

Birds Recently Sighted in Hkakaborazi Region, Northern Myanmar

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Introduction

Hkakaborazi region is a narrow strip of the western escarpment of Yunnan Province in China, once part of a continuous land formation comprising the Tibetan Plateau to the east (Kingdon-Ward 1944). At the most northern extremities of Myanmar is a sparsely populated, little-explored region that is generally referred to as the icy mountains—containing some lesser-known Himalayan peaks, including Mount Hkakaborazi, estimated at 5,881m high (Figure 9).

Designated as a protected area in 1996, the Ministry of Forestry declared the area north of the Nam Tami River to the Chinese border as Hkakaborazi National Park in 1998 (Figure 9) and submitted a proposal for upgrading Hkakaborazi to the status of a World Natural Heritage site to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

This report is the outcome of data collected during two surveys that were carried out by biological expeditions of Myanmar Forest Department supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society, New York.

Objectives

- To assess the presence and distribution of avifauna
- To find unrecorded bird species and Sino-Himalayan bird species
- To make recommendations for the active management and protection of Hkakaborazi National Park.

Methods

The data on bird presence were obtained by observations with binoculars and telescopes, netting with mist nets, and examination of hunters' kills in villages. In March / April 1997, we travelled and observed birds on the main trail from Putao to Rasang Camp (28° 19' N, 97° 39' E) (Figure 9). A second bird survey was carried out between 25 April and 24 May 1998, and started at Putao Town. We walked and observed birds along the main trail to Gawle via Naungmon Town and back to Putao via Babaw and Machanbaw. During this survey, mist netting was carried out in the Nanhti Camp and Naungmon Town areas.

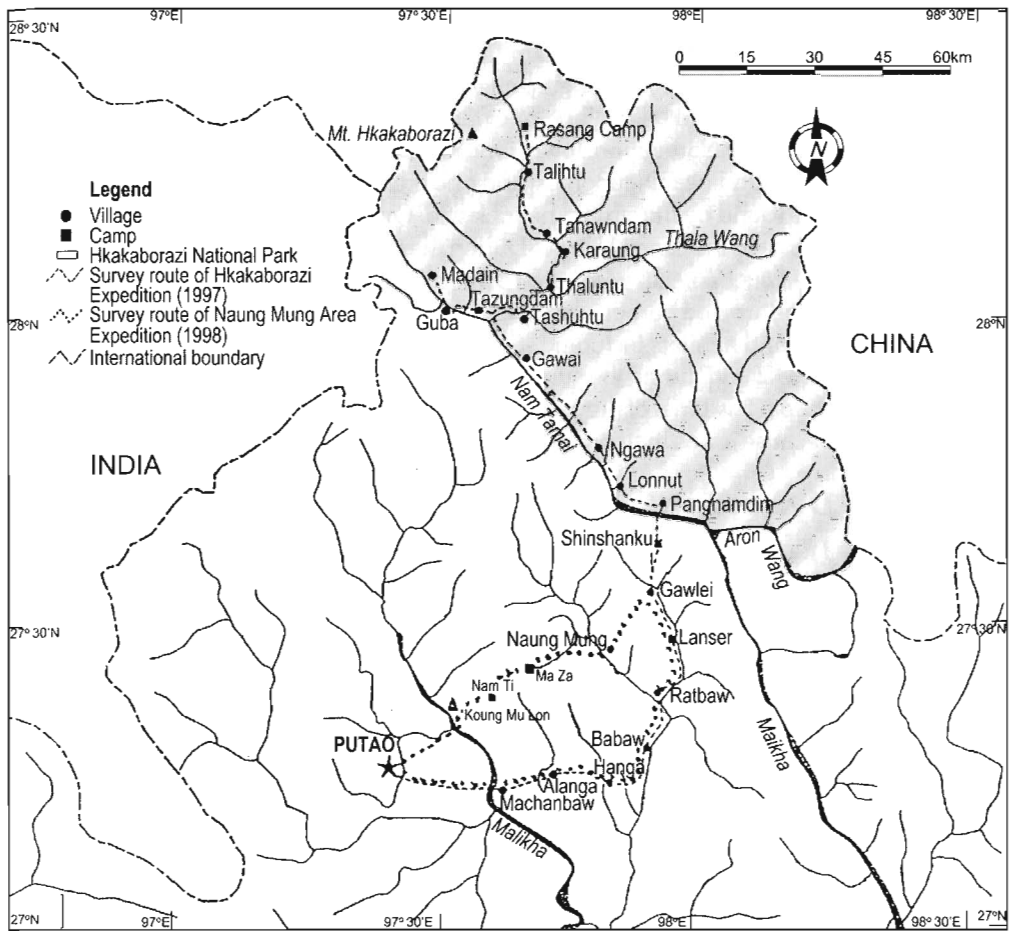


Figure 9: North Myanmar showing the Khakaborazi Protected Area (shaded), survey route and villages visited during the 1997 and 1998 expeditions

Survey Route

Between 2 March and 13 April 1997, the first bird survey was carried out by a biological expedition of Myanmar Forest Department into far northern Myanmar, starting at the town of Putao (27° 16' N, 97° 24' E) and reaching as far north as Rasang Camp (28° 19' N, 97° 39' E) (Figure 9). For the purpose of bird watching, nearly 290 km were covered. During the second bird survey, we travelled from Putao and observed birds on the main trail. We also set up the bird netting (for detailed identification) at two places (Nanhti and Natngmon).

