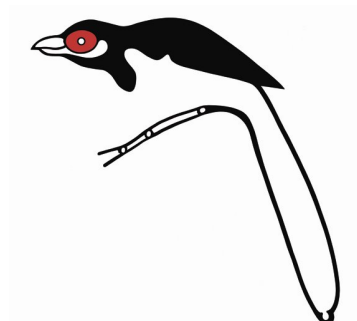


Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka

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Revised Avifaunal List of Sri Lanka

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Revised Avifaunal List of Sri Lanka

The taxonomy of Asian birds has been subject to many changes over the last two decades, consequent to increased research efforts and new methodologies which were adopted in avian taxonomy. This resulted in changes to both the scientific nomenclature as well as English names. This document seeks therefore to update the avifaunal list produced by Kotagama *et. al.* (2006) and to duly incorporate relevant changes. Furthermore the launch of a web based "Sri Lanka Birds" facility and its global application (www.worldbirds.org) make further revisions mandatory. Hence, this paper updates the families, scientific nomenclature and English names as currently recognized by BirdLife International (2008, 2009).

Taxonomy

Species sequence in the list

Kotagama *et. al.* (2006) followed Sibley and Monroe's (1990) sequence for species and family orders which, in turn, were based on DNA-DNA hybridization techniques. However, in this checklist we have followed the BirdLife System, which follows Dickinson (2003) for higher level (Family and Order) sequence, and Sibley and Monroe (1990, 1993) for the species sequence. The family names also follow Dickinson (2003).

Family level taxonomic changes

Some larger families identified by Sibley and Monroe (1990), which appeared in Kotagama

et.al. (2006) are now split in to several smaller families (Dickinson, 2003). This is, however, in most cases merely an elevation of subfamilies or tribes to family level. The reason for this treatment is rejection of the "lumping" suggested by Sibley & Monroe (1990,1993).

Kotagama *et. al.* (2006) recognized sixty four families representing the species present in Sri Lanka. Five of these families have been deleted as they are now "lumped" with other existing families. Twenty new families have been added, resulting from the elevation of subfamilies or tribes to full family status. Thus the avifauna of Sri Lanka is currently represented by a total of 79 families. Changes at the family level taxonomy from the system of Sibley and Monroe (1990,1993) to that of Dickinson (2003) at in so far as they are related to the Sri Lankan avifauna, are discussed below.

Species of the family Dendrocygnidae are now placed in the family Anatidae which now includes all the ducks, geese and swans. Family Megalaimidae is placed in the family Ramphastidae creating a single family for toucans and barbets. All kingfisher species are placed in the family Alcedinidae, hence the families Halcyonidae and Cerylidae are no longer valid. Coucals, which were included in the family Centropodidae are now included in the family Cuculidae. Family Batrachostomidae is merged into the family Podargidae, hence all frogmouths are now placed in a single family.

Tribes Haematopodini and Recurvirostrini identified in subfamily Recurvirostrinae of the family Charadriidae were upgraded to family level. Hence, all the Oystercatchers are now placed in the family Haematopodidae while all Stilts and Avocets are placed in the family Recurvirostridae. Subfamily Dromadinae of the Family Glareolidae, is now upgraded to family level and named Dromadidae. Tribe Stercorariini in the subfamily Larinae of the family Lariidae was upgraded to the family level. Hence, Skuas and Jaegers are now included in the family Stercorariidae. Subfamily Hydrobatinae of the family Procellariidae was upgraded to family level. Therefore Storm-petrels are included in the family Hydrobatidae whereas Petrels and Shearwaters are included in the family Procellariidae.

Leafbirds, which were included in the family Irenidae together with fairy blue birds, are now placed in a separate family named Chloropseidae.

The family Corvidae of Sibley and Monroe (1990, 1993) has undergone severe changes after its publications. Tribe Artamini (Woodswallows) of the subfamily Corvinae is upgraded to family Artamidae. Species of Orioles which were placed in the tribe Oriolini of the subfamily Corvinae are now placed in a separate family named Oriolidae. Cuckoo-shrikes, Minivets and Flycatcher-shrikes which were also included in the tribe Oriolini are now placed in the family Campephagidae. Woodshrikes which were placed under tribe Vangini of the subfamily Malaconotinae are also included in the family Campephagidae. Tribes Rhipidurini (Fantails) Dicrurini

(Drongos) and Monarchini (Monarchs) of the subfamily Dicrurinae were upgraded to family level creating families Rhipiduridae, Dicruridae and Monarchidae respectively. Subfamily Aegithininae is upgraded to family Aegithinidae creating a separate family for the loras.

