

BROWNISH-FLANKED BUSH-WARBLER <i>Cettia fortipes</i>	Belta Kharak, around Joshimath	3,7	1,800-2,800	5
CHESTNUT-CROWNED BUSH-WARBLER <i>Cettia major</i>	Dibrugeta	1	3,600	3
BUSH-WARBLER <i>Cettia</i> sp.	Above Bethartoli	1	4,400	1
SULPHUR-BELLIED WARBLER <i>Phylloscopus griseolus</i>	Sarsonpatal	1	4,200	2
PALE-RUMPED WARBLER <i>Phylloscopus chloronotus</i>	Doodganga	2,3	2,800	1
GREENISH WARBLER <i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>	Dibrugeta	2	3,500	2
LARGE-BILLED LEAF-WARBLER <i>Phylloscopus magnirostris</i>	Deodi, Dibrugeta, Belta Kharak	2,3	2,800-3,600	4
WESTERN CROWNED WARBLER <i>Phylloscopus occipitalis</i>	Rishi Ganga gorge, Belta Kharak	2,3	2,200-2,800	3
BLYTH'S LEAF-WARBLER <i>Phylloscopus reguloides</i>	Dood Ganga, Dibrugeta	2,3	2,800-3,600	3
GOLDEN-SPECTACLED WARBLER <i>Seiurus burkii</i>	Dibrugeta	2	3,600	3
GREY-HOODED WARBLER <i>Seiurus xanthoschistos</i>	Doodganga	3	2,800	1
STREAKED LAUGHINGTHRUSH <i>Garrulax lineatus</i>	Around Joshimath	3,7	2,300-2,700	5
VARIEGATED LAUGHINGTHRUSH <i>Garrulax variegatus</i>	Belta Kharak, Auli	3	2,300-3,000	4
CHESTNUT-TAILED MINLA <i>Minla strigula</i>	Dibrugeta, Deodi	2	3,300-3,500	2
(RUFIOUS SIBIA <i>Heterophasia capistrata</i>	Auli	3	2,400-2,800	2)
YELLOW-BELLIED FLOWERPECKER <i>Dicaeum melanoxanthum</i>	Reni-Kalikona	3	2,300	1
(HOUSE SPARROW <i>Passer domesticus</i>	Around Joshimath	7	2,000	-)
GREY WAGTAIL <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Rishisanga gorge	4	2,000-2,800	2
OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT <i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>	Dibrugeta - Deodi	1/2	3,300-3,600	4
ROSY PIPIT <i>Anthus roseatus</i>	Dibrugeta to Sarsonpatal	1	3,500-4,500	5
ALPINE ACCENTOR <i>Prinella collaris</i>	Pathalkhan	1,5	4,200	2
ROBIN ACCENTOR <i>Prinella rubeculoides</i>	Sarsonpatal	1	4,200	1
RUFIOUS-BREASTED ACCENTOR <i>Prinella strophiata</i>	North Sanctuary	2		
(FIRE-FRONTED SERIN <i>Serinus pusillus</i>	Around Joshimath	3,7	2,000	6)
PLAIN MOUNTAIN-FINCH <i>Leucosticte nemoricola</i>	North Sanctuary	1	4,000	2
COMMON ROSEFINCH <i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	Dibrugeta	1	3,600	1
BEAUTIFUL ROSEFINCH <i>Carpodacus pulcherrimus</i>	Bethartoli	5	4,000	1
PINK-BROWED ROSEFINCH <i>Carpodacus rodochrous</i>	Dibrugeta, Pathalkhan	2,6	3,500-4,100	-
SPOT-WINGED ROSEFINCH <i>Carpodacus rodochrous</i>	Deodi, North Sanctuary, Joshimath	1,2,7	1,900-4,100	-
WHITE-BROWED ROSEFINCH <i>Carpodacus thura</i>	Dibrugeta	2	3,500	-
RED-FRONTED ROSEFINCH <i>Carpodacus puniceus</i>	Dibrugeta, Ramni, Sarsonpatal, Joshimath	1,2,7	1,800-4,200	-
RED-HEADED BULLFINCH <i>Pyrrhula erythrocephala</i>	Near Ramni	2	3,600	2
(BLACK-AND-YELLOW GROSBEAK <i>Mycerobas icteroides</i>	Auli	3	2,500-2,700	2)
SPOT-WINGED GROSBEAK <i>Mycerobas melanoxanthos</i>	Belta Kharak, Dibrugeta, Auli	2,3	2,800-3,600	4

