

Threatened Birds of Asia:

The BirdLife International Red Data Book

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BROWN-CHESTED JUNGLE-FLYCATCHER

Rhinomyias brunneata



Critical —
Endangered —
Vulnerable C1

This species qualifies as Vulnerable because it has a small, declining population as a result of destruction of lowland forest in its breeding and wintering grounds, primarily through logging for timber and conversion to agricultural production.

DISTRIBUTION The Brown-chested Jungle-flycatcher breeds in the subtropical forests of south-east China, and outside the breeding season it is recorded from Thailand (rare passage migrant), Peninsular Malaysia (winter visitor and passage migrant), Singapore (rare passage migrant and winter visitor), Brunei (one record) and possibly southern China. It presumably also occurs in parts of Indonesia and East Malaysia, on the islands of Sumatra and Borneo. Its status on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in India is unclear (see Remarks 1).

■ **CHINA** The species is a summer visitor to south-east China, which breeds (or at least has been recorded during the breeding season) in Guizhou, Anhui, Jiangsu, Shanghai, Zhejiang, Fujian, Jiangxi, Hunan, Guangxi and Guangdong (see Remarks 2), and has been recorded on passage in Hong Kong and in winter in Yunnan, with records (by province and autonomous region) as follows:

■ **MAINLAND CHINA** ■ **Yunnan Xishuangbanna National Nature Reserve**, two, December 1998 (K. S. Lee and J. R. Fellowes *in litt.* 1999);

■ **Guizhou Qinggangtang**, Suiyang, male collected, 900 m, May 1984 (Wu Zhikang *et al.* 1986);

■ **Anhui Huang Shan**, August 1976 (female in AUCN), a summer visitor, but “numbers not high” (Wang Qishan *et al.* 1981);

■ **Jiangsu** Yixing mountains, **Yixing county** and Liyang city, June 1958 (Chou Kaiya *et al.* 1959, Jiangsu Agricultural and Forestry Department 1988, three specimens in NNUCN);

■ **Shanghai** unspecified locality, July 1923 (specimen in ASCN);

■ **Zhejiang Mogan Shan** (Mokanshan), July 1915 (male in AMNH); **Longgong** mountain, July 1983 (specimen in WUCN); **Fengyang Shan National Nature Reserve**, Longquan county, a summer visitor, undated (Zhu Xi and Yang Chunjiang 1988); **Wuyanling National Natural Reserve**, Taishun county, “rare” summer visitor, 1980s (King and Zheng Guangmei 1988); unspecified locality, June 1897 (male in BMNH; also La Touche 1925–1934);

■ **Fujian Wuyi Shan Nature Reserve**, Chong’an, Dayang and Guangze counties, recorded inside the reserve at Guadun (Kuatun), where specimens were collected in May 1896 (two) (Slater 1897), May 1897 (two males and one female), May 1898 (eight males and one female, when it was apparently plentiful with several more heard), 1914 and spring 1916 (La Touche 1899, specimens in ASCN, BMNH, MCZ and USNM), one collected at Wuyi Shan in June in the period 1938–1943, in subtropical broadleaf evergreen forest (Wang Qishan *in litt.* 1997), collected at Qiliqiao, July 1963 (Cheng Tso-hsin *et al.* 1981, specimen in ASCN), up to six in the reserve, 1,000–1,200 m, May–June 1990 (Lewthwaite 1996), one just outside the reserve entrance, May 1992 (MJC); **Dazhu** (Dazhulan), Wuyi Shan mountains, July 1939 (specimen in ASCN);

■ **Jiangxi Huang Shan**, north-east of Poyang Hu lake, 1984 and 1986 (Fu Daoyan *et al.* 1989); **Lu Shan**, north-west of Poyang Hu lake, collected, 1984 and 1986, including in May

(Fu Daoyan *et al.* 1989, specimen in ASCN); **Sanqing Shan Nature Reserve**, Dexing and Yushan counties, one, 1,190 m, August 1999 (T. Woodward *in litt.* 2000);

