

Threatened Birds of Asia:

The BirdLife International Red Data Book

Editors

N. J. COLLAR (Editor-in-chief),
A. V. ANDREEV, S. CHAN, M. J. CROSBY, S. SUBRAMANYA and J. A. TOBIAS

Maps by

RUDYANTO and M. J. CROSBY

Principal compilers and data contributors

■ **BANGLADESH** P. Thompson ■ **BHUTAN** R. Pradhan; C. Inskipp, T. Inskipp ■ **CAMBODIA** Sun Huan; C. M. Poole ■ **CHINA** ■ **MAINLAND CHINA** Zheng Guangmei; Ding Changqing, Gao Wei, Gao Yuren, Li Fulai, Liu Naifa, Ma Zhijun, the late Tan Yaokuang, Wang Qishan, Xu Weishu, Yang Lan, Yu Zhiwei, Zhang Zhengwang. ■ **HONG KONG** Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (BirdLife Affiliate); H. F. Cheung; F. N. Y. Lock, C. K. W. Ma, Y. T. Yu. ■ **TAIWAN** Wild Bird Federation of Taiwan (BirdLife Partner); L. Liu Severinghaus; Chang Chin-lung, Chiang Ming-liang, Fang Woei-horng, Ho Yi-hsian, Hwang Kwang-yin, Lin Wei-yuan, Lin Wen-horn, Lo Hung-ren, Sha Chian-chung, Yau Cheng-teh. ■ **INDIA** Bombay Natural History Society (BirdLife Partner Designate) and Sálím Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History; L. Vijayan and V. S. Vijayan; S. Balachandran, R. Bhargava, P. C. Bhattacharjee, S. Bhupathy, A. Chaudhury, P. Gole, S. A. Hussain, R. Kaul, U. Lachungpa, R. Naroji, S. Pandey, A. Pittie, V. Prakash, A. Rahmani, P. Saikia, R. Sankaran, P. Singh, R. Sugathan, Zafar-ul Islam ■ **INDONESIA** BirdLife International Indonesia Country Programme; Ria Saryanthi; D. Agista, S. van Balen, Y. Cahyadin, R. F. A. Grimmett, F. R. Lambert, M. Poulsen, Rudyanto, I. Setiawan, C. Trainor ■ **JAPAN** Wild Bird Society of Japan (BirdLife Partner); Y. Fujimaki; Y. Kanai, H. Morioka, K. Ono, H. Uchida, M. Ueta, N. Yanagisawa ■ **KOREA** ■ **NORTH KOREA** Pak U-il; Chong Jong-ryol, Rim Chuyon. ■ **SOUTH KOREA** Lee Woo-shin; Han Sang-hoon, Kim Jin-han, Lee Ki-sup, Park Jin-young ■ **LAOS** K. Khounbolin; W. J. Duckworth ■ **MALAYSIA** Malaysian Nature Society (BirdLife Partner); K. Kumar; G. Noramly, M. J. Kohler ■ **MONGOLIA** D. Batdelger; A. Bräunlich, N. Tseveenmyadag ■ **MYANMAR** Khin Ma Ma Thwin ■ **NEPAL** Bird Conservation Nepal (BirdLife Affiliate); H. S. Baral; C. Inskipp, T. P. Inskipp ■ **PAKISTAN** Ornithological Society of Pakistan (BirdLife Affiliate) ■ **PHILIPPINES** Haribon Foundation for Conservation of Natural Resources (BirdLife Partner); N. A. D. Mallari, B. R. Tabaranza, Jr. ■ **RUSSIA** Russian Bird Conservation Union (BirdLife Partner Designate); A. V. Andreev; A. G. Degtyarev, V. G. Degtyarev, V. A. Dugintsov, N. N. Gerasimov, Yu. N. Gerasimov, N. I. Germogenov, O. A. Goroshko, A. V. Kondrat'ev, Yu. V. Labutin, N. M. Litvinenko, Yu. N. Nazarov, V. A. Nechaev, V. I. Perfil'ev, R. V. Ryabtsev, Yu. V. Shibaev, S. G. Surmach, E. E. Tkachenko, O. P. Val'chuk, B. A. Voronov. ■ **SINGAPORE** The Nature Society (Singapore) (BirdLife Partner); Lim Kim Seng ■ **SRI LANKA** Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka (BirdLife Affiliate); S. Kotagama; S. Aryaprema, S. Corea, J. P. G. Jones, U. Fernando, R. Perera, M. Siriwardhane, K. Weerakoon ■ **THAILAND** Bird Conservation Society of Thailand (BirdLife Partner); U. Treesucon; R. Jugmongkol, V. Kongthong, P. Poonswad, P. D. Round, S. Supparatvirkorn ■ **VIETNAM** BirdLife International Vietnam Country Programme; Nguyen Cu; J. C. Eames, A. W. Tordoff, Le Trong Trai, Nguyen Duc Tu.