Key :

Habitat	1 = Alpine meadow
	2 = Subalpine forest
	3 = Upper temperate forest
	4 = Water courses/bodies
	5 = Cliffs
	6 = Boulder-strewn slopes with sparse vegetation
	7 = Agriculture/habitation

Abundance ranking (based on sightings or calls heard)

1 = 1
2 = 2-5
3 = 6-10
4 = 11-50
5 = 50-100
6 = >100

() = indicates species seen only outside NDBR

Occurrence of some pelagic seabirds (Procellariiformes) in waters off the Indian subcontinent

A. L. H. ROBERTSON

Information on the occurrence and movements of petrels Procellariiformes in the northern Indian Ocean is summarised. An attempt is made to integrate these pelagic and migratory species from the southern fringe of the Oriental region more firmly within the avifauna of the Indian subcontinent. Some additions to the regional avifauna are noted.

Petrels, shearwaters and storm-petrels (Procellariidae) are truly pelagic birds, often returning to land only to breed. Many species are also highly migratory at sea, following ocean currents and upwellings in search of food during the non-breeding season (Harrison 1985, Warham 1990). In the Indian Ocean north of the equator there are few known breeding sites and individuals are seldom examined in the hand. Information has been sparse and scattered (Bailey and Bourne 1963, van den Berg *et al.* 1991) and the recording of most species near the coasts of the Indian subcontinent is based largely on sporadic sight records and in some cases specimens (Ripley 1982, Ali and Ripley 1987), the latter usually washed ashore or caught by fishermen.

A search of the literature on seabirds in the Indian Ocean, including the published records of the Royal Naval Bird Watching Society, has revealed much extra information on the occurrence and movements of these birds relative to the subcontinent and its off-shore island groups. It is hoped that summarizing these data, and providing a deliberately long list of references, will help to stimulate further research.

Numbers in parentheses after the scientific name are those used in Ripley (1982). Following the taxonomy of Sibley and Monroe (1990) all the species treated fall within the Procellariidae and Persian Shearwater is treated as a separate species. Nomenclature conforms with that preferred by Bourne and Casement (1993).

NOTES ON SPECIES

CAPE PETREL *Daption capense* (6)

A circumpolar species from the Southern Oceans, very occasionally straying north.

A single undated specimen collected prior to 1870 and said to have been killed between Sri Lanka and the Indian mainland is in the Hume collection at the British Museum (Tring) (R. Prys-Jones pers. comm., Whistler 1944). It is one of only about a dozen records from north of the equator (Bourne 1967a) and the only specimen from the northern Indian Ocean. However, Legge (1880) reported a second instance of its occurrence south of Sri Lanka at about 03°N in November 1866 and there is a more recent sight record off south-east Arabia (Landers 1957).

[MASCARENE PETREL *Pterodroma aterrima* (13)

For many years known only from four 19th century skins from the Mascarene Islands; it has been recently collected on Réunion. Little is known of its range and distribution (Harrison 1985) and Feare (1984) considers it 'may well be the rarest of tropical Indian Ocean seabirds'. Reports of its occurrence in the Arabian Sea, such as those noted by Alexander (1954), have been open to doubt since the discovery and naming of the similar-looking Jouanin's Petrel *Bulweria fallax* in 1955, and in all probability refer to the latter species (Jouanin 1970a).

Its only reported occurrence from the subcontinent was of a specimen collected alive by fishermen near Bombay in June 1940 and identified by G. M. Henry at the Colombo Museum (Abdulali and Ali 1940). In light of the subsequent discovery of *B. fallax* the specimen should be re-examined but its whereabouts are unknown (Bailey and Bourne 1963, Ripley 1982) and, even without it, there is doubt as to its identity (Jouanin 1970a.)

BARAU'S PETREL *Pterodroma barau* (—)

First described in 1963 and known only from the Indian Ocean where it breeds on the Mascarene islands (Jouanin 1987).