Results

A quick assessment of bird presence and distribution was made during the two bird surveys; the total bird count was 160 species and out of that 33 Himalayan species were recorded. Although the presence of many species of birds is expected in this area, a lower number than expected was recorded due to the weather conditions and time limitations. Two white georgette flycatchers, one grey-cheeked fulvetta and one golden babbler were captured in two days by mist netting in Nanhti Camp. One active nest of wreathed hornbill was seen 2.4 km away from

Nanhti Camp. One blue-rumped pitta captured in a snare was seen near the cultivated area near Nanhti Camp. Three red-vented bulbul, two oriental white-eye, four grey-cheeked Fulvetta, one common tailorbird, one red-whiskered bulbul, and one puffthroated babbler were netted in three days near Naungmon Town. One red-whiskered bulbul nest with three eggs was found near Naungmon and one greater-coucal nest with three eggs was found by the stream near Gawle. One (live) captured kalij pheasant was seen in Alanga Village. During the survey, the songs of the large hawkcuckoo, the great barbet, the golden-throated barbet, and the blue-throated barbet were heard every day. Although there are many wetland habitats including streams, rivers, and lakes, no migratory birds were found during the survey. Although their habitats are still in good shape, few birds of prey and hornbill species were seen, presumably because it was their breeding season.

Discussion

The Hkakaborazi region is the only place that contains Sino-Himalayan subtropical forests and Sino-Himalayan temperate forests, which provide habitats for Sino-Himalayan avifauna. From the two surveys in 1997 and 1998, we were able to identify 33 Himalayan species that indicated it was a transition zone between the Indo-Malayan and Sino-Himalayan region. Although few bird species were recorded during the survey, considerable numbers of threatened species were listed (Appendix 1). There was no evidence of migratory birds in the wetland habitats, which might be explained by the fact that the survey was carried out of the migratory season, which is between mid-October and late March. Although there was no illegal bird trade in the region, large species such as birds of prey and hornbill were shot by crossbow and some birds that live on the ground, such as pitta pheasant, were captured by snares for subsistence purposes.

Hkakaborazi National Park adjoins the neighbouring countries of India and China. We therefore need to cooperate with them in transboundary conservation matters.

Recommendations

- A systematic ornithological survey should be carried out to study the presence and abundance of existing bird species.
- The endangered, endemic, Himalayan bird species should be categorised and the Hkakaborazi region should be designated an 'important bird area for biodiversity conservation'.
- Detailed identification of avifauna should be conducted and the species so far unrecorded should be studied.

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S. No.	English Name	Scientific Name	Status	Putao (1342')	Namti (2050')	Naungmon (1798')	Gawlei (2200')	Alanga (1520')	Babaw (1700')	Pangnandim (3670')	Tazungdam (4730')	Tahundam (6300')
1	Little heron	<i>Butorides striatus</i>	CR			X	X	X				
2	Black stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	R				X					
3	Black kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	R		X	X	X		X		X	X
4	Crest serpent-eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>	CR		X	X	X		X		X	X
5	Pied harrier	<i>Circus melanoleucos</i>	R			X						
6	Northern hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	F			X						
7	Rufous-throated partridge	<i>Arborophila rufogularis</i>	R							X		
8	Blood pheasant*	<i>Ithaginis cruentus</i>	R									X
9	Himalayan monal	<i>Lophophorus impejanus</i>	R									X
10	Kalij pheasant*	<i>Lophura leucomelanis</i>	R				X	X				
11	Common pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	R				X					
12	Red jungle fowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>	CR			X	X	X				
13	Grey peacock-pheasant	<i>Polyplectron bicalcaratum</i>	R		X	X	X	X	X			
14	Red-wattled lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	CR			X	X	X	X			
15	Ibisbill*	<i>Ibidorhyncha struthersii</i>	M									
16	Pintailed pigeon*	<i>Treron apicauda</i>			X	X	X	X				
17	Green imperial pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>	R		X	X	X	X		X		
18	Mountain imperial pigeon*	<i>Ducula badia</i>	R		X	X	X	X				
19	Spotted dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	CR	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
20	Oriental turtle-dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	R	X			X	X	X		X	
21	Emerald dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	R				X			X		
22	Red-breasted parakeet	<i>Psittacula alexandri</i>	R							X		
23	Large hawkcuckoo*	<i>Cuculus sparveriodes</i>	R	X	X	X	X	X				
24	Indian cuckoo	<i>Cuculus micropterus</i>	RM	X	X	X	X	X				