With contributions from: S. H. M. Butchart, D. S. Butler (maps), P. Davidson, J. C. Lowen, G. C. L. Dutson, N. B. Peet, T. Vetta (maps), J. M. Villasper (maps), M. G. Wilson

Recommended citation

BirdLife International (2001) *Threatened birds of Asia: the BirdLife International Red Data Book*. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International.

© 2001 BirdLife International

Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge, CB3 0NA, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 1223 277318 Fax: +44 1223 277200 Email: birdlife@birdlife.org.uk

Internet: www.birdlife.net

BirdLife International is a UK-registered charity

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrical, chemical, mechanical, optical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

ISBN 0 946888 42 6 (Part A)

ISBN 0 946888 43 4 (Part B)

ISBN 0 946888 44 2 (Set)

British Library-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

First published 2001 by BirdLife International

Designed and produced by the **Nature**Bureau, 36 Kingfisher Court, Hambridge Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 5SJ, United Kingdom

Available from the Natural History Book Service Ltd, 2–3 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5XN, UK. Tel: +44 1803 865913 Fax: +44 1803 865280 Email nhbs@nhbs.co.uk
Internet: www.nhbs.com/services/birdlife.html

The presentation of material in this book and the geographical designations employed do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of BirdLife International concerning the legal status of any country, territory or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

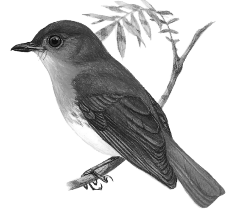
PALAWAN FLYCATCHER

Ficedula platenae

Critical —

Endangered —

Vulnerable **A1c; A2c; B1+2a,b,c,d,e**



This flycatcher qualifies as Vulnerable because it has a small occupied range which is being rapidly reduced as a result of continuing clearance, degradation and fragmentation of its lowland primary forest habitat. As such, it is inferred to be declining rapidly.

DISTRIBUTION The Palawan Flycatcher (see Remarks 1) is endemic to Palawan and its satellites in the Philippines. Records are as follows:

■ **PHILIPPINES** *Palawan Pangulasian* island, October 1996 (Gonzalez *et al.* 1997); **Lagen** island, April or May 1997 (Gonzalez *et al.* 1997); **St Paul's Subterranean River National Park**, August or September 1991 (Lambert 1993c) and January 1995 (W. Simpson *in litt.* 1997); **Puerto Princesa**, September and December 1883, January and February 1884, December 1889, December 1891, September 1925 (nine specimens in CM, MCZ, MNHN, USNM, plus Baud 1978); **Iwahig Penal Colony** on the Balsahan trail, repeatedly, 1983–1997 (Fisher mss, Clarke 1983, Sargeant 1989, Jensen and Hornskov 1992, many observers *in litt.* 1987–1997); **Inagauan**, July–August 1987 (Hartley and McGowan 1991); **Mt Victoria**, 3.8 km east-south-east of the peak at Tuas on the Tuas River, Estrella, 600–650 m, May 1990 (three specimens in CMNH); **Quezon**, July 1964 (female in FMNH) and at 50 m, May 1985 (male in NCSM); **Ilog river** (Iloy River), August or September 1991 (Lambert 1993c, F. R. Lambert verbally 1997); **Taguso**, June to August 1887 (seven specimens in AMNH, BMNH, MNHN); **Brooke's Point** at Macagua, April and May 1962 (two specimens in YPM); **Tigwayao**, Batarasa, September 1925 (male in CM).

POPULATION Although *Ficedula* flycatchers can be easily overlooked during brief surveys (particularly if vocalisations are not known), the finding of this species at only two sites during such work in September 1991 in forest areas scattered throughout Palawan suggested that it is a genuinely rare or uncommon species (Lambert 1993c). Moreover, a century earlier F. S. Bourns and D. C. Worcester had found it “quite rare in the ground collected in by us” (McGregor 1909–1910). McClure's (1974) assessment that it was fairly common appears to have been based on just three records over six years. However, the procuring of three specimens over three days on Mt Victoria, (27–29) May 1990 (see Distribution), plus the hearing of several birds at Iwahig in February 1996, are indications that it may in fact be a highly elusive, skulking creature whose presence and abundance are best assessed by mist-netting (P. A. J. Morris *in litt.* 1996), preferably combined with playback of vocalisations. The species's presence on two small offshore islands (Gonzalez *et al.* 1997) hints at a wider range than is currently known.

