 shorebird species included a single **Sharp-tailed Sandpiper** – a first Cambodian record of this vagrant species in Southeast Asia, as well as a single **Ruddy Turnstone** (also undocumented inland in Southeast Asia!), a single **Ruff** (previously only known in January-April), a juvenile **Red-necked Stint**, three **Long-toed Stints** and still a single **Broad-billed Sandpiper**. This great harvest was supplemented by a single **Short-toed Snake-eagle** (early record), a **Greater Painted-snipe** with two fluffy chicks and three **Milky Storks** with an additional hybrid Milky-Painted Stork (all RM *et al.*).

Further SVC guide trainings in the broad Siem Reap-Angkor region yielded a steady record influx during the usually idle birding period of September. Selected records amongst those posted on the blog are mentioned hereafter.

A transitional plumage adult and a juvenile **White-winged Terns**, two early returned **Grey-headed Lapwings** and a few

Long-toed Stints were spotted at Chreaw on 11 September (RM, SS, AJ).

Kbal Spean hosted a first-winter male **Yellow-rumped Flycatcher** (first for the northwest and the fifth reported in this review period for a species with now just ten national records!), two **Violet Cuckoos** and a **Yellow-vented Flowerpecker** on 13 September (all RM *et al.*)

At Angkor's Western Baray, a reconnaissance visit found 11 **River Lapwings** on 18 September, increasing to 27 individuals on the SVC guide training trip on 22 September. This is the largest group on record since July 2003 when 29 birds were present at the same site, with no intervening records. Other species of interest there on the same date included four **Grey-headed Lapwings**, a single **Curlew Sandpiper** (first for Angkor area), two **White-winged Terns** in nearly-full winter plumage and one **Long-toed Stint** (all RM *et al.*).

Records from around Siem Reap on 29 September end the copious northwestern harvest with an *indochinensis* **Asian Paradise-flycatcher** (resident form) at Western Baray, out-of-forest records of two **Hainan Blue Flycatchers**, two **Forest Wagtails** and an enigmatic male **Cyornis** (provisionally assigned to Blue-throated Flycatcher, for lack of a better option) at Wat Atwear (RM, CS), and a female **Hainan/Tickell's Blue Flycatcher** at the SVC garden (RM).

NORTH

Best birds found during a SVC training trip to Koh Ker on 15 September were a female **White-rumped Falcon** and an **Asian Paradise-flycatcher** of the *incei* form – apparently the first record positively assigned to that migrant subspecies (all RM *et al.*).

NORTH-EAST

A single **Black-backed Kingfisher** was found entangled in a fishing net near Siem Pang town on 16 July (per TK). The species is rarely recorded and its status is unclear, though presumably mainly a breeding visitor. A non-breeding plumage **White-winged Tern** refueling at a large pond within dry deciduous forest at Western Siem Pang on 28 August was an addition for the site (TK).

There was a **Greater Adjutant** at the Siem Pang vulture restaurant on 20 September (per SM).



The unfortunate Black-backed Kingfisher rescued from a fishing net at Siem Pang, 16 July 2012 (Photo: Meng Mai)

OBSERVERS

AJ	Ashish John	RM	Rob Martin
CP	Colin Poole	RO	Rob Overtoom
CS	Chen Sophal	SB	Sarah Brook
GC	Gee Chartier	SL	Seng Lim
HC	Hong Chamnan	SM	Simon Mahood
NE	Nigel Eustace	SS	Sanh Sophoan
OSv	Orn Sambovannak (Johnny)	TK	Thomas Kuenzel