■ **Hunan** Dawei Shan, **Liuyang county**, 1995 (specimens in HNUCN); **Mang Shan Nature Reserve**, Yizhang county, 1995 (specimens in HNUCN), one, 1,000 m, April 1995 (Lewthwaite 1996);

■ **Guangxi Dayao Shan Nature Reserve** (Yaoshan), Jinxiu county, female collected, May 1928, 20 specimens collected, April–July in the period 1929–1931, when the species was a “fairly common summer visitor in all districts of Yaoshan” (Stresemann 1929, Yen 1930, Yen 1933–1934), with up to four daily, 850–1,100 m, June 1994 (Lewthwaite 1996);

■ **Guangdong Babao Shan Nature Reserve**, Ruyuan, Yangshan and Lechang counties, one, July 1987 (Kennerley *et al.* 1987), up to six, 600–1,200 m, in April–July in the 1990s, including a pair with four fledged young in May (Lewthwaite 1996), nest found and photographed, May 1999 (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 30 [1999]: 50–58); **Shantou** (Swatow), February 1898 (female in SNMS); unspecified localities, northern Guangdong, three males collected, April–May 1930 (Yen 1932a).

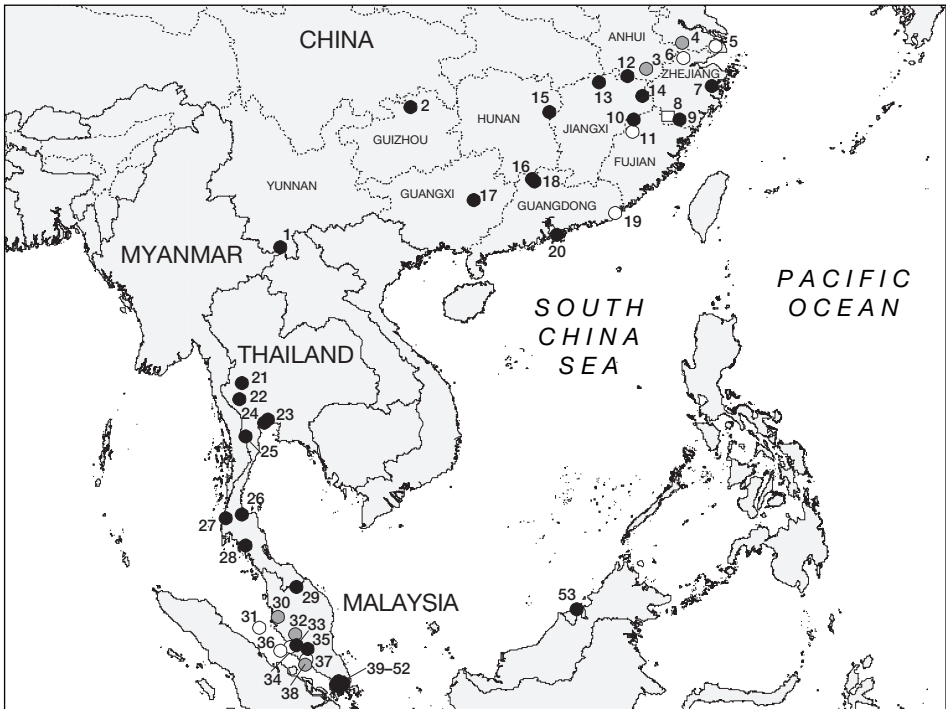
■ **HONG KONG** Kap Lung Forest Trail, **Tai Lam Chung** (Tai Lam Country Park), one, September 1995 (Hopkin *et al.* 1996).

