

19/1
84

Blockley

January 5 1994

Dear Aasheesh,

I am suprised that you are suprised that I suprised you with a letter, so hopefully this one will not come as a surprise!

Regarding the IOC in Vienna, the registration fee alone is 4000 Austrian shillings (about £215), if paid before May 31; thereafter it rises to 5000 AS. However, reduced rates are available, and "ornithologists from developing countries" will be given special consideration, but you should apply soon to be considered for these. Whether you can apply as an NGO observer representing the OSI might be worth discussing with Futehally.

An application for reduced rates and/or travel and accomodation assistance must be accompanied by:

- a brief curriculum vitae,
- a statement of the applicant's scientific contribution to the congress,
- two letters of recommendation,
- an estimate of the money needed for the applicant to attend the congress. "It is important here to include one's own financial contribution as well as any other possible financing".

Dr.Asha Saklani suggested at the Bangalore seminar that an OSI delegation might be put together and this would undoubtedly help in raising some outside finance for your trip. I am trying to get the Trust for Oriental Ornithology to pay my registration fee.

Enclosed is an out-dated draft of Tim Inskipp's 'Bibliography of Indian birds'. The current draft has 4680 entries! You may find it useful, and if so you can write to Tim and ask him for a current version; he also has it on disk.

The paper I mentioned is:

Thiollay, J-M. (1993) Response of a raptor community to shrinking area and degradation of tropical rain forest in the South Western Ghats (India). *Ecography*, 16:97-110.

The reason I suggested a species-specific index is because your own work in many ways duplicates that of Tim Inskipp. Sure it will involve an enormous amount of work, but will be that more useful as a result. If this South Asian bird project gets sufficient funding, say for a clerical data entry person, do you know if someone suitable can be found in Hyderabad, and if so, would you be interested in having them work with you on such an index?

Wishing you and your family all the best in 1994.

Andrew

AASHEESH PITTIE

14-7-370 Begun Bazaar, Hyderabad - 500 012. India. Phone : R:35683 / O:43264.

[1/1]

REF: Your: Dt. 05.01.94.

January 24, 1994

Mr. Andrew Robertson
2 St. Georges Terrace
Blockley
Moreton-in-Marsh
GLOS. GL56 9BN
UNITED KINGDOM

Dear Andrew,

Thanks for your above letter and especially for the enclosure - Tim Inskipp's "Bibliography of Indian Birds". It is tremendously useful. There are many references and sources in it, I had not known the existence of. I plan to write to him for his 'latest' list and will request him for a diskette.

I will not be able to come for the Ornithological Congress. This will be a busy year for business.

Andrew, in the paper by Thiollay, J-M. (1993), which is the place or locality, in the South Western Ghats, that the study was done in?

If the South Asia database can get funding and I am able to hire the services of a data entry clerk, I would certainly like to build up a species-specific index. But by myself, it will not be possible. It almost seems that for the rest of my life I will be keying bird names into a pc!

I have been working on the note on errata and additions to the nomenclature booklet and wonder why it should not become a paper by itself, as it is. I cannot think what I can add to it. You have marked c. 20 items with an asterisk, which you suggest should be included in the paper for the time being. Why should we not include those where spellings are being corrected, etc.? Also, shall we send it for publication in its present format, but including only those items with an asterisk?

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



23/2
F/94

Blockley

15.2.94

Dear Aasheesh,

Thanks for your letter of the 24th. I have been unable to get anyone to pay for my visit to the IOC in Vienna so it is rather a relief that you have decided not to go either. However, we will probably go over to Austria anyway just for a holiday and it is a pity you cannot come to Europe at all, IOC or no IOC. Perhaps some time in the future.

The area of Thiollay's study was west of Shimoga, around Kogar, and further south inland from Mangalore.

I agree with Futehally and Sridar that we cannot go on endlessly making adjustments to the Indian bird list. We should confine ourselves to changes directly relevant to the booklet we published. For example I have added 3 new species to the list already this year, based on published records, and there are half-a-dozen others I know of that have yet to be published; and this is without considering changes in taxonomy that effect the India list. Incidentally, Sibley & Monroe is increasingly coming in for criticism, for example in the current issue of Ibis where Mayr & Bock, arguing for consistent classification, make remarks like "regardless of how good the taxonomic decisions may be..., the great majority of them are not based on published investigations", and "the classification proposed and the sequence based on it are provisional and full of uncertainties". We have as a result completely revised the Oriental list for the TOO Handbook project to conform with a modified Wetmore sequence rather than S&M.