Initially thought not to migrate north of the equator (Bailey 1968) it has now been shown that it does disperse north-east of its breeding range. Four sightings off the south-east coast of Sri Lanka (c. 05°10'N 82°E) on 26 June 1984 and two more in the 9° Channel between the Maldives and Lakshadweep on 27 June 1985 were reported by the Dutch research ship Tyro (van den Berg *et al.* 1991). Two sight records near Colombo in September 1991, a single bird off Wellawatte (De Silva 1992), and four birds off Mutwal on 8th, have been reported (Warakagoda and Karunaratne 1993), and three other sightings are listed by Warakagoda (1994), and one other in June by Karunaratne *et al.* (1994).

The species is an addition to the recognised regional avifauna (Ripley 1982, Ali and Ripley 1987).

SOFT-PLUMAGED PETREL *Pterodroma mollis* (—)

Primarily a bird of the Southern Oceans where it is most numerous between 25° and 60°S (Harrison 1985) and seldom appears in the northern hemisphere.

On 7 and 10 September 1988 landbased observers at Wellawatte beach, Colombo (06°52'N 79°51'E) recorded a total of four separate sightings of single birds, identified as this species by reference to the literature (De Silva 1989). This is the first record of the species in the region and there have been no further sightings (R. I. De Silva *in litt.* 1993, Warakagoda 1994).

In the Indian Ocean it is occasionally recorded north of the Tropic of Capricorn, in June and July (Bourne 1966, Bourne and Radford 1961, Bailey 1968), but there appear to be no other Indian Ocean records north of the equator, so its appearance here needs to be confirmed.

BULWER'S PETREL *Bulweria bulwerii* (13b)

Birds breeding in the East China Sea apparently disperse westwards in the non-breeding season (Harrison 1985).

The first confirmed occurrence in the Indian Ocean was based on a single specimen from Addu Atoll, Maldives (0°40'S 73°50'E) (Phillips 1959) taken in August. It may have been an immature non-breeding bird summering in the winter range (Bourne 1967a). Now known to regularly invade the eastern edge of the Indian Ocean, travelling through Indonesian waters, and commonly found off north-west Australia (Harrison 1985, Dunlop *et al.* 1988, Warham 1990), some birds at least penetrating further west.

One was sighted off Cape Comorin (07°11'N 76°17'E) on 20 August 1973 (Bourne 1984) and there have been sightings in the northern Indian Ocean as far west as 51°42'E (Bailey *et al.* 1968).

JOUANIN'S PETREL *Bulweria fallax* (13a)

The species was only named in 1955, having long been confused with *Puffinus pacificus* or *Pterodroma aterrima*, and it is probably endemic to the north-west Indian Ocean. Its breeding localities are still undiscovered and it is conjectural whether they are in barren coastal ranges or on offshore islands (Gallagher *et al.* 1984, Gallagher 1985, Warham 1990). It is found commonly in the Arabian Sea, especially during the south-west monsoon, dispersing south of the equator during the northern winter (Bourne 1987). Roberts (1991) mentions possible sight records off Karachi and Sinclair (1979) saw five birds west of the Gulf of Kutch on 25 November 1974.

A specimen was collected at Dehiwela near Colombo in January 1978 (Kotagama 1980). It has also been recorded at sea west of Lakshadweep (11°24'N 70°48'E) on 1 October 1987 (Bourne 1989); south of Cape Comorin (06°22'N 77°50'E) on 15 September 1986 (Chapman and Cheshire 1987); south of Sri Lanka (05°29'N 81°22'E) on 24 June 1985; west of Trivandrum between 08°06'N 76°32'E and 08°22'N 75°42'E on 26 June 1985 (van den Berg *et al.* 1991); and in Lakshadweep in April 1988 (Daniels 1992). A probable record of the species in the vicinity of 10°N 72°E is reported by Pocklington (1967), and off Colombo on 18 June 1994 by (Karunaratne *et al.* 1994).

Earlier records, of *Pterodroma aterrima* in particular, may refer to this species (Jouanin 1957, 1970a) and it is now evident that it does indeed occur in subcontinental waters.

