

NOTES ON BIRDS RECORDED IN KHAPTAD NATIONAL PARK, NEPAL

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A Report to the Department of National Parks and Wildlife  
Conservation, Nepal

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## INTRODUCTION

Covering an area of 225 sq km, Khaptad National Park is an isolated massif with the highest point at 3300m and is situated south of the main Himalayan range in Seti Zone, far west Nepal. The top of Khaptad is a plateau of grasslands interspersed with oak and coniferous forests, rhododendron and berberis scrub and boggy areas. The slopes, which extend down to about 1200m, are steep sided and thickly vegetated with broadleaved forests and bamboo stands.

Khaptad is the only protected area representative of Nepal's western mid-mountain region. It is of national importance for nature conservation, mainly because of the wide variety and high quality of its forests which comprise subtropical, lower and upper temperate and subalpine types. Khaptad is especially valuable for its lower temperate and subtropical forests.

The park was identified by Inskipp (1989) as one of nine under-recorded protected areas in Nepal where more bird surveys are needed. The following report is based on casual observations by John Halliday and Bettina Vettori in the vicinity of the Park HQ on the plateau top (30 March-2 April), at c2700-3050m in upper temperate/subalpine zone, near Jhigrano (28-29 March), at c2200m in lower temperate zone and at Koramando (2 April-7 April), at c1500-1800m in the subtropical zone.

## SPECIES LIST (\* indicates new confirmed record for the Park )

Lammergeier Gypaetus barbatus

Singles regularly at HQ and Koramando.

Himalayan Griffon Gyps himalayensis

Several Jhigrano, HQ and Koramando.

Red-headed Vulture Sarcogyps calvus

Singles at Koramando.

Crested Serpent Eagle Spilornis cheela

Pairs displaying at Jhigrano and Koramando.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk Accipiter nisus

Singles at Jhigrano, HQ and Koramando.

Common Buzzard Buteo buteo

Pair copulating near HQ on 30 March.

Black Eagle Ictinaetus malayensis

Pair displaying Koramando 6 April.

Steppe Eagle Aquila nipalensis

Single near Jhigrano.

Mountain Hawk-Eagle Spizaetus cirrhatus

Singles near Jhigrano and Koramando.

Common Kestrel Falco tinnunculus

Singles Koramando.

\* Snow Partridge Lerwa lerwa  
A single near Khaptad Daha (lake) on 31 March.

Kalij Pheasant Lophura leucomelana  
Single male at Jhigrano.

Solitary Snipe Gallinago solitaria  
Single at Khaptad Daha on 31 March.

Snow Pigeon Columba leuconota  
Flocks of up to 32 at Koramando.

Oriental Turtle Dove Streptopelia orientalis  
Small numbers at Koramando and single on plateau.

Slaty-headed Parakeet Psittacula himalayana  
Small flocks at Koramando.

Mountain Scops Owl Otus spilocephalus  
Heard calling at night at Koramando.

White-throated Needletail Hirundapus caudacutus  
Six over Hermitage (plateau top).

Fork-tailed Swift Apus pacificus  
Ten near Jhigrano.

Crested Kingfisher Ceryle lugubris  
Singles regularly on streams at Koramando.

Great Barbet Megalaima virens  
Fairly common at Koramando.

Speckled Piculet Picumnus innominatus  
Single at Koramando.

\* Lesser Yellow-naped Woodpecker Picus chlorolophus  
Single at Koramando on 4 April.

Scaly-bellied Woodpecker Picus squamatus  
Single female at Jhigrano.

Himalayan Woodpecker Dendrocopos himalayensis  
Singles and pairs on plateau top.

Rufous-bellied Woodpecker Dendrocopos cathpharius  
Single and pair at Koramando.

Brown-fronted Woodpecker Dendrocopos auriceps  
Single male near Jhigrano.

Nepal House-Martin Delichon nipalensis  
Common at Jhigrano and Koramando.

Olive-backed Pipit Anthus hodgsoni  
Singles singing on plateau.

Grey Wagtail Motacilla cinerea  
Singles on streams on plateau and at Koramando.

Scarlet Minivet Pericrocotus flammeus  
Pair at Koramando.

Long-tailed Minivet Pericrocotus ethologus  
Small flocks in upper temperate, lower temperate and subtropical forest at HQ and Koramando.

Black Bulbul Hypsipetes flavalus  
Fairly common at Jhigrano and Koramando.