25	Plaintive cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis merulinus</i>	CR	X	X	X	X	X	X	X														
26	Drongo cuckoo	<i>Surniculus lugubris</i>	R/M	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
27	Greater coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	CR	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
28	Chestnut-winged cuckoo	<i>Clamator coromandus</i>	R/M	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
29	Mountain scopsowl *	<i>Otus spilocephalus</i>	CR	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
30	Himalayan swiftlet *	<i>Collocalia brevirostris</i>	R	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
31	Asian palm-swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasensis</i>	CR	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
32	Red-headed trogon	<i>Harpactes erythrocephalus</i>	R	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
33	Common kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	CR	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
34	White-throated kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	CR	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
35	Black-capped kingfisher	<i>Halcyon pileata</i>	R	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
36	Common hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	R	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
37	Rufous-necked hornbill	<i>Aceros nipalensis</i>	R	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
38	Wreathed hornbill	<i>Aceros undulatus</i>	R	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
39	Oriental pied hornbill	<i>Antracoceros albirostris</i>	R	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
40	Great hornbill	<i>Buceros bicornis</i>	R	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
41	Great barbet	<i>Megalaima virens</i>	R	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
42	Golden-throated barbet	<i>Megalaima franklinii</i>	R	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
43	Blue-throated barbet	<i>Megalaima asiatica</i>	CR	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
44	Greater yellownape *	<i>Picus flavinucha</i>	R	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
45	Himalayan goldenback *	<i>Dinopium shorii</i>	R	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
46	Common goldenback	<i>Dinopium javanense</i>	CR	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
47	Grey-capped woodpecker	<i>Picoides canicapillus</i>	R	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
48	Long-tailed broadbill*	<i>Psarisomus dalhousiae</i>	R	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

73	Rufous treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>	R						X				X	X			
74	Grey treepie	<i>Dendrocitta formosae</i>	R	X				X	X				X	X			
75	Collared treepie*	<i>Dendrocitta frontalis</i>	R					X	X				X	X			
76	House crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	R					X									
77	Large-billed crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	CR					X	X				X	X			
78	Collared crow	<i>Corvus torquatus</i>	R													X	
79	Sultan tit*	<i>Melanochlora sultanea</i>	R					X					X	X			
80	Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>	R												X		X
81	Yellow-cheeked tit*	<i>Parus spilonotus</i>	R												X		
82	Chestnut-vented nuthatch*	<i>Sitta nagaensis</i>	R						X								
83	Chestnut-bellied nuthatch	<i>Sitta castanea</i>	R										X				
84	Velvet-fronted nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>	R										X	X			
85	Brown dipper*	<i>Cinclus pallasi</i>	R					X					X				
86	Puff-throated babbler	<i>Pellorneum ruficeps</i>	CR						X					X			
87	White-browed scimitar-babbler*	<i>Pomatorhinus schisticeps</i>	CR											XX			
88	Golden babbler	<i>Stachyris chrysaea</i>	R										X				X
89	Grey-throated babbler	<i>Stachyris nigriceps</i>	R										X				
90	White-necked babbler	<i>Stachyris leucotis</i>	R										X				
91	White-crested laughing thrush	<i>Garrulax leucolophus</i>	CR						X				X	X			
92	Red-tailed laughing thrush	<i>Garrulax milnei</i>	R														X
93	Greater necklaced laughing thrush	<i>Garrulax pectoralis</i>	R						X				X	X			
94	Chestnut-backed laughing thrush	<i>Garrulax nuchalis</i>	R						X								
95	Silver-eared mesia*	<i>Leiothrix argenteauris</i>	R						X				X	X			
96	Cutia*	<i>Cutia nipalensis</i>	R						X				X	X			

141	Ashy woodswallow	<i>Artamus fuscus</i>	CR	X									
142	Brown shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>	M		X		X						
143	Burmese shrike	<i>Lanius colluriooides</i>	R	X			X						
144	Grey-backed shrike*	<i>Lanius tephronotus</i>	M	X				X					
145	Long-tailed shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>	R	X	X								
146	Chestnut-tailed starling	<i>Sturnus malabaricus</i>	R	X	X								
147	Common myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	CR	X		X		X		X			
148	Collared myna	<i>Acridotheres albocinctus</i>	R	X									
149	Purple sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>	R						X			X	
150	Green-tailed sunbird*	<i>Aethopyga nipalensis</i>	R				X						X
151	Black-throated sunbird*	<i>Aethopyga saturata</i>	R							X			
152	Crimson sunbird	<i>Aethopyga siparaja</i>	R	X						X			
153	Streaked spiderhunter*	<i>Arachnothera magna</i>	R		X				X				
154	Plain flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum concolor</i>	R					X					
155	Oriental white-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>	R	X	X					X			
156	Eurasian tree sparrow	<i>Passer montianus</i>	CR	X			X			X		X	
157	House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	R				X		X		X		
158	White-rumped munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>	R	X						X		X	
159	Scaly-breasted munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	R				X						
160	Crested bunting	<i>Melophus lathami</i>	R										X

* = Himalayan species; R = resident; CR = common resident; F = found; M = migrant

Note: 38 Himalayan species out of 160 recorded during 2 survey trips (Hkakaborazi Expedition 1997 and Naungmung Expedition 1998)