

## TAXONOMIC UPDATE

# Species-level changes suggested for Asian birds, 2007–2008

J. D. PILGRIM, T. P. INSKIPP & N. J. COLLAR

OBC uses Inskipp *et al.* (1996) as its baseline checklist for both species and sequence, with 71 species added in 2000 as a result of the inclusion in our area of north-east Asia (OBC Bull. 31: 6–7). Collar (2003, 2005) and Collar & Pilgrim (2007) carried updates on some of the changes that had been made through taxonomic revisions. In this article we attempt to summarise the changes suggested in the literature in the years 2007 and 2008 (with a few previously overlooked from earlier years). We have sought to track down as many changes as possible, with reference to Martens & Bahr (2009) and more than 100 publications on taxonomy and systematics of Asian birds during this period, but we cannot be certain of the completeness of our coverage. Moreover, owing to the increasingly complex, extensive and revolutionary insights being gained in higher-level avian taxonomy, we endeavour simply to report on new species and suggestions for species-level changes in this review, without attempting a review of changes in generic position and other such insights. Although sometimes referred to when relevant, we have also not attempted to review the decisions of regional ornithologists' unions, as these are usually based solely on reviews of the primary literature. Likewise, simple repetition of previous taxonomic changes in checklists with no additional discussion (as, e.g., in Clements 2007) is generally not covered here.

Our focus is on taxonomic proposals that run contrary to Inskipp *et al.* (1996), including (more opportunistically) changes indicated during this period which add support to prior such proposals, but we also mention a couple of cases where the existing taxonomy has been confirmed. This is mainly a service to OBC members, so we see no need to do more than mention here the papers in the Club's own *Forktail* and *BirdingASIA* by Rheindt & Hutchinson (2007) concerning a number of possible splits in the southern Moluccas, King & Robson (2008) separating (Greater) Rufous-headed Parrotbill *Psittiparus (Paradoxornis) bakeri* from White-breasted Parrotbill *Psittiparus ruficeps*, Collar & Eames (2008) providing additional support for the separation of White-shouldered Ibis *Pseudibis davisoni* from Red-naped Ibis *P. papillosa*, and Bakewell & Kennerley (2008) and Kennerley *et al.* (2008) discussing the status of the

White-faced Plover *Charadrius (alexandrinus) dealbatus*.

Taxonomic changes to species, which occur in the OBC region, but only affect extralimital populations, have not been detailed here. However, it is worth mentioning the suggested lump of Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus* within Olive Bee-eater *M. superciliosus* (the latter of southern and eastern Africa and Madagascar) by Marks *et al.* (2007), the separation of two non-migratory Mexican subspecies of Yellow-rumped Warbler *Dendroica coronata* (the migratory subspecies *auduboni* from western North America, which has been treated as a separate species in the past and is a vagrant to Russia within the OBC region, was shown to be correctly maintained as a subspecies) by Milá *et al.* (2007), and the separation of the north-west African populations of House Bunting *Emberiza striolata* by Kirwan & Shirihi (2007). This latter publication was—while in draft—apparently the ultimate source of the split by Rasmussen & Anderton (2005), erroneously reported *vice versa* by Collar & Pilgrim (2007).

One further point, not addressed before in these summaries, concerns the gender of generic names and hence the ending of species names. David & Gosselin (2002a,b, 2008) and David & Gregory (2008) examined this issue in detail for all bird names and proposed many spelling changes for names in common use, e.g. *Saxicola torquatus* instead of *S. torquata*. These were adopted in Dickinson (2003) and will henceforth be used, as far as possible, in OBC publications.

We should, however, make clear that it is by no means the case that every change proposed in print, even in *Forktail*, is automatically accepted by OBC. The Club has no mechanism for determining a position on any of these or other new arrangements. Having said this, some changes were incorporated into the online list of birds in the OBC region (see <http://www.orientalbirdclub.org/publications/checklist/obcchecklist.txt>), mainly ones from papers in OBC publications: Rufous-tailed Bushhen *Amaurornis moluccana*, Long-billed Murrelet *Brachyramphus perdix*, Sangihe Shrike-thrush *Colluricincla sanghirensis*, Jerdon's Bushlark *Mirafraga affinis*, Burmese Bushlark *M. microptera*, Indochinese Bushlark *M. erythrocephala*, Manchurian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus tangorum*,

Large-billed Reed Warbler *A. orinus*, Grey-crowned Warbler *Seicercus tephrocephalus*, Bianchi's Warbler *S. valentini*, Whistler's Warbler *S. whistleri*, Sangihe White-eye *Zosterops nehrkorni* and Seram White-eye *Z. stalkerii*. We offer no summary indicating the number of elevations to species level in this period, since it is unclear which of them will become generally accepted. We may have personal views on particular suggestions, but we seek here to be as impartial as possible in reporting developments, although circumstances sometimes invite or require a degree of commentary.

### Newly described species

Collar (2003) did not include reference to newly described species and therefore those described between the date Inskipp *et al.* (1996) went to press and 2004 (Collar 2005) have scarcely been mentioned in these reviews. Table 1 summarises the 18 species involved.

### *Phylloscopus occisnensis*

Martens *et al.* (2008) found two deeply split mitochondrial lineages within Tickell's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis* and described the populations from the eastern Tibet-Qinghai Plateau, Yunnan, Sichuan and Gansu as West Chinese Leaf Warbler *P. occisnensis*. Morphological and vocal differences are considerably less obvious. The trills of this new species cover a lower and slightly broader frequency range than those of Tickell's Leaf Warbler, and the underpart coloration ('bright yellow... with a slight orange touch') falls between the 'bright citron yellow' of *P. a. perflavus* of the western Himalayas (newly described by Martens *et al.*) and the 'dull greenish yellow' of nominate *P. affinis* of the eastern Himalayas. Martens *et al.* also note that the new species, unlike the taxa from which it has been split, has a breast-band that was quite distinctive in a newly moulted September specimen and a May specimen: broad and beige with an orange touch in the centre.