■ **THAILAND** The species is a scarce passage migrant (but see Remarks 3), with a few records of birds apparently overwintering, as follows: **Huai Kha Khaeng National Park**, at Khao Khieo, May 1998 (Round 1998, *Bird Conserv. Soc. Thailand Bull.* 15,9 [1998]: 14–15); Phu Tho, Bung Kroeng Kavia, now Bung Kroeng National Park, **Kanchanaburi province**, one, September 1987 (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 7 [1998]: 34–40); Rangan, near **Bangkok**, one, September 1995 (*Bird Conserv. Soc. Thailand Bull.* 12,11 [1995]: 15); Ban Chai Thale Rangan, **Samut Sakhon**, one, September 1995 (P. D. Round *in litt.* 1998); **Kaeng Krachen National Park**, one, January 1996 (*Bird Conserv. Soc. Thailand Bull.* 13,3 [1996]: 12–13, J. N. Dymond *in litt.* 1999); Ao Ko, **Tha Chang** district, Surat Thani, one, 50 m, September 1983 (Nabhitabata and Nadee 1985); Thung Chalee, **Sri Phang Nga National Park**, Khura Buri district, Phangnga province, male collected, April 1988 (*Bangkok Bird Club Bull.* 5,11 [1988]: 11, P. D. Round *in litt.* 1998); Ban Bang Tiew, **Khao Pra-Bang Khrum Wildlife Sanctuary**, singles, April 1990, April 1991 (P. D. Round *in litt.* 1998), one, October (unspecified year) (U. Treesuon *per P. D. Round in litt.* 1998); **Hala-Bala Wildlife Sanctuary**, one, April 1998 (*Bird Conserv. Soc. Thailand Bull.* 15,7 [1998]: 14–15).

■ **MALAYSIA** The species is a passage migrant in Peninsular Malaysia, with a few records of birds apparently overwintering, as follows: **Gunung Hijau**, Maxwell Hill, Perak, one picked up dead, 1968 (Medway and Wells 1970); **Pulau Jarak**, Melaka Strait, collected, April 1932 (Gibson-Hill 1950, three specimens in ZRCNUS); **Fraser’s Hill**, regularly mist-netted (at night) in the 1960s and 1970s, including single birds on four nights in October 1966, 94 in September–November 1967 (Medway *et al.* 1968), two in February–May 1968, 208 in September–December 1968 (peak numbers in late September, latest record in November) (Medway and Wells 1970), nine in two days in April 1969, 169 in September–November 1969 (Wells 1972), one in April–May 1970, 48 in September–October 1969, 27 in August–November 1971 (Wells 1974), 61 in October–November 1972, and 30 in September–October 1973 (Wells 1975); **Ulu Langat Forest Reserve** (Sungei Lepoh Ulu Langat), Selangor, one, October 1997 (*Suara Enggang* November/December 1997); **Klang**, February 1879 (male in BMNH); **Pasoh Forest Reserve**, Negri Sembilan, five mist-netted, October 1969 (none the following month, suggesting that these birds were on passage) (Wells 1972), one ringed in 1972 returning to winter in same site in 1973 (Wells 1975), 15 caught in virgin dipterocarp forest and seven in regenerating forest during a comparative mist-netting study of virgin and regenerating forest, 1978–1980 (Wong 1985); **One Fathom Bank** lighthouse, Straits of Melaka, 25 km from Pulau Pintu Gedong, three collected, November 1918 (Robinson and Kloss

1918b, specimens in BMNH, USNM and ZRCNUS); **Gunong Tampin** (Tampin hill), Negri Sembilan, August–September 1913 (Gibson-Hill 1950, single specimens in BMNH and ZRCNUS); **Klebang Besar**, Mal, October 1967 (Medway *et al.* 1968).

■ **SINGAPORE** The species is a rare winter visitor and passage migrant in Singapore, with one or two records annually (Lim 1994), and it has been recorded in the North, East, West and Central Forests (Lim and Gardner 1997); **Ulu Sembawang**, one, January 1980 (Lim Kim Seng *in litt.* 2000); **Nee Soon**, October 1997 (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 27 [1998]: 61–66); **Mandai forest**, October 1997 (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 27 [1998]: 61–66); **Changi Central**, two, October–November 1988 (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 9 [1989]: 38–44); **Bukit Timah Nature Reserve**, one, October–November 1988 (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 9 [1989]: 38–44), two adults disputing a territory at Fern Valley, October–November 1996, one at Dairy Farm, November 1996 (Lim Kim Seng *in litt.* 2000), three, October 1997 (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 27 [1998]: 61–66); **Poyan**,



