

Birds of the Palnis - A checklist and museum list: Part III : by T.V. Narayana.

When I visited the museum at Shembaganur, I heard the disturbing news that the library and possibly the historic museum and bird specimens would be transferred to Madras. Since some of the books and surely all the specimens will disintegrate in the heat of Madras, this list of museum specimens could be of interest to ornithologists (I omit the very common species). A number after the bird's name or birds' names indicates the month when it was collected. This museum list is already difficult to obtain and since the location where the

specimen was collected is usually indicated, this list has both historical value and gives excellent clues for the birdwatcher. The collection was essentially made 25 ± 5 years ago.

Perumal

Brown Fish Owl/1
 Pale Harrier, Red Spurfowl/2 Three-toed Goldenback Woodpecker/3
 Intermediate Egret, Painted Bush Quail, Small Skylark, Ashy Swallow
 Shrike, Red-headed Fantail Warbler/5 Malabar Crested Lark/6
 Crested Goshawk, European Kestrel/11
 Indian Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Emerald Dove, Woodcock/12
 Mountain Hawk-Eagle (no month given)

Shembag

Common Buzzard/1
 Indian Rosefinch/3 Black-headed Munia/4
 Common Iora, Quaker Babbler/5 Scimitar Babbler/9 (Peninsular)
 Indian Pitta, Green-billed Malkoha, Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Yellow-
 legged Button-quail, Forest Eagle Owl, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Indian
 Blue Chat/10 Barn Owl/11 Eastern Grey Wagtail/12

Kodi Chestnut Bittern/5 Green Willow Warbler, Collared Scops Owl/12

Moir Points White-bellied Shortwing/4

Levinge Coorg Wren-warbler/6

(Birds above are from higher altitudes, while those below were collected lower)

Coolie Ghat Road and Toppe

Blue-headed Rock Thrush, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Black-headed Babbler,
 Paradise Flycatcher/2
 Brown Shrike, Grey Hornbill, Gold-fronted Chloropsis, White-throated
 Babbler, Ceylon Bush-lark, Plaintive Cuckoo, White-browed Bulbul/5
 Little Spider Hunter/6 Malabar Wood Shrike/8
 Fairy Blue-bird, Yellow-naped Woodpecker/9
 Blue-tailed Bee-eater/12

Miscellaneous medium altitude birds (i.e. various locations)

Ruby-throated Bulbul/2 Wood Snipe/3
 Crested Tree Swift/4 Tickell's Flycatcher, Grey-headed Bulbul/5
 Great Indian Hornbill/5 (Palamalai) Yunnan Tree Pipit/4 (Mt. St. Mary)
 Blossom-headed Parakeet, Whistling Teal/4 (Palni)
 Yellow-fronted Pied Woodpecker/12 (Palni)
 Malay Bittern/4 (Manalur) Bay-backed Shrike, Black-naped Blue Flycatcher,
 Malabar Trogon, Jerdon's and Grey-fronted Imperial Pigeons/5 (Manalur)

On the basis of my own birdwatching, I recommend the following birds to

the special attention of the birdwatcher. (Underlined birds are easy; birds underlined --- are usually found at lower altitudes only.)

Western Ghat Specialities Wynaad Laughing Thrush Nilgiri Pipit
White-breasted Laughing Thrush ? White-bellied Shortwing Rufous Babbler
Nilgiri Verditer Flycatcher Black & Orange Flycatcher

Birds Worth Searching for in Palnis Small Green Barbet
Nilgiri Wood Pigeon Malabar Whistling Thrush

(Last 3 birds in S Indian peninsula only, while next 3 are in peninsula and Ceylon only)

