Threatened Birds of Asia:
The BirdLife International Red Data Book

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GOLDEN-WINGED LAUGHINGTHRUSH  
*Garrulax ngoclinhensis*

This recently discovered laughingthrush qualifies as Vulnerable because it is known from a single site and inferred to have a very small range.

**DISTRIBUTION** The Golden-winged Laughingthrush (see Remarks 1) is currently only known from Mount Ngoc Linh on the Kon Tum plateau of central Vietnam, which is protected by two nature reserves (in separate provinces). Records are as follows:

- **VIETNAM** Ngoc Linh (Quang Nam) proposed nature reserve, Quang Nam, in Tra Linh commune, 2,000–2,200 m, March–May 1998 (Tordoff et al. 2000); Ngoc Linh (Kon Tum) Nature Reserve, Kon Tum, on Mt Ngoc Linh, 2,000–2,200 m, “numerous observations”, May 1996, March–April 1998 (Eames et al. 1999a).

**POPULATION** The species has only so far been recorded on Mt Ngoc Linh, on the border between Kon Tum and Quang Nam provinces; several sightings were made but no estimate of population size was possible (Eames et al. 1999a, Tordoff et al. 2000). Its occurrence in Quang Nam province was deemed likely, as the provincial boundary bisects Mt Ngoc Linh and suitable habitat is contiguous over the border (Eames et al. 1999a), although a survey of the Quang Nam side of Mt Ngoc Linh in March–April 1999 failed to record this species, possibly because the survey was concentrated below 1,500 m (Tordoff et al. 2000). Suitable forest is also present in neighbouring Attapu and Se Kong provinces of Laos, and it is thought likely that the species will also be discovered there in future (Eames et al. 1999a).

**ECOLOGY**

- **Habitat** All observations of the species to date have been between 2,000 and 2,200 m, almost exclusively in herb and shrub layers of primary upper montane evergreen forest; within this currently known altitudinal range, forest canopy height was 10–15 m, with occasional 20 m trees (Eames et al. 1999a). Sightings to date have all been of singles or pairs, with one seen consorting with a party of three Red-tailed Laughingthrushes *Garrulax milnei* (Eames et al. 1999a).

- **Food** There is no information, although the species probably specialises in catching invertebrates in low shrubs and leaf-litter (J. C. Eames in litt. 1999).

- **Breeding** The holotype was a male with enlarged testes, suggesting breeding activity at the time of collection (May) (Eames et al. 1999a).
THREATS An account of threats at Ngoc Linh (Kon Tum) Nature Reserve appears under Black-crowned Barwing *Actinodura sodangorum*. Forest at Ngoc Linh (Quang Nam) proposed nature reserve is threatened by clearance for agriculture, a process that is accelerating in response to natural population growth and settlement of migrants in the area; these two factors pose a “formidable challenge” to local conservation (Tordoff et al. 2000).

MEASURES TAKEN Protected areas An “investment plan” prepared by the BirdLife International Vietnam Programme and the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute (FIPI) was approved by the Vietnamese government in 1999, thereby establishing Ngoc Linh (Kon Tum) Nature Reserve; this new protected area is now the subject of a GEF project by the BirdLife International Vietnam Programme in collaboration with the Kon Tum provincial authorities (J. C. Eames in litt. 1999). A feasibility study for the establishment of Ngoc Linh (Quang Nam) proposed nature reserve was completed in early 2000 (Tordoff et al. 2000), and an investment plan is currently being prepared (A. W. Tordoff in litt. 2000).

MEASURES PROPOSED Research Further survey work is required in and around the known range of this little-known bird in Vietnam (and, if found there, in Laos), so that its exact distribution, status and conservation requirements can be clarified.

Protected areas Measures proposed at Ngoc Linh (Kon Tum) Nature Reserve are given in the equivalent section under Black-crowned Barwing. Detailed management proposals for Ngoc Linh (Quang Nam) proposed nature reserve are presented by Tordoff et al. (2000); these include controlling of clearing and exploitation of the forest, promoting forest regeneration, developing a buffer zone, controlling immigration and population growth and conducting education campaigns. Three sites on the Kon Tum plateau—Ngoc Linh (Kon Tum) Nature Reserve, Ngoc Linh (Quang Nam) proposed nature reserve and Song Thanh-Dakpring proposed nature reserve—are contiguous and, when all are established, should be upgraded to national park status, thus affording the highest management category and ensuring central government support for a representative area of the Kon Tum plateau EBA (Tordoff et al. 2000).

REMARKS (1) When this taxon was recently described it was proposed for the category Data Deficient (Eames et al. 1999a), but a precautionary view of subsequent evidence (see Threats), particularly when discounting the possibility that it might occur elsewhere, leads directly to the conclusion that it is more appropriately regarded as threatened.