**Table 1.** Species first described between 1996 and 2004.

Species	Author and date	Notes
Talud Bush-hen <i>Amaurornis magnirostris</i>	Lambert 1998a	
Talud Rail <i>Gymnocrex taludensis</i>	Lambert 1998b	Forktail 13
Bukidnon Woodcock <i>Scolopax bukidnonensis</i>	Kennedy <i>et al.</i> 2001	Forktail 17
Nicobar Scops Owl <i>Otus alius</i>	Rasmussen 1998	See <i>OBC Bull.</i> 29: 490
Sangihe Scops Owl <i>Otus collaris</i>	Lambert & Rasmussen 1998	See <i>OBC Bull.</i> 29: 490
Cinnabar Hawk Owl <i>Ninox ios</i>	Rasmussen 1999	
Little Sumba Hawk Owl <i>Ninox sumbaensis</i>	Olsen <i>et al.</i> 2002	See <i>OBC Bull.</i> 36: 39
Busuanga Frogmouth <i>Batrachostomus pygmaeus</i>	Alviola 1997	Treated as a synonym of Javan Frogmouth <i>B. javensis</i> by Holyoak 2001
Taiwan Bush Warbler <i>Bradypterus alishanensis</i>	Rasmussen <i>et al.</i> 2000	See <i>BirdingASIA</i> 2: 20 (photo)
Martens's Warbler <i>Seicercus omeiensis</i>	Martens <i>et al.</i> 1999	
Plain-tailed Warbler <i>Seicercus soror</i>	Alström & Olsson 1999	
Chestnut-eared Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax konkakinensis</i>	Eames & Eames 2001	See <i>OBC Bull.</i> 33: 26
Golden-winged Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax ngoclinensis</i>	Eames <i>et al.</i> 1999a	See <i>OBC Bull.</i> 30: 45, 33: 26
Black-crowned Barwing <i>Actinodura sodangorum</i>	Eames <i>et al.</i> 1999b	See <i>OBC Bull.</i> 29: 50
Sichuan Treecreeper <i>Certhia tianquanensis</i>	Li 1995	Described as a subspecies of Eurasian Treecreeper <i>C. familiaris</i> but elevated to species level by Martens <i>et al.</i> 2002. See <i>OBC Bull.</i> 37: 65
Beijing Flycatcher <i>Ficedula beijingnica</i>	Zheng <i>et al.</i> 2000	Zhang <i>et al.</i> 2006 found that this taxon referred to subadult Narcissus Flycatcher <i>F. narcissina</i> of the subspecies <i>elisae</i>
Lina's Sunbird <i>Aethopyga linaraborae</i>	Kennedy <i>et al.</i> 1997	See <i>OBC Bull.</i> 26: 58, 36: 15
Mekong Wagtail <i>Motacilla samveasnae</i>	Duckworth <i>et al.</i> 2001	See <i>OBC Bull.</i> 34: 56



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**Plate 1.** Nonggang Babbler *Stachyris nonggangensis*, Nonggangi NNR, Guangxi, China, December 2008.



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**Plate 2.** Sooty Babbler *Stachyris herberti*, Phong Nha, Vietnam, February 2008.

### *Stachyris nonggangensis*

The most exciting news in this period was the description of the Nonggang Babbler *Stachyris nonggangensis* (Plate 1), from south-west Guangxi, China, by Zhou & Jiang (2008). Although forest on limestone karst is known for its high degree of endemism, and Sooty Babbler *S. herberti* (Plate 2) is an endemic of such habitats in central Laos and Vietnam, many experts in the region had presumed the northern Indochinese limestone areas to be lacking in avian endemism. Nonggang Babbler differs from Sooty in its black bill, dark greyish-brown spots on white throat and upper breast, white crescent-shaped patch behind the ear-coverts, lack of an eye-ring and—although not mentioned by Zhou & Jiang (2008)—distinctive vocalisations (J. A. Eaton *in litt.* 2009). The distribution of this species is intriguing: it is common in Nonggang Natural Reserve but has not been found elsewhere despite extensive searches. With Nonggang less than 20 km from the border, perhaps it may next be found in Vietnam.

### *Zosterops somadikartai*

Indrawan *et al.* (2008) found Togian White-eye *Zosterops somadikartai* to be a scarce resident below 100 m altitude on the islands of Malenge,

Talatakoh and Batudaka in the Togian Islands off the eastern seaboard of Sulawesi. They suggested it be considered globally Endangered on account of its small range, few locations and continuing decline inferred from habitat conversion and degradation. It has not been found on Togian or the Walea islands, but may have been overlooked. It is most readily distinguished from Black-crowned White-eye *Z. atrifrons* of mainland Sulawesi by its lack of a white eye-ring, distinct pale bill-base, reddish (not brown) iris, and higher-pitched song, lacking trills. It differs from *Z. (a.) atrifrons* of the Banggai Islands in its lack of a white eye-ring, greyer breast and less extensive black crown. The distinctiveness of this new species, and the description of a new hawk owl species in 2004 (see Collar 2005), serve to highlight both the ornithological significance and the paucity of knowledge of the Togian Islands.

### Suggested or tentative splits in journals

#### *Anser middendorffii*

Prior morphological studies of the Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*-Pink-footed Goose *A. brachyrhynchus* complex by Burgers *et al.* (1991), Sangster & Oreeil (1996), and Dronneau (2006) concluded that three

species were involved: Pink-footed *A. brachyrhynchus*, Taiga Bean *A. fabalis* and Tundra Bean *A. serrirostris* (synonymous with *A. rossicus*). Ruokonen *et al.* (2008) used mitochondrial DNA to investigate this complex, also concluding that three (albeit different) species were involved. They found insufficient phylogenetic evidence for separating *fabalis* and *rossicus/serrirostris*, but did find support for assigning species rank to Middendorff's Goose *A. middendorffii* (incorporating the putative taxon *johanseni* to which they did not assign subspecific rank). *A. middendorffii* breeds in taiga forests of eastern Siberia, and winters in eastern China and Japan, showing more of a preference than Bean for lakes and marshes where it feeds on aquatic vegetation. A latitudinal cline in morphology was observed, but with Middendorff's typically having a long and slender bill with a relatively low base. However, even using discriminant function analysis, Ruokonen *et al.* found that three measurements (bill length, bill nail length and grinning patch height) could be used to identify only 87% of individuals to one of these three taxa, with most overlap between Bean and Middendorff's. Good luck identifying these in the field!

#### *Oceanodroma castro*

Friesen *et al.* (2007) and Smith *et al.* (2007) studied Band-rumped Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma castro* throughout its range, mainly extralimitally where different populations co-occur, breeding in different seasons. They found genetic differences that suggested that the complex comprised several species (e.g. the hot-season Azores breeding population split off by Bolton *et al.* 2008), but they omitted from their analysis the only population breeding in the OBC region, that from Japan, 'because it is highly divergent from other populations and lacks seasonal populations', Friesen *et al.* (2007) indicating that it may warrant treatment as a separate species.

#### *Nisaetus (Spizaetus) kelaarti*

After Haring *et al.* (2007) noted this taxon's genetic distinctiveness, Gjershaug *et al.* (2008) documented its morphological and vocal characters, and recommended its separation, as Legge's Hawk Eagle of Sri Lanka and southern India (Plate 3), from Mountain Hawk Eagle *Spizaetus nipalensis*. The flight call of Legge's is described as 'a shrill, rapid, peevish, chattering CHI-CHI-CHI\chew', composed of much shorter notes than most of those recorded for Mountain. Another vocalisation, believed to be a distinctive flight call, is 'a relatively high-pitched, squealing, insistent kip-FEEEU, FEEEU'. Legge's differs from Mountain in



UDITHA HETTIGE

**Plate 3.** Legge's Hawk Eagle *Nisaetus (Spizaetus) kelaarti* holding Ceylon Hill Myna *Gracula ptilogenys*, Kitulgala forest, Sri Lanka, August 2007.

its larger bill and claws, shorter primary projection and, in adult plumage, paler head, especially crown and side of face, lighter mesial streak, paler breast-streaks, paler rufescent breast and flank barring, lighter barring on underwing-coverts and uppertail-coverts, less contrasting tail-bands, and less tarsal feathering. Juvenile Legge's have very broad breast-bands of rufescent-brown and whitish-cinnamon (juvenile Mountains normally lack patterning below), and have fewer, darker and narrower tail-bands, with the longest uppertail-coverts concolorous with lower back and tail. However, vocal and specimen sample sizes of *kelaarti* are extremely small.

