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NOTEWORTHY BIRD OBSERVATIONS FROM THE CAROLINE AND MARSHALL ISLANDS 1988–2009, INCLUDING FIVE NEW RECORDS FOR MICRONESIA

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ABSTRACT: We evaluate previously unpublished or semi-published reports of 61 migratory, 3 resident, and 1 failed introduced species or subspecies of birds in Micronesia from a variety of sources. These include first (or first confirmed) Micronesian records of the Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*), American Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*), Brown Hawk-Owl (*Ninox scutulata*), Oriental Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus orientalis*), and Scaly Thrush (*Zoothera dauma*); second regional reports of the Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*), Rufous Hawk-Cuckoo (*Hierococcyx hyperythrus*), Eurasian Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*), and White-throated

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Needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*); and many firsts for major islands, island groups, and islands within groups including 13 first (or first confirmed) and 7 second records for Yap, 11 first and 8 second records for Palau, 7 firsts for Pohnpei, 1 for Kosrae, 1 for Kwajalein, and a second for Majuro. We report several occurrences as first for their season and other significant bird observations that help to establish patterns in the region. We question published sight records of the Asian House Martin (*Delichon dasypus*).

Because Micronesia (Figure 1) falls outside the scope of surrounding list-keeping nongovernmental organizations such as the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU), the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union, and the Oriental Bird Club, summarizing of its avifauna has fallen haphazardly to authors of varying affiliations (Baker 1951, Owen 1977a, Pyle and Engbring 1985, Pratt et al. 1987, Engbring 1988, Wiles 2005). Their work has been aided by a long tradition of occasional omnibus compilations of bird reports such as Engbring and Owen (1981), Pratt and Bruner (1981), Pyle and Engbring (1987), Wiles et al. (1987, 1993, 2000, 2004), and VanderWerf et al. (2006), to which this paper is a contribution. We understand that authors of such compilations serve as a *de facto* checklist committee, and we have evaluated all records thoroughly. For this summary, we have restricted our geographic coverage to the Caroline Islands (Republic of Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia) and the Marshall Islands but have contributed several records to a compilation for the Mariana Islands to be published elsewhere. We cover records known to us through October 2009.

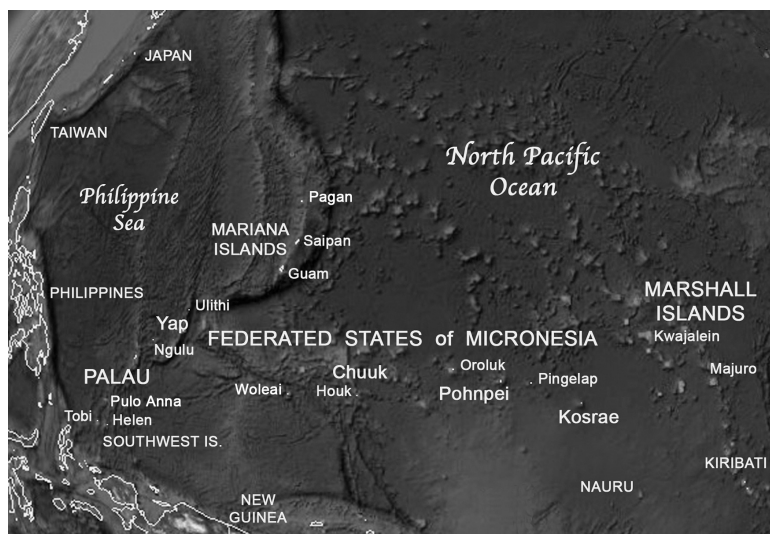


Figure 1. Northwestern Pacific showing localities mentioned in the text.

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SOURCES AND METHODS

In February 2003, Pratt escorted a private birding group that included Stuart Keith, Gaye Fugate, J. Anthony Keith, and Iola Price (hereafter 2003 Pratt party) that visited all the high islands of Micronesia. Wiles et al. (2004) published their noteworthy records except those from Yap, which we include here. Pratt also led a research expedition in April 2007 under the auspices of the North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences, with participants Pisano, Douglas Chapman, Michael L. P. Retter, W. Michael Ord, Daphne Gemmill, William M. Mueller, and Romney Bathurst (hereafter 2007 Pratt party). They visited Pohnpei (3–7 Apr), Palau (7–12 Apr), and Yap (12–15 Apr). In June 2007 and June 2008, Pratt and Pisano studied skins of difficult-to-identify species seen on the expedition at the National Museum of Natural History (Smithsonian Institution) in Washington, DC. As senior author of the primary field guide to the region (Pratt et al. 1987), Pratt frequently receives unsolicited bird reports from visitors to Micronesia, sometimes long after the fact. We include several such records dating back as much as two decades. Increasingly, international birders are posting trip reports on the Internet. These may include new distributional records of which the list-makers are apparently unaware. Such unedited and non-peer-reviewed reports do not qualify as publication in the traditional sense and require the same scrutiny as other sightings. Pratt reviewed all such reports from the region and, where necessary, contacted the observers for corroborating details of significant sightings as well as permission to publish them. Copies of relevant correspondence are available from him.

Over several decades, Falanruw has accumulated many unpublished reports and specimens of unusual birds seen on Yap, including a few whose documentation was almost lost in the destruction of the Yap Institute of Natural Science building by termites or damaged or destroyed by Typhoon Sudal in April 2004. Some documentation was contained in now obsolete media from which we have retrieved what we could. Wildlife photographer Etpison has lived in Palau since 1985 and focused primarily on birds 2004–2008. Pratt and Etpison's (2008) semi-popular book provides additional photographs of many of the birds discussed in this report. Following Pratt's discovery of the possible records, Etpison obtained the original photos (and permission to publish them) of two "mystery birds" photographed in November 2004 by the Helen Reef Resource Management Project, under the management of Wayne Andrew. No further information on these birds is available. Buden has investigated the avifaunas of numerous poorly known atolls in the region and contributes several previously unpublished records from outlying atolls in Chuuk State to this compilation. He visited Ngulu Atoll in Yap State 12 Jul–10 Aug 2008 and noted three land birds new to this nearly uninhabited and ornithologically unexplored island. The remaining authors are present or former wildlife and conservation workers (Ketebengang, Olsen, Gupta, Vice, Wiles, Yalap) or birders on brief visits to the region (Klauber 2–23 Apr 2004; Herter Sep 1991 and Feb 1992; Clement Mar 2008). Gupta worked for several years with the Palau Conservation Society (PCS) on BirdLife International's Important Bird Area project (Holm et al. 2008), which yielded several observations reported here.

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Nomenclature follows the *AOU Check-list* and its supplements (American Ornithologists' Union 1998, Banks et al. 2006, 2007, 2008, Chesser et al. 2009) or Gill and Wright (2006) for species not covered by the AOU. Opinions on the validity or accuracy of older published records are Pratt's. Most of the photographs were cropped from their originals, and some were brightened (as noted in captions) with Adobe PhotoShop cs, version 8.0, but no colors were altered, and no changes were made that affect identifications.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

For brevity in the text, compass directions are given as capital letters (N = north, etc.), adjectival directions given as lower case (e. = eastern, c. = central, etc.), and plumages are specified as ad. (adult), or juv. (juvenile).

Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*). Flock of four, including one male in alternate plumage, on the main reservoir on Yap 25 Feb 2003 (Pratt party) represents the third report from the island. The second was in 2001 after hiatus of nearly 80 years (Wiles et al. 2004).

Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*). Observers in w. Micronesia usually assume all Green-winged Teal to be the Eurasian subspecies *A. c. crecca* rather than American *A. c. carolinensis* (Pratt et al. 1987), but only alternate-plumaged males are identifiable in the field (Beaman and Madge 1998, Brazil 2009). Both forms visit the Hawaiian Is. (Pyle 2002), and *carolinensis* has reached the Marshalls (Baker 1951). Etpison photographed a lone male *A. c. crecca* in full alternate plumage (Pratt and Etpison 2008:187) on the small pond beside the old airport runway 8 Feb 2008, establishing the first unequivocal record for Yap.

Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*). May be an annual visitor to Yap, but only two specific records, both from the Colonia reservoir in Feb, have been published previously (Wiles et al. 2000). Clement saw two female-plumaged Northern Shovelers on the old airport pond in Ruul Municipality 15 Mar 2008. T. Mark (pers. comm.) and T. Alfonso saw a female at the intermittent pond near the old airport 16 Oct 2008 for the first fall record.

Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*). One of the most frequent wintering ducks in w. Micronesia (Pratt et al. 1987), but Yap's only published record is from Feb 1988 (Wiles et al. 2000). The 2003 Pratt party saw ~15 pintails on the Colonia reservoir 23–24 Feb 2003, and T. Alfonso (pers. comm.) reports small numbers present every year. Most birds seen on Yap are female-plumaged, but Etpison photographed three males in alternate plumage 8 Feb 2008. On 2 Feb 2009 John Gilardi observed two females in a wetland on Woleai Atoll, Yap State, a first for that remote island. Buden saw two males and a female on a saline lake on Houk (= Pulask) I., Chuuk State, 28 Dec 2003, the first report for that island and only the second for Chuuk State (Pyle and Engbring 1987).

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*). The 2003 Pratt party observed one alternate-plumaged male and three female-plumaged Garganey on the Colonia reservoir, Yap, 24 Feb. This first record for Yap fills a distributional gap between scattered records from the Marianas (Wiles et al. 2004) and a single sighting at Palau (Engbring and Owen 1981).