Orange-bellied Leafbird Chloropsis hardwickii  
Two at Koramando on 3 April.

Brown Dipper Cinclus pallasii  
One or two on streams on plateau and at Koramando. Recently fledged juveniles at Koramando.

Northern Wren Troglodytes troglodytes  
Singles on plateau.

Altai Accentor Prunella himalayana  
Flocks on plateau.

Orange-flanked Bush-Robin Tarsiger cyanurus  
One or two occasionally in temperate and subtropical forest at Jhigrano, plateau and Koramando.

Blue-fronted Redstart Phoenicurus schisticeps  
One or two on plateau.

Plumbeous Redstart Rhyacornis fuliginosus  
Fairly common on streams at Koramando and on plateau.

Grey Bushchat Saxicola ferrea  
One or two occasionally on plateau and Koramando.

White-capped Redstart Chaimarrornis leucocephalus  
Fairly common on streams on plateau (pairs displaying) and at Koramando.

Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush Monticola rufiventris  
Pair mating in upper temperate forest.

Blue Whistling Thrush Myiophoneus caeruleus  
Common at Koramando and Jhigrano.

White-collared Blackbird Turdus albocinctus  
Singles on plateau.

Mistle Thrush Turdus viscivorus  
Small numbers on plateau.

\* Little Forktail Enicurus scouleri  
Singles on stream at Koramando on 3 and 5 April.

Grey-bellied Tesia Tesia cyaniventer  
Singles at Koramando on 5 and 6 April.

Golden-spectacled Warbler Seicercus burkii  
Fairly common at Koramando.

Grey-hooded Warbler Seicercus xanthoschistos  
Fairly common at Koramando and one above Jhingrano.

Black-faced Warbler Abroscopus schisticeps  
Single at Koramando on 7 April.

Blyth's Leaf Warbler Phylloscopus reguloides  
Common at Koramando.

Orange-barred Leaf Warbler Phylloscopus pulcher  
Several above Jhingrano.

Pallas's Leaf Warbler Phylloscopus proregulus  
Common at Koramando.

Yellow-browed Warbler Phylloscopus inornatus  
Occasional at Koramando.

Small Niltava Niltava macgrigoriae  
Several pairs displaying at Koramando.

Rufous-bellied Niltava Niltava sundara  
Single male at Koramando on 5 April.

Verditer Flycatcher Muscicapa thalassina  
Several at Jhingrano, HQ and Koramando.

Ultramarine Flycatcher Ficedula superciliaris  
Single in lower temperate forest above Jhingrano on 29 March.

\* Snowy-browed Flycatcher Ficedula hyperythra  
Pair at Koramando on 5 April.

Orange-gorgetted Flycatcher Ficedula strophciata  
Singles above Jhingrano, at HQ and Koramando.

Grey-headed Flycatcher Culcicapa ceylonensis  
Small numbers at Jhingrano and Koramando.

Lesser Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler Pnoepyga pussila  
Single at Koramando on 7 April.

White-throated Laughing-Thrush Garrulax albogularis  
Two flocks at Jhingrano.

White-crested Laughing-Thrush Garrulax leucolophus  
Flocks regularly at Koramando.

Striated Laughing-Thrush Garrulax striatus  
Flocks fairly common at Koramando and single at Jhingrano.

Variegated Laughing-Thrush Garrulax variegatus  
Flocks at Khaptad Daha and above Jhingrano.

Chestnut-crowned Laughing-Thrush Garrulax erythrocephalus  
Flock at Koramando.

\* White-browed Shrike-Babbler Pteruthius flaviscapis  
Flock in lower temperate forest above Koramando.

Hoary Barwing Actinodura nipalensis  
Single in upper temperate forest above Jhingrano.

Chestnut-tailed Minla Minla strigula  
Flock in lower temperate forest above Jhingrano.

White-browed Fulvetta Alcippe vinipectus  
Flocks in upper temperate forest.

Black-capped Sibia Heterophasia capistrata  
Small numbers above Jhingrano and at Koramando.

Whiskered Yuhina Yuhina flavicollis  
Small numbers at Jhingrano and Koramando.

Stripe-throated Yuhina Yuhina gularis  
Flocks above Jhingrano in upper temperate forest.

Black-chinned Yuhina Yuhina nigrimenta  
Small flocks recorded regularly in subtropical forest at Koramando.