#### *Loriculus sclateri*

Various authorities, most recently Dickinson (2003), declined to recognise Collar's (1997) separation of Sula Hanging Parrot *Loriculus sclateri* from Moluccan Hanging Parrot *L. amabilis* based on differences in size and in colour of head, lower mantle and rump, and because the sexes are similar (they differ in *L. amabilis*). Collar (2007) presented the evidence more fully and formally, adding to it by noting that the uppertail-coverts in *L. amabilis* extend to or beyond the tail and are considerably brighter red than those of



N. J. COLLAR

**Plate 4.** Type specimens of Sula Hanging-parrot *Loriculus sclateri* (right) and Moluccan Hanging-parrot *L. amabilis* (left). © Natural History Museum.

*L. sclateri* (Plate 4). Collar (2007) also corrected his erroneous 1997 deletion of the subspecies *ruber* from *L. sclateri*.

#### *Collocalia dodgei*

Moyle *et al.* (2008) split Bornean Swiftlet *Collocalia dodgei* from Linchi Swiftlet *C. linchi*—itself a split from Glossy Swiftlet *C. esculenta* as treated in Inskipp *et al.* (1996): see Collar & Pilgrim (2007)—based on a comparison of molecular data obtained from two specimens of ‘unknown identity’ (but presumably *dodgei*) from Mt Kinabalu, Sabah, and data from another study (Price *et al.* 2004) relating to one specimen of *linchi* from Java.

#### *Megalaima (Megalaimus) annamensis*

Molecular data in Feinstein *et al.* (2008) provided independent support for Collar’s (2006b) morphology-driven division of Black-browed Barbet *Megalaima oorti* into Black-browed Barbet *sensu stricto* (Plate 5), Taiwan Barbet *M. nuchalis* (Plate 6) and Chinese Barbet *M. faber* (Plate 7). However, Collar (2006b) retained the subspecies *annamensis* within *M. oorti*, although noting its distinctive yellowish-green crown and throat, longer wing, shorter tail, and lower mandible more extensively

grey-horn, while Feinstein *et al.* conferred specific status on Annam Barbet *M. annamensis* (Plate 8), finding it genetically closer to Blue-throated Barbet *M. asiatica* than to *M. oorti*.

#### *Lanius pallidirostris*

Klassert *et al.* (2008) delved into mitochondrial DNA analyses of the Southern Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis* complex far enough to confirm it is a polyphyletic species, to recommend that *L. m. meridionalis* be given specific status, and to suggest that *L. m. pallidirostris*, *L. m. algeriensis*, *L. m. aucheri* and *L. m. koenigi* be reviewed and assigned to different species. However, their analysis was not complete enough to determine exactly how these taxa should be rearranged. Given the proximity of Asian *pallidirostris* and Middle Eastern *aucheri* in their analyses, it is possible that these subspecies will later be united outside of Southern Grey Shrike as a distinct species.

#### *Cettia brunnescens*

Collar & Pilgrim (2007) mentioned in passing that an analysis of morphological, vocal and molecular data had led Alström *et al.* (2007) to conclude that the taxon *brunnescens* (Hume’s Bush Warbler) of the Himalayas should be split from Yellowish-bellied Bush Warbler *Cettia acanthizoides* of China and Taiwan. Martens & Bahr (2009) are generally supportive of this. Compared to Yellowish-bellied, Hume’s is brighter, ruddier-brown above and paler, duller and more washed-out below, with a relatively weakly yellow-tinged (or in worn plumage untinged) belly. The bill of Hume’s averages longer, slightly narrower and shallower at the base, giving it a relatively ‘spikelike appearance’. Its commonest song type begins like Yellowish-bellied’s, with a series of drawn-out whistles on an ascending scale, but the number of whistles is much smaller and less variable (usually 3–5), and the individual whistles average nearly twice as long and are usually more ‘stepped’ in frequency. The second part of Hume’s song is a rather slow melodious ‘wobbling’ trill (a repeated phrase of 2–4 whistled elements of alternating pitch), generally distinctly shorter than the tremolo of Yellowish-bellied, which consists of a single, very short and rapidly repeated element.

#### *Bradypterus kashmirensis*

##### *Bradypterus davidi*

Alström *et al.* (2008) separated out West Himalayan Bush Warbler *Bradypterus kashmirensis* and Baikal Bush Warbler *B. davidi*—this already marked for species status by Round & Loskot (1995)—from Spotted Bush Warbler *Bradypterus thoracicus*. Spotted *sensu stricto*, breeding on the northern edge

**Plate 5.** Black-browed Barbet *Megalaima oorti*, Jalan Lady Maxwell, Fraser's Hill, Malaysia, November 2008.

**Plate 6.** Taiwan Barbet *Megalaima nuchalis*, Taipei Botanical Gardens, Taiwan, April 2005.

**Plate 7.** Chinese Barbet *Megalaima faber*, Jianfengling, Hainan, China, November 2009.

**Plate 8.** Annam Barbet *Megalaima annamensis*, Mount Lang Bian, Vietnam, February 2006.



CHRISTOPHER HILL



JOHN AND JEMI HOLMES

**Plate 5.**

**Plate 6.**

**Plate 7.**

**Plate 8.**



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JANOS OLAH

of the Himalayas and extending into central China, is dark warm brown above, slightly more rufescent on crown, with pale grey supercilium, blackish spots on lower throat and breast, dark cold brown flanks and bases to undertail-coverts (latter with thin white tips), and grey ear-coverts, sides of neck and lower throat contrasting with upperparts and flanks. West Himalayan, breeding in north-west India (wintering grounds unknown), is slightly paler overall than Spotted (it also has a distinctive entirely buffy morph), with usually fine brown spots on lower throat and breast, and fulvous flanks and bases to undertail-coverts (latter broadly tipped white). Baikal, breeding in south-east Russia, and north-east and central China and wintering to at least northern and western Thailand, is distinguished from the other two by its buffy supercilium, and brownish ear-coverts, sides of neck and lower throat largely concolorous with the upperparts and flanks (lower throat and breast of Baikal are similar to Spotted *sensu stricto*). Where Baikal and Spotted co-occur in central China they are largely separated altitudinally, with the former at lower altitudes.

Spotted and West Himalayan Bush Warblers have songs with a similar clicking, buzzing quality but differing markedly to the human ear, the former ‘a fast, monotonous, prolonged, rhythmic, mechanical reel of short clicking and more drawn-out metallic buzzing sounds... *tri-tri-tri-treez tri-tri-tri-treez tri-tri-treez tri-tri-treez tri-tri-treez*’, the latter a slower ‘*tre-tre-tre-triptreez-trip-treeez, tre-tre-tre-trip-treez-trip-treeez, tretre-tre-trip-treez-trip-treeez*’. The song of Baikal is wholly different, a distinctive ‘dry, rasping, monotonous, drawn-out *brzzzzzz . . . brzzzzzz . . . brzzzzzz . . .* which often continues for lengthy periods’.