Common Pochard/Redhead (*Aythya ferina*/A. *americana*). While surveying shorebirds for avian influenza on the reef flats at the n. end of Peleliu, Palau, 9 Feb 2007, Ketebengang and Shelley Kremer observed a flock of six diving ducks on the

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ocean that Kremer, familiar with only North American waterfowl, initially identified as Redheads. Kremer made no notes at the time, but, following Vice's suggestion that the birds were more likely Common Pochards, the sighting was published as such without comment (Hawai'i-Pacific Islands Working Group on Avian Influenza Surveillance 2008: table 7). Neither of these species has been reported previously from Palau, and while the pochard is more likely (two records from the Marianas; Wiles 2005), the Redhead has straggled to South Korea and Japan (Brazil 2009) and is a rare visitor to the Hawaiian Is. (Pyle 2002). Consequently, this sighting is equivocal and only the Redhead/Common Pochard species pair can be accepted for Palau.

Wedge-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*). In Nov 2004, a party with the Helen Reef Resource Management Project captured and photographed (Figure 2) a dark-morph Wedge-tailed Shearwater on Helen I. for the second, and first documented, Palau record. The only previous record is of a dark-morph bird seen near Koror, May 1978 (Pyle and Engbring 1987).

Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*). Historically only a vagrant in extreme w. Micronesia, with scattered records of adults for Palau (Baker 1951) and Yap (Wiles et al. 2000). Now seen annually at the Koror landfill, Palau (Etpison). First juvenile for Palau reported by VanderWerf et al. (2006). Etpison photographed another at the Malakal sewer pond Oct 2007 (Pratt and Etpison 2008:162). The Yap Institute of Natural Science has a mounted specimen in first basic plumage taken on Yap, other details lost (Falanruw).

Striated Heron (*Butorides striatus*). Cathy McFadden reported a Striated Heron at the Malakal sewer pond Jan–Feb 2005 (www.surfbirds.com/trip_report.php?id=626), possibly same individual photographed later that year by VanderWerf et al. (2006) for the second published Palau record. However, these sightings postdate repeated observations by the Pratt party of an adult Striated Heron feeding in the boat channel adjacent to the Palau Aquarium during the third week of Feb 2003.



Figure 2. Wedge-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) captured on Helen Reef atoll, Palau, by the Helen Reef Resource Management Project party, Nov 2004.

Photo by Conservation Officer Homar

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Unidentified pond heron (*Ardeola* sp.). On 12 Dec 2008 Ketebebang photo-graphed a small heron (Figure 3a, b) feeding in grass beside the garbage dump in Koror, Palau. On 19 Dec 2008 Olsen relocated the bird at the same place (Fig. 3c). It is clearly a pond heron in nearly complete basic plumage but with a few dark feathers remaining in the neck from the previous alternate plumage. The Chinese Pond Heron (*A. bacchus*) has a chestnut neck in alternate plumage, breeds in ne. China, migrates as far south as Borneo (Brazil 2009), and has turned up at least once on Guam (Wiles et al. 1993). The Javan Pond Heron (*A. speciosa*) has an orange-buff neck tinged chestnut at the base and is mostly nonmigratory but recently expanded its range to Mindanao in the Philippines (Kennedy et al. 2002). Both could reach Palau, but the Chinese is more likely. Many authorities consider the two indistinguishable in the field in basic plumage, but Robson (2000) suggested that noticeably dusky tips to the outer primaries might be diagnostic for the Chinese Pond Heron, and the Palau bird clearly shows them (Figure 3c, arrow). Unfortunately, the bird was last seen in February 2009 (Ketebebang) before it acquired the next alternate plumage. Pratt believes some traces of chestnut (Figure 3b, arrow) are too high on the neck for a Javan, which, combined with dusky primary tips and likelihood, suggests strongly that this bird is *A. bacchus*. Others (Vice, Wiles, Ben King, and Phillip D. Round) who viewed the photos considered the bird's identity equivocal. Perhaps eventually this bird can be identified for certain, but for now only *Ardeola* sp. can be placed on the Palau list.

Gray Heron (*Ardea cinerea*). C. McFadden (www.surfbirds.com/trip_report.php?id=626) saw a juvenile on a basketball court in the village of Ngardmau on Babeldaob in Jan or Feb 2005. The first confirmed Palau record is of an adult photographed on Peleliu Apr 2005 (VanderWerf et al. 2006). Other recent sightings: one ad., Malakal sewage pond, 30 Oct 2006 (Etpison); one juv. on reef flats near Palau Aquarium, Koror, May 2007 (Etpison); one ad., Lake Ngardok, Babeldaob, 19 Aug 2007 (Olsen and Milang Eberdong), the earliest fall date for Micronesia; and two birds in second basic plumage (Pratt and Etpison 2008:163), Malakal sewer pond, 12 Jan 2008 (Etpison). The first Gray Heron seen on Yap was in Feb 1991 (Wiles et al. 2000), the second in Nov 2001 (Wiles et al. 2004). Pratt party saw a single ad. at Colonia reservoir on 23 Feb 2003.

Purple Heron? (*Ardea purpurea*). On 18 Mar 2008, Ketebebang and S. Kremer saw a large dark heron unknown to them at Ngatpang aquaculture ponds, Babeldaob, Palau. They photographed it (Figure 3d) through Canon Stabilizer binoculars with a Sony Cybershot digital camera. The photo shows a dark heron with coloration and proportions unlike those of the Pacific Reef Heron (*Egretta sacra*) or Rufous Night Heron (*Nycticorax caledonicus*), the only dark herons resident at Palau. Brownish dark areas, with lighter, more reddish brown feather edges on the wing coverts, a buffy white foreneck and throat with a diffuse dark stripe separating them from the reddish brown of the sides of the neck, an indistinctly dark crown and feathering around the eye, a buffy or grayish white belly, a dark yellow bill with a dark tip, pale yellow legs with indistinct darker markings, and bright a yellow iris are all consistent with a late juv. Purple Heron (Beaman and Madge 1998, Brazil 2009) and inconsistent with features of any other large heron. Nevertheless, some observers familiar with the Purple Heron believe the bird depicted in Figure 3d fits the Purple Heron poorly and could represent an aberrant individual of another species or a hybrid. Or it might be stained. Purple Herons breed in e. Asia, including the Philippines, with n. populations migratory (Brazil 2009). There is no previous record of the Purple Heron for Palau or Micronesia.

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*). The first Great Egret for Yap was noted in Feb 1991 (Wiles et al. 2000). Pratt's party saw three on the extensive tidal flats in Gilman Municipality at the s. tip of the island on 13 Apr 2007 for a second island record, and the third sighting for Yap was by T. Mark and T. Alfonso (pers. comm.) of one at an

intermittent pond near the old airport 16 Oct 2008. Palau's first Great Egret was on Peleliu in Mar 2000 (Wiles et al. 2004), its second on the same island May 2005 (VanderWerf et al. 2006). Etpison found five individuals, the first in Palau north of Peleliu, among a huge gathering of egrets at the sewer pond on Malakal during Nov 2006 (photo Pratt and Etpison 2008:172).

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*). Engbring (1988) considered the Little Egret an uncommon migrant at Palau, but today substantial numbers occur every year (Pratt and Etpison 2008:172). Etpison counted 46 white egrets, mostly Little Egrets, at the Malakal sewer pond in Nov 2006 with the aforementioned five Great Egrets and a few Cattle (*Bubulcus ibis*) and Intermediate (*Mesophoyx intermedia*) egrets. The 2007 Pratt party noted 20 Little Egrets feeding on tidal flats at Ngatpang, Babeldaob, on 9 Apr. Yap's first Little Egret was seen by Pratt and Bruner (1981) in Aug 1978 but was overlooked by Wiles et al. (2000). This summer date remains anomalous. Subsequent published reports are for Feb 1991 and Mar 1993 (Wiles et al. 2000) and Nov 2001 (Wiles et al. 2004). The 2003 Pratt party saw one at the Colonia reservoir 23–24 Feb, and the 2007 Pratt party saw two departing a roost shared with Cattle Egrets near the reservoir on 13 Apr. A few Little Egrets probably now reach Yap every year.

Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*). On 17 June 2009, after two weeks of reports from taro farmers of an all-dark egret-sized bird at several localities on Babeldaob, Angelina S. Olsen spotted such a bird in a taro patch in Ngerkebesang, Arakabesan I., Palau. Alan Olsen photographed it (Figure 3e, f) at 14:30 and watched it for 5 minutes before it flew out of sight into the far end of the taro patch. The photos show clearly the long down-curved bill, glossy olive-green body plumage, and chestnut-brown neck and head of a *Plegadis* ibis in first alternate plumage, as well as the brown iris and dark gray facial skin bordered above and below by pale blue that distinguish this species from the very similar White-faced Ibis (*P. chihi*), a regular nonbreeding visitor in low numbers to the Hawaiian Is. (Pyle 2002). This is the first record for the Glossy Ibis in Micronesia and the oceanic tropical Pacific (a juvenile *Plegadis* collected in Fiji was not identified to species; Pratt et al. 1987). The Glossy Ibis has a patchy cosmopolitan distribution that includes the Philippines, E. Indies (Kennedy et al. 2000), and Australia, where it is irregularly migratory and irruptive (Pizzey and Knight 1997) north into New Guinea from March to October (Beehler et al. 1986). The ibis on Palau was more likely a migratory overshoot from Australia than a straggler from nearer but more sedentary populations.

Unidentified cormorant (*Phalacrocorax* sp.). The 2003 Pratt party saw and photographed (Figure 3g) a large cormorant at the reservoir near Colonia, Yap, early on the mornings of 23 and 24 February. It resembled a Great Cormorant (*P. carbo*), a species found once before at this locality (Wiles et al. 1987), but lacked the characteristic white border to the orange gular pouch (Brazil 2008, Orta 1992) and instead showed more orange in the area. The bird's heavy-necked proportions and lack of orange in the lores suggest that it was not a Double-crested Cormorant (*P. auritus*), the only all-black cormorant with such an extensive orange gular pouch (Orta 1992). John Gilardi saw another all-dark cormorant flying inside the lagoon at Woleai Atoll, Yap, on 2 Feb 2009 but was unable to distinguish any further identifying marks. All-dark cormorants, including a Great on Pagan in the Mariana Is. (Glass et al. 1990), a Little Cormorant (*P. sulcirostris*) on Pulo Anna in Palau's Southwest Is. (Wiles et al. 2004), and an unidentified bird on Guam (Wiles et al. 1993), are very rare in Micronesia and tantalizingly difficult to identify to species.