The distribution of Brown-chested Jungle-flycatcher *Rhinomyias brunneata*: (1) Xishuangbanna National Nature Reserve; (2) Qinggangtang; (3) Huang Shan; (4) Yixing county; (5) Shanghai; (6) Mogan Shan; (7) Longgong; (8) Fengyang Shan National Nature Reserve; (9) Wuyanling National Natural Reserve; (10) Wuyi Shan Nature Reserve; (11) Dazhu; (12) Huang Shan; (13) Lu Shan; (14) Sanqing Shan Nature Reserve; (15) Liuyang county; (16) Mang Shan Nature Reserve; (17) Dayao Shan Nature Reserve; (18) Babao Shan Nature Reserve; (19) Shantou; (20) Tai Lam Chung; (21) Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary; (22) Kanchanaburi province; (23) Bangkok; (24) Samut Sakhon; (25) Kaeng Krachan National Park; (26) Tha Chang; (27) Si Phang Nga National Park; (28) Khao Pra-Bang Khrum Wildlife Sanctuary; (29) Hala-Bala Wildlife Sanctuary; (30) Gunung Hijau; (31) Pulau Jarak; (32) Fraser's Hill; (33) Ulu Langat Forest Reserve; (34) Klang; (35) Pasoh Forest Reserve; (36) One Fathom Bank; (37) Gunong Tampin; (38) Klebang Besar; (39) Ulu Sembawang; (40) Nee Soon; (41) Mandai; (42) Changi Central; (43) Bukit Timah Nature Reserve; (44) Poyan; (45) Tanah Merah; (46) Tuas; (47) East Coast Park; (48) Holland Grove Park; (49) Tyersall Park; (50) Alexandra Estate; (51) Mt Faber; (52) Sentosa; (53) Bandar Seri Begawan.

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

one, October–November 1988 (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 9 [1989]: 38–44); **Tanah Merah**, one, October–November 1988 (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 9 [1989]: 38–44); **Tuas**, one immature in coastal scrub, November 1992 (Lim Kim Seng *in litt.* 2000), October 1997 (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 27 [June 1998]: 61–66); **East Coast Park**, one immature, December 1992 (Lim Kim Seng *in litt.* 2000); **Holland Grove Park** (Holland Woods), October 1997 (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 27 [1998]: 61–66); **Tyersall Park** (Tyersall Woods), October 1997 (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 27 [1998]: 61–66); **Alexandra Estate** (Alexander Park), one killed by a cat, October–November 1988 (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 9 [1989]: 38–44); **Mt Faber**, October 1997 (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 27 [1998]: 61–66); **Sentosa**, one, October 1997 (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 27 [1998]: 61–66).

■ **BRUNEI** There is a single record: **Bandar Seri Begawan** at Kiarong, October 1982 (Mann 1987).

There are two possible records of this species from Indonesia, both at Way Kambas National Park, Sumatra, January and December 1985 (Parrott and Andrew 1996; also J. Hornskov *in litt.* 1989).

POPULATION Numbers of Brown-chested Jungle-flycatcher in its breeding range in China are undocumented. The records there suggest that it is generally scarce and very locally distributed, but it is an inconspicuous species that is undoubtedly greatly under-recorded. It has been found to be locally common at a few breeding localities, including Wuyi Shan Nature Reserve (La Touche 1899, Lewthwaite 1996), Dayao Shan Nature Reserve (Yen 1930, Yen 1933–1934) and Babao Shan Nature Reserve (Lewthwaite 1996). During the MAPS project, it was mist-netted in large numbers on nocturnal passage migration at Fraser's Hill in the mountains of Peninsular Malaysia (McClure 1998). Between 1965 and 1973, 12 were caught in spring and 640 in autumn, suggesting that overall numbers might be much higher than other records suggest (Wells 1992). However, the pattern of records suggests that the most of its population may migrate along the Malaysian Peninsula in spring and autumn, and it is possible that a significant proportion of the total global population could have been captured during the intensive ringing studies at Fraser's Hill.