#### *Phylloscopus xanthodryas*

Reeves *et al.* (2008) analysed mt-DNA of Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis*, traditionally divided into subspecies *borealis* (Scandinavia to westernmost Beringia), *kennicotti* (Alaska) and *xanthodryas* (Chukotka, Kamchatka, Sakhalin, Japan), and found no support for this arrangement. Gene-flow proves to be largely unrestricted across the Bering Strait but highly restricted across the barrier formed by the mountains between the Lena and Kolyma rivers of north-eastern Russia (thus the name *kennicotti* could apply to populations extending from Alaska westwards to Magadan and the Kolyma River), but genetically the most divergent populations are those in the central (and presumably southern, but the Kuril Islands and Japan were not sampled) part of the range of *xanthodryas*, which are tentatively proposed to be recognised as Pacific Warbler *P. xanthodryas*

(Kamchatka Peninsula and Sakhalin Island). Reeves *et al.* present no indication of what barrier might exist to prevent the mixing of *xanthodryas* and *borealis/kennicotti*, nor do they provide guidance on field identification of the resultant species, which is presumably difficult if current morphologically defined subspecies are invalid. As a subspecies of Arctic Warbler, *xanthodryas* was considered by Baker (1997) to be one of the easiest to identify in fresh plumage, being greener above and yellower below, and with a song that is ‘more complex and longer’ or, according to Clement (2006), ‘slower [with] harsher or more scratchy notes’. Whether all these characters apply only to the central and southern populations of *xanthodryas* remains to be determined.

#### Fourteen splits from three *Pteruthius* shrike babblers

Reddy (2008) undertook a genetic and morphological analysis of the five known *Pteruthius* species and—although based on relatively few samples and thus preliminary—recognised 19 phylogenetic species, including 14 in the OBC region, from three of the five previously recognised species. White-browed Shrike Babbler *P. flaviscapris* produced nine of the 19 phylogenetic species, with *P. ripleyi* in the western Himalayas (males paler than *P. validirostris*, with orange-chestnut tertials and brown primary edges); *P. validirostris* in the central and eastern Himalayas (males with white throats and undersides, dark chestnut tertials, black coverts, blue-grey primary edging, darker grey backs and less white on primary tips than *P. ripleyi*, females with distinct grey crowns and postocular stripes); *P. ricketti* from mountains of north-eastern Myanmar, Yunnan, southern China, Hainan and far northern Thailand, Laos and Vietnam (both sexes with darker grey backs and undersides than *P. validirostris*, ear-coverts in males grey to black, in females light grey); *P. annamensis* of South Annam in Vietnam and extreme eastern Cambodia (males lack black tertial tips and white throat-line, with greatly reduced white primary tips and black ear-coverts); *P. aeralatus* of much of Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and all but southern Thailand (both sexes with lighter, less grey undersides than *P. ricketti* and white lines along the throat separating the chin, males with patches of yellow and chestnut tipped with black on tertials); *P. schauenseei* of highland peninsular Thailand, south of the Isthmus of Kra (shorter wings than *P. aeralatus*, females with no chestnut on tertials); *P. cameranoi* from highlands of the lower Malay Peninsula and Sumatra (both sexes distinctly darker and larger than *P. schauenseei*); *P. flaviscapris sensu stricto* (smallest within this

species group, males with black backs, heads and tails) restricted to montane Java; and *P. robinsoni* of northern Borneo (smaller than the mainland species, but larger than *P. flaviscapis*, males with grey backs and strong pinkish wash on flanks).

Green Shrike Babbler *P. xanthochlorus* is split into four phylogenetic species, with *xanthochlorus sensu stricto* (both sexes with significantly darker grey crowns than in *P. occidentalis*) restricted to the eastern Himalayas; *P. occidentalis* of the western Himalayas (males with pale ash-grey crowns, females with pale greenish-grey crowns); *P. hybrida* of Assam in India and the Chin Hills in Myanmar (similar crown to *P. xanthochlorus* but prominent white eye-ring); and *P. pallidus* of the mountains of north-east Myanmar and across southern China, from Yunnan and Sichuan to Fujian (distinctive bluish slate-grey crown distinct from drab back, dark grey ear-coverlets, and white eye-ring).

The two allopatric subspecies of Black-eared Shrike Babbler *P. melanotis* are broken down as *melanotis sensu stricto* of the Himalayas, Myanmar, Yunnan and highlands throughout South-East Asia except the Thai-Malay peninsula (deep chestnut chin and chest, yellow ear-coverts and a bright yellow underside in males, less bright in females), and *P. tahanensis* of the Malay Peninsula highlands (chestnut restricted to the chin, olive-green ear-coverts, each sex duller/paler below than *P. melanotis*).

Reddy's findings are the subject of an evaluation invoking the biological species concept (Rheindt & Eaton 2009).

### The Grey-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe morrisonia* complex

Zou *et al.* (2007), tackling the widespread and variable Grey-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe morrisonia*, included a subspecies of Mountain Fulvetta, *A. peracensis annamensis*, on genetic grounds, and then divided the resulting complex into four species. First, they grouped *schaefferi* and *davidi* together on the basis of substantial genetic divergence from other taxa, and included *yunnanensis* (for which they did not have DNA samples) with them because it shares their plumage: a brown, rather than grey, head, lacking a prominent black superciliary line. Second, the subspecies *hueti*, *rufescentior* and *morrisonia* were combined into an eastern species (*A. morrisonia*) that is genetically well differentiated from the remaining two western taxa. Finally, the two remaining western taxa were each given species status on the basis of plumage differences: *A. fratercula* is distinguished from *A. p. annamensis* by its darker, richer brown throat, breast and flanks.

Moreover, while *hueti* and *rufescentior* are genetically close, *morrisonia* of Taiwan is quite divergent from them and Zou *et al.* speculated that it could be split as a monotypic species, with the other two grouping as *A. hueti*.

However, a one-sentence corrigendum (Zou *et al.* 2008) states that specimens identified as *fratercula* in the study were in fact *yunnanensis*, but offers no indication of whether this error affected the genetic or the morphological analysis or (as we presume) both, nor provides guidance on how this affects the conclusions of the main paper (which lamented the lack of genetic material of *yunnanensis*). The following arrangement appears to result: (i) David's Fulvetta *A. davidi* (with *schaefferi*); (ii) Morrison's Fulvetta *A. morrisonia* (with *hueti* and *rufescentior*); (iii) what might remain in English as Grey-cheeked Fulvetta *A. yunnanensis* (originally but mistakenly *A. fratercula*); (iv) Mountain Fulvetta *A. p. annamensis*, i.e. retaining the *status quo* until comparison with *peracensis*, with which *annamensis* is currently joined, is made; and *fratercula*, its DNA unanalysed, left hanging.

Taking his cue largely from Zou *et al.* (2007), Robson (2008) (a) grouped *fratercula* with *yunnanensis* (retaining the common name Grey-cheeked Fulvetta), (b) included *laotiana* (not dealt with by Zou *et al.*, and treated as a synonym of *A. fratercula* by Dickinson 2003) in what he called Schaeffer's Fulvetta (perhaps unaware that *davidi*, extralimital to his book, was named before *schaefferi*), (c) retained *annamensis* as a subspecies of Mountain Fulvetta *A. peracensis*, and (d) split off the extralimital eastern *A. morrisonia*, which he referred to as Huet's Fulvetta, but should more logically be Morrison's Fulvetta.

Zou *et al.* (2007) accepted that their sampling was 'extremely spotty', and the implications of the error over the '*fratercula*' material render the situation more uncertain still. At one point, moreover, Zou *et al.* cited MacKinnon & Phillipps (2000) as indicating that *yunnanensis* lacks the black supercilium typical of this complex, which is a further mistake (see Collar & Robson 2007). The need for much wider genetic sampling and morphological analysis is obvious.