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*). Adam Welz (pers. comm.) saw an Osprey twice at the north end of Maap I., Yap, in late 2002 (exact date not recorded). Only two previous records have been published for Yap, one in 1991 (Wiles et al. 2000) and another in 2003 (Clements 2003).



Figure 3. (a, b) Pond-heron (*Ardeola* sp.) at Koror landfill, Palau, 12 Dec 2008; arrow indicates trace of previous alternate plumage; (c) same, 19 Dec 2008; arrow indicates dusky primary tips; (d) probable juv. Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*) at Ngatpang aquaculture ponds, Babeldaob, Palau, 18 Mar 2008 (brightened +26 in Adobe PhotoShop); (e) Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) on Arakabesan I., Palau, 17 Jun 2009; (f) same, close-up of head showing facial details; (g) cormorant (*Phalacrocorax* sp.) in flight, showing extensive orange gular pouch with rounded posterior margin, Colonia reservoir, Ruul District, Yap, 24 Feb 2003 (digital enlargement from original 35-mm Kodachrome 200 transparency).

Photos by Heather Ketebangang (a, b, d), Alan Olsen (c, e, f) and H. Douglas Pratt (g)



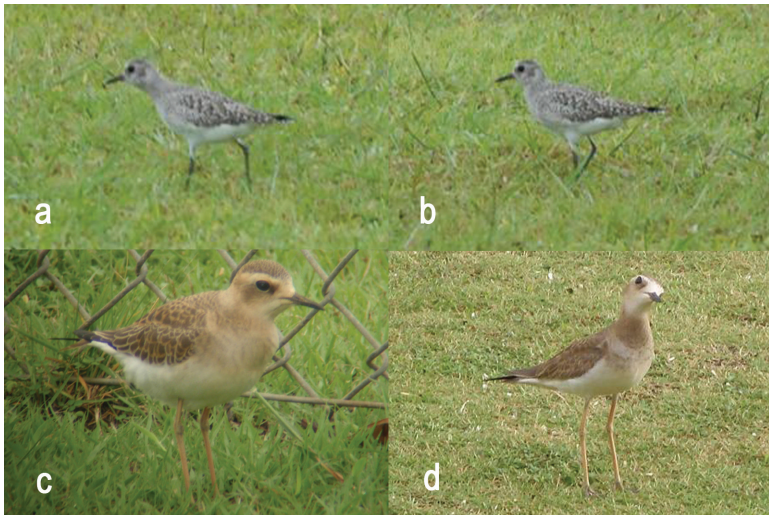


Figure 5. (a, b) Two views of a Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) at Kolonia, Pohnpei, 6 Apr 2007; (c) juvenile Oriental Plover (*Charadrius veredus*), Meyuns, Arakabesan, Palau, 30 Sep 2009; (d) adult Oriental Plover, Belau International Airport, Babeldaob, Palau, 27 Oct 2009

Photos by Daphne Gemmill (a, b) and Heather Ketebangang (c, d)



Figure 6. Common Snipe mist-netted at Koror landfill, Palau, 17 Nov 2008 showing prominent white trailing edge of secondaries.

Photo by Jeff Flores

Figure 4. (a–c) Nearly ad. Gray-faced Buzzard (*Butastur indicus*) captured on Yap, Mar 2003; (d–f) immature captured on Kayangel Atoll, Palau, Nov 2004.

Photos by Sam Falanruw (a), Marjorie Falanruw (b, c), and Miriam Watts (d–f)



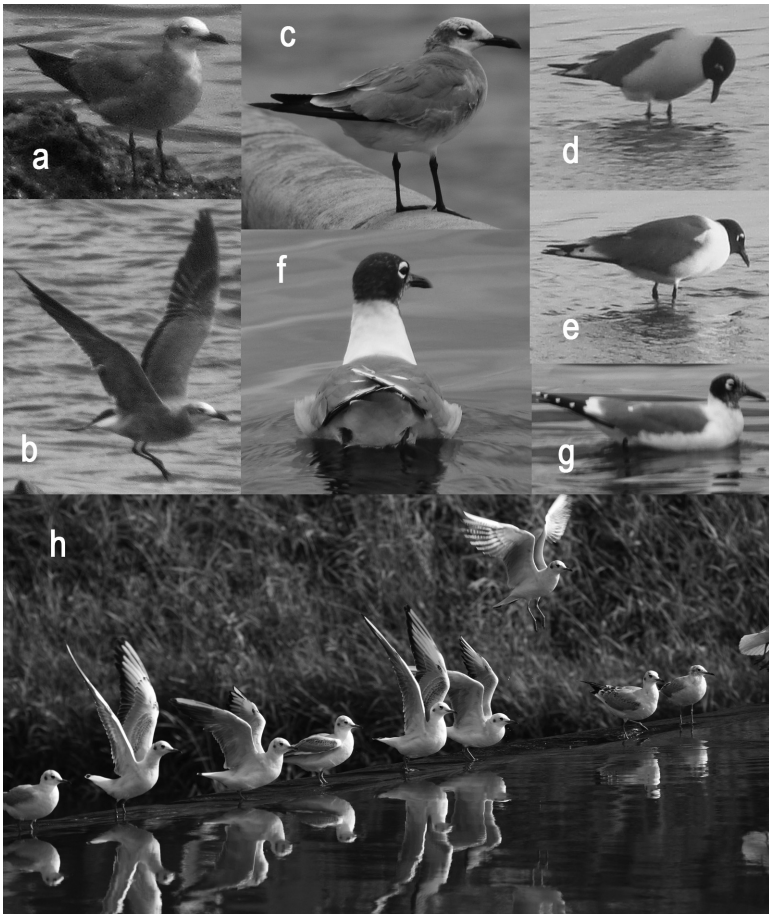


Figure 8. Gulls: (a, b) Laughing Gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*), Pohnpei, 4 Apr 2007; (c) Laughing Gull, Kosrae, 4 Jan 2008; (d, e) Franklin's Gull (*L. pipixcan*) near airport, Majuro, Marshall Is., 19 May 2009; (f, g) Franklin's Gull, Kitti District, Pohnpei, 5 Jul 2009; (h) part of large assemblage of Black-headed Gulls (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) at Malakal sewer ponds, Palau, late winter 2008.

Photos by Paul Pisano (a, b), Carlos Cianchini (c), Glenn McKinlay (d–g), and Mandy T. Etpison (h)

Figure 7. (a) Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*) at Malakal sewer pond, Palau, Oct 2006, (b) at same locality, Sep 2007; (c) Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) molting into alternate plumage (right) with alternate-plumaged Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) at Malakal sewer pond, Palau, 20 May 2008; (d) Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*), Colonia, Yap, 23 Sep 2000; (e) Ruff, Ulithi Atoll, 25 Sep 2000; (f) Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*) in Palau's Rock Islands, 10 Oct 2006; (g) Oriental Pratincole (*Glareola maldivarum*) at Koror Airport, Babeldaob, Palau, spring 2008; (h) same, mist-netted bird showing rufous underwing characteristic of species.

Photos by Mandy T. Etpison (a–c, f), Paula Sullivan (d, e), and Heather Ketebebang (g, h)

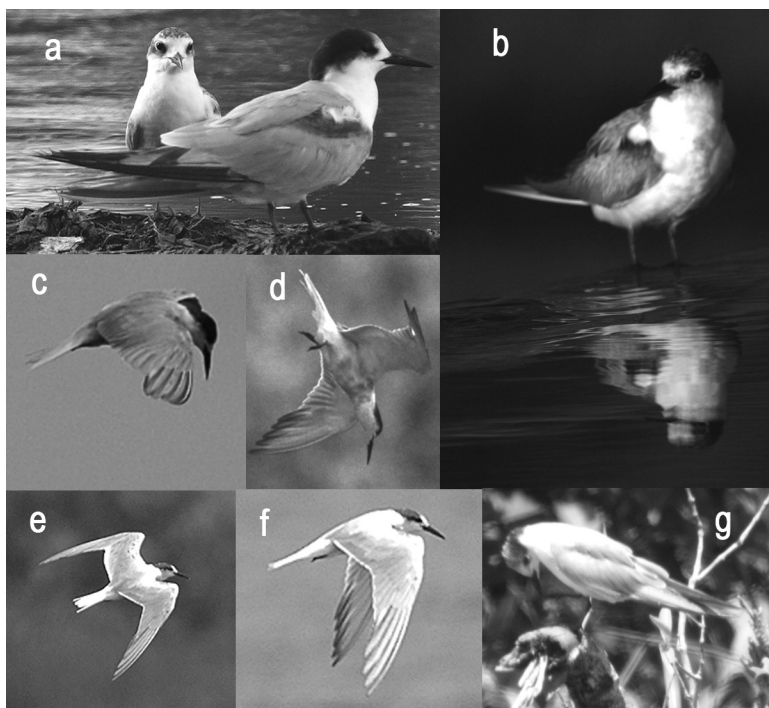


Figure 9. Terns: (a) Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) at the Malakal sewer pond, Palau, Oct 2006; (b) same, Sep 2007; (c, d) same species, Pohnpei, Apr 2007; (e, f) Whiskered Terns (*Chlidonias hybrida*) (possibly same bird) flying near causeway between Kolonia and airport, Pohnpei, 7 Apr 2007; (g) Whiskered Tern ad. in basic plumage, 9 Apr 2007, Lake Ngardok, Babeldaob, Palau.