If we are to publish a note in Newsletter for Birdwatchers we should add two paras to the introduction -

1

"It was never ^(not) our intention to provide an updated list of species occurring in the region, but rather to compare new and old names. The former task is never-ending, and no sooner is a list published than it is out-of-date. This article therefore only refers to the booklet published by OSI and corrects some of the statements made in the light of the publication of the Supplement. We have not included subsequent additions to the species list, nor taxonomic alterations from other sources."

"We should emphasise that both the nomenclature and the classification and sequence of Sibley & Monroe's work is provisional. Neither has yet been permanently accepted, and it is possible some of it may never be."

also, from my list the following should definitely not be included in any published article:

not taken the term 'my error' in some entries
— Moluccan Scops Owl

p.17 the spelling mistake is a valid comment but the square bracket below should be deleted

not taken — White-eyed Gull

not included — Black Noddy

X { 'p.62 1579,1580' [the evidence has just been published and no.1580 is considered invalid, but this is not noted in Sibley & Monroe and therefore is not relevant to the booklet]

X such expressions as 'thank goodness' p.62

If you make these changes and still wish to submit it to Futehally please send me a draft before doing so. I'll be in India from March 24 - April 29.

Hope you are all well.

best wishes,

Andrew

AASHEESH PITTIE

14-7-370 Begum Bazaar, Hyderabad - 500 012. India. Phone : R:35683 / O:43264.

[1/1]

REF: Your: Dt. 15.2.94.
Mine: GEN/1/94.

March 6, 1994

Mr. Andrew Robertson
2 St. Georges Terrace
Blockley
Moreton-in-Marsh
GLOS. GL56 9BN
UNITED KINGDOM

Dear Andrew,

Enclosed is a draft of the paper on errata, additions and comments on the Nomenclature booklet. Please make the necessary corrections and return it, so that I can mail it to Sridhar.

I have included almost all the birds from your earlier (dt. 5.1.94), except those which you have specifically mentioned not to (vide your above letter), and also those whose distribution is mentioned as doubtful in the sub-continent by Ripley also. I do not feel it necessary that we should repeat (whether to emphasize or otherwise) what Ripley has already stated.

I do not know whether "author's error" should be mentioned at all in the text, when we are correcting something.

Why is Hyderabad not on your itinerary to India? Can you squeeze in a day for birding? We'd be glad to take you out!

Best wishes to all,



encl: as above.

NOMENCLATURE OF BIRDS OF THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT.
 A review of some changes taking place.
 Errata, additions and some comments.

By: Andrew Robertson & Aasheesh Pittie

When we compiled the 'Nomenclature' booklet, we did not intend to provide an updated list of species occurring in the region, but rather to compare new and old names. The former task is never-ending, and no sooner is a list published than it is out-of-date.

This article therefore only refers to the booklet published by DSI and corrects some of the statements made in the light of the publication of A Supplement to Distribution and Taxonomy of Birds of the World, which appeared in 1993. It contained both corrections to the original text as well as subsequent changes in taxonomy.

Some of these changes are listed below, though we have not included subsequent additions to the species list, nor taxonomic alterations from other sources.

We should emphasise that both the nomenclature and the classification and sequence of Sibley & Monroe's work is provisional. Neither has yet been permanently accepted, and it is possible some of it may never be.

p.4 85,86 - delete "85"
 84 - add "85"

[*jankowskii* is a race of the Tundra Swan not of the Whooper Swan.]

p.4 - insert between nos. 84 and 79:

"77 Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*"

[originally excluded as only hypothetical, there have been several recent reports of this species in Nepal, tentatively referred to the race *rossicus*, but there is as yet no evidence that the race *middendorffi* occurs.]

p.8 831a Black Woodpecker *Dryocopus martius*

[the occurrence of this species is conjectural, though there is a possible sight record from Bengal in JBNHS, 88(1):112.]

