

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

The annual **White-shouldered Ibis** censuses were conducted in July, August, September and October. In addition to the usual four key sites (Kulen Promtep WS, Western Siem Pang, Lumphat WS and the central Kratie-Stung Treng Mekong), coordinated roost counts were also conducted at Phnom Prich WS for the first time. The September census yielded a new high count of 754 birds. The total of maximum count at each site across the censuses amounts to a record 806 birds (per SP). The recorded numbers have annually increased since 2009 thanks to improved coverage and knowledge of roosting sites.

PHNOM PENH

The most stunning news of the period was the five-day visit a first-year **Rufous-headed Robin** paid to a garden in central Phnom Penh from 15 to 20 November (SM). This is not only a first for Cambodia but also simply the second southeast asian record for this little known species breeding in central China. For the whole story with photos, visit the birding blog www.cambodiabirdingnews.blogspot.com. On 17 November, a **Mugimaki Flycatcher** was also discovered in the same Phnom Penh garden (RM, SM).

SOUTH-EAST

The amazing saga of the Takeo **Blue-eared Kingfishers** came to a sad end when the last bird (the male) was found dead after flying into a window on 3 November (RO). The remains were preserved for DNA analysis.

Regular visits to the Prek Ksach site photographed a plover matching features of the recently described **White-faced Plover** on 10 November (RvZ). This taxon (a good species or a subspecies of Kentish Plover) had not been recorded inland previously.

A group of 30+ **Black-headed Ibis** and three **Painted Storks** were present in Bateay district of Kompong Cham province on 10 November. In Kandal, a **Grey-faced Buzzard** on 17 November over Koh Ognathey on the Kandal Mekong, and of another single on 29 December at Boeng Veal Samnap were noteworthy raptors for the region (all SSL).

At Boeng Prek Lepeuw, a record number of 1,325 **Painted Storks** was counted on 5 December (per SKH).

SOUTH-WEST

A single **Grey-headed Fish-eagle** was noted at Pteah Rong commune, Kravahn district on 4 October (SSL).

Two **Rufous-throated Fulvettas** mist-netted at 290m in Phnom Samkos WS on 11 November were a welcome find and perhaps unsuspected first record (CS). The species was indeed on the Cambodian list based on a sight record made in the same area in 2000, but later apparently retracted by the observers.



The Rufous-throated Fulvetta mistnetted at Phnom Samkos WS on 11 November 2012 (Photo: Chhin Sophea)

On 14 October, there was a single **Dark-sided Flycatcher** at Kep NP (RM). In a mangrove north of Kep, several **Ashy Tailorbirds** calling and brought into views on 16 October were an expected addition to the national list. Several **Golden-bellied Gerygones** and a male **Copper-throated Sunbird** were also present (RM, SM).

A pair of **Ashy Tailorbirds** was also spotted in degraded mangroves along the Kampot river on 5 November, as well as two **Bar-tailed Godwits**, 15 **Ruddy Turnstones** and a single **Great Knot** (SVC guides). At the Kampot estuary, there were 50+ **Whimbrels**, 22 **Great Crested Terns** and four **Far Eastern Curlews** on 18 November, and one second-year **Brown-headed Gull** on 26 November, a species not recorded in the coastal region since 1996 (RO).

A SVC reconnaissance trip to Bokor NP on 3-5 November managed to find four **Chestnut-headed Partridges** at three locations around the plateau despite landscape-wide damage done by the megalomaniac Sokimex construction project. Other excellent records were single **Booted Eagle** (dark morph), **Black Eagle** and **Jerdon's Baza** as well as one immature **Blue-and-white Flycatcher** around the waterfall, **Large Scimitar-babbler**, **Brown Wood-owl** (heard) and the first record of **Silver-breasted Broadbill** for the park since historical times (SM, SSL, HN, SVC guides). On 2 December, an **Eastern Imperial Eagle** photographed soaring at the foot of Bokor is a first record in the southwest (RO).



Silver-breasted Broadbill rediscovered at Bokor NP on 3-5 November 2012 (Photo: Rob Martin)

A short foray in Kirirom NP on 6 November provided perhaps the only ornithological information from the park since 2004. Of note were **White-bellied** and **Grey-headed Woodpecker** in the pine forest and a **Rufous-bellied Eagle** carrying nest material. At least six trophies of **Great Hornbill** were openly displayed in the middle of the touristic zone, a shocking sight and depressing testimony of non-enforcement of wildlife crime in the heart of a National Park (all RM, HN, SSL, SVC guides).