ECOLOGY Habitat The Brown-chested Jungle-flycatcher breeds in subtropical broadleaf evergreen forests in south-east China, but its precise habitat requirements there are not fully understood. It is reportedly a very shy bird which inhabits dense bamboo undergrowth or low bushes in dense forest (La Touche 1899, Cheng Tso-hsin 1987). Most records are from mountainous areas, but it appears to be absent from higher altitudes, with records from between 600 and 1,200 m (La Touche 1899, Lewthwaite 1996). It appears not to occur in logged forest or artificial plantations (Wang Qishan *in litt.* 1997).

In Peninsular Malaysia it apparently winters in mature (not secondary) forest and is an extreme lowland forest specialist (D. R. Wells *in litt.* 1994). Passage migrants in Thailand have been recorded in lowland semi-evergreen rainforest (five records), mixed deciduous forest (one record), and *Avicennia* mangrove/beach scrub (one record) (P. D. Round *in litt.* 1998), and in the understorey of streamside vegetation in lowland semi-evergreen forest (Nabhitabhata and Nadee 1985). On passage in Singapore, its habitats include primary and secondary forests, and coastal scrub (usually of *Acacia auriculiformis*, *Casuarina equisetifolia* and *Albizia falcataria*) in reclaimed land, parks and gardens; however, wintering birds appear to be confined to forest (Lim Kim Seng *in litt.* 2000). Two birds observed in close proximity (less than 10 m apart) at Bukit Timah Nature Reserve were apparently defending territories, as they engaged in prolonged posturing and tail-fanning, and gave a dry musical tinkling call similar to Grey-chested Jungle Flycatcher *Rhinomyias umbratilis* (Lim Kim Seng *in litt.* 2000).

Food The stomach of a specimen collected in Guizhou in May 1984 contained insects (Wu Zhikang *et al.* 1986). In Singapore, both passage and wintering individuals appear to

occupy a fixed niche in all habitats, hunting and hawking for food less than 1.5 m off the ground, similar to Ferruginous Flycatcher *Muscicapa ferruginea*, but unlike other migrant *Muscicapa* and *Ficedula* flycatchers (Lim Kim Seng *in litt.* 2000).

Breeding At Babao Shan in Guangdong, a nest has been found and photographed in May (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 30 [1999]: 50–58), and a pair seen with four fledged young on 25 May (Lewthwaite 1996).

Migration Of eight or so recognised species in the genus *Rhinomyias*, this is the only one that is known to migrate (Vaurie 1952). It is present on the breeding grounds in China from April to August, although there are records from Guangdong in February and Yunnan in December, perhaps indicating that some individuals winter in the tropical zone in southern China. Fu Daoyan *et al.* (1989) described the species as resident in the hills around Poyang Hu lake in Jiangxi, but it seems unlikely that an insectivorous bird would winter so far north. Yen (1933–1934) reported that it arrived at Dayao Shan (Yaoshan) in Guangxi in the second week of April and left in the middle of July, and Lewthwaite (1996) recorded it at Babao Shan in Guangdong between 11 April and 10 July.

The absence of midwinter records suggests that this species may be only a passage migrant in Thailand (P. D. Round *in litt.* 1998), although the possibility exists that it formerly wintered in at least part of southern Thailand, before the almost complete removal of mature, undisturbed lowland forest. Wong (1985) described this species as a winter resident at Pasoh following her mist-netting study in 1978–1980, but most records from Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore were during April and September–November (see Distribution) and presumably involved birds on passage. The “species’ main wintering quarters remain a mystery” (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 9 [1989]: 38–44), and Wells (1992) noted that “perhaps the main winter quarters of this species have yet to be discovered”. The records of birds on passage through the Malaysian Peninsula, and the single record from Brunei and the unconfirmed reports from Sumatra, suggest that the main wintering grounds may be in the Greater Sunda islands.