Subfamily Turdinae (Thrushes) was separated from the family Muscicapidae and upgraded as family Turdidae while retaining the family Muscicapidae for chats and old world flycatchers. Subfamily Garrulacinae (Laughingthrushes) and tribe Timaliini (Babblers) of the subfamily Sylvinae of the family Silviidae were placed in the family Timaliidae. Tribe Dicaeini (Flowerpeckers) of the subfamily Nectariniinae were separated from the family Nectariniidae and upgraded to the family Dicaeidae. Subfamilies Passerinae (Sparrows and allies), Motacillinae (Wagtails and Pipits), Ploceinae (Weavers) and Estrildinae (Munias and allies) of the family Passeridae were upgraded to family level. Subfamily Emberizinae (Buntings & allies) of the family Fringilidae was upgraded to the family Emberizidae.

Species level taxonomic changes

Many changes occurred in the species level taxonomy recently due to either lumping or splitting of existing species. The following taxonomic changes affect Sri Lankan species and therefore their scientific names and distribution ranges.

Phoenicopterus ruber (Sibley and Monroe, 1990, 1993) following Knox *et al.* (2002) has been split into *P. roseus* (Greater Flamingo)

and *P. ruber* (Caribbean Flamingo). *P. roseus* is present in the Asian region whereas *P. ruber* occurs in the new world.

Sibley and Monroe (1990, 1993) treated *Larus heuglini* (Heuglin's Gull) as a race of *Larus argentatus* (Herring Gull). Kotagama *et. al.* (2006) followed Inskipp *et. al.* (1996) which treated these two taxa as separate species. Hence, both *L. heuglini* and *L. argentatus* were listed for Sri Lanka. Recent studies (Crochet *et al.* 2002) suggest that *heuglini* should be treated as a separate species. However, these proposals are under review by the BirdLife Taxonomic Working Group. The treatment of Sibley and Monroe (1990, 1993) is provisionally retained in this revision pending further clarification.

Lanius excubitor (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) was split into *L. excubitor*, (Northern Grey Shrike) and *L. meridionalis*, (Southern Grey Shrike) (Inskipp *et.al.* 1996, AERC TAC, 2003a, Sangster *et al.* 2002). Hence *L. meridionalis* was included in the Sri Lanka list by Kotagama *et.al.* (2006). This treatment is not followed by the BirdLife Taxonomic Working Group pending further clarification of the relationships between taxa. Therefore, *L. excubitor* is retained in this revision as in Sibley and Monroe (1990, 1993).

Corvus macrorhynchos was split into *C. macrorhynchos* (Large-billed Crow) and *C. leuallantii* (Jungle Crow) by Sibley and Monroe (1990), who listed the latter for Sri Lanka. Kotagama *et.al.* (2006) followed Inskipp *et. al.* (1996) which lumped the above two taxa into *C. macrorhynchos*. This treatment is not followed here and the

treatment of Sibley and Monroe (1990) is retained as recognized by BirdLife International (2008, 2009).

Hirundo tahitica was split in to *H. tahitica* (Pacific Swallow) and *H. domicola* (Hill Swallow) by Sibley and Monroe (1990) and listed *H. domicola* for Sri Lanka. This treatment was not accepted by Kotagama *et.al.* (2006) who followed Inskipp *et. al.* (1996), which lumped these two taxa into *H. tahitica* once again. However, the treatment by Sibley and Monroe (1990) is retained and that of Inskipp *et. al.* (1996) is rejected in this revision as this procedure has been adopted by BirdLife International (2008, 2009).

Mirafra assamica (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) has been split into *M. assamica* (Rufous winged bushlark), *M. affinis* (Jerdon's Bushlark), *M. erythrocephala* (Indochinese Bushlark) and *M. microptera* (Burmese Bushlark) following Alström (1998). *M. affinis* is present in South and East India and Sri Lanka.

Pomatorhinus horsfieldii (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) has been split into *P. horsfieldii* (Indian Scimitar Babbler) and *P. melanurus* (Sri Lanka Scimitar Babbler) following Rasmussen and Anderton (2005) and Collar (2006). Resulting from this split, *P. melanurus* becomes endemic to Sri Lanka while *P. horsfieldii* is present in India.

Z. imbricata from Sri Lanka, previously considered a subspecies of *Z. dauma* following Sibley and Monroe (1990, 1993), is treated as a distinct species following Collar (2004, 2005) and Rasmussen & Anderton

(2005). As a result of this treatment, *Z. imbricata* becomes endemic to Sri Lanka.

Chloropsis cochinchinensis (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) has been split into *C. cochinchinensis* (Blue winged Leafbird), *C. kinabaluensis* (Bornean Leafbird) and *C. jerdoni* (Jerdon's Leafbird) following Wells *et al.* (2003). *C. jerdoni* is present in India and Sri Lanka.