Photos by Mandy T. Etpison (a, b), H. Douglas Pratt (c–f), and Paul Pisano (g)

Gray-faced Buzzard (*Butastur indicus*). Approximately a week after passage of Typhoon Miteg, 4 Mar 2003, Yap's first Gray-faced Buzzard was caught by children and brought to Falanruw (Figure 4a, b; Pratt and Etpison 2008:49, bottom). The bird was quite battered, with an injured eye, drooping wing, and damaged tail. Falanruw and State Forester Pius Liyagel rehabilitated it and liberated it in June. It returned briefly to the release site, and a local pilot saw it over the airport, before it disappeared from the island.

During a visit to Kayangel Atoll, Palau, from 9 to 12 Nov 2004, a PCS party saw three unfamiliar hawks, which local residents said had been present for some time. Yalap suggested capturing one without injuring it, and, after the PCS group departed, one hawk was shot but not seriously wounded, kept caged for a short time, photographed (Figure 4d–f), and released. It shows the white eyebrow, bold mesial line on the throat, streaked and spotted underwing coverts, and three dark bands in the tail characteristic of the species (Ferguson-Lees and Christie 2001, Robson 2000). The Chinese Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter gularis*), more frequently seen at Palau, lacks the eyebrow, has four bands in the tail and unmarked underwings, and is much smaller.



Figure 10. (a) Three ages of Whiskered Terns, Lake Ngardok, Palau, 14 Dec 2005: upper, ad. alternate; middle, ad. basic; lower, first basic (browner nape, trace of dark carpal bar); (b) White-winged Tern (*C. leucopterus*) in alternate plumage, Malakal, Palau, May 2008; (c–e) Rufous Hawk-Cuckoo (*Hierococcyx hyperythrus*) carcass, Yap, late 1996, video stills by Brent McCraven; (f) Brown Hawk-Owl (*Ninox scutulata*) captured on Helen Atoll by Helen Reef Resource Management Project, Nov 2004; (g) Oriental Dollarbird (*Eurystomus orientalis*) killed at Gitam, Yap, Nov 1988; (h) injured Oriental Dollarbird, Ngulu Atoll, Yap, 3 Aug 2008.

Photos by Thomas Dove (a), Mandy T. Etpison (b, f), Marjorie Falanruw (c–e, g), Conservation Officer Homar (f), and Donald W. Buden (h)

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This is the second report of the Gray-faced Buzzard for Palau, the first with photo-documentation (Wiles et al. 2004), and the first for Kayangel.

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*). While observing a flock of shorebirds that included Pacific Golden Plovers (*Pluvialis fulva*), Ruddy Turnstones (*Arenaria interpres*), Little Ringed Plovers (*Charadrius dubius*), and Little Curlews (*Numenius minutus*; see below) at the south end of the airport on Peleliu on 13 Apr 2004, Klauber watched a Peregrine Falcon attack and flush all the birds but fail to catch any. This is the first Peregrine Falcon reported on Peleliu and the third for Palau. The second was captured on the Koror–Babeldaob bridge in 2001 (Wiles et al. 2004), and the first was a century and a quarter earlier (Finsch 1875) at an unknown locality.

Eurasian Coot (*Fulica atra*). The 2003 Pratt party saw a single Eurasian Coot on the reservoir south of Colonia, Yap, early in the morning on 23 Feb 2003. The bird was standing in the edge of shallow water at the north end of the reservoir among a group of shorebirds, ducks, and crakes. It had all-black body plumage and a prominent white bill and frontal shield, with a point of black feathering between the shield and the bill, diagnostic for this species as compared to other n. hemisphere coots (Pratt et al. 1987). The coot was not seen again on subsequent visits to the reservoir over the next four days. The Eurasian Coot is a rare and erratic winter visitor to the Mariana Is. (Wiles et al. 2004), but this is the first reported on Yap.

Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*). First recorded as a vagrant at Palau in 1978 (Engbring and Owen 1981), and not again until 2002 (VanderWerf et al. 2006), the Black-winged Stilt now winters at Palau annually in small groups. Recent observations include one on a brackish pond, Ngeriungs I., Kayangel Atoll, 11 Nov 2004 (Gupta and PCS party), one at the milkfish pond on Peleliu, 25 Jan 2005 (same observers), nine at the Malakal sewer pond, winter 2006–07 (Etpison), and six at the Ngatpang aquaculture ponds, Babeldaob, 9 April 2007 (Pratt party).

Yap's first Black-winged Stilt sighting was in 1986 (Wiles et al. 1987), followed by several in 2002 (Clements 2003; reported erroneously as the Pied Stilt, *H. leucocephalus*). Three at the Colonia reservoir, 13 Apr 2007 (Pratt party), and three at the old Yap airport pond in Ruul Municipality, 15 Mar 2008 (Clement, Barry Cooper, and Gail Mackiernan), suggest the Black-winged Stilt has also become an annual visitor to Yap.

Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*). On 6 Apr 2007, Pratt's party found a Black-bellied Plover (Figure 5a, b) among a small group of Pacific Golden Plovers on an athletic field near downtown Colonia, Pohnpei. This bird is the second recorded for the main island of Pohnpei, and the first in spring for Pohnpei State. Buden (1995, 1999a) reported Black-bellied Plovers in December on the outlying islands of Pingelap and Oroluk, and G. Dutson saw one on the main island in Oct 2001 (Wiles et al. 2004).

Greater Sand Plover (*Charadrius leschenaultii*). Although this species has been long reported as a winter resident (Baker 1951, Pratt et al. 1987, Pratt and Etpison 2008) in Micronesia, actual records reveal it to be mainly, if not entirely, a passage migrant. Recent reports on Yap include three on 7 Aug 1989 (locality not noted; H. L. Jones, field notes), one on 23 Sep 2000 (Paula Sullivan), and two molting into alternate plumage 15 Apr 2007 (Pratt party). But Pratt's parties found none in Feb 1988 and 1991, early Mar 1993, or Feb 2003. At Palau, where the species is a regular spring and fall migrant, Vice captured individuals in 2008 on 27 Mar and 18 Nov, and in 2009 on 24 Feb and 2 Apr. His Feb record and one from Pohnpei (Wiles et al. 2000) are the only possibly winter records published, and both could well be of early spring migrants.

Oriental Plover (*Charadrius veredus*). In Micronesia known only from several sight

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records in the 1970s from Palau's Southwest Islands (Merir and Helen) and Angaur, all between 10 and 21 Oct (Engbring and Owen 1981; Angaur records mistakenly attributed to Peleliu by Pratt and Etpison 2008). On the basis of geographic probability these reports have been assumed to represent *C. veredus* rather than the very similar Caspian Plover (*C. asiaticus*). On 30 Sep 2009 Ketebangang, with Sarah Sugiyama, photographed a single juvenile Oriental Plover (Figure 5c) at the softball field in Meyuns, Arakabesan I., and saw two more at the same locality 15 Oct, the first to be reported from the main islands of Palau. They found and photographed (Figure 5d) another at the international airport, Babeldaob, on 27 Oct. The photographs show bright straw-yellow legs with a slight orange tint (would be dusky in *C. asiaticus*) and the more diffuse breast band characteristic of *C. veredus* (Brazil 2009). The absence of reports from Palau during the 1980s and 1990s probably reflects both the lack of observers and the narrow interval for potential sightings. This species is possibly a rare but regular migrant in Palau in October.

Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*). On 24 Feb 2003 the Pratt party closely observed a snipe feeding along the shore of the small pond adjacent to the abandoned airport runway in Ruul Municipality, Yap. The bird was in strong morning light at ~25 m and viewed through binoculars and a spotting scope. It was richly colored, apparently in fresh plumage, without any extreme tail projection beyond the wing tips. In two short, hopping flights, the bird revealed a bold white trailing edge to the secondaries, diagnostic for the Common Snipe (Pratt et al. 1987, Message and Taylor 2005) and establishing a first record for Yap. Swinhoe's Snipe, a regular visitor to w. Micronesia (Wiles 2005), lacks the prominent trailing edge. The very similar Wilson's Snipe (*G. delicata*) of N. America has the pale edge to the secondaries less obvious (Message and Taylor 2005; Pratt pers. obs.) than that of the bird on Yap. Vice captured Palau's first Common Snipe at the Koror landfill on 17 Nov 2008 (Figure 6). The bird clearly shows the prominent white trailing edge to the secondaries.

Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*). Shortly after the Common Snipe sighting (above) on Yap, Pratt independently observed a second snipe on the far side of the same pond. The bird was considerably larger with very worn plumage that, except in the scapulars, showed little of the rich dorsal patterning typical of snipes. The tail extended well beyond the folded wing tips. When flushed, the bird flew rapidly with comparatively heavy wing beats directly toward the observer, so details of wing feathers were not visible. All of these features suggest Latham's Snipe (Hayman et al. 1986:394, Message and Taylor 2005, Brazil 2009) but are insufficient to establish an unequivocal first record for Yap. A report of Latham's Snipe on Rota (Mariana Is.), with a similar level of detail, is also considered hypothetical (Stinson et al. 1991). The only certain record for Micronesia remains a specimen from the Marshall Is. (Amerson 1969), although Vice recently photographed a bird in the hand on Guam that is likely this species (details to be published elsewhere).