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[there is a record of this species having been obtained in Bangladesh in 1958. Add to the list on p.85:

"LACED WOODPECKER: Paynter, R.A. (1970) Bull. B.O.C., 90:118-9.]

p.16 619-623 and 624 - merge together:

"619-624 Collared Scops Owl *O. bakkamoena*"
[the 1993 Supplement calls for *O. lempiji* to be treated as conspecific.]

p.17 - 638 should be *G. castanonotum*
[though Marshall has confirmed to me (pers. comm.) that this is probably a valid species no one has yet published the evidence. In fact, in the most recent publication on the subject - 1988 - Marshall & King list it as a sub-species of *G. radiatum*. In the 1993 Supplement it is still listed as a species.]

p.27 450 - delete "451"
Yellowlegged Gull *Larus cachinnans*
- delete "#" and add "451"
[there has been considerable revision in this group which remains fluid. The race *heuglini* no. 450 is considered by some to be part of *L. fuscus*, in which case *L. argentatus* would be removed from the list, but while recognising the uncertainty the Supplement retains it under *L. argentatus*.]

p.29 134 Blackeared Kite *Milvus lineatus*
[though 1993 Supplement continues to accept this as a separate species many authorities regard it as a race of *M. migrans*.]

p.31 194 Eastern Marsh Harrier *Circus spilonotus*
[there remains disagreement as to whether this should be considered a separate species.]

p.32 168 - delete lower line:
"Eurasian Tawny Eagle *A. vindhiana* \$15"
[the 1993 Supplement accepts that the race *vindhiana* is a subspecies of *A. rapax*, therefore no change in name is involved for no. 168 though it remains separate from no. 169. See Clark, W.S. (1992) The taxonomy of Steppe and Tawny Eagles. Bull. B.O.C., 112(3):150-157.]

p.33 220 - delete lower line and replace with:
"Amur Falcon *F. amurensis*"
[author's error: Sibley & Monroe treated this as a separate species rather than a race of *F. vespertinus*.]

p.33 209-211 - change number to read "209,211" and add new entry:
"210 Barbary Falcon *Falco pelegrinoides* \$"
[author's error: Sibley & Monroe treated this as a separate species, including the race *babylonicus*.]

p.34 28a - the correct spelling is *pygmeus*.
[both Ripley and Sibley & Monroe use *pygmaeus* but 1993 Supplement points out that this is not the original spelling.]

p.35 37 Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*
- add "37a"
[author's error].

p.35 58 - add lower line:

"Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis*" @
[1993 Supplement prefers *Dupetor* to *Ixobrychus*.]

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[1993 Supplement reverts to including the term 'Island' in the common name, and though they prefer Frigatebird as a single word there is no substantial difference to Ripley's usage. The occurrence of the species in the region remains doubtful.]

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[1993 Supplement includes the genus *Pseudobulweria* in *Pterodroma*. Recent research has shown that the species was misidentified in the past, and in fact probably does not occur in our region.]

[there are several additional species in the Procellariiformes for the Indian region and a paper is being written on the group.]

p.38 868 - : add lower line :

"Mangrove Pitta *Pitta megarhyncha* *"

[author's error: Sibley & Monroe treated this as a separate species.]

p.39 EOPSALTRIIDAE: Australasian Robins

- delete section and transfer no. 1448,1449 to p. 48 and insert between no. 1447 and no. 1642 [1993 Supplement places *Calicicapa ceylonensis* back in MUSCICAPIDAE.]

p.41 1055,1057 Jungle Crow *Corvus levaillanti*

[its separate status is the subject of dispute.]

p.45 1748 - delete lower line.

[1993 Supplement reverts to the name Tickell's Thrush and there is therefore no variation from Ripley's usage.]

p.46 1767 Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

[Roberts (1992) disallows any record from Pakistan so its occurrence in the region needs confirmation.]

p.46 - insert between nos. 1410 and 1418:

"# Yellowrumped Flycatcher *Ficedula zanthopygia*"

[the presence of this species in India has been reported. Add to list on p. 85:

"YELLOWRUMPED FLYCATCHER: Haribal, M. (1991) JBNHS. 88 (3) : 456-7.]

p.48 1434 - in lower line delete "Blue".

[1993 Supplement prefers the name Whitetailed Flycatcher.]

p.50 1696-1698 - replace no. with "1695-1698"

1695 - delete entry.

[1993 Supplement treats *S. maura* as conspecific.]