Black-throated Tit Aegithalos concinnus  
Small flocks at Koramando.

Grey-crested Tit Parus dicrous  
Flocks in upper temperate forest on plateau.

Spot-winged Tit Parus melanolophus  
Fairly common in upper temperate forest on plateau.

Green-backed Tit Parus monticolus  
Occasional above Jhingrano and at Koramando.

Black-lored Tit Parus xanthogenys  
Fairly common at Koramando.

White-tailed Nuthatch Sitta himalayensis  
Small numbers in upper temperate forest.

Rusty-flanked Treecreeper Certhia nipalensis  
Single near HQ.

Eurasian Treecreeper Certhia familiaris  
Single at Jhingrano.

Green-tailed Sunbird Aethopyga nipalensis  
One or two above Jhingrano and near HQ.

Black-throated Sunbird Aethopyga saturata  
Occasional at Koramando.

Fire-breasted Flowerpecker Dicaeum ignipectus  
Fairly common at Koramando.

Maroon Oriole Oriolus traillii  
Fairly common at Koramando and single at Jhingrano.

\* Black Drongo Dicrurus macrocercus  
Single at Jhingrano.

Ashy Drongo Dicrurus leucophaeus  
Fairly common at Koramando.

Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo Dicrurus remifer  
Small numbers regularly at Koramando.

Eurasian Jay Garrulus glandarius  
Single at Koramando.

Yellow-billed Blue Magpie Urocissa flavirostris  
Single at Khaptad Daha on plateau.

Red-billed Blue Magpie Urocissa erythrorhyncha  
Fairly common at Koramando.

Green Magpie Cissa chinensis  
One at Koramando on 5 April and four on 7 April.

Grey Treepie Dendrocitta formosae  
Small numbers occasionally at Koramando.

Spotted Nutcracker Nucifraga caryocatactes  
Small numbers in subtropical forest at Koramando.

Jungle Crow Corvus macrorhynchos  
Common throughout the Park, nest building at Jhingrano.

Cinnamon Sparrow Passer rutilans  
Flock above Jhingrano.

\* Plain Mountain-Finch Leucosticte nemoricola  
Flock on plateau on 30 March.

Pink-browed Rosefinch Carpodacus rhodochrous  
Flocks in temperate forest above Jhingrano.

Spot-winged Rosefinch Carpodacus rhodopeplus  
Single near HQ on 1 April.

\* Brown Bullfinch Pyrrhula nipalensis  
Flock at Koramando on 3 April and two on 7 April.



Red-headed Bullfinch Pyrrhula erythrocephala  
Single at Jhingrano.

\* White-winged Grosbeak Mycerobas carnipes  
Three in upper temperate forest on 2 April.

Rock Bunting Emberiza cia  
Three at Jhingrano.

#### DISCUSSION

A total of 106 species were recorded during the survey period (28 March-7 April 1993), nine of which were new records for the National Park viz. Snow Partridge, Lesser Yellow-naped Woodpecker, Little Forktail, Snowy-browed Flycatcher, White-browed Shrike-Babbler, Black Drongo, Plain Mountain-Finch, Brown Bullfinch and White-winged Grosbeak. The records of Snow Partridge and White-winged Grosbeak are of particular distributional interest being new records for far western Nepal. A total of 227 species have now been recorded in Khaptad National Park, 55 for which Nepal may hold internationally significant breeding populations. Seven species in Khaptad are considered at risk in Nepal including Mountain Scops Owl (rare) and Black-chinned Yuhina (endangered), both recorded regularly in subtropical forest at Koramando during the survey. Khaptad is the only protected area in Nepal where the Black-chinned Yuhina is known to occur.

Despite the fact Khaptad is a relatively extensive protected area, habitat loss and degradation are very much in evidence. The subtropical forest on Khaptad's lower slopes is limited in extent and under particular threat. At Koramando villagers living on the edge of the Park came up daily to cut grass, foliage, firewood and larger trees for building material. There was also much evidence of grazing. Consequently dense understorey was restricted to the steeper slopes and ravines. There was no evidence of any Park staff patrolling this remote part of the Park. The subtropical zone is an integral component of the forest ecosystem in Khaptad, important for resident and altitudinal migrant bird species. It is obviously essential that this vulnerable zone of subtropical forest in the south-western fringe of the Park is adequately protected if endangered species like the Black-chinned Yuhina are to survive in Nepal.

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