A trip to Koh Tang during the water festival on 25-27 November failed to locate any Nicobar Pigeon but found **Lesser Frigatebirds** almost constant, in gangs of up to 22, plus **White-bellied Sea-eagles**, **Osprey**, **Peregrine Falcon**, dark morph **Pacific Reef-egrets** and a number of **Pied Imperials-pigeons** (PE).

Up to 18 **Painted Storks**, with at least three immatures, were noted in the Sre Ambel coastal plain on several dates in September and December, and one probable **Spot-bellied Eagle Owl** was spotted along the Sre

Ambel river on 12 December (GD).

In November (date unknown), a juvenile-looking **Ruddy Kingfisher** seen along the Kampot river a few kilometers upstream of the provincial town was the first recent record for the province (BK).

TONLE SAP

Single **White-winged Terns** in intermediate plumage were recorded at Prek Toal on 6 October (SSi) and 28 November (SMo). Other species infrequently recorded at Prek Toal were **Eastern Marsh-harriers** on 9 November (CeS) and 31 December (CP, RM) and **Van Hasselt's Sunbird** on 15 December (VT).

Frequent birdwatching trips to floodplain shrub, marsh and fields around Phnom Kraom yielded great species diversity and a series of interesting records. On 23 and 24 October, 30 **Temminck's Stints** in muddy fields constitute the largest flock on record (SSo, RM). Other digest-worthy observations were a pair of **Pink-necked Green Pigeons** on 7 December (SMo), an **Eurasian Coot** on 21 December (OA), **Greater Painted-snipe** on 24 December, **Thick-billed Warbler** on 31 December (SSo), recurrent sightings of **White-browed Crakes**, **Chestnut-capped Babblers**, **Grey-headed Lapwings** and small flocks of **White-shoulded Starlings** in December (SVC guides).

There was a single **Black-necked Stork** at Proloy grasslands on 19 December (VT), and three **Asian Pied Starlings** at Wat Prahoot on 25 December (SSi).

NORTH-WEST

Good series of waders on passage were observed in fields at Chreaw, namely **Lesser Sand-plovers**, two **Red-necked Stints** and some **Long-toed Stints** and **Kentish Plover** on 20 October (SSo).

The wooded grove around Wat Atwear pagoda cum angkorian ruins proved again a good flycatcher haunt, with **Verditer Flycatcher** and **Hainan Blue Flycatcher** seen on 1 November (CeS).

The second and third country records of **Green-backed Flycatcher** were a single male at Boeng Mealas temple on 19 November (SMA, CF) and another single male in the SVC garden in the middle of Siem Reap town on the following day (RM). The same wooded garden had a male **Asian Paradise-flycatcher** on 23 October, while an **Oriental Honey-buzzard** passed over on 23 November (per RM).

One **Black-headed Gull** at Western Baray of Angkor on 24 November was a first for the northwest (RM *et al.*).

Also first for the northwest were the **Sulphur-breasted Warblers** and **Plain-tailed Warbler** recorded during a trip to Kbal Spean on 18-21 December (RM). Camera traps on the plateau also revealed the presence of **Coral-billed Ground-cuckoo** and good numbers of **Siamese Fireback**. Other good birds included heard only **Blue Pitta**, **Banded Kingfisher**, **Yellow-vented Flowerpecker**, and a *Zosterops* thrush seen briefly was most likely to be **Scaly Thrush** given the low altitude and habitat (RM, SVC guides). A **Plain-tailed Warbler** was also seen there on 29 December (SMo).

For a change, few records of interest were received during this review period from Ang Tropeang Thmor reserve. Several reports of **Western Marsh-harriers** in December need to be properly assessed (SVC guides). The national high count of 1,000 **Oriental Pratincoles** made on 9 September deserves reporting although falling outside the review period (RM).



Green-backed Flycatcher in the SVC garden, Siem Reap on 20 November 2012 (Photo: Rob Martin)



White-browed Scimitar-babbler in Kulen Promtep WS, 22 November 2012 (Photo: Ashish John)

NORTH

At Toul Kreul BFCA, there was a single **Indian Thick-knee** in October (date unreported) (SM). Two **Grey-faced Buzzards** on passage at Chhep on 23 October 2012 are first for the northern plains (AJ, TS), as was the **White-browed Scimitar-Babbler** photographed along the Stung Memay, Kulen Promtep WS on 22 November. Of high conservation significance were several sightings of **Masked Finfoot**, including a juvenile, a family, and another probable single in the latter area on the same date (all AJ). The site is known to regularly support a small breeding population of the species since 2009, the only such site in Southeast Asia. Also good were two **Pale-capped Pigeons** at Thmat Baeuy on 23 December (SMA).