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*). H. L. Jones (field notes) saw a Bar-tailed Godwit at Bechyal, n. Maap I., Yap, 7 Aug 1989. His sighting predates by 13 years the first published record (Clements 2003). The third, and only spring, record is of a bird radio-tagged (Z5) in New Zealand in early 2007 and tracked to Yap, where it remained for a month before flying to Okinawa (Battley et al. 2008). Coincidentally, Etpison photographed (Pratt and Etpison 2008:207) a number-tagged Bar-tailed Godwit in Ngiwal State on Babeldaob, Palau, in early Nov 2007. This male had been banded and leg-flagged at Chongming Dongtan, near the mouth of the Yangtze River, China, on 13 May 2007 (Zhijun Ma, pers. comm. to PCS and others, 7 Nov 2007).

Little Curlew (*Numenius minutus*). The only Palau sighting since the 1970s (Engbring 1983b, Owen 1977a) is of two birds at the north end of airport on Peleliu, 13 Apr 2004 (Klauber), a first for that island.

(American) Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*). Although all Micronesian records of the Whimbrel identified to subspecies had proven to represent *N. p. variegatus*, Wiles (2005) presciently stated that the N. American form *N. p. hudsonicus* “could reach Micronesia, especially the Marshalls.” On 3 Apr 2007, from the window of a commercial passenger jet, Pratt saw a *hudsonicus* among several Whimbrels flushed from grassy areas adjacent to the runway on Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Is. The bird lacked any trace of the white “slash” that extends up the rump and lower back of *N. p. variegatus* (Message and Taylor 2005, Brazil 2009), and it lacked the characteristic peach color seen on the posterior of the similar Bristle-thighed Curlew (*N. tahitiensis*; Pratt et al. 1987). Subsequently, “at least one” American Whimbrel was adequately described from a high-tide roost in mangroves on Pohnpei in Dec 2008 (Derek Scott, www.birdquest.co.uk/tripreports.cfm?trip=667). The American Whimbrel regularly visits Hawaii and has strayed to Japan (Brazil 2009), but these are first reports from Micronesia.

Far Eastern Curlew (*Numenius madagascariensis*). This species seems to be decreasing, both in Micronesia and elsewhere (Close and Newman 1984, Wiles et al. 2000, Reid and Park 2003), so all sightings in Micronesia are now important. H. L. Jones (field notes) saw one on Peleliu, Palau, 4 Aug 1989, and the Pratt party saw and photographed (Pratt and Etpison 2008:206) another on 11 Apr 2007 near the Ngiwal State building and monument on the east coast of Babeldaob for the only recent reports from Palau, where the Far Eastern Curlew was formerly believed to be a regular passage migrant (Baker 1951). Buden found one on the beach near the airstrip on Houk I., Chuuk State, on 28 Dec 2003 for the first report from Houk and the third from Chuuk State (Pyle and Engbring 1987, Wiles et al. 2004).

Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*). Among the species reported from shorebird surveys 6–9 Feb 2007 at the Ngatpang aquaculture ponds on Babeldaob, Palau (Hawaii-Pacific Islands Working Group on Avian Influenza Surveillance 2008:Table 7), is a Lesser Yellowlegs. Lead biologist S. Kremer (pers. comm., 4 Jun 2009) is familiar with the species but did not realize the significance of the sighting, a possible first record for Palau, at the time. She identified the bird by its very bright yellow legs and size appropriate for this species rather than the Greater Yellowlegs (*T. melanoleuca*) but made no detailed notes. Other species present at the time that can have yellow or yellowish legs include the Common Greenshank (*T. nebularia*), Wood Sandpiper (*T. glareola*), Marsh Sandpiper (*T. stagnatilis*), and Gray-tailed Tattler (*T. brevipes*), but none approached

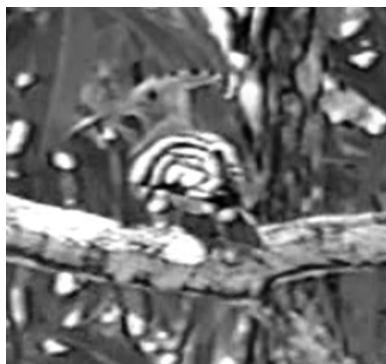


Figure 11. Eurasian Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*), Yap, Oct 1995; video still by Brent McCraven.

Photo by Marjorie Falanruw



Figure 12. Oriental Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus orientalis*): (a–c) Malakal sewer pond, Palau, 11 Apr 2007; (d) Ruul District, Yap, 8 Feb 2008.

Photos by Paul Pisano (a–c) and Mandy T. Etpison (d)

the bright yellow color of this individual. Nevertheless, the reported details are insufficient for a positive identification, and this species must be regarded as hypothetical for Palau. The Lesser Yellowlegs breeds in N. America and winters in S. America but has a strong tendency for long-distance vagrancy. It is regular in Hawaii (Pyle 2002) and has reached Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, French Polynesia (Tibbitts and Moskoff 1999), and Kwajalein in the Marshall Is. (Clapp and Schipper 1990).

Common Redshank (*Tringa totanus*). Despite Clements's (2003) statement that this species "is an uncommon winter visitor to Yap," the only published record is of

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two birds seen 3 Aug 1978 (Pratt and Bruner 1981). The Pratt party and T. Alfonso observed several individuals on tidal flats at the s. end of the main island of Yap on 23 and 24 Feb 2003.

Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*). Etpison photographed three Green Sandpipers (Pratt and Etpison 2008:199; Figure 7a), long regarded as hypothetical for Palau (Owen 1977), at the sewage pond on Malakal in Oct 2006. The birds segregated themselves from a much larger number of Wood Sandpipers (*T. glareola*). The photographs show many of the distinctive features that distinguish the Green Sandpiper from the similar and more common Wood Sandpiper (Message and Taylor 2005), including darker overall plumage, much reduced pale flecking on the back, a shorter eyestripe less prominent behind the eye, darker greenish legs, and fewer and broader dark bars across the white tail feathers. All birds were juveniles, as indicated by their brownish color and barring extending to the sides of the rump. The birds remained at the site into December. In Sep 2007, Etpison again found a Green Sandpiper at the same locality (Figure 7b) for the second confirmed Palau record.

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*). Wiles (2005) considered all records of this species from Kosrae and Pohnpei hypothetical because none had detail sufficient to eliminate the Spotted Sandpiper (*A. macularius*) of N. America, which reaches Hawaii (Pyle 2002) and strayed once to the Marshalls (Amerson 1969). The 2007 Pratt party confirmed that the several birds they saw on Pohnpei in April were Common Sandpipers by the long projection of the tail beyond the folded wing tips (Pratt et al. 1987, Message and Taylor 2005).

Great Knot (*Calidris tenuirostris*). Klauber saw a Great Knot in nearly full alternate plumage roosting with Greater Sand Plovers on a temporary coral causeway off the s. end of Babeldaob, Palau, on 16 Apr 2004. The only previous Palau record is of flocks of 15–20 birds at Peleliu in Sep 1945 (Baker 1951). Klauber's sighting is first report of a Great Knot in alternate plumage in Micronesia.

Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*). Clement and B. Cooper observed a Red Knot at a distance of ~150 m in good light through binoculars and a telescope 15 Mar 2008 in Colonia, Yap, taking detailed notes of the bird's basic plumage. This is the first Red Knot reported on Yap and only the fourth for Micronesia, the previous ones being two from Guam and one from Palau (Owen 1977b, Wiles et al. 2004), including records for both spring and fall.

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*). Although Engbring (1988) considered this species an uncommon passage migrant at Palau, published records are few, with two from Peleliu, in September (Baker 1951) and April (VanderWerf et al. 2006), and another from Helen Reef (Engbring 1983a; no details). Klauber saw a Curlew Sandpiper at a small pond north of the airport on Peleliu 13 Apr 2004 and another among a group of birds foraging on the lawn of the new national capitol at Melekeok, Babeldaob, 18 Apr 2004. Etpison found a bird approaching full alternate plumage at the sewer pond on Malakal on 20 May 2008 (Figure 7c), and Vice captured one in Apr 2009 at Ngatpang, Babeldaob. Elsewhere in Micronesia, Yap (Pyle and Engbring 1987) and Guam (Wiles et al. 1987) have one record each.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*). The first published records of this species from Yap State are those of Wiles et al. (1987), who reported one near the Yap airport and another at Ulithi Atoll, both in early Mar 1986. P. Sullivan photographed a Ruff (Figure 7d) in the center of Colonia on 23 Sep 2000 and another at Ulithi Atoll (Figure 7e) on 25 Sep 2000. Each photo establishes a second record for the Ruff for each island and the first fall records for Yap State. The Ruff is a regular passage migrant at Palau May–June and September–October (Owen 1977a, VanderWerf et al. 2006, Etpison pers. obs.). Etpison's observation of a Ruff at the Ngatpang aquaculture ponds on Babeldaob on 15 Feb 2007 suggests that a few overwinter.

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Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*). Although this arctic breeder winters at sea just south of Micronesia (Piersma et al. 1996) and surely must pass through the region during migration, only a single actual record exists, of one in alternate plumage on Tinian 29 May 1999 (Wiles et al. 2000). Etpison found the first for Palau, a bird in basic plumage swimming in the open lagoon among the Rock Is. on 10 Oct 2006 (Figure 7f; Pratt and Etpison 2008:254). Local fishermen (*vide* Shallum Etpison), who regularly venture 32–80 km outside the reef to troll for marlin, often see similar birds but could not recall specific dates other than Sep 2006. They notice the bird “because it floats in the middle of nowhere and swims around in circles like it’s drunk.” On 6 Nov 2006, Etpison saw another Red-necked Phalarope on the ocean outside the main reef between Peleliu and Angaur.

Oriental Pratincole (*Glareola maldivarum*). Engbring (1988) considered this species an annual migrant to Palau, but subsequent observations suggest that it is less regular there. Pratt, whose visits have been mostly in February, has never seen one there, nor has Etpison in her work from 2004 through 2009, but in 2008, Kete-bengang saw one bird at the Palau airport on her monthly survey in January, then 39 in February, 45 in March, and three in April. A few individuals remained through the ensuing months (Figure 7g, h) until she found none on 28 Aug. The February and March counts represent by far the largest groups of pratincoles ever reported in Micronesia and contrast strikingly with the many years in which none have been present during the same months.