STREAKED SHEARWATER *Calonectris leucomelas* (7)

A Pacific Ocean species, breeding around Japan, that occasionally strays through the Malacca Straits into the Indian Ocean (Harrison 1985, Warham 1990).

Ripley (1982) lists only a single specimen from near Colombo, taken in either 1884 or 1894, though Phillips (1967 and 1978) noted another British Museum specimen taken in the Gulf of Mannar in December 1956.

More recently the species has been recorded at sea off the coasts of Sri Lanka: in the east (08°N 82°30'E) on 5 October 1962 and between Gt. Basses reef and Dondra Head (06°N 80°45'E) on 13 October 1962 (Bourne 1965); in the south-west (06°06'N 79°09'E) four birds on 18 December 1979 (Chapman 1983); and in the Gulf of Mannar, observed from the ferry between Talaimannar and Rameshwaram on 21 September 1978 (van den Berg *et al.* 1982b). A bird was photographed off Cape Comorin (07°53'N 77°47'E) on 22 June 1984 (van den Berg *et al.* 1991).

Sri Lanka lies on the western edge of its normal range (W. R. P. Bourne *in litt.* 1993) but it has reached as far as Eilat (Morgan and Shirihai 1992).

WEDGE-TAILED SHEARWATER *Puffinus pacificus* (9)

The Indian Ocean population breeds only in the warm water areas of the Southern Hemisphere (Bailey 1968, Warham 1990) including the Chagos Archipelago. After breeding in the southern summer colonies disperse northwards to range widely throughout the tropical waters of the Indian Ocean (Jouanin and Mougin 1979).

In the area between the the Maldives and Sri Lanka it is perhaps the commonest shearwater during the northern summer, occurring between March and October (Phillips 1954 and 1963, Bourne and Dixon 1975, Bourne 1984, Wijesinghe 1985, Warakagoda 1994). It has been recorded in May in Lakshadweep (Bailey 1968) and there is a report outside this season from west of Goa (15°N 72°E) on 20 January 1984 (Chapman 1985). It was observed by van den Berg *et al.* (1991) to be a good deal commoner east of the 81°E meridian.

Identification at sea is difficult and this species may be confused with the next, while older sight records from the Arabian Sea may refer to *Bulweria fallax*.

FLESH-FOOTED SHEARWATER *Puffinus carneipes* (8)

A population migrates from its breeding range off western Australia north across the equator to moult in the northern Indian Ocean (Bourne 1960), where it is common during the months of the south-west monsoon, numbers increasing from May to a peak in July-August and most birds having departed by October (Bailey 1966).

Records summarised by Abdulali and Grubh (1982) included two birds purchased from fishermen at Kanyakumari [Cape Comorin] in May; sight records from Addu Atoll in the Maldives in March, July and October; and one in August about 400 km west of Minicoy, Maldives. They also noted the statement by Bourne (1960) that numbers have been recorded off Cochin, India in September on return passage. Some specimens are known from the western coast of Sri Lanka. Four are in the Department of National Museums, Colombo, including the first, which was collected in 1879, and the fifth and sixth collected in 1944 and 1961 respectively. The seventh specimen was blown ashore at Colombo in October 1991 (Gunawardana 1993).

To this list may be added: a single bird east of 9° Channel on 7 August 1951 (Norris 1952); several small flocks, mostly heading north-west or west, seen west of Lakshadweep in May (Bailey 1968); numbers both east and west of One and Half Degree Channel in the Maldives on 1-2 August 1980 (Chapman 1982); sightings along the length of the Maldives in late April and off Goa (14°48' 73°41'E) on 3 May 1964 (Gill 1967); 28 birds off Cochin (10°06'N 75°35'E) on 11 August 1987 (Bourne 1989); and a total of 361 birds on five days in June 1984 and June 1985 between Cape Comorin, Colombo and off the south-east coast of Sri Lanka (van den Berg *et al.* 1991).

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Puffinus griseus* (—)

This widely distributed species has been shown to occur in the Red Sea from mid-March to early August (Shirihai 1987) and a beached specimen was recovered in Oman in July (Colston and Gallagher 1983). It is otherwise unknown in the northern Indian Ocean, with the exception of the sight record of birds off Trincomalee in November 1974 (Sinclair 1977, De Silva 1990). The identification in this instance was not in doubt but further records would be desirable. An addition to the regional avifauna.

