

but cannot say whether they both share the incubation or feeding the young.

Stuart Baker in NIDIFICATION (1933, II, pp. 294 *et seq.*) has overlooked this though he quotes Inglis as having once found a young one and three *fresh* eggs in a nest, though the usual complement was three, and sometimes only two.

Here the matter lay until in 1950 K. K. Neelakantan (*JBNHS* 49 : 554) writing from Palghat, recorded a male and two females sharing the labour at a nest. Of the two females, one was more active than the other, but the second was seen to bring nesting material. About a month later, all three fed the *two* chicks in the nest.

The last note is referred to in INDIAN HANDBOOK (6:44) but the earlier note suggests that this habit is more wide-spread than generally realised and provides an excellent item for study in the field.

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## 9. ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS FOR PAKISTAN

During the past year I have been lucky to encounter several interesting new distributional records for different regions of Pakistan and feel that it is important to record these if only to indicate how much fresh information still has to be worked out for this country which has not been as intensively studied in the past few decades as has been the case in many parts of India.

**Pluvialis dominica** (Horsfield) Eastern or Lesser Golden Plover.

This has been recorded as wintering in India and Bangladesh (Ripley 1961) with no mention of what was then called, West Pakistan<sup>1</sup>. Vaurie also records only an eastern migration route to the Maldives, Ceylon and the southeast coast of India (Vaurie 1965). This is rather surprising in view of Dr. Ticehurst's records for the Karachi area (*Ibis*, October 1923, pp. 662).

I have only encountered it near the Indus mouth, generally on the east bank, and preferring the margins of drying-out swamps. It is one of the rarest waders visiting Sind in winter, but as it is usually encountered in small flocks, and its dark grey axillaries are easily seen when in flight, it is not difficult to recognise in the field.

**Rhipidura hypoxantha** (Blyth) Yellowbellied Fantail Flycatcher.

This bird has been described as occurring in the Himalayas, in

<sup>1</sup> But see HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA & PAKISTAN 2:223—Eds.

India from Kareri Lake near Simla, eastwards through Nepal, Bangladesh and Burma (Ripley 1961).

On December 6, 7 and 8, 1973 I was camping in the old municipal gardens of Sialkot Cantonment ( $32^{\circ} 28' N.$ ,  $74^{\circ} 33' E.$ ) and there were at least three individuals, (one obviously a female) frequenting the tree groves around these gardens. They were always seen feeding in trees and often in the company of the Greyheaded Flycatcher-Warbler (*Seicercus xanthoschistos*), another altitudinal winter migrant. A considerably smaller, and if possible, even more restless version of the Whitebrowed Fantail Flycatcher (*R. aureola*), they were nevertheless fearless of humans and very easy to observe. Though Sialkot is roughly two hundred miles northwest of Simla, perhaps its occurrence so near to the hills of Jammu is not surprising, but after twenty-three years residence in Pakistan, to see a new species, and one so gaudily attired was an especial thrill.

#### **Terpsiphone paradisi** (Linnaeus) Paradise Flycatcher.

In the "Newsletter for Birdwatchers", edited by Mr. Zafar Fatehally, I recorded in about 1966 the attempted breeding of this flycatcher in an irrigated forest plantation near Khanewal in the southwest Punjab. It is probably a not infrequent breeder in suitable forested regions of the Punjab because in May 1973, a pair attempted to breed in my own garden in Khanewal ( $30^{\circ} 18' N.$ ,  $71^{\circ} 56' E.$ ). This is at 600 feet above sea level and maximum daily temperature in early May is usually about  $112^{\circ} F.$  so these flycatchers would normally be only tarrying briefly on northward passage. We have a small swimming pool surrounded by shady trees and the female was first seen carrying nesting material on May 7th. Anxious not to disturb the pair, I did not discover the completed nest until May 12th! — *a grass-lined, sleeve-like structure* suspended in a hanging creeper. Unfortunately on May 19th, I had to go away on business and found the nest robbed upon my return. However I have several fairly good 300 mm telephoto lens picture of both parent birds sitting on the nest. Both sexes were extremely restless, never staying long to incubate. There were only two eggs at the time of my departure. The female generally came and perched on the nest rim to relieve the male and she usually sat from ten to fifteen minutes at a spell. The male never came to incubate except when the nest was unoccupied and never sat for more than ten minutes, usually only five. Both sexes frequently left the nest to chase after insects, even when incubating.