Laughing Gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*). Pisano, accompanied by Chapman and Retter, digiscoped an apparent first-summer Laughing Gull (Figure 8a, b) along the causeway connecting the commercial port and Kolonia, Pohnpei, on 4 Apr 2007 for the first Pohnpei record. The gull was not present on subsequent visits to the locality. On 4 Jan 2008, Carlos Cianchini photographed a winter ad. Laughing Gull (Figure 8c), a first for Kosrae, perched on a swimming platform next to the causeway that connects Lelu I. with the main island. The bird remained through February and was seen twice at Okat Harbor on the west side of the island (C. Cianchini pers. comm.).

Franklin’s Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*). Early in the morning on 19 May 2009, Glenn McKinlay photographed a Franklin’s Gull in full alternate plumage (Figure 8d, e) at the west end of the airport on Majuro, Marshall Is. He did not find the gull on subsequent visits to the site through 21 May. The only previous record for Majuro

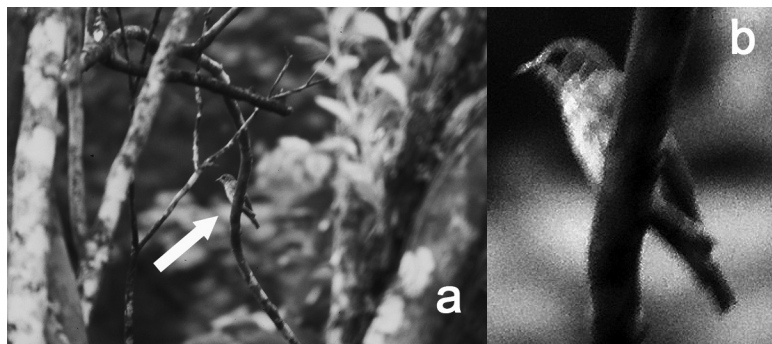


Figure 13. (a) Gray-streaked Flycatcher (*Muscicapa griseisticta*), Fanif District, Yap, 26 Sep 1991; (b) same image enlarged and processed with Adobe PhotoShop by H. D. Pratt.

Photo by Dale Herter

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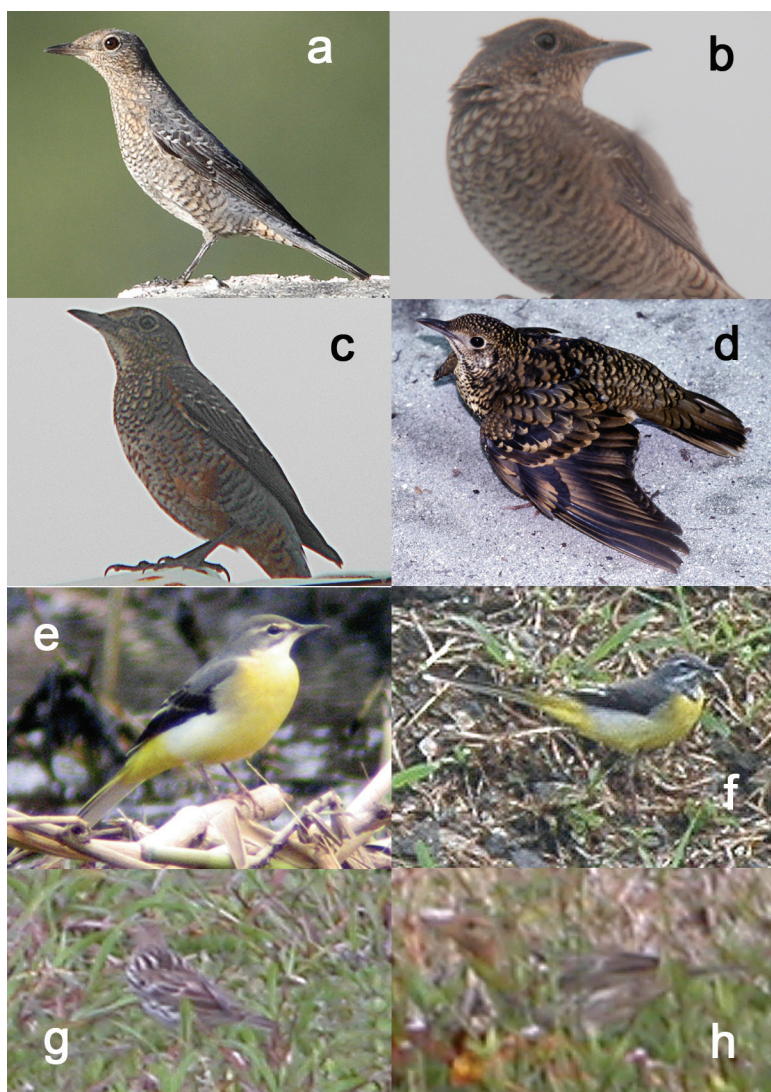


Figure 14. (a) Blue Rock Thrush (*Monticola solitarius*), female, Koror, Palau, 12 Nov 2006, (b) female, Arakabesang I., Palau, 22 Oct 2009, (c) juvenile male with incoming definitive feathers, Koror, Palau, 25 Oct 2009 (shadow levels adjusted in Adobe PhotoShop by Pratt); (d) Scaly Thrush (*Zoothera dauma*), Neco I., Palau, Jan 2006; (e) Gray Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*), female, Malakal sewer pond, Palau, 11 Apr 2007 and (f) male, same locality and date; (g, h) Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*), Peleliu, Palau, Apr 2004.

Photos by Mandy T. Etpison (a), Alan Olsen (b, c), H. Douglas Pratt (e–f), and David Klauber (g, h)

and the Marshalls is that of Anderson (1978) in Jun 1976. McKinlay photographed another Franklin's Gull (Figure 8f, g), molting from basic to alternate plumage, in the lagoon 500–800 m NW of Nahlap, Kitti District, Pohnpei, 5 July 2009 just before 18:00. It is the first Franklin's Gull reported for that island and the second for the Carolines; the first was at Chuuk in August 1983 (Pyle and Engbring 1987). McKinlay sent his photographs via Buden to Pratt who, assisted by Steve N. G. Howell, made the identifications on basis of the large eye crescents, relatively small bill, rounded head, and large amount of white in the primary tips.

Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*). Although the first published sighting of this species for Yap was in 1993 (Wiles et al. 2000), the first known occurrence on the island is of two winter-plumaged birds observed by Herter near the Manta Ray Bay Hotel on 20 Feb 1992. Pratt's 2003 party saw another bird from the mainland across from O'Keefe's I. At Palau, the Black-headed Gull (Figure 8h) has been regarded as a regular winter resident in small numbers (Pratt et al. 1987, Engbring 1988), but because so few reports have been published since the 1980s, VanderWerf et al. (2006), who had sightings of what may have been only a single individual in Apr 2005, questioned whether that status still held. Filling some of the gap are previously unpublished sightings by Pratt's tour groups in Feb 1991, 1993, and 2003. Etpison sees Black-headed Gulls every year, and in the spring, groups of up to 25 birds often congregate in a vacant lot adjacent to NECO Marine Dive Shop and at the nearby Dolphins Pacific facility on Malakal. Dolphins Pacific employees reported as many as 20 birds at a time stealing fish intended for dolphin food for "several months" in 2007–08 but did not see any in 2008–09 (Etpison). Apparently numbers fluctuate widely from year to year, and many birds may be spring migrants rather than winter residents. Most of them depart by April, which might explain the paucity of sightings by VanderWerf et al. (2006) and the lack of sightings by the 2007 Pratt party.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*). A Common Tern (Figure 9a; misidentified as a Whiskered Tern in Pratt and Etpison 2008:233), one of three present at the Malakal sewer pond in late Oct 2006, provides only the second confirmed record for Palau since the 19th century. Another Common Tern at the same locality in Sep 2007 (Figure 9b) suggests the species is probably annual at Palau. On Pohnpei, the 2007 Pratt party observed the first since several individuals wintered there in 1978–79 (Engbring and Owen 1981). A single Common Tern, first seen and identified while perched, was later flying (Figure 9c) and plunge-diving (Figure 9d) just east of the causeway connecting the main island and the airport on 6 Apr. To date, all Micronesian Common Terns have apparently been the black-billed *S. hirundo longipennis*.

Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonias hybrida*). The 2007 Pratt party saw three or four Whiskered Terns on several occasions from 4 to 7 Apr around the commercial port on Pohnpei (Figure 9e, f). All apparently adults in basic plumage, they constitute a first record for Pohnpei. Since 2006, especially in the fall, Etpison has noted increasing numbers of Whiskered Terns at Palau. At least a few birds remain until April each year. Other recent unpublished reports are of three birds, Lake Ngardok, Babeldaob, 14 Dec 2005 (T. Dove pers. comm.), one at same locality (Figure 9g) 9 Apr 2007 (Pratt party), and three near the Koror landfill 7–9 Apr 2007 (Pratt party). Except for the first, of one collected July 1976 (Clapp and Laybourne 1983), Yap records extend from October to April. Recent sightings at the old airport pond, Ruul Municipality, include three in basic plumage 13 Apr 2007 (Pratt party), one 15 Mar 2008 (Clement), and another 16 Oct 2008 (T. Alfonso and T. Mark pers. comm.). All plumage stages have now been observed in Micronesia (Figure 10a).