SHORT-TAILED SHEARWATER *Puffinus tenuirostris* (10)

The species migrates in the Pacific between the Bass Straits and the Aleutians, possibly in a vast figure-of-eight across the ocean (Warham 1990).

It has occurred twice in subcontinental waters, once in Pakistan in 1899 (Roberts 1991) and once in Sri Lanka in 1949 (Phillips 1951 and 1978). Bourne (1967a) considered these 'wrecked on the beach at the time of the northward migration in May. A clear example of movement north from the Southern Ocean into the wrong ocean'.

Two specimens were found in 1977, also in May, off western peninsular Thailand (Frith 1978) but there appear to be no further records of the species from the northern Indian Ocean other than that reported by Karunaratne *et al.* (1994) in June off Colombo.

AUDUBON'S SHEARWATER *Puffinus lherminieri* (11)

Widely distributed through tropical seas with three possible subspecies resident in the Indian Ocean - *P. l. bailloni*, *P. l. nicolae* and the recently named *P. l. temptator*. They are considered mainly sedentary (Bailey 1968, Jouanin and Mougouin 1979) though to some extent following ocean upwellings (Bailey 1971).

Contra Ripley (1982) the race *bailloni* is now confined to birds breeding in the Mascarenes (Jouanin 1970b, Louette and Herremans 1985) while those breeding in the Maldives, certainly in December and January and possibly throughout the year (Phillips and Sims 1958), and probably also in Lakshadweep and Chagos (Bailey 1968), are considered to be *nicolae*. The only record in the area away from breeding localities is of one seen in Sri Lanka in 1982 (De Silva 1990).

PERSIAN SHEARWATER *Puffinus persicus* (12)

Breeds in summer on the cliffs of the Kuria Muria islands off Arabia (Gallagher 1985) and possibly elsewhere (Gallagher *et al.* 1984).

It can be regularly sighted off the Makran coast of Pakistan (Roberts 1991) and has strayed as far as Trivandrum (8°30'N) (Bourne 1960).

WILSON'S STORM-PETREL *Oceanites oceanicus* (14)

A notable migrant and abundant visitor to the northern Indian Ocean from its breeding grounds in the Southern Ocean (Bailey 1971, Warham 1990) and probably the most widespread storm-petrel in subcontinental waters during the northern summer.

Large numbers are reported to be present from April to October in the seas around the Maldives (Phillips 1963) and mass southerly migration has been noted off Sri Lanka and south India (Phillips 1954 and 1955, Dawson 1958, Bourne and Dixon 1973 and 1975, van den Berg *et al.* 1982a). At the Bombay High oilfields (19°37'N 71°23'E) it has been reported as the commonest and most widespread offshore species in September (Chapman 1984). The record of six birds off the mouth of the Hugli river, West Bengal (c. 21°30'N) on 11 May 1964 and one on 30 May 1965 are the most northerly records in the Bay of Bengal (Bourne 1967b). Roberts (1984 and 1991) indicates that non-breeding birds may remain in the northern Indian Ocean all year and can be observed along the coast of Pakistan.

WHITE-FACED STORM-PETREL *Pelagodroma marina* (—)

Birds from the south-west Australian breeding population *P. m. dulciae* migrate to the western Indian Ocean where they are quite common in the northern summer from late May to September (Junge 1941, Bailey 1966 and 1968, Harrison 1985, Warham 1990). Migrating birds pass through subcontinental waters, but the occurrence of the species was not noted by Ripley (1982) or Ali and Ripley (1987).