THREATS The Brown-chested Jungle-flycatcher is one of four threatened bird species that are entirely restricted to the “South-east Chinese Mountains Endemic Bird Area”, threats and conservation measures in which are profiled by Stattersfield *et al.* (1998). Further information relevant to its conservation is given in the accounts for the other threatened species that occur in the forests of south-east China, White-eared Night-heron *Gorsachius magnificus*, White-necklaced Partridge *Arborophila gingica*, Cabot’s Tragopan *Tragopan caboti* and Elliot’s Pheasant *Syrnaticus ellioti*.

Habitat loss This species is threatened by the continuing loss and fragmentation of its habitat in both its breeding and non-breeding ranges. *China* Its breeding range in south-east China is in one of the most densely populated regions in the world, and most of the natural forest has been cleared or modified as a result of demands for agricultural land and timber; rapid forest loss has taken place in most provinces in south-east China in the past 50 years, for example in Fujian, where timber reserves declined by 50% between 1949 and 1980 (Smil 1984, see Table 1). The relatively low-altitude forests favoured by this species are likely to have been particularly badly affected. At Wuyanling in Zhejiang, there were large areas of undisturbed evergreen broadleaf forest before 1950, but in 1958, during the “great steel making” movement in China, large areas of this forest were logged (Sun Yuehua 1995). In the hills near Poyang Hu lake where this species was recorded during surveys in 1984–1986, the natural subtropical broadleaf evergreen forests have all been logged, and only secondary forest and artificial plantations remain (Fu Daoyan *et al.* 1989). The Dayao Shan (Yaoshan) range in Guangxi has suffered two decades of rapid conversion of forest to agricultural land, with large additional areas destroyed by uncontrolled fires (Smil 1984). There was widespread clear-felling there in the 1950s and 1960s, and most of the remaining natural forest is 20–

Table 1. Changes in the extent of natural habitats within this species's range in south-east China. The data in this table are reproduced from MacKinnon *et al.* (1996), and show the estimated areas (both original and remaining in km²) of presumably suitable habitats within this species's known range in south-east China, and the area of each habitat estimated within existing protected areas. However, it is important to note that this only gives an indication of the extent of reduction (or increase) of presumed habitats, as there is no information on the time-scale over which they have been lost, and this species does not necessarily occur throughout each habitat in this region of China.

Habitat	Original	Remaining	%	Protected	%
deciduous/evergreen broadleaf forest	229,575	22,838	10	8,151	3.6
subtropical evergreen broadleaf forest	682,066	45,298	7	19,839	2.9
tropical limestone forest	16,300	1,630	10	0	0
tropical semi-evergreen forest	69,698	3,707	5	240	0.3

30-year-old secondary regrowth, with limited areas of primary forest mainly confined to the inaccessible higher peaks (MacKinnon *et al.* 1996). *Malaysia* As this species is largely restricted to mature forest in lowlands during the winter, it is threatened by destruction of this habitat. A full discussion of threats to this habitat type in Malaysia is in the equivalent section under Malaysian Peacock-pheasant *Polyplectron malacense*.

MEASURES TAKEN *Protected areas* *China* The Brown-chested Jungle-flycatcher has been recorded in or near several protected areas in its breeding range in China: Suiyang Nature Reserve in Guizhou (25 km², forest area apparently small and damaged), Huang Shan National Forest Park in Anhui (117 km², forest apparently in good condition), Longchi Shan Nature Reserve in the Yixing mountains in Jiangsu (1 km²; although the reserve itself is very small, good forests apparently extend south from the reserve boundary to the provincial border), Fengyang Shan National Nature Reserve in Zhejiang (247 km², forest apparently in fine condition), Wuyanling Nature Reserve in Zhejiang (190 km², forest apparently in moderately good condition), Wuyi Shan Nature Reserve in Fujian (565 km², forest apparently in very good condition), Lu Shan Nature Reserve in Jiangxi (305 km², forest apparently in good condition), Sanqing Shan Nature Reserve in Jiangxi (27 km², good forest in the areas, but not clear if inside the reserve), Dawai Shan Nature Reserve in Hunan (63 km², forest apparently in fine condition but small), Mang Shan Nature Reserve in Hunan (200 km², forest apparently in good condition), Dayao Shan Nature Reserve in Guangxi (2,022 km², forest apparently in moderately good condition, recently covering c.58% but now much less: J. Fellowes *in litt.* 1999) and Babao Shan Nature Reserve in Guangdong (sizes and condition from MacKinnon *et al.* 1996). *Thailand* It has been recorded in Khao Pra-Bang Kham Wildlife Sanctuary and Kaeng Krachen National Park. *Malaysia* In Peninsular Malaysia, it has been recorded from Ulu Langat and Pasoh Forest Reserves, although these have no formal value as conservation units. *Singapore* It has been recorded from Bukit Timah Nature Reserve.