ECOLOGY Habitat The Palawan Flycatcher has been characterised as a bird of forest understorey and second growth, up to 10 m from the ground, below 1,000 m (Dickinson *et al.* 1991), but it is not clear that second growth is occupied or that elevation reaches so high (650 m appears the highest record in Distribution), and it is not inconceivable that the species also spends time unobserved in the canopy. The species was “found in thickets in the jungle or forest, and always near the ground” (F. S. Bourns and D. C. Worcester in McGregor 1909–1910), the three birds from Mt Victoria were all in primary forest (CMNH label data), while observations in 1991—one in tall primary forest in a national park, one in one of the

few unlogged forest patches in the southern lowlands, and none in logged forest or secondary growth—suggest it may be very sensitive to habitat modification and confined to primary lowland forest, with both observations being of single birds low in understorey particularly rich in rattan and other understorey palms, perhaps suggesting some degree of habitat specialisation (Lambert 1993c). Birds at St Paul’s Subterranean River National Park in April 1996 remained within 2 m of the ground (W. Simpson *in litt.* 1997). The bird on Pangulasian was foraging among tangled understorey vines, and the bird on Lagen was in relatively open understorey below closed-canopy old growth forest on limestone, with many large “ipil” *Intsia bijuga* trees (J. C. T. Gonzalez *in litt.* 1997).



The distribution of Palawan Flycatcher *Ficedula platena*: (1) Pangulasian; (2) Lagen; (3) St Paul’s Subterranean River National Park; (4) Puerto Princesa; (5) Iwahig Penal Colony; (6) Inagauan; (7) Mt Victoria; (8) Quezon; (9) Ilog river; (10) Taguso; (11) Brooke’s Point; (12) Tigwayao.

○ Historical (pre-1950) ● Fairly recent (1950–1979) ● Recent (1980–present)

Food Insects were in the stomach of the male from Quezon (NCSM label data).

Breeding Whitehead (1890) mentioned a nest which can only have been from the period June–September (Dickinson *et al.* 1991). The three specimens from Mt Victoria, May, were all sexually active (CMNH label data). A male from Puerto Princesa, September, had “very large testes” (Baud 1978), and three out of four birds trapped in July and August were in full breeding condition (Hartley and McGowan 1991). All this tends to suggest that the species readily breeds in (or at least into) the rainy season, which begins in August and continues to around January (Hartley and McGowan 1991).

Migration There is no evidence of any seasonal or elevational displacement in this species.

THREATS Being apparently restricted to primary lowland forest on Palawan, this species is almost exclusively threatened by the destruction of this habitat, the remaining fragments of which are few in number and widely spaced (Lambert 1993c). There are plans to commence granite mining at Iwahig (McGowan and Garson 1995). Nearly all of Palawan’s forests are leased to logging operations (Quinnell and Balmford 1986), although the small populations on the tiny islands of Pangulasian and Lagen appear relatively secure (J. C. T. Gonzalez *in litt.* 1997).

MEASURES TAKEN The Palawan Flycatcher is found in St Paul’s Subterranean River National Park (see Appendix), which is actively managed and protected by the local government of Palawan. The Iwahig Penal Colony is managed by the Bureau of Prisons and provides further protection (BRT), but see Threats.

MEASURES PROPOSED Apart from the area targeted for conservation above, the species is known from within or near two “key sites” (Victoria/Anapalan ranges and Mt Mantalingahan; see Appendix), which deserve further survey and formal designation, at least in part, under the NIPAS process. Preservation of the maximum area of lowland and mid-altitude forest is the priority for this and several other threatened Palawan endemics (see equivalent section under Palawan Hornbill *Anthracoceros marchei*). A conservation strategy for the island should focus on sites that support populations of all these species (see Appendix). In addition, the Palawan Flycatcher should be targeted in the complete ornithological survey of Palawan and its satellite islands that is now required (see equivalent section under Palawan Peacock-pheasant *Polyplectron emphanum*). Field survey work making use of mist-nets and tape playback of vocalisations will greatly facilitate determination of its distribution, altitudinal range and habitat preferences.

REMARKS (1) *Ficedula* is a genus with numerous Palearctic species, but Vaurie (1953) associated *platenae* with *crypta*, *bonthaina* and *harterti*, which are all Philippine or Wallacean. Lowland forest flycatchers of the genus *Ficedula* in other parts of the Sunda region are known to be sensitive to the effects of logging (Lambert 1992), and it is unsurprising that this species has only been observed in unlogged forest. Indeed, if it is as sensitive as related Sundaic species such as the Rufous-chested Flycatcher *F. dumetoria* appear to be, then it may be one of the most seriously endangered of the endemic species of Palawan (Lambert 1993c). Survey workers should be aware that the call of Palawan Flycatcher is very unusual and easily mistaken for an insect, being a high-pitched *ze-ee*, which often sounds like one note and is repeated about 10–15 times before the bird utters a short 4–5 second trill (Lambert 1993c).