A number of records exist relevant to the species' passage including, listed chronologically:

May	16	06°00'N 83°00'E	specimen taken (AMNH)	Mörzer Bruyns and Voous (1964)
"	22	05°48'N 88°00'E	" " (ZMA 17692)c	" "
"	28	08°05'N 73°00'E	shipboard bird photographed	Bailey and Bourne (1963)
June	9	05°00'N 81°00'E	one on board ship	Junge (1941)
"	25	06°33'N 79°20'E	two observed	van den Berg <i>et al.</i> (1991)
"	26	10°30'N 75°00'E	bird on board ship	Bourne and Radford (1961)
"	26	04°52'N 82°40'E	four observed	van den Berg <i>et al.</i> (1991)
July	1	06°00'N 84°00'E	bird on board ship	Bourne (1966)
"	2	05°00'N 80°30'E	three birds on board ship	" "
"	12	13°00'N 74°00'E	bird on board ship	" "
"	16	00°30'S 76°00'E	two birds on board ship	" "
"	21	00°40'S 73°05'E	dead bird ashore	Strickland and Jenner (1978)
August		01°30'N 73°30'E	one observed	Ash and Shafeeg (1994)
Sept.	16	12°40'N 68°47'E	one observed	Voous (1965)

The species is relatively easily distinguished at sea from other storm-petrels by its white face, almost entirely white underside, and pale grey rump. It is clearly evident that it occurs in subcontinental waters, certainly on its northward passage, passing direct from the breeding grounds to the wintering area in the Arabian Sea (Bailey 1968), though the lack of records in August-September indicates that it may return by a more southerly route. Birds have been reported from the Chagos islands in July (Bourne 1971) and in October (Bourne 1985).

BLACK-BELLIED STORM-PETREL *Fregetta tropica* (15)WHITE-BELLIED STORM-PETREL *Fregetta grallaria* (—)

The genus *Fregetta* is taxonomically complex but usually divided into two species, each with two colour phases often difficult to identify in the field with certainty. They breed in the Southern Oceans, migrating north to the tropics (Jouanin and Mougouin 1979) and are common in the Arabian Sea from May to September (Bailey 1968 and 1971). Specific identification of birds observed at sea is often open to doubt.

For many years the only record of *F. tropica* in the region was of a specimen from the 'Bay of Bengal' in the British Museum (Gibson-Hill 1948, Ripley 1982). The date of circa 1895 given for this specimen by Ali and Ripley (1987) must be wrong since the label is apparently in the handwriting of the ninth Marquis of Tweeddale who died in 1878.

An example of *F. tropica* caught at 08°03'N 72°50'E - off Minicoy in the 8° channel - on 9 September 1960 was considered the first which has actually been handled in recent times in the Indian Ocean north of the equator (Bailey and Bourne 1963). The only positive records since are of three seen west of 9° Channel (c. 08°48'N 70°17'E) on 20 June 1984 and two more south-east of Sri Lanka (c. 04°52'N 82°40'E) six days later (van den Berg *et al.* 1991).

Abdulali (1981) noted a sight record on 12 April 1977 off Battye Malve, south of Car Nicobar, which 'may have been of this species', while Cheke (1966) recorded a *Fregetta* sp. in the Bay of Bengal (05°56'N 87°E) on 7

August 1963, and Bourne and Dixon (1973) refer to two *Fregatta* seen at 12°15'N 74°E on 27 July 1967.

Birds that may have been *F. grallaria* were observed off Lakshadweep (12°21'N 74°05'E) and 250 miles west of Goa (15°04'N 70°56'E) (Anon. 1970) but the only confirmed record in subcontinental waters is of a bird seen in the 1° Channel in the Maldives (01°30'N 73°30'E) by R. C. Anderson in August 1994 (Ash and Shafeeg 1994).

SWINHOE'S STORM-PETREL *Oceanodroma monorhis* (16)

Breeds around the Sea of Japan and migrates westwards to the Indian Ocean, with stray birds reaching as far as the Arabian and Red Seas, but their movement in the Indian Ocean is very inadequately documented (Warham 1990).

Bailey *et al.* (1968) summarised records from the Indian Ocean up to that time, of which they considered only two as definite, including one found exhausted on the shore in Sri Lanka on 3 July 1927 (Gibson-Hill 1953). They also noted a number of possible records, including one from Port Blair, Andamans. In the course of their study they collected two further specimens in the Arabian Sea, plus additional sight records in subcontinental waters:

March 14	10°53'N 72°45'E	50-60 birds
" 15	13°32'N 72°44'E	one positively identified
April 8	06°52'N 75°30'E	three birds.