A pair of **Indian Spotted Eagles** was displaying at Veal Krous on 10 December, while a record number of 17 **Greater Adjutants** were circling over the vulture restaurant (RM, SVC guides). Also there on same date, a pair of **Grey-headed Fish-eagle** seemed to be attending a nest, though no actual breeding behaviour

was noted (RM). A **Grey-headed Fish-eagle** nest (active?) was also spotted at Prey-veng reservoir on 25 December (SSi). These are would be the first breeding reports of this species for the northern plains.

Koh Ker temple becomes a reliable site for the **White-rumped Pygmy-falcon** with up to four birds seen there or en route during the SVC visits in November and December (VT, SMa, RM, SMo). A female **Rufous-bellied Woodpecker** in November (observers?), a single **Spot-breasted Woodpecker** on 16 December (VT) and **Yellow-vented Flowerpecker** on 30 December were also noteworthy (SMa).

A **Short-toed Snake-eagle** was seen along the way to Thmat Baeuy on 24 December (SMo). On 25 December, a **Small Buttonquail** running across the track on the way to Prey-veng reservoir needs confirmation to be the first for the region. At the reservoir, **White-winged Duck** was only heard and a pair of **Black-necked Stork** visited while a family of **Bronzed-winged Jacana** was an expected addition to the northern plain list (all SSi).

NORTH-EAST

The Siem Pang vulture restaurant attracted an exceptional 98 vultures, including 66 **White-rumped** and 29 **Slender-billed Vultures** on 19 October. Quite tragically, a poisoned domestic cow carcass caused the death of at least four White-rumped Vultures on 3-4 November (per SM). Still in Western Siem Pang Proposed Protected Forest, a trip to Veal Kriel on 9-11 November discovered one small colony of **Lesser Adjutants** with five nests (one juvenile seen in three nests) in two trees. Other digest-worthy records made during that trip were one female **Pied Harrier** (a first for the site), a single **Indian Spotted Eagle**, one **Short-toed Snake-Eagle** and one **Black-necked Stork** (all per TK).

A series of other records of interest were made at Siem Pang. A single **Eurasian Wryneck** photographed in ricefields near district town on 11 October and seen again on 16 November (per TK) is the first for the northeast, and the earliest sighting of this winter visitor with only four previous records, all being in Feb-March. A single male **Japanese Paradise-flycatcher** in bamboo forest along a stream on 14 October is only the third national record. On the next day, the observer counted 193 **Black Drongos** flying to roost across the Sekong river at Siem Pang town (all TK). A pale morph **Booted Eagle** near Veal Kriel in December (date unreported) was an addition for the site (HN).

There was a **Collared Kingfisher** at Kratie marsh, its range limit in Cambodia, on 25 December (SMa). On 12 December, a pair of **White-rumped Pygmy-falcon** on an electric wire in the devastated landscape of Snoul WS was a depressing vision (DN).

At Seima PF, **Orange-necked Partridge** was vocal in the vicinity of the headquarters but eluded observations in early October. Pairs were however seen on consecutive days in two locations between 28 November and 6 December (RM). Second-best birds recorded there were two **Pin-tailed Parrotfinches** on 4 December, with **Bar-bellied**, **Hooded** and **Blue-rumped Pittas** seen during the visit as well (RM). An **Eastern Marsh-harrier** at 900m at Dak Dam on 27 December (SMa) was unexpected for this largely open lowland species, and a first for Mondolkiri. A white morph **Asian Paradise-flycatcher** was seen at Seima on 26-28 December (SMa).

OBSERVERS

(* = SVC guides)

AJ	Ashish John	RvZ	Robert van Zalinge
BK	Bart Kennis	SKH	Seng Kim Hout
CF	Con Foley	SM	Simon Mahood
CP	Colin Poole	SMa *	Sean Mardy
CS	Chhin Sophea	SMo *	Sang Mony
CeS *	Chen Sophal (Naran)	SP	Sum Phearum
DN *	Duong Nara	SSi *	San Sikol (Srun)
GD	Gregory Duplant	SSl	Suy Senglim
OA *	Oun Art	SSo *	Sanh Sophoan
HN	Howie Nielsen	TK	Thomas Kuenzel
PE	Paul Everingham	TS	Tan Setha
RM	Rob Martin	VT *	Vanh Tharath
RO	Rob Overtoom		



Heart-breaking trophies displayed for sale right in the middle of Kirirom National Park. The Great Hornbill, a globally near-threatened species, is probably extirpated from the park (Photo: Suy Senglim)