White-winged Tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*). From the airport terminal on Pohnpei 7 Apr 2007 the Pratt party saw a tern perched on the runway several hundred meters away. It was observed through glass windows with binoculars and a telescope

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and showed very pale upperparts, an obvious round black auricular spot, and smudgy markings across the hindcrown. When it flew, it showed a pure white rump and shallowly forked tail, with no dark color in the outermost web. The wing pattern was very similar to that of several Whiskered Terns seen at the same time. The distinctive head pattern is characteristic of the White-winged Tern in basic plumage (Brazil 2009). This sighting constitutes the first record for Pohnpei.

The White-winged Tern is a regular spring and fall passage migrant at Palau (Pratt et al. 1987, Engbring 1988). Most birds observed are in some stage of molt between the juvenal, basic, and alternate plumages (VanderWerf et al. 2006, Pratt and Etpison 2008:232). On 11 May 2008 after two weeks of stormy weather with strong southwesterly winds, a large number of White-winged Terns in resplendent alternate plumage (Figure 10b) appeared at Palau. They foraged mostly among the Rock Is. north to Malakal, in groups of up to nine individuals, and, because of their unusual plumage, were even noticed by Palauans with little interest in birds. On Babeldaob, Olsen and Mark Bezner saw several at Lake Ngardok on 10 May, and Olsen saw several on the Compact Road at Ngatpang, 24 May. The terns lingered at Palau until the third week of June, the latest date ever for this species in Micronesia.

Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*). Domestic pigeons have been reported on many Micronesian islands but, except in the Marianas, have not become established (Wiles 2005). An incipient population on Pohnpei was the object of efforts at extermination in 2007 and 2008 by the Pohnpei Invasive Species Task Force, whose efforts succeeded in eliminating the birds from the island except for a domestic flock of ~20 maintained by a family in U District (K. Englberger pers. comm., 17 Sep 2009). T. Alfonso found a lone pigeon at the ESA Hotel, Colonia, Yap, 2 Sep 2007 (*vide* Falanruw). It bore colored leg bands, blue with numeral 50 over white on the left leg and one blue band on the right. The bird remained for ~2 weeks and disappeared. The cargo ship *Haneburg* was in port when the bird was first seen, and other ships had called on 22 and 30 Aug.

Rufous Hawk-Cuckoo (*Hierococcyx hyperythrus*). This species, also called the Northern Hawk-Cuckoo, has been known in Micronesia only from a single ad. specimen in the Yale Peabody Museum (YPM 12390), collected by P. J. R. Hill on Babeldaob, Palau, in Feb 1950 (Ripley 1951; Wiles 2005). The species was once considered a subspecies of Hodgson's (or Horsfield's) Hawk-Cuckoo (*H. fugax*), now divided into several species (King 2002). It is the only migratory member of that group and breeds in temperate ne. Asia and migrates apparently to Borneo and surrounding areas, although the details are poorly known (Payne 2005). In late 1996 (exact details not recorded), following either Typhoon Dale (Nov) or Fern (Dec), Falanruw found a hawk-cuckoo (Figure 10c–e) with damaged tail feathers dead on the road in Fanif Municipality, Yap. She made a video of it before preparing it as a specimen that was later destroyed by insects. Although the heavily streaked head, including the crown and nape, does not match exactly any published illustration or description we can find, Robert B. Payne (pers. comm.) believes the bird to be a juv. *H. hyperythrus*. Bradley Livezey and Stephen P. Rogers (Carnegie Museum of Natural History) reached the same conclusion by comparing stills from the video to a small number of specimens, and Livezey (pers. comm.) believes the bird to be “very recently fledged without all the flight feathers yet grown out.” Paul Sweet compared still outtakes with specimens in the American Museum of Natural History and noted that all the juv. *H. hyperythrus* in that collection differ in being solidly dark on the top of the head. Whatever this bird's plumage represents, it constitutes the first record of a hawk-cuckoo for Yap and only the second of *H. hyperythrus* for Micronesia.

Brown Hawk-Owl (*Ninox scutulata*). For decades on hypothetical list for Micronesia (Pratt et al. 1987, Wiles 2005) on the basis of two unsubstantiated reports from

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Helen Atoll in Palau's Southwest Is., 1978–1979. Those sightings failed to rule out “several other *Ninox* spp. that reside on nearby islands with which the [Brown Hawk-Owl] could conceivably be confused” (Engbring 1983b). In Nov 2004, the Helen Reef Resource Management Project party captured and photographed a Brown Hawk-Owl (Figure 10f, Pratt and Etpison 2008:157) on Helen Atoll to confirm the species' occurrence on that island and add it unequivocally to the Micronesia list.

Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*). Clements (2003:41) said this species is “the only owl...reported from Yap, but the records need documentation.” We know of no certain published records for Yap, but Pyle and Engbring (1987) found an owl pellet (specimen at Yap Institute of Natural Science) in the open savanna of Gagil-Tomil and tentatively identified it as that of a Short-eared Owl. John Fanoway caught one of several owls at the Yap airport at ~21:00 in Jun or Jul 1991 (exact date not recorded). Sam Falanruw made a video of it, viewed later by M. Falanruw, who was off the island at the time. Unfortunately, the images were later damaged in a typhoon, but from memory, M. Falanruw identified the bird as a Short-eared Owl. T. Alfonso and Martin Faimau also saw the bird and, after viewing photos of several possible owls, agree with the identification. The Short-eared Owl is the one most likely to turn up on Yap (Pyle and Engbring 1987), and we consider this bird sufficiently documented now to confirm the species for the island. Migratory Short-eared Owls turn up occasionally throughout Micronesia (Spennemann 2004, Wiles 2005).

White-throated Needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*). Klauber saw four black-and-white birds with swiftlike shape and powerful flight soaring over Bloody Nose Ridge, Peleliu, Palau, 13 Apr 2004. They were much larger than nearby Palau Swiftlets (*Aerodramus pelewensis*) and lacked the prominent white rump of the White-breasted Woodswallow (*Artamus leucorhynchus*), resident in n. Palau. They showed white throats, but the tails were short, not long and forked as in the Fork-tailed Swift (*Apus pacificus*), the only other large white-throated swift previously known from Micronesia (Wiles 2005). The features he saw are all consistent with the White-throated Needletail and are not shared by any other potential species (Chantler and Driessens 1995). The only previous record for Micronesia is of one on Guam, Nov 1997 (Wiles et al. 2000). Klauber's sighting is the first for any migratory swift at Palau.

Oriental Dollarbird (*Eurystomus orientalis*). H. L. Jones (field notes) observed an Oriental Dollarbird on Ngcheangel Islet of Kayangel Atoll, n. Palau, 2 Aug 1989, an island first. Gupta and R. Leidich reported the first dollarbird for Peleliu in Dec 2003, the only Micronesian record during the n. winter. Engbring (1983a) incorrectly stated that *E. o. pacificus* is the only migratory subspecies, and this observation suggests that one of the field-identifiable e. Asian forms (Fry et al. 1992) may also visit Palau occasionally.

A second specimen of the Oriental Dollarbird for Yap was brought dead (Figure 10g) to Falanruw in Sep or Oct 1988 (specimen later destroyed by insects). Buden saw a dollarbird on Ngulu Atoll, Yap State, almost every day 13 Jul–3 Aug 2008, a first for that island. On 3 Aug an islander brought him an Oriental Dollarbird with a broken wing (Figure 10h). The bird died the next day and was not preserved.

Eurasian Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*). On 25 or 26 Oct 1995, Falanruw and M. Faimau found a Eurasian Hoopoe near the Department of Education and the Catholic Mission in Colonia, Yap. In Falanruw's video, all identifying features of this very distinctive bird are clearly evident (Figure 11). This is the first record of a hoopoe for Yap and only the second for Micronesia; the first was on Saipan Aug 1988 (Stinson et al. 1991).

Brown Shrike (*Lanius cristatus*). Until recently, the Brown Shrike was known in Micronesia only on the remote island of Tobi in Palau's Southwest Is., where an ad. and immature were present 15 Nov 1977, followed by a single bird 21 May 1979

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(Engbring and Owen 1981). On 19 Apr 2003, J. Hunter saw a Brown Shrike on s. Peleliu (Wiles et al. 2004, pers. comm.). On 23 May 2003, T. Mark (pers. comm.) saw probably the same individual in the same general area. The bird had a black mask, white supercilium, and uniformly brownish-gray cap and upperparts, which eliminate from consideration both the Tiger Shrike (*L. tigrinus*) and Bull-headed Shrike (*L. bucephalus*), the other *e.* Asian brown-backed shrikes likely to reach Micronesia (Brazil 2009). These sightings are the first for the main Palau Is. and the third for Micronesia (if both observers saw the same bird in 2003).

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*). A common nonbreeding visitor, with a few remaining all year, on the main islands of Palau (Pratt and Etpison 2008) and Yap (Clements 2003), but it has not been reported from Yap's outlying atolls. Falanruw saw several on Gileop Islet, Uliithi Atoll, in Aug 2007. Buden saw one bird, flying back and forth along the beach, on Ngulu Atoll on 25 Jul 2008. By the end of the month, six or seven birds were present, and by the time he departed on 10 Aug, dozens of swallows were hawking insects over the island.

Unidentified house martin (*Delichon* sp.). Engbring and Owen's (1981) two identifications, based primarily on geographic probability, of single Asian House Martins (*D. dasypus*) from Koror, Palau, have long been accepted uncritically (Pratt et al. 1987, Wiles 2005, Pratt and Etpison 2008), but the observers themselves considered the Asian and Common (*D. urbicum*) house martins indistinguishable in the field. Details of the sightings do not eliminate the Common House Martin, which breeds in far *e.* Siberia, winters to *se.* Asia (Robson 2000, Brazil 2009), and is only slightly less likely to stray to Palau. Fer-Jan de Vries (www.camacdonald.com/birding/tripreports/TripReports.html) reported a sighting between 22 Dec 1994 and 4 Jan 1995 on Angaur, Palau. Like the first, this report lacks details essential for distinguishing the two species of house martins, which are difficult but not impossible to identify in the field (Brazil 2009). Thus, the occurrence of the Asian House Martin in Micronesia must be considered hypothetical.

Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*). Fortunately, Common Mynas are not yet established anywhere in Micronesia, although they were present for several years on Kwajalein in the Marshall Is. (Wiles 2005). In Sep 1988, shortly after a ship had been in port, seven Common Mynas appeared in Colonia, Yap. They were identified by Falanruw and C. Frieberg, who were familiar with the species elsewhere. Local citizens T. Alfonso, M. Faimau, and P. Liyagel took the responsibility of killing them all because of the bird's reputation for invasiveness on other Pacific islands.

Oriental Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus orientalis*). This species has long languished on the hypothetical list for Micronesia because sight records from Palau (Pyle and Engbring 1987) and Yap (Wiles et al. 2000) did not completely exclude other possible similar species.

The first confirmation of this species at Palau is a series of photographs (Figure 12a–c), digiscoped by Pisano, of one of two individuals at the Malakal sewer pond on 11 Apr 2007. The photos reveal a clear pale supercilium, flaring behind the eye; a dark eye line extending well behind the eye; faint grayish streaks on the sides of the breast; obvious pale tips and diffuse darker subterminal area on the rectrices (this feature particularly obvious in flight, Pratt); tawny tinges to lower flanks; a very slight rufous tinge to the rump; primaries evenly spaced, showing seven or eight beyond the tertials; a squarish, slightly graduated tail; and a nearly straight lower mandible, pale throughout its length. The bird is intermediate in several features between the two color figures of the Oriental Reed Warbler in Robson (2000: plate 82) and is clearly not a Thick-billed Warbler (*A. aedon*), whose facial features are quite different (Brazil 2009), or a Clamorous Reed Warbler (*A. stentoreus*), which lacks the breast streaks and the pale-tipped tail (Robson 2000). Pratt and Pisano's close comparison of the photographs with large series of skins

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of all three candidate species at the U.S. National Museum found the Palau bird's bill to be too thin for the Thick-billed Warbler and too thick for the Clamorous Reed Warbler, with plumage characters matching those of Oriental Reed Warbler.

On 8 Feb 2008, Etpison, with T. Alfonso, photographed an Oriental Reed Warbler (Figure 12d) at a small pond near the old airport runway, Ruul Municipality, Yap. The photograph shows all of the identifying features mentioned above. The bird gave the harsh chattering calls characteristic of large *Acrocephalus* warblers but did not sing. The locality is only a short distance from the spot where Pratt and others saw and heard a similar bird, not positively identified to species, in Feb 1991 (Wiles et al. 2000). This photograph establishes the first unequivocal record of the Oriental Reed Warbler for Yap.

Gray-streaked Flycatcher (*Muscicapa griseisticta*). Herter saw and photographed a Gray-streaked Flycatcher (Figure 13) in the n. part of Fanif Municipality, Yap, on 26 Sep 1991, for a first island record. The clear streaking on the sides of the breast is not as evident in the photo as it was at the time of the observation. This feature helps to distinguish this species from similar ones that might stray to Yap, such as the Dark-sided Flycatcher (*M. sibirica*) and Asian Brown Flycatcher (*M. daurica*) (Brazil 2009).

Blue Rock Thrush (*Monticola solitarius*). The Blue Rock Thrush is a rare winter visitor to Palau, with only three previous reports, one prior to 1932, and more recently in 1979 and 1988 (Wiles et al. 2000). The latter two were of ad. males of the chestnut-bellied form *M. s. philippensis*. Etpison noted a female-plumaged bird in Nov 1993, and it or similar birds have turned up along her driveway on Koror every 2–3 years since. She found one there on 12 Nov 2006 and again on its roost in a coral cave on 9 Apr with the 2007 Pratt party (Figure 14a, Pratt and Etpison 2008:157). Olsen saw a female (Figure 14b) on 22 Oct 2009 near the Palau National Hospital in Meyuns, Arakabesang I., and a juvenile male beginning its molt into definitive plumage (Figure 14c) on 25 Oct 2009 on Koror.

Scaly Thrush (*Zoothera dauma*). Following a heavy storm in Jan 2006 (exact date not recorded), Etpison found an apparently exhausted Scaly Thrush (Figure 14d; Pratt and Etpison 2008:157) on the beach at Neco I. (between Ngeruktabel and Mercherchar in the Rock Is.), Palau, for the first Micronesian record. The bird appeared uninjured but did not fly when approached and could be picked up. It was released unharmed. From the photographs, the bird appears to belong to the subspecies *Z. d. aurea*, which breeds across Siberia, winters south to the Philippines, and has a wide pattern of vagrancy (Clement 2001).

Eurasian Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*). How this species, which breeds naturally in e. Asia, Japan, and Taiwan, reached Micronesia is shrouded in mystery. Baker (1951) was apparently unaware of it, and the first solid report was of several pairs on Guam (Marshall 1957). By 1976, it had spread, aided or otherwise, to all the larger islands in the Marianas (Pratt et al. 1979). It has been established around the military base on Kwajalein in the Marshalls since at least 1964 (Amerson 1969, Pratt et al. 1987). It reached Yap in the late 1970s or early 1980s and was established in small numbers at the public market and around Chamorro Bay in the town of Colonia and at the communications center of the old airport by 1984 (Pyle and Engbring 1987, Engbring et al. 1990). The populations remained small and localized through mid-1994 (Wiles pers. obs.); Engbring et al. (1990) estimated <10 birds at the airport and 25–50 in Colonia. Following this period of latency, the population increased dramatically, and Pratt's 2003 party found the species ubiquitous in rural areas throughout the main islands with a population likely in the thousands.

At Palau, Eurasian Tree Sparrows first appeared in the village of Kloulklubed on Peleliu in 2000 (Wiles et al. 2004), and that population has expanded rapidly

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(VanderWerf et al. 2006). In 2005, a small population (~30 birds) was reported in the industrial/harbor area of Malakal (VanderWerf et al. 2006). That population remained stable through 2007 (Pratt and Etpison 2008) but more than tripled to over 100 birds and spread to nearby downtown Koror by early 2008 (Etpison). On 13 Oct 2009, Olsen and Milang Eberdong discovered an apparently isolated colony of at least 10 birds around the Ngiwal State office building in Ngiwal, Babeldaob. Office personnel had not noticed them previously, and their origin is unknown.

On Pohnpei, this species was unknown until the 2007 Pratt party discovered several Eurasian Tree Sparrows in the commercial harbor area of Dekehtik I. and along the causeway to the town of Kolonia. Later that year, several observers saw sparrows at three locations in Kolonia, including >20 at the Dekehtik locality in November (Englberger 2008). The Pohnpei Invasive Species Task Force targeted the sparrows in 2007 and 2008. Initially, numbers were reduced to ~20 (K. Englberger pers. comm. 28 Sep 2008), but further reduction proved difficult, and by Sep 2009 the sparrows had increased in numbers and were "spreading fast" (K. Englberger pers. comm. 17 Sep 2009).

We know of no evidence that anyone purposely introduced the Eurasian Tree Sparrow to Micronesia, and its preference for urban habitats, where it often nests in man-made structures, makes it a good candidate for inadvertent transport in planes or ships. In every case in Micronesia, the birds have appeared first in developed areas, usually near a seaport or airport, and only spread later to rural areas, even though they seem well adapted to those less urbanized habitats. The seemingly inexorable spread of the Eurasian Tree Sparrow in Micronesia suggests that control measures might be futile because new colonists could arrive on any ship or plane from e. Asia or other islands in Micronesia. Will Chuuk and Kosrae be next?

Blue-faced Parrot-Finch (*Erythrura trichroa pelewensis*). Until recently, Palau's endemic subspecies of the Blue-faced Parrot-Finch was unknown from the s. island of Peleliu (Engbring 1988), but Wiles et al. (2004) reported two sightings there Feb–Mar 2000, and VanderWerf et al. (2006) found it at two localities on the island. Other recent sightings include two at Bloody Nose Ridge lookout, 20 Apr 2003 (J. Hunter pers. comm.), and one a short distance south of Klouklubed, 12 Apr 2004 (Klauber).

Gray Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*). This species was first reported in Palau in Oct 1978, when two or three were seen on Koror (Engbring and Owen 1981), then not again until VanderWerf et al. (2006) found one at the sewer pond on Malakal, Apr–May 2005. Pratt, Pisano, and Ord saw and photographed a male (Figure 14e) and a female (Figure 14f; Pratt and Etpison 2008:156) at the same locality on 11 Apr 2007 for a third record.

Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*). Engbring and Owen (1981) saw three alternate-plumaged Red-throated Pipits at the Koror landfill 25–26 Mar 1979 for the first Palau record. Klauber found Red-throated Pipits at two localities in Palau in Apr 2004, a bird photographed poorly (Figure 14g, h) at the south end of the airport on Peleliu on 13 Apr, and another seen on the lawn of the new capitol building at Melekeok, Babeldaob, on 18 Apr. The birds at both localities had the dull reddish throat characteristic of the alternate plumage (Brazil 2009). Klauber's sightings are the first for their respective islands, the second and third for Palau, and the third and fourth for Micronesia, one having been seen at Ulithi Atoll, Yap State, in Mar 1986 (Wiles et al. 1987).

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Micronesia's two most widespread endemic birds: above, the Micronesian Myzomela (*Myzomela rubratra*), male (left) and female (right); below, the Micronesian Starling (*Aplonis opaca*), juvenile (left) and adult (right).

Grayscale image from color paintings by H. Douglas Pratt