- p.54 1798 - in lower line change common name to:
 "Whitenaped Tit".
 [1993 Supplement prefers this name.]
- p.57 1123,1124 - delete "1124" and transfer to next entry.
 [some authorities do not accept the splitting of *P. leucogenys* but Sibley & Monroe do; the race *humei* no. 1124 should therefore have been included under *P. leucogenys* rather than *P. leucotis* (author's error) though its status requires investigation.]
- p.60 1484 - in lower line replace *robustipes* with *acanthizoides*,
 and delete "*".
 [1993 Supplement accepts that the specific name *robustipes* was misapplied.]
- p.60 1545 - add lower line:
 "Common Grasshopper Warbler *L. naevia*"
 [change to common name in 1993 Supplement.]
- p.60 1542,1543 - delete lower line.
 [no difference in common name in 1993 Supplement.]
- p.60 - insert between nos. 1495 and 1555:
 "# Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*"
 [two specimens were mist-netted and ringed in Ladakh in 1981. Add to list on p. 85:
 "SEdge WARBLER: Williams, C. & Delaney, S. (1986) Migration through the northwest Himalayas. part 2 Bull. O.B.C., 3:11-16.]
- p.60 1553 - add no. "1554"
- p.61 1554 - delete entry
 [1993 Supplement accepts *A. orientalis* as a subspecies of *A. arundinaceus*.]
- p.61 1562,1563 - delete no. 1563, and create new entry:
 "1563 Booted Warbler *H. caligata*
 Sykes's Warbler *H. rama* #"
 [1993 Supplement splits these into two separate species. This split seems to be accepted.]
- p.61 1574,1575 - change nos. to read "1574-1576"
 1576 - delete entry
 [1993 Supplement considers *sindianus* to be a subspecies of *P. collybita*.]
- p.62 1594-1596 - change no. to "1594,1595" and change lower line to read:
 "Palerumped Warbler *P. chloronotus*"
 [1993 Supplement accepts the split in *P. proregulus* proposed by Alstrom & Olsson (1990); they do not accept the validity of the race *newtoni* no. 1596.]
- p.62 1602-1604 - change nos. to "1602-1605"

- p.62 1605 - delete entry
[according to 1993 Supplement *P. nitidus* should be considered a race of *P. trochiloides*.]
- p.63 1616-1619 - in lower line correct spelling to:
" *S. xanthoschistos*"
[Sibley & Monroe's spelling of the species name was a typo.]
- p.65 1297-1299 - replace nos. with "1298,1299"
[no. 1297 the race *maximus* is treated as a separate species by Sibley & Monroe but in fact there is no firm evidence for its occurrence in the region.]
- p.66 1181-1184
[it is likely that the 3 races occurring represent both *P. erythrocnemis* and *P. erythrogegensys*.]
- p.67 - insert between nos. 1197,1198 and 1199:
"# Nepal Wren-Babbler *Pnoepyga immaculata*"
[new species described from Nepal in 1991.
Add to list on p.85:
"NEPAL WREN-BABBLER: Martens, J. & Eck, C. (1991): J. Ornithol., 132:179-198."]
- p.70 1384,1385 - delete no. 1384, and create new entry:
"1384 Brownheaded Tit-Babbler *A. cinereiceps*
Ludlow's Fulvetta *A. ludlowi* \$"
[1993 Supplement accepts that *ludlowi* be elevated to full species status.]
- p.72 - insert between nos. 1247,1248 and 1566:
"# Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*"
[this species has been recorded in Ladakh in 1980 and 1981.
Add to list on p.85:
"GARDEN WARBLER: Williams, C. & Delaney, S. (1986) Bull. O.B.C., 3:13."]
- p.72 1567-1570 - split into three entries as follows:
"1567,1568 Lesser Whitethroat *S. curruca*"
"1569 Lesser Whitethroat *S. curruca*
Small Whitethroat *S. minula* "\$"
"1570 Lesser Whitethroat *S. curruca*
Hume's Whitethroat *S. althaea* "\$"
[according to 1993 Supplement.]
- p.76 1885-1890
[at least one of the races should be listed under
"? Blackbacked Wagtail *M. lugens*"
probably *ocularis* no. 1889, but there is as yet no agreement on how the species is to be split. We had failed to note this in Sibley & Monroe.]
- p.76 1881-1883 - in lower line change common name to:
"Citrine Wagtail"
[this is the name preferred by 1993 Supplement.]