<u>Malabar Grey Hornbill</u>	<u>Malabar Trogon (tough)</u>	<u>Small Sunbird</u>
<u>Nilgiri Flowerpecker</u> (other races found in Assam and E and N of Assam)		
<u>Nilgiri House-Swallow</u> (also Ceylon & Burma to Tahiti)		? <u>Alpine Swift</u>
<u>Larger Goldenback Woodpecker</u>	<u>Crested Hawk-Eagle</u>	
<u>Crested Serpent-Eagle</u> ?	<u>Crested Honey-buzzard</u>	
<u>Besra Sparrow-Hawk</u>	<u>Yellow-cheeked Tit</u>	<u>Fairy Bluebird</u>
<u>Velvet-fronted Nuthatch</u>	<u>Yellow-browed Bulbul</u>	<u>Grackle Myna</u>
<u>Grey Jungle-Fowl</u>	<u>Indian Lorikeet</u>	<u>Scarlet Minivet</u>
<u>Black-tailed Drongo</u>	<u>Red Spurfowl (hard)</u>	<u>Ground Thrush</u>

Before I conclude with my own checklist (which has no historical pre-
 sumptions like the museum list) which illustrates how a modern, coded
 computer list should be, I add a few further birds seen during July
 6-13, 1979. The monsoon had already set in for three weeks and during
 my single visit to the forest tract of Part II, I had the distinct
 impression many birds had moved around already. The complicated local
 migrations which herald the onset of the monsoon may have been taking
 place or was it simply a bad day for birdwatching? At the higher
 altitudes little seemed changed: Grey Jungle Fowl and Nilgiri Wood
 Pigeons were seen on a trip to Berijam Lake. Ashy Wren-Warblers were
 seen at the beginning of the road ascending Perumal; without being
 absolutely certain, the same species and the Pied Flycatcher-shrike
 (Hemipus) were also seen near the orchards in Kodi. Spotted Munias
 were less conspicuous in town than before the monsoon. Walking up
 Perumal may be the most rewarding walk in S India, from the point of
 view of both birds and scenery. Ground Thrushes and Dusky Crag Martins
 were seen at the lower levels. A little higher up, where the eucalypts
 were thinning out, I saw a pair of Little Scaly-bellied Green Wood-
 peckers tentatively pecking at slim eucalyptus trunks. Cockatoos and
 parrots nest in the holes of eucalypts in Australia, where there are
 no woodpeckers at all; the magnificent introduced eucalyptus forests
 in other parts of the world are usually very poor for birding. Near
 the very top of Perumal, a Streaked Fantail-Warbler was seen, with no
 trace of red or rufous on its head; hence I missed the red-headed
 cisticola. Unidentified pipits and a LBJ (little brown job) completed

the new birds seen on the ascent of Perumal. This tiny all-brown warbler with a brown eyebrow and no other field marks remains a mystery to me still. Prolonged birding on Perumal during the monsoon should yield some birds from local migrations; I consider the green woodpeckers probing at eucalypts simply the luck of the draw!

SELECTED DISTRIBUTIONAL LIST OF PALNI BIRDS

_____ Ceylon ._____ Plains and small hills of India ._____ Assam
 _____ Nepal and E Himalayas _____ Western Himalayas

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
|Grey Tit |Tickell's Willow-Warbler |
| .. Peninsular Scimitar Babbler | . Large Crowned WW |
|Spotted B | . Dusky Crag Martin |
| .. Quaker B | .. Large Pied Wagtail |
|Indian Blue Chat |Cuckoo |
| ... Shama |Indian C |
|Blue Rock-Thrush |Common Hawk-Cuckoo |
|Red-breasted Flycatcher |Indian Tree Pipit |
|Blue-throated F |Spotted Piculet |
| v....Verditer F | .. Green Barget |
| ? Rufous-tailed F | ... Brown-throated Spinetail |
|Grey-headed F | Swift |
|Paradise F |Common Green Pigeon |
|Grey Drongo | . Grey-fronted GreenP |
|White-bellied D |Green Imperial P |
|Bronzed D | . Painted Bush Quail |
| | T.V. Narayana |