MEASURES PROPOSED *Legislation* Brown-chested Jungle-flycatcher should be listed as a nationally protected species in China.

Protected areas MacKinnon *et al.* (1996) made the following recommendations for the protected areas where this species has been recorded in China: at Huang Shan National Forest Park, strengthen protection of the reserve; at Longchi Shan Nature Reserve, extend the reserve southwards toward the provincial border, to include the good forests which apparently exist outside its boundaries; at Fengyang Shan-Baishan Zu National Nature Reserve, strengthen protection of the reserve; at Wuyanling Nature Reserve, strengthen protection of the reserve; at Wuyi Shan Nature Reserve, enlarge the reserve and link over the border with the Jiangxi (Wuyishan) reserve; at Lu Shan Nature Reserve, strengthen protection

of the reserve; at Sanqing Shan Nature Reserve, probably enlarge the reserve and extend it into Zhejiang province ensuring that the good forest in the area is included; at Dawai Shan Nature Reserve, extend the reserve if possible; at Mang Shan Nature Reserve, link this reserve with Qingxiding and Nanling Shan in Guangdong to form a single Nan Shan conservation unit; at Dayao Shan Nature Reserve, control the planting of star anis *Illicium verum* and illegal logging.

Research Surveys are required in south-east China, with the aim of locating and censusing populations of this species, and therefore determining which existing protected areas are important for its conservation (and for the conservation of the other threatened forest birds of south-east China: see above) and identifying any other important areas that should be protected. Ecological studies are also required there to establish its breeding habitat requirements and altitudinal range, with the aim of developing appropriate forest management regimes in the nature reserves where it occurs. This species should be looked for during surveys in the Malaysian Peninsula and the Greater Sundas, in order to help clarify its non-breeding range and to determine its habitat requirements and altitudinal range at that season, and ultimately to identify key sites for its conservation. The taxonomic position and conservation status of the populations on the Andaman and Nicobar islands need to be clarified (see Remarks 1).

REMARKS (1) Birds on the Nicobar (and presumably also Andaman) islands are morphologically distinct from *Rhinomyias b. brunneata* (see Vaurie 1952, White 1953), and may represent a separate, resident species, *R. nicobarica* (Inskipp *et al.* 1996). Ali and Ripley (1968–1998) noted that “This subspecies [*R. b. nicobarica*] has a more rounded wing than the nominate race, suggesting that it may be less of a long distance migrant”. They described it as a “common winter visitor to the Great and Little Nicobar islands”, that “may be expected in the Andamans”. It was collected on Great Nicobar island in March 1901 (Richmond 1903, male in BMNH) and March 1907 (male and two females in AMNH), and 11 were collected on Great Nicobar and Little Nicobar islands in February–March 1927 (Robinson and Kloss 1927). There was a sight record on South Andaman island in January 1990 (*Oriental Bird Club Bull.* 11 [1990]: 40–48). (2) A report from Baihe Nature Reserve, Nanping county, Sichuan, in mid-level mixed forests in 1978 and 1979 (Shi Dongchou *et al.* 1984), is so far outside the known range that it must be presumed erroneous. (3) Night-netting in September at a forest site in Thailand would be almost certain to reveal many more birds (P. D. Round *in litt.* 1998).