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## A NOTE ON THE PASSAGE OF *VARIEGATUS* AND *PRAEOPUS* TYPE WHIMBRELS THROUGH ALAS PURWO NATIONAL PARK, EAST JAVA

by

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(Final draft received 7 March 2000)

### Summary

Over autumn mid spring passage (1997-99), Alas Purwo National Park hosted good numbers of birds resembling Western Palearctic type Whimbrels *Numenius phaeopus phaeopus*. Of 264 passage birds racially identified, only 4.5% were of the more expected Eastern Palearctic race *Numenius phaeopus variegatus*. The remainder all showed characteristics of the nominate *phaeopus*, which usually winters only as far east as India and the Malagasy region.

### Ringkasan

Selama musim bermigrasi (1997-1999), Taman Nasional Alas Purwo ditempati burung Gajahan *Numenius phaeopus* dalam jumlah yang cukup besar. Gajahan ini mirip tipe Whimbrels dari 'Western Palearctic.' Dari 264 Gajahan yang ras diidentifikasi, hanya 4.5% jelas dari ras *Numenius phaeopstv variegates* yang paling dimungkinkan di Jawa. Semua burung yang lain punya ciri-ciri mirip *Numenius phaeopus phaeopus* yang bermusim dingin (*winters*) sejauh India dan daerah Malagasy.

### Introduction

Alas Purwo National Park lies in the far southeast corner of Java. The west of the Park consists of riverine mangroves (Segoro Anak) and a small estuary leading into Grajagan Bay, at Cungur (8°31'S 110°15'E). During peak passage periods (September-November and March-April), these areas hold small numbers of 21 species of migrant shorebirds. Autumn passage is dominated by Sanderling *Calidris alba*, Rufous-naked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* and Whimbrel, with only the latter present in any numbers on spring passage. Other interesting migrant records include Oriental Plover *Charadrius veredus*, Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* and Red-capped Plover *Charadrius ruficollis* (for details, see Grantham, in prep.).

### Whimbrel passage In Alas Purwo

During the period, up to 134 Whimbrels were seen in the Segoro Anak - Cungur area, with the main passage period spanning late October to December, with a smaller spring passage from March until mid April.

However, of more interest are the racial origins of these birds. Of some 264 birds identified to sub species (between 31 August 1997 and 1 June 1998), only 12 individuals (4.5%) were considered to be 'classic' *variegatus* types, with the remainder (252 individuals) showing characteristics of *phaeopus* types. The only *variegatus* birds seen were as listed below:

Date	Number
31 August 1997	8
1 September 1997	1
13 October 1997	1
24 April 1998	2

Usually, due to observation at long distance, birds were racially identified on lower back and rump colour only (heavily barred on *variegatus*, and white or lightly barred on *phaeopus*). Of birds seen at close range (all *phaeopus* types), the lower back and rump were seen to be white with no obvious barring. However, the underwing coverts of these birds showed some dark barring, intermediate between *variegatus* and *phaeopus* as depicted in Marchant *et al* (1986), though this may be a variable feature.

### Distribution

The four races of Whimbrel have a near cosmopolitan distribution. *Numenius phaeopus phaeopus* breeds across the Western Palearctic from Iceland to western USSR, wintering south to South Africa and east to India and the Malagasy region. *Numenius phaeopus variegatus* breeds in eastern USSR, moving south along the coast of East Asia to wintering grounds in South east Asia and Australia. As expected, only *variegatus* has been recorded in the Philippines (Dickinson *et al.* 1991) and Wallaces. (White & Bruce 1986), though interestingly Coates and Bishop (1997) describe *variegatus* Whimbrels in Wallacea as showing "a white rump to lower back with variable brown barring; whole underwing is barred brown and white." MacKinnon and Phillipps (1993) also state of Whimbrels in the Greater Sundas that "some individuals with white rump and underwing approach form of nominate *phaeopus*." Through the Malay peninsula, west coast birds typically show white on the back and rump (suggesting *phaeopus*), whereas east coast birds are presumed to be both *phaeopus* and *variegatus* (Wells 1999).

### Conclusion

It is not known why so many *phaeopus* type Whimbrels should occur on passage in Alas Purwo and this requires further field observations. In central USSR is a racial hybrid zone between *phaeopus* and *variegatus*, will these birds show the characteristics described above, and also be likely migrants in South east Asia?

Further records of *phaeopus* type Whimbrels in South east Asia, or any other comments would be much appreciated by the author.

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**NOTE ON THE OCCURRENCE OF LITTLE CORMORANT AT  
NUSA DUA, BALI**

by

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(Received 6 July 1999)

The ponds which treat sewage from the Nusa Dua hotel complex are located west of the road running between Buala and Tanjung Benoa, near the hamlet of Celu, coordinates: 08°48'S, 115°14'E. Divided by wide, grassy bunds, they are bounded on two seaward sides by mangroves, and elsewhere by a screen of natural greenery. Situated in the ponds are numerous small islands, supporting a growth of trees, shrubs, reeds and grasses, which in turn support teeming bird life. It is a spectacular location.

In fact six years ago the author recommended to the local office of the State Ministry of the site be gazetted a Wetland Reserve, considering its important population of waterfowl, including breeding Black crowned Night heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Java Pond heron *Ardeola speciosa*, Egrets *Egretta* sp., Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*, and little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*. Unusual visitors have included Rufous Night heron *N. caledonicus*, Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilus javanicus*, Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*, Oriental Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*, and Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*. And now little Cormorant *P. niger*.

The area falls within the jurisdiction of Bali Tourist Development Corporation (BTDC), who have taken positive measures to protect this sanctuary, such as gating the bunds, although current construction of a bypass road skirting the southern edge has, at least temporarily, tended to disturb and diminish the resident population of waterfowl.

A search of available literature (see Bibliography) reveals that Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger* (sometimes combined with Pygmy Cormorant *P. pygmaeus* of Eurasia) is known from the Greater Sundas, including Java, but has not hitherto been recorded from the island of Bali.