#### **Sylvia mystacea** Menetries's Warbler.

Perhaps this is also not such a surprising record for Baluchistan, in view of what is known about the species' migration routes and breeding range.

However, it is a new record for the sub-continent as it is not listed

in Stuart Baker's FAUNA OF BRITISH INDIA (1924) nor in Dillon Ripley's SYNOPSIS OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN (1961). It is listed as a passage migrant and summer visitor for Afghanistan (Paludan 1959). He only secured one specimen in Seistan and considered it rare. Hue & Etchescopar (1970) give its distribution as, occurring across northern Afghanistan as a breeding species.

On March 23rd and 24th, 1974 during a visit to Baluchistan province and Pishin district, northeast of Quetta, I explored a relatively remote valley called Sorkhab, running roughly east west at 5,500 feet elevation and situated at  $30^{\circ} 33' N.$ ,  $67^{\circ} 12' E.$  The valley contains a small stony stream of flowing water (unusual in this arid part of the world), flanked by quite large willow trees, tamarisk scrub and thickets of *Phragmites* reeds. On one afternoon's walk I encountered at least eight different individuals of this species. Though typically Sylviine in their relatively furtive habits, they advertised their presence by continuously scolding "tchk-tchk-tchk" calls. The males also were frequently heard singing a very soft but melodious song which I recorded as being very similar to that of a Common Whitethroat's (*S. communis*). The males were remarkably like *C. cantillans*, the Subalpine Warbler in appearance (in fact this is what I assumed them to be at first), in that the upper breast was distinctly strawberry red or terra-cotta and both sexes had noticeable white loreal streaks. Moreover the males had dark grey rather than black crowns, napes and ear-coverts. The orbicular ring was fleshy orange and conspicuous in both sexes as also the white outer margins to the outer tail feathers.

The breasts of several females seen, I recorded at the time, as pinkish-buff, with one individual having a distinctly fulvous tone.

From their behaviour and numbers I would say that they were by no means accidental visitors but that this valley is regularly used on spring passage.

#### **Prunella fulvescens (Severtzov) Brown Accentor.**

In Pakistan, it is recorded as a winter visitor, occurring in the northern reaches of the Indus Valley in Baltistan, Hunza, Astor and northern Gilgit. Also in Chitral down to the main valley it has been recorded. However it is also generally encountered above 10000 feet elevation, even in these far northern areas. It apparently breeds in north-central Afghanistan at about 9000 feet elevation (Paludan 1959) and eastwards to Chinese Turkestan and Ladakh (Vaurie 1959).

During the same visit to Baluchistan (mentioned above) on March 30th, 1974, I visited the Mashelakh range in Quetta district, located about 30 miles northwest of Quetta at 6000 feet ( $30^{\circ} 15' N.$ ,  $66^{\circ} 34' E.$ ). This area is at least 300 miles south of previous records for Pakistan's Himalayan regions.

I encountered but one individual frequenting a dry bush-studded

gulley on a sloping plain. It perched conspicuously on bush tops fluttering periodically to the ground nearby to pick up food. It was tame and allowed continuous and close observation and appeared to be in quite bright fresh plumage though it is not possible to state whether it was a male or female. Looking at the coloured plate by Paul Barruel, of this species in "Les Oiseaux du Proche et du Monjen Orient", this Baluchistan specimen had more conspicuous black or dark brown streaking both on its crown and mantle whilst its throat was a yellow-buff or fulvous tone and the outer margins of the scapulars were pale creamy-buff. The broad supercilium was much whiter than that of either *P. strophiata* or *P. atrogularis* which have creamy-yellow superciliums. These latter species, with a more marked altitudinal migration pattern are more frequently encountered in Pakistan.

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#### 10. A NOTE ON THE BIRD PREDATORS OF THE DEATH'S HEAD HAWKMOTH, *ACHERONTIA STYX* W.

The sphingid *Acherontia styx* W. is a polyphagus pest noted on sesamum, lab lab, brinjal, groundnut and jasmine. The caterpillar is a defoliator. Sesamum is badly effected especially during the months of September - November at Coimbatore with as much as 20% damage. However, the outbreak is often effectively checked by birds that feed on these fleshy caterpillars. The following are the birds that have been



Roberts, T J. 1975. "Ornithological Records for Pakistan." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 72, 201–204.

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