The following taxonomic changes also affect species recorded from Sri Lanka. Scientific names of the affected species, listed by Kotagama *et. al* (2006), do not change, but their distributional ranges in the region do. The Following taxonomic notes are excerpted from BirdLife International (2008, 2009)

- *Coturnix chinensis* and *C. adansonii* (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) have been lumped into *C. chinensis* (Blue Quail) following Dowsett and Forbes-Watson (1993) and a review by the BirdLife Taxonomic Working Group.
- *Puffinus bannermani*, *P. persicus* (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) and *P. subalaris* (SACC 2006) are lumped with *P. lherminieri* (Audubon's Shearwater) following Brooke (2004).
- *Butorides sundevalli* and *B. striatus* (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) have been lumped into *B. striata* (Striated Heron) following AOU (2003).
- *Egretta garzetta* and *E. dimorpha* (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) have been lumped into *E. garzetta* (Little Egret) following Kushlan and Hancock (2005) who also lump *E. gularis* with *E. garzetta* (Western Reef-egret); this latter treatment

is under review by the BirdLife Taxonomic Working Group (BirdLife International 2009).

- *Sula dactylatra* (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) has been split into *S. dactylatra* (Masked Booby) and *S. granti* (Nazca Booby) following AOU (2000).
- *Spilornis minimus* (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) has been split into *S. klossi* (South Nicobar Serpent-eagle) with the remainder (i.e. nominate *minimus*) lumped with *S. cheela* (Crested Serpent-eagle) (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) following Rasmussen and Anderton (2005).
- *Spizaetus cirrhatus* (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) has been split into *S. cirrhatus* (Changeable Hawk-eagle) and *S. floris* (Flores Hawk-eagle) following Gjershaug *et al.* (2004).
- *Otus scops* (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) has been split into *O. senegalensis* (African Scops-owl) following Dowsett and Forbes-Watson (1993), *O. sunia* (Oriental Scops-owl) following AOU (1998), *O. alius* (Nicobar Scops-owl) following Rasmussen (1998) and *O. scops* (Common Scops-owl) with species limits accordingly revised.
- *Acrocephalus stentoreus* (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) has been split into *A. stentoreus* (Clamorous Reed-warbler) and *A. orinus* (Large-billed Reed-warbler) following Bensch and Pearson (2002).
- *Seicercus burkii* (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) has been split into *S. burkii* (Green-crowned Warbler), *S. valentini* (Bianchi's Warbler), *S. whistleri* (Whistler's Warbler), *S. soror* (Alstrom's Warbler) and *S. tephrocephalus* (Grey-crowned Warbler) following Alström & Olsson (1999) and *S.*

omeiensis (Martens's Warbler) following Martens *et al.* (1999).

- *Copsychus malabaricus* and *C. stricklandii* (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) have been lumped into *C. malabaricus* (White-rumped Shama) following Collar (2004).
- *Chloropsis aurifrons* (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) has been split into *C. aurifrons* (Golden-fronted Leafbird) and *C. media* (Sumatran Leafbird) following Wells *et al.* (2003).
- *Lonchura malacca* (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) has been split into *L. malacca* (Tricoloured Munia) and *L. atricapilla* (Chestnut Munia) following AOU (2000).
- *Motacilla alba* and *M. lugens* (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) have been lumped into *M. alba* (White Wagtail) following AOU (2005).
- *Anthus richardi*, *A. cinnamomeus*, *A. cameroonensis* with the Kenyan population previously ascribed to *A. latistriatus* (Sibley and Monroe 1990, 1993) have been lumped into *A. richardi* (Richard's Pipit) following Dowsett and Forbes-Watson (1993).

Endemic Species

The number of endemic species has undergone numerous changes over the years. Much of this has been the result of “close taxonomic revisions”. This number has fluctuated between minimum of 20 and maximum of 47 throughout the recorded ornithological history of the island (Kotagama *et.al.* 2006). High numbers of endemics were recorded by authors in the 19th century (Legge 1880, Murray, 1890). However, a drop in the

number of endemic species is observed after the 1920s with the introduction of the concept of subspecies. With the advancements of the avian systematics in the recent past, many scientists have investigated the “overlumping” of species. Many taxonomic studies relating to Sri Lankan species are currently in progress. However, on principle, species which were validly published are considered for endemic status in this revision. List of definitive endemic species are given in the table 1.

There are some proposals for species level taxonomic changes, and therefore endemic status in Sri Lanka. These proposals are described below. However, the treatment of these species by Sibley and Monroe (1990, 1993) are retained here until such time, as valid taxonomic procedures clarify the situation. Hence, the following species will only be treated as Proposed Endemic species.

Rasmussen and Anderton (2005) propose splitting *Treron pompadora* (Sibley and Monroe, 1990, 1993) into *T. pompadora* (Sri Lanka Green Pigeon), *T. afinis* (Grey-fronted Green Pigeon), *T. chloropterus* (Andaman Green Pigeon) and *T. phayrei* (Ashy-headed Green Pigeon). Based on this treatment *T. pompadora*, will be endemic to the island, while the other species are present in South India, Andaman islands and South east Asia.