### *Acridotheres javanicus*

#### *Acridotheres grandis*

Zuccon *et al.* (2008) investigated phylogenetic relationships among the Palearctic–Oriental starlings and mynas in the genera *Sturnus* and *Acridotheres*. Their mitochondrial tree provided support for species status for Jungle *A. fuscus*, Javan *A. javanicus* and Pale-bellied Myna *A. cinereus*. These taxa are often separated owing to

their parapatric distribution and minor plumage differences, but very preliminary genetic findings by Lovette *et al.* (2008) had suggested they may comprise one species. Wells (2007) also considered Jungle and Javan Myna quite likely to be conspecific on the basis of apparent hybridisation and genetic swamping of the former by the latter near Melaka, Malaysia, but considered Great Myna *A. grandis* a distinct species. Inskipp *et al.* (1996), in the absence of published justification to do otherwise, treated Javan and Great Mynas as conspecific with *A. cinereus* (with the composite name White-vented Myna), but genetic analyses of Zuccon *et al.* also suggested that Great is more closely related to Crested *A. cristatellus* and Collared Myna *A. albocinctus*. This is supported by evidence of coexistence and assortative pairing of Javan and Great Mynas around Kuala Lumpur (Wells 2007).

Zuccon *et al.* (2008) did not find support for the species status afforded to Malabar White-headed Starling *Sturnus (malabaricus) blythii* by Rasmussen & Anderton (2005).

#### **Eighteen splits within *Turdus poliocephalus***

Peterson (2007) collated useful data on variation in size and coloration within Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus* across most of its range. However, his conclusion that ‘31 geographically contiguous manifestations of plumage types’ (of which 18 occur in the OBC region) could potentially be considered as biological species may gain little traction, given that morphological similarity within this species is not correlated with taxonomy (Jones & Kennedy 2008). Clearly this is a taxon for which considerable further analysis of ecological, genetic, morphological and vocal differentiation is necessary before a clear picture of species limits can be obtained.

#### ***Saxicola indicus* *Saxicola maurus* *Saxicola bicolor***

Among taxa sampled by Illera *et al.* (2008) were the *indicus* (north-west and central Himalayas, wintering in Pakistan and central Asia) and *maurus* (non-breeding visitor to south-west and south Asia) subspecies of Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*. Although counselling caution until phylogenetic relationships of other forms of *S. torquatus* (especially from Africa and Asia) are assessed, preferably with additional nuclear markers, Illera *et al.* (2008) noted that for these two—as for other subspecies of Common Stonechat—the degree of genetic differentiation is no less than that of valid species recognised within the same family. We thus include them as ‘proposed splits’ here to draw attention to the fact

that even Siberian Stonechat *S. maurus (sensu lato)*, already recognised by many authors, may comprise more than one species.

Illera *et al.* (2008) further suggested that the *bicolor* subspecies of Pied Bushchat found in South-East Iran, Pakistan and North India is distinct enough to be separated as a species, because ‘(t)he level of genetic differentiation between *S. caprata bicolor* and all the other [*sic*] Indonesian subspecies analysed... is similar to that seen between other valid avian species considered within the family’. However, three other subspecies exist between *bicolor* and Indonesia, so more work is needed to exclude the possibility of a genetic cline from west to east.

#### ***Pica bactriana* *Corvus pastinator***

Haring *et al.* (2007) analysed phylogeographic patterns in widespread corvids. They found some suggestion that the eastern *pastinator* subspecies of Rook *Corvus frugilegus* and the eastern ‘*bactriana*’ subspecies of Magpie *Pica pica* may best be separated as distinct species. However, their conclusions were cautious and sensibly recommended more analysis of genetic data from regions where each of these taxon pairs may hybridise.

#### **Suggested splits in books**

##### **Olsen & Larsson (2003): gulls**

This book, which has not been mentioned before, split two species relevant to the region. Thayer’s Gull *Larus thayeri* was split from Iceland Gull *L. glaucooides* following AOU (1998), although it is admitted that its taxonomic status was not fully clarified. American Herring Gull *L. smithsonianus* was split from Herring Gull *L. argentatus*, based on DNA, call, first-year plumages and geographical isolation.

##### **Hanson (2006, 2007): Canada Goose**

These two posthumously published volumes suggest that there are six species and more than 200 subspecies within Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* (a species not mentioned by Inskipp *et al.* 1996, but occurring in the subsequently expanded OBC region). Banks (2007, 2009) points out numerous problems with, and inconsistencies in, this suggested reclassification.

##### **Robson (2008): South-East Asia**

In the new edition of the region’s most popular field guide, Robson (2008) listed changes in the introduction but only from the first edition (Robson 2000), rather than from the version widely in use

(Robson 2005). The taxonomic changes between 2000 and 2005, reported in Collar & Pilgrim (2007), were relatively small, but those between 2005 and 2008 were significant.

One undescribed species, Limestone Warbler *Phylloscopus* sp., was included following Alström *et al.* (in prep.).

Splits were numerous, and generally followed published literature, although there was no taxonomic discussion.

The following have not been included or referred to in these summaries previously (Collar 2003, 2005, Collar & Pilgrim 2007, herein): Blyth's Frogmouth *Batrachostomus affinis*, for which no reference is given, although treated as separate by Sibley & Monroe (1990), a decision Holyoak (2001) showed to be based on incorrect assumptions; Grey Nightjar *Caprimulgus jotaka* (cf. Rasmussen & Anderton 2005); Spot-breasted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos analis* (cf. Rasmussen & Anderton

2005); Grey-crowned Tit *Aegithalos annamensis*, following King (1997), who provided no justification; White-tailed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus ogilviegranti*, Claudia's Warbler *P. claudiae* and Hartert's Warbler *P. goodsoni*, following Olsson *et al.* (2005)—see Rheindt (2006) for details; Grey-breasted Parrotbill *Suthora (Paradoxornis) poliotis*, Buff-breasted Parrotbill *S. (P.) ripponi* and Black-eared Parrotbill *S. (P.) beaulieui*, all further detailed in Penhallurick & Robson (2009); Chinese Blackbird *Turdus mandarinus*, following Rasmussen & Anderton (2005); Chinese Blue Flycatcher *C. glaucicomans*, following King (1997), who again provided no justification; Plain Flowerpecker *Dicaeum minullum*, following Rasmussen & Anderton (2005); White-capped Munia *Lonchura ferruginosa* (cf. Restall 1996).

The splits in Table 2 have all been mentioned or alluded to previously or herein.

