

Three Black-faced spoonbills “rediscovered” on the Philippine islands

Three Black-faced Spoonbills were “rediscovered” on the Batanes Islands, in northern Philippines.

Simba Chan, Head of the Conservation and Database Division of the International Centre-Wild Bird Society of Japan, who reported the “rediscovery” last 24 January 2002 said that the birds were seen at the Batanes Islands from October to December 2001. “This is the first report of these species from the Philippines since 1914, and probably the first confirmed,” Chan said.

He added that the local people of Batanes may not have been aware that these species have been existing in the area for a long time. This was until they were shown posters of the Black-faced spoonbills brought by staff of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Philippines. The Wild Bird Federation of Taiwan produced the posters, which have been distributed by the Wild Bird Society of Japan, both partners of Birdlife International in Taiwan and Japan.

The Batanes group of islands has been declared as Batanes Protected Landscape and Seascape, through Presidential proclamation No. 335 on 28 February 1994; it has also been listed as an Important Bird Area in the Philippines by HARIBON Foundation.

About 870 Black-faced spoonbills have also been recorded last year on wintering grounds in some parts of eastern Asia.

In China, 14 sites were added to the Ramsar list, including important sites for the black-faced spoonbills. ■

New bird species discovered in Cambodia

A bird species has been discovered in the northeastern part of Cambodia. The Bird Life International Vietnam programme reported that researchers of Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the Department of Forestry and Wildlife in Cambodia discovered the **Mekong Wagtail**, scientifically called *Motacillidae samveasnae* along the Mekong River, in the major streams of north-eastern Cambodia and southern Laos, dwelling on rocks and in bushes.

The species was named after Sam Veasna, Cambodia’s leading ornithologist and conservationist, who died of malaria in 1999. Considering that the species depends on streams flowing from Thailand, Vietnam and China, WCS is calling for international cooperation to ensure its survival. This is especially so as hydroelectric dams, which have been proposed along the Mekong River, could pose a great threat to these species as these dams could flood their breeding

habitat.

Accordingly, specimens of this new species that were collected in Thailand almost 30 years ago, were

misidentified as a subspecies of the White Wagtail (*Motacillidae alba alboides*). ■

Source: www.birdlifevietnam.com

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Organizing Committee: Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Philippines, ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation, Foundation for the Philippine Environment, Haribon Foundation, and Birdlife International-Asia

For registration and/or submission of abstracts by fax or mail, please send to:

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