p.76 1871,1872 - delete no. 1872 and insert new entry:
"1872 Water Pipit *A. spinoletta*
 American Pipit *A. rubescens* \$"
[Author's error; the race *japonicus* is regarded as part of
A. rubescens which Sibley & Monroe treated as separate.]

p.77 1785a - in lower line change common name to:
"Radde's Accentor"
[this is the name preferred by 1993 Supplement.]

p.78 1990-1992 - replace nos. with "1990,1992" and add entry:
"1991 Himalayan Greenfinch *C. spinoides*
 Blackheaded Greenfinch *C. ambigua* \$"
[Sibley & Monroe treated these as separate species and we
failed to notice; however, it is uncertain if it actually occurs
in our region.]

p.80 Godlewski's Bunting *E. godlewskii*
- add no. "2053,2054" and delete these nos. from previous
entry *E. cia*.
[author's error.]

p.81 - insert between nos. 2056 and 2046:
"# Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*"
[this species has recently been recorded several times in
Nepal. Add to list on p. 85:
RUSTISTIC BUNTING: Inskipp, C. & T. (1991) A Guide to the
Birds of Nepal. 2nd edition. p. 374.]

-----xxxxxxxxxx-----

25/3
/94

Blockley

16.3.94

Dear Aasheesh,

Have just received your letter and the draft for submission to Newsletter for B/w. A few corrections are noted and the copy returned to you now so that you can get it off to Sridhar.

Sorry not to be able to stop off in Hyderabad. We must certainly try to arrange a birding trip together at some time - perhaps to go and see Jerdon's Courser? I have been bullied into leading 2 or 3 natural history tours next winter for Cox & King's, one in November, the others probably in February, and will certainly add a few weeks for myself onto each. Currently I'm trying to get permission to go to Mizoram next January but we might try to get together in late October.

Don't forget to think about coming to Europe some time soon.

Best wishes to Smriti and all your family,

regards,

Andrew

AP
AASHEESH PITTIE

14-7-370 Begum Bazaar, Hyderabad - 500 012. India. Phone : R:35683 / O:43264.

[1/1]

REF: Your: Dt. 16.3.94.
Mine: GEN/2/94.

March 25, 1994

Mr. Andrew Robertson
2 St. Georges Terrace
Blockley
Moreton-in-Marsh
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UNITED KINGDOM

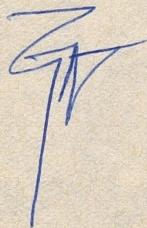
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- p.60 1484 - in lower line replace *robustipes* with *acanthizoides*,
 and delete "*".
 [1993 Supplement accepts that the specific name *robustipes* was misapplied.]
- p.60 1545 - add lower line:
 "Common Grasshopper Warbler *L. naevia*"
 [change to common name in 1993 Supplement.]
- p.60 1542,1543 - delete lower line.
 [no difference in common name in 1993 Supplement.]
- p.60 - insert between nos. 1495 and 1555:
 "# Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*"
 [two specimens were mist-netted and ringed in Ladakh in 1981. Add to list on p. 85:
 "SEDGE WARBLER: Williams, C. & Delaney, S. (1986) Migration through the northwest Himalayas. part 2 Bull. O.B.C., 3:11-16.]
- p.60 1553 - add no. "1554"
- p.61 1554 - delete entry
 [1993 Supplement accepts *A.orientalis* as a subspecies of *A.arundinaceus*.]
- p.61 1562,1563 - delete no. 1563, and create new entry:
 "1563 Booted Warbler *H. caligata*
 Sykes's Warbler *H. rama* \$"
 [1993 Supplement splits these into two separate species. This split seems to be accepted.]
- p.61 1574,1575 - change nos. to read "1574-1576"
 1576 - delete entry
 [1993 Supplement considers *sindianus* to be a subspecies of *P. collybita*.]
- p.62 1594-1596 - change no. to "1594,1595" and change lower line to read:
 "Palerumped Warbler *P. chloronotus*"
 [1993 Supplement accepts the split in *P. proregulus* proposed by Alstrom & Olsson (1990); they do not accept the validity of the race *newtoni* no. 1596.]
- p.62 1602-1604 - change nos. to "1602-1605"