**Table 2.** Splits in Robson (2008) already mentioned herein or in Collar (2003, 2005) and Collar and Pilgrim (2007).

Chinese Spot-billed Duck <i>Anas zonorhyncha</i>	Spot-breasted Scimitar Babbler <i>Pomatorhinus mccllellandi</i>
Andaman Teal <i>Anas albogularis</i>	Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler <i>Pomatorhinus gravivox</i>
Eastern Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus coromandus</i>	White-throated Wren Babbler <i>Rimator pasquieri</i>
Himalayan Buzzard <i>Buteo burmanicus</i>	Grey-bellied Wren Babbler <i>Spelaornis reptatus</i>
Changeable Hawk Eagle <i>Nisaetus (Spizaetus) limnaeetus</i>	Pale-throated Wren Babbler <i>Spelaornis kinneari</i>
Eastern Water Rail <i>Rallus indicus</i>	Chin Hills Wren Babbler <i>Spelaornis oatesi</i>
Black-backed Swampphen <i>Porphyrio indicus</i>	Chevron-breasted Babbler <i>Sphenocichla roberti</i>
Indian Thick-knee <i>Burhinus indicus</i>	Assam Laughingthrush <i>Trochalopteron (Garrulax) chrysopteron</i>
Ashy-headed Green Pigeon <i>Treron phayrei</i>	Silver-eared Laughingthrush <i>Trochalopteron (G.) melanostigma</i>
Andaman Green Pigeon <i>Treron chloropterus</i>	Malayan Laughingthrush <i>Trochalopteron (G.) peninsulae</i>
Dark Hawk Cuckoo <i>Hierococcyx bocki</i>	Scarlet-faced Liocichla <i>Liocichla ripponi</i>
Eastern Grass Owl <i>Tyto longimembris</i>	Vietnamese Cutia <i>Cutia legalleni</i>
Collared Scops Owl <i>Otus lettia</i>	Collared Babbler <i>Gampsorhynchus torquatus</i>
Indian Eagle Owl <i>Bubo bengalensis</i>	Streak-throated Fulvetta <i>Fulvetta (Alcippe) manipurensis</i>
Himalayan Wood Owl <i>Strix nivicola</i>	Black-crowned Fulvetta <i>Pseudominla (Alcippe) klossi</i>
Northern Boobook <i>Ninox japonica</i>	Grey-cheeked Fulvetta <i>Alcippe fratercula</i>
Northern Brown Hornbill <i>Ptilolaemus (Anorrhinus) austeni</i>	Schaeffer's Fulvetta <i>Alcippe schaefferi</i>
Annam Barbet <i>Megalaima annamensis</i>	Chestnut-collared Yuhina <i>Staphida (Yuhina) torqueola</i>
Jerdon's Minivet <i>Pericrocotus albifrons</i>	Black-crowned Parrotbill <i>Psittiparus (Paradoxornis) margaritae</i>
Scarlet Minivet <i>Pericrocotus speciosus</i>	Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbill <i>Psittiparus (Paradoxornis) bakeri</i>
Indian Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus kundoo</i>	Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch <i>Sitta cinnamoventris</i>
Large-billed Crow <i>Corvus japonensis</i>	Neglected Nuthatch <i>Sitta neglecta</i>
Eastern Jungle Crow <i>Corvus levaillantii</i>	Hodgson's Treecreeper <i>Certhia hodgsoni</i>
Japanese Tit <i>Parus minor</i>	Hume's Treecreeper <i>Certhia manipurensis</i>
Grey Tit <i>Parus cinereus</i>	White's Thrush <i>Zoothera aurea</i>
Burmese Tit <i>Aegithalos sharpei</i>	Black-throated Thrush <i>Turdus atrogularis</i> <sup>1</sup>
Grey-throated Sand Martin <i>Riparia chinensis</i>	Himalayan Bluetail <i>Tarsiger rufilatus</i>
Rufous-bellied Swallow <i>Cecropis (Hirundo) badia</i>	Taiga Flycatcher <i>Ficedula albicilla</i>
Hill Prinia <i>Prinia supercilialis</i>	Large Blue Flycatcher <i>Cyornis magnirostris</i>
Black-crested Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus flaviventris</i>	Van Hasselt's Sunbird <i>Leptocoma (Nectarinia) brasiliana</i>
Hume's Bush Warbler <i>Cettia brunnescens</i>	Chestnut Munia <i>Lonchura atricapilla</i>
Baikal Bush Warbler <i>Bradypterus davidi</i>	Eastern Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla tschutschensis</i>
Indian Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus brunnescens</i>	Sharpe's Rosefinch <i>Carpodacus verreauxii</i>

<sup>1</sup> Judged premature by Voelker *et al.* (2007) but followed by Knox *et al.* (2008). Note also the song description in Arkhipov *et al.* (2003).

**Christidis & Boles (2008): Australia**

This major new checklist split the Australasian Darter *Anhinga novaehollandiae*, following Kennedy *et al.* (2005), who showed that this form had diverged from African *rufa* to a level comparable to that between species of cormorants or boobies. However, Asian *melanogaster* was not included in the analysis. Christidis & Boles (2008) declared that it ‘presumably is comparably distinct, and is so treated here’. However, the Asian form provides a connecting link geographically between the other two and could prove intermediate in its molecular divergence or very close to one or the other.

The Eastern Osprey *Pandion cristatus* was split from (Western) Osprey *P. haliaetus*, following Wink *et al.* (2004), who found that genetic distances between subspecies were equivalent to or greater than those between members of several closely related sister species within *Aquila* and *Hieraetus*; this, combined with small but consistent differences in plumage and morphology, led them to suggest that three species could be recognised, the third being the extralimital American Osprey *P. carolinensis*.

White & Bruce (1986) advocated that several species should be split from Hair-crested Drongo *D. hottentottus*, i.e. Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus* (including populations from the east-central and southern Philippines, Sulawesi—subspecies *montanus*, the Moluccas, New Guinea, Australia and the Solomon Islands), Sumatran Drongo *D. sumatranus* and Wallacean Drongo *D. densus*. Inskipp *et al.* (1996) did not follow this treatment because it was largely based on unpublished data, but split Sulawesi Drongo *D. montanus* because of sympatry with *D. h. leucops*. Dickinson (2003) split *montanus* and *bracteatus* but retained the Lesser Sunda (*D. densus*) and all Philippine populations in *hottentottus*. Christidis & Boles split *bracteatus*, following Schodde & Mason (1999), who restricted the species to populations in Australia, New Guinea, New Britain and the north Moluccas, thus excluding the Philippines and the Solomons. Pasquet *et al.* (2007) conducted a molecular study of the genus based on 18 of the 20 species, including *hottentottus* from Cambodia and Thailand and *bracteatus* from New Guinea; their results supported treatment of *bracteatus* as a separate species, with *hottentottus* forming a sister pair with the Philippine Balicassiao *D. balicassius*, while *bracteatus* linked with Ribbon-tailed Drongo *D. megarhynchus* from New Ireland.

Other splits already dealt with were Eastern Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla tschutschensis*, Green-headed Yellow Wagtail *M. taivana*, Eastern Great Egret *Ardea (Casmerodius) modesta* and Variable Goshawk *Accipiter hiogaster*.

**Mann (2008): Borneo**

This BOU Checklist split Dulit Partridge *Rhizothera dulitensis*, following Davison (2000); Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus*, following Mayr & Short (1970) although this reference was dismissed by Inskipp *et al.* (1996) as insubstantial; Ruddy Cuckoo Dove *Macropygia emiliana*, following Baptista *et al.* (1997); Bornean Frogmouth *Batrachostomus mixtus*, following Cleere (1998); House Swift *Apus nipalensis*, following Chantler (1999), although supposed sympatry with Little Swift *A. affinis* is still not proven; Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla*, following Sangster *et al.* (2004); Northern White-crowned Forktail *Enicurus sinensis* (from Southern White-crowned Forktail *E. leschenaulti*) following ‘D. R. Wells (in prep., and pers. comm. 2002), who discovered considerable differences in the juvenile plumages between the *leschenaulti/frontalis* group and the *indicus/sinensis/borneensis* group.’ This last follows on from the discussion in Collar & Pilgrim (2007) referring to *E. borneensis*.

Table 3 lists splits covered by Mann (2008) already mentioned or alluded to herein or in Collar (2003, 2005) and Collar & Pilgrim (2007) previously.

