

characteristic of the species.

The bird's size, slightly larger than Green Magpie *Cissa chinensis*, black and white plumage, and long graduated tail made it unmistakable. I had no doubt as to its identity, being familiar with the species in Britain and Europe.

I observed it through 8x40 binoculars and took brief notes on a mini-cassette recorder. The black head and breast, white belly and scapulars, and white wing flashes in flight were all noted. There do not appear to be any similar species in South-east Asia mentioned in King *et al.* (1975).

At the time I did not realise the significance of this record, having seen Eurasian Jays *Garrulus glandarius* on Doi Inthanon a few days before, and I had erroneously assumed that Black-billed Magpies had a similar status in Thailand. I had also seen the plate of Black-billed Magpie and *Corvus* species in King *et al.* (1975) and this reinforced my view! On reading King *et al.* (1975) more closely on our return home, I was surprised to see that the Black-billed Magpie had not actually been recorded in Thailand, and was found only as close as northern Laos and eastern Myanmar.

P. D. Round (*in litt.* 1989), stated that the Black-billed Magpie is not found in the Shan States across the border in Myanmar, but it 'could be a species extending its range with deforestation'.

While this is the first record of Black-billed Magpie for Thailand, the ever-increasing records of new species for that country may indicate that lack of observers rather than vagrancy is responsible for the limited sightings of some species. There have been hardly any observations of birds in Myanmar and Laos in recent years, and some open country species such as the Black-billed Magpie may be more widespread than realised.

#### REFERENCE

King, B. F., Dickinson, E. C. and Woodcock, M. W. (1975) *A field guide to the birds of South-East Asia*. London: Collins.

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## Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*: a new species for Thailand

PETER CUEREL and SOMSRI THONGSATJA

On 27 December 1991, Peter Cuerel and Somsri Thongsatja were birdwatching at Chiang Saen Lake (20°15'N 100°03'E), Chiang Rai Province, Thailand, when they found a drake Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*.

The lake is situated about 8 km south-west of the town of Chiang Saen, 4-5 km from the Mekong River and about 25 km due south of the most northerly point in Thailand. On 26 December we had been taken to a secluded bay by local people. This bay contained a large number of ducks and although nothing exceptional was seen, it was noticed that there was a considerable movement of birds in the area, with several large groups of ducks being seen in flight over the surrounding countryside. We therefore returned to the site on the following day.

At about 15h00 on 27 December, PC was searching through a flock of about 600 ducks using a telescope (magnification 30x) at a range of approximately 150 m. The species present were mainly Lesser Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna javanica*, with good numbers of Garganey *Anas querquedula* and Northern Pintail *A. acuta*, together with some Common Teal *A. crecca*. It was hoped that the search might produce a Thai rarity such as Gadwall *A. strepera*. Instead, however, a familiar bird was seen and quickly identified as a drake Mallard *A. platyrhynchos* in breeding plumage. The bird remained in view for about 1 3/4 hours, mainly resting. It flew briefly, once, during a disturbance, but travelled only about 20 m. It remained in the same general area in which it was first sighted. The identification was checked by consulting King *et al.* (1975), for the benefit of ST. Notes were taken and used to compile the description given below.

A medium or large-sized duck, appearing about the size of a Northern Pintail, but with a slightly heavier build. The large bill was yellowish, with a touch of green and was darker on the nostrils. The head and neck were entirely dark green, and a narrow white collar at the base of the neck separated these areas from the body. The breast was dark brown, dull with no sheen, but with some lighter speckling. The folded wings and upperparts visible while the bird was at rest appeared pale grey, with some light brown marks. The back was light brownish and the rear end of the body was black with some white visible in the tail. The underparts were whitish and the legs and feet were orange. A very dark bluish speculum, edged with white at the front and rear, was visible in flight. An unexpected feature was that the eye was yellow instead of dark; the latter colour is typical of the Mallard at all stages.

In South-East Asia, the species has previously been recorded in northern, central and eastern Myanmar (King *et al.* 1975) and in Viet Nam (Vo Quy 197?). This appears to be the first record for Thailand, although Boonsong Lekagul and Round (1991) considered that the species was a likely future addition to the list of Thai birds.

The authors wish to thank P. D Round for his comments on the first draft of this note.

## REFERENCES

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King, B. F., Dickinson, E. C. and Woodcock, M. W. (1975) *A field Guide to the birds of South-East Asia*. London: Collins.

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## Collared Grosbeak *Mycerobas affinis*: a new species for Thailand

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Soon after dawn on the mornings of 18 and 19 February 1986, at the edge of evergreen forest surrounding the small marsh on the summit of Doi Inthanon, Chiang Mai province, northern Thailand, David Clugston, John Mullins and I identified a Collared Grosbeak *Mycerobas affinis*. Although previously unrecorded in Thailand, it has transpired that we were neither the first, nor the last, observers, to see this individual. The bird was originally found by Brian Field and others who saw it at the same site, again just after dawn, on 2 January. It remained in the area until at least 22 March, when it was seen by Phil Round and Kamol Kamolphalin.

The following description is compiled from my own combined field notes taken on 18 and 19 February. In size and shape the bird was obviously a grosbeak *Mycerobas*, appearing substantially larger than a Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*, with a massive pale horn-colored bill. The head, wings and tail were wholly black except for yellow spots on the inner tertials. The breast, belly, under tail-coverts, rump, mantle and a broad collar around the lower neck were brilliant golden yellow, suffused orange on the collar. When the bird was perched, the collar was conspicuous and the yellow rump

was usually visible because the wings were held above it. The mantle was not normally visible on the perched bird, but became conspicuous in flight, as did the contrast between the mantle and the orange lower neck. We did not see that the thighs were yellow, which would conclusively rule out the Black-and-yellow Grosbeak *M. icteroides*, but this feature was noted by later observers and the orange on the collar is also a feature of *affinis* and not *icteroides*.

On both mornings the bird was first observed when it flew into the tops of the low trees on the edge of the marsh opposite the boardwalk. It then dropped into the bushes below the trees, where it was in the company of Common Rosefinches *Carpodacus erythrinus* and the occasional Dark-breasted Rosefinch *C. nipalensis*. On each occasion the bird was in view for approximately 30 minutes, but was not observed to feed or to drop to the ground. It did not call during our observations but B. Field (pers. comm.) stated that his attention was first attracted to it by its distinctive call.

I should like to thank Phil Round for his comments.

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## Northern Shrike *Lanius excubitor*, a species new to Borneo and South-East Asia

CLIVE F. MANN and DAVID A. DISKIN

At about 16h30 on 4 October 1990 C.F.M. saw a grey, black and white bird fly low across a muddy stretch of a paddyfield onto a low bush growing on a bund about 200 m distant. It was at first reminiscent of Pied Triller *Lalage nigra*, but habitat, behaviour and jizz were wrong for that species. When viewed through a telescope down to 30 m it became obvious that it was a grey shrike *Lanius*. The bird was seen in flight on two occasions. It was larger than, and had a longer tail and a heavier bill than that of a Brown Shrike *L. cristatus*. There was a broad, black stripe running back from the eye; the crown and mantle were pale grey and the rump was white. The wings were black with a large white area, and the tail was black with much white on the outer feathers. The underparts were white, with a faint pink tinge on the breast and