There is also a record of a bird caught and banded in Lakshadweep (11°40'N 72°25'E) on 20 October 1963 (Mathew and Ambedkar 1964). Mohan (1989) recorded small numbers off the coasts of several islands in Lakshadweep in early 1987. Some tentatively identified sightings are reported by van den Berg *et al.* (1991), and De Silva (1990) mentions one collected at Colombo harbour in 1975, and other sightings off Colombo in June have recently been reported (Karunaratne *et al.* 1994).

It has sometimes been considered a race of *O. leucorhoa* (Ali and Ripley 1987, De Silva 1990, Ripley 1982, Simpson 1990) and possible confusion in the literature may be compounded by the discovery that stragglers of the nominate race of *O. leucorhoa* have occurred in the western Indian Ocean (Laphorn *et al.* 1970).

[MATSUDAIRA'S STORM-PETREL *Oceanodroma matsudairae* (—)]

A highly migratory species, moving from its confined breeding area south of Japan into the western equatorial Indian Ocean where it is most common between June and September (Bailey *et al.* 1968). Their exact migration route is unknown but it is possible that the species may be found, as a passage migrant, in the southern Maldives, probably within 5° of the equator.

Two possible sight records exist in the region: of a bird at 01°N 78°E on 25 July 1964 (Bourne 1966), and of five in the wake of a ship at 01°27'N 80°E on 18 November 1984 (Chapman 1986).]

DISCUSSION

The tendency of some Procellariiformes to long distance wandering into strange waters, their often difficult identification, plus less than perfect viewing conditions found on board ship combine to give a degree of uncertainty to many sight records. However, present evidence would indicate that more species may occur more regularly, particularly around the time of the south-west monsoon, than have traditionally been thought to reach subcontinental waters.

Our knowledge of the seabirds of the Indian Ocean remains patchy, though there has been some advance since the situation was reviewed twenty years ago by Bourne (1974). Such areas as the Bay of Bengal offer rich opportunities for research. The likelihood that other species not listed here will be found to occur is strong. An unusual petrel sighted west of Cape Comorin, India was thought to be either Atlantic Petrel *Pterodroma incerta* or Tahiti Petrel *P. rostrata* (van den Berg *et al.* 1991), most likely the former (Bourne 1992), and White-headed Petrel *Pterodroma lessoni* has been tentatively identified off Colombo in September 1990 (De Silva 1992 and *in litt.* 1993).

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A new subspecies of Spectacled Fulvetta *Alcippe ruficapilla* from Vietnam

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A new subspecies of Spectacled Fulvetta *Alcippe ruficapilla* [Timaliini (Timaliidae)], believed to be endemic to the Da Lat Plateau in southern Vietnam is described. It is restricted to upper montane forest above 2,100 m elevation. The most distinctive characters are its general dullness and the absence of whitish-grey and blackish on the outer webs of the primaries.

INTRODUCTION

On 22 May 1991 the authors, together with Truong Van La, observed an unfamiliar fulvetta *Alcippe*, thought to belong to the group of species comprising Streak-throated *A. cinereiceps* and Spectacled *A. ruficapilla*. It was at 2,160 m elevation on Nui Bi Doup in Lam Dong Province, southern Vietnam. On 23 May this individual was again observed and later, a flock of at least four was seen on the summit at 2,289 m. One of the four individuals observed on the summit was mist-netted, and a series of biometrics was taken before it was released (Robson *et al.* 1993).

On 12 December 1993 whilst on a return visit, J.C.E. and N.C. observed six birds of the same form, on the summit of Nui Bi Doup, and on 13 December trapped nine individuals, of which a series of seven specimens was collected.

On 16 January 1994, above 2,200 m on Chu Yang Sin in neighbouring Dac Lac Province, J.C.E. observed three flocks of the same *Alcippe*, consisting of five, eight and three birds respectively. On 17 January, J.C.E. trapped and photographed two birds, on 26 January J.C.E. and N.C. observed and trapped a flock of six birds at 2,210 m, and took a series of biometrics before all the birds were released. The species was common along the summit ridge on 27 January and recorded commonly at the summit (2,442 m).

FORMAL DESCRIPTION

The birds seen and collected on Nui Bi Doup in 1991 and 1993, and observed on Chu Yang Sin in 1994 are of a previously undescribed taxon for which we propose the name