**Table 3.** Splits covered by Mann (2008) already mentioned or alluded to previously.

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White-shouldered Ibis <i>Pseudibis davisoni</i>
Eastern Marsh Harrier <i>Circus spilonotus</i>
Rufous Hawk Cuckoo <i>Hierococcyx hyperythrus</i>
Whistling Hawk Cuckoo <i>Hierococcyx nasicolor</i>
Dark Hawk Cuckoo <i>Hierococcyx bocki</i>
Sunda Lesser Cuckoo <i>Cuculus lepidus</i>
Oriental Cuckoo <i>Cuculus optatus</i>
Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo <i>Surniculus dicruroides</i>
Eastern Grass Owl <i>Tyto longimembris</i>
Linchi Swiftlet <i>Collocalia linchi</i>
Two-barred Greenish Warbler <i>Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus</i>
White’s Thrush <i>Zosterops aurea</i>
Siberian Stonechat <i>Saxicola maurus</i>
Montane Blue-winged Leafbird <i>Chloropsis kinabaluensis</i>
Grey-breasted Spiderhunter <i>Arachnothera modesta</i>
Chestnut Munia <i>Lonchura atricapilla</i>

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**Trainor *et al.* (2007): Timor Leste**

This trilingual field guide covering the eastern half of Timor recognised the distinctive white-bodied endemic race of Pheasant Coucal *Centropus phasianinus* as Timor Coucal *C. mui* (alluded to by Inskipp *et al.* 1996). It also followed splits mentioned in Collar (2003), elevating the form *capistratus* of Rainbow Lorikeet *Trichoglossus haematodus*, along with the subspecies *fortis* of

Sumba and *flavotectus* of Wetar and Rombang, to species level, as Marigold Lorikeet *T. capistratus*, following Schodde & Mason (1997), and separating the endemic race of Russet Bush Warbler *Bradypterus seebohmi* as Timor Bush Warbler *B. timorensis*, following Dickinson (2000).

#### Onley & Scofield (2007): tubenoses

This field guide split Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross *Thalassarche (Diomedea) carteri* from Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross *T. chlororhynchos*, following Robertson & Nunn (1998). However, Penhallurick & Wink (2004) noted that ‘Robertson and Nunn (1998) did not publish or otherwise provide an input matrix containing the distance data for the proposed new albatross species’; they used these authors’ data to calculate them and found that ‘pairwise distances among traditionally recognised species within *Thalassarche* range from 1.66% to 3.15%.’ They also found that ‘Among the Yellow-nosed Albatross taxa, the distance of 0.35% (0.00%) between *T. carteri* [was *D. bassi* Mathews, 1912] and *T. chlororhynchos* strongly suggests that *carteri* should also be treated as a subspecies of *T. chlororhynchos*’. Rheindt & Austin (2005) questioned Penhallurick & Wink’s analysis but did not specifically mention this species pair. The ACAP Taxonomy Working Group (2007) recommended that the split should be maintained, based on morphological differences, but Christidis & Boles (2008) continued to treat it as a subspecies. The form was omitted in error in Inskipp *et al.* (1996)—it has been recorded in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands (Stokes *et al.* 1984).

The guide also split Bannerman’s Shearwater *Puffinus bannermani* and Tropical Shearwater *P. bailloni* from Audubon’s Shearwater *P. lherminieri*, following Austin *et al.* (2004).

#### König & Weick [König *et al.*] (2008): owls

The second edition of this well-established owl monograph adopted the following taxonomic splits: Stresemann’s Scops Owl *Otus stresemanni* from Spotted Scops Owl *O. spilocephalus*, with the comment that it is ‘often considered a pale rufous morph of *Otus spilocephalus vandewateri* but several plumage features support recognition as full species’; Wetar Scops Owl *O. tempestatis* provisionally from Moluccan Scops Owl *O. magicus*, even though the taxonomy is ‘not yet totally clarified, as ecological, ethological, bioacoustical and genetic (DNA) evidence are lacking’; Sula Scops Owl *O. sulaensis* from Moluccan Scops Owl, differing in both morphology and vocalisations; Kalidupa Scops Owl *O. kalidupae* from the ‘distinctly larger’ Moluccan Scops Owl; Siau Scops Owl *O. siaoensis* from Moluccan Scops Owl, based on its small size and prominent pale

nuchal collar; Nias Wood Owl *Strix niasensis* from Brown Wood Owl *S. leptogrammica*, based on its deep rufous nuchal collar and face (plus a claim for distinct enough calls, although the text on voice then states: ‘No exact information. Needs study. A bisyllabic *whoo-hooh* might be the male’s song’).

#### HBW 12 (2007)

Collar & Robson (2007) adopted the species-level changes for babblers explained in Collar (2006a), but with the following additions, for which no previous justification has been published:

- Chestnut-hooded Laughingthrush *Rhinocichla (Garrulax) treacheri* (Plate 9) split from Chestnut-capped Laughingthrush (now Spectacled Laughingthrush) *Rhinocichla mitratus* (Plate 10): ‘differs from... *mitratus* in having narial feathering, lores and superciliary area slightly paler, clearer chestnut, eyering only on lower and rear edge of eye and bright yellow (not white), chestnut of ear-coverts extending up toward nape, feathers of forecrown greyer, upper malar and chin chestnut, upperparts purer grey, underparts paler ochrous with vague pale shaft streaks’, with some evidence that song in *treacheri* consists of more notes; and
- Scarlet-faced Liocichla *Liocichla ripponi* split from Red-faced Liocichla (now Crimson-faced Liocichla) *L. phoenicea*: ‘differs from... *phoenicea* in having crimson of face replaced by much brighter scarlet extending clearly over eye, onto lores and over malar area to chin, black lateral crownstripe vestigial, crown greyer, underparts paler, undertail browner’, with song ‘similar in quality... but simpler’.

They also followed the recent split of Sumatran Babbler *Pellorneum buettikoferi* (see Collar 2003).

Gosler & Clement (2007) lumped Yellow-breasted Tit *Cyanistes (Parus) flavipectus* with Azure Tit *Cyanistes cyanus* (noting limited hybridisation in Kyrgyzstan). Päckert & Martens (2008) supported this treatment but, in general, they regarded the *HBW* review as a missed opportunity to take account of various well-supported taxonomic changes proposed in recent years (all outlined in Collar & Pilgrim 2007). These included the lumping of Turkestan Tit *Parus bokharensis* with Great Tit *P. major*, based on phylogeographic studies that demonstrated that *P. m. major* forms a monophyletic lineage with *bokharensis* (e.g. Kvist *et al.* 2007); also, there are no significant vocal differences between them and hybridisation between the two is extensive in at least one area. On the other hand, this lineage is strongly divergent from an East Palearctic/



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**Plate 9.** Chestnut-hooded Laughingthrush *Rhinocichla treacheri*, Mount Kinabalu, Sabah, August 2009.

**Plate 10.** Spectacled Laughingthrush *Rhinocichla mitratus*, Jelai Highland, Fraser's Hill, Malaysia, June 2008.



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Indomalayan cluster of populations, which are also vocally distinct and could be separated as Eastern Great Tit *P. minor*. They also drew attention to the status of *Periparus (Parus) melanolophus* where they considered there was ample evidence for lumping this with Coal Tit *Periparus ater*.

#### HBW 13 (2008)

Harrap (2008a) split Silver-throated Tit *Aegithalos glaucogularis* from (Northern) Long-tailed Tit *A. caudatus*, noting distinctive plumages, and no reports of regular hybridisation; and Burmese Tit *A. sharpei* from Black-browed Tit *A. bonvaloti*, noting its distinctive appearance and geographically remote distribution.

Harrap (2008b) split Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch *Sitta cinnamoventris* and Neglected Nuthatch *S. neglecta* from Indian Nuthatch *S. castanea*, noting that they all differ morphologically and that the last two overlap in north-west Thailand, where they are separated altitudinally—this builds on Rasmussen & Anderton (2005), who treated *cinnamoventris* as separate and noted that *neglecta* was a likely candidate for separation; and Przewalski's Nuthatch *S. przewalskii* from White-cheeked Nuthatch *S. leucopsis*, noting significant morphological and vocal differences—following Rasmussen & Anderton.

Higgins *et al.* (2008) split Grey Friarbird *Ptilemon kisserensis* from Little Friarbird *P. citreogularis*, Tanimbar Friarbird *P. plumigenis* from Black-faced Friarbird *P. moluccensis*, Indonesian Honeyeater *Lichmera limbata* from Brown Honeyeater *L. indistincta*, Sumba Myzomela *Myzomela dammermani*, Sulawesi Myzomela *M. chloroptera*, Wakolo Myzomela *M. wakoloensis* and Banda Myzomela *M. boiei*, all from Scarlet Myzomela *M. dibapha* (= *sanguinolenta*), but provided no discussion of the basis for these treatments.

Walther & Jones (2008) split Philippine Oriole *Oriolus steerii*, which Inskipp *et al.* (1996) declined to split in the absence of a published justification. However, Dickinson (2004) filled this gap with a detailed review of the complex.

#### Suggested lumps

##### *Lophura hatinhensis*

Robson (2008) lumped Vietnamese Pheasant *Lophura hatinhensis* with Edwards's Pheasant *L. edwardsi*, given the lack of evidence to suggest specific status of the former taxon.

##### *Carduelis flammea hornemanni*

In concordance with previous genetic studies by Seutin *et al.* (1995), Ottvall *et al.* (2002) and Kerr

*et al.* (2007), Marthinsen *et al.* (2008) found no differentiation between Common Redpoll *Carduelis flammea* and Hoary (Arctic) Redpoll *C. hornemanni* (or between them and *C. cabaret*).

## Reconfigurations

### *Catharacta skuas*

Ritz *et al.* (2008) analysed mitochondrial DNA within the southern skua *Catharacta* complex, finding that significant differences exist between taxa, but that most populations still exchange genes with neighbouring populations of other taxa and speciation is incomplete. They concluded that, depending on which species concept is applied, the southern skuas could be lumped into one species, *C. antarctica*, or the three current subspecies could be given species status. They further noted that, if this latter treatment was followed, further diversity among populations of 'Brown Skua' *C. (a.) lonnbergi* would probably also need to be recognised.

### *Eudynamys koels*

Christidis & Boles (2008) arranged the koel *Eudynamys* complex differently from Inskipp *et al.* (1996), who followed White & Bruce (1986) in treating Australian Koel *E. cyanocephalus* as separate from Asian Koel *E. scolopaceus*. Christidis & Boles elected to follow Mason (1997), who realigned subspecies *orientalis* from the southern Moluccas and *corvina* from the northern Moluccas with Australian, New Guinea and Melanesian forms under the oldest name *orientalis*, as Eastern Koel; *corvina* was subsumed in *E. scolopaceus mindanensis* by Dickinson (2003) and Payne (2005), but treated as valid by White & Bruce (1986).

### *Collocalia linchi*

Christidis & Boles (2008) split Linchi Swiftlet *Collocalia linchi*, following Chantler (1999), and included the Christmas Island subspecies *natalis*, which is usually treated as a race of Glossy Swiftlet *C. esculenta*.

### *Phylloscopus fuligiventer weigoldi*

In the same publication describing *Phylloscopus occisinensis*, Martens *et al.* (2008) removed *weigoldi* (from Qinghai) from Dusky Warbler *P. fuscatus* and placed it as a subspecies of Smoky Warbler *P. fuligiventer*. The change was made on the grounds of molecular relationships, backed up by evidence that the song of *weigoldi* is somewhat different from that of *P. fuscatus* in its greater complexity and higher pitch (but no *fuligiventer* vocal material was analysed). Nevertheless, Martens *et al.* indicate that *weigoldi* differs markedly from *P. fuligiventer* in

being a pale brownish-white rather than what Martens *et al.* call 'blackish olive' on the underparts, something very apparent in their Figure 10 C, where indeed the difference is so striking that the conspecificity of the taxa seems improbable.

What renders the situation all the more uncertain is that, while Martens *et al.* outlined the taxonomic arrangement made for *fuligiventer* by Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) (which involved transferring the form *tibetanus* to *fuscatus*, rendering *fuligiventer* monotypic), they took no account of the two items of evidence that these latter authors assembled. First, the illustration (Plate 150) in Rasmussen & Anderton deliberately juxtaposes *weigoldi* and *fuligiventer* to show their great similarity, and the text under Dusky Warbler describes Smoky as a 'lookalike' of *weigoldi* (although earlier in this Dusky Warbler account, somewhat by way of contradiction, the underparts of *weigoldi* are said to be only 'slightly more yellow- and brown-streaked' than nominate *fuscatus*). Second, although Rasmussen & Anderton described the song of *fuligiventer* as 'inadequately documented' and made no reference to the song of *tibetanus*, they nonetheless described the call of *weigoldi* as 'even shorter, higher and less hard and stony' than in nominate *fuscatus*, but 'quite different from call of lookalike Smoky'. This is American English, and the word 'quite' here clearly bears the meaning 'distinctly'. If this vocal evidence is correct, the placement of *weigoldi* would appear to need revisiting.

## Confirmations

### *Polyplectron katsumatae*

Inskipp *et al.* (1996) treated Hainan Peacock Pheasant *Polyplectron katsumatae* as separate from Grey Peacock Pheasant *P. bicalcaratum* owing to morphological differences. Chang *et al.* (2008) added molecular support, showing that the genetic distance between these taxa exceeds that between Grey Peacock Pheasant and Mountain Peacock Pheasant *P. inopinatum*. This split is not, however, widely adopted elsewhere and is the subject of emerging debate (see also Collar 2009).

### *Certhia hodgsoni*

#### *Certhia manipurensis*

Tietze *et al.* (2008) added more support to their previous findings (Martens & Tietze 2006, Tietze *et al.* 2006) by showing that all nine treecreeper species they previously recognised can be distinguished clearly from one another by their vocalisations. These analyses also confirmed the earlier recommendation of Martens & Tietze (2006) and

Tietze *et al.* (2006) that the subspecies *bianchii* belongs within Eurasian Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*, *contra* Harrap (1996). Collar & Pilgrim (2007) erroneously suggested that the position of *bianchii* required clarification and included an incorrectly captioned photo, which should have been labelled 'Plate 10. "Eurasian Treecreeper" *Certhia familiaris bianchii*, Huzu Bei Shan, Qinghai, China, April 2005.' Harrap (2008c) followed these splits.

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John. D. Pilgrim,  
Global Biodiversity Network,  
8 Nguyen Che Nghia, Hanoi, Vietnam  
Email: john@biodiversitynetwork.org

Tim P. Inskipp,  
1 Hernesside, Welney, Wisbech,  
Cambridgeshire PE14 9SB, UK  
Email: inskipp@btinternet.com

Nigel J. Collar,  
BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court,  
Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0NA, UK  
Email: nigel.collar@birdlife.org