next page

- p.62 1605 - delete entry
[according to 1993 Supplement *P. nitidus* should be considered a race of *P. trochiloides*.]
- p.63 1616-1619 - in lower line correct spelling to:
" *S. xanthoschistos*"
[Sibley & Monroe's spelling of the species name was a typo.]
- p.65 1297-1299 - replace nos. with "1298,1299"
[no. 1297 the race *maximus* is treated as a separate species by Sibley & Monroe but in fact there is no firm evidence for its occurrence in the region.]
- p.66 1181-1184
[it is likely that the 3 races occurring represent both *P. erythrocnemis* and *P. erythrogegensys*.]
- p.67 - insert between nos. 1197,1198 and 1199:
"# Nepal Wren-Babbler *Pnoepyga immaculata*"
[new species described from Nepal in 1991.
Add to list on p.85:
"NEPAL WREN-BABBLER: Martens, J. & Eck, C. (1991): J. Ornithol., 132:179-198."]
- p.70 1384,1385 - delete no. 1384, and create new entry:
"1384 Brownheaded Tit-Babbler *A. cinereiceps*
Ludlow's Fulvetta *A. ludlowi* \$"
[1993 Supplement accepts that *ludlowi* be elevated to full species status.]
- p.72 - insert between nos. 1247,1248 and 1566:
"# Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*"
[this species has been recorded in Ladakh in 1980 and 1981.
Add to list on p.85:
"GARDEN WARBLER: Williams, C. & Delaney, S. (1986) Bull. O.B.C., 3:13."]
- p.72 1567-1570 - split into three entries as follows:
"1567,1568 Lesser Whitethroat *S. curruca*"
"1569 Lesser Whitethroat *S. curruca*
Small Whitethroat *S. minula* "\$"
"1570 Lesser Whitethroat *S. curruca*
Hume's Whitethroat *S. althaea* "\$"
[according to 1993 Supplement.]
- p.76 1885-1890
[at least one of the races should be listed under
"? Blackbacked Wagtail *M. lugens*"
probably *ocularis* no. 1889, but there is as yet no agreement on how the species is to be split. ~~[We had failed to note this in Sibley & Monroe.]~~
- p.76 1881-1883 - in lower line change common name to:
"Citrine Wagtail"
[this is the name preferred by 1993 Supplement.]

p.76 1871,1872 - delete no. 1872 and insert new entry:

"1872 Water Pipit *A. spinoletta*
 American Pipit *A. rubescens* \$"

[~~Author's error~~ the race *japonicus* is regarded as part of *A. rubescens* which Sibley & Monroe treated as separate.]

p.77 1785a - in lower line change common name to:

"Radde's Accentor"

[this is the name preferred by 1993 Supplement.]

p.78 1990-1992 - replace nos. with "1990,1992" and add entry:

"1991 Himalayan Greenfinch *C. spinoides*
 Blackheaded Greenfinch *C. ambigua* \$"

[Sibley & Monroe treated these as separate species; ~~and we failed to notice~~ however, it is uncertain if it actually occurs in our region.]

p.80 Godlewski's Bunting *E. godlewskii*

- add no. "2053,2054" and delete these nos. from previous entry *E. cia*.

[~~author's error.~~]

p.81 - insert between nos. 2056 and 2046:

"# Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*"

[this species has recently been recorded several times in Nepal. Add to list on p. 85:]

RUSTISTIC BUNTING: Inskipp, C. & T. (1991) A Guide to the Birds of Nepal. 2nd edition. p. 374.]

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~~51~~
AASHEESH PITTIE

14-7-370 Begum Bazaar, Hyderabad - 500 012. India. Phone : R:315683 / O:43264.

[1/1]

REF: Your: nil.

May 11, 1994

Mr. Andrew Robertson
2 St. Georges Terrace
Blockley
Moreton-in-Marsh
GLOS. GL56 9BN
UNITED KINGDOM

Dear Andrew,

I have been going through the copy of *BIBLIOGRAPHY OF INDIAN BIRDS*, compiled by Tim Inskipp, which you had sent me some time ago. You have entered the following references, by hand, in the margins of this document. Could you send me Xeroxes of them please ?

1. Casement, M B (1990): Bombay notes. SEA SWALLOW. 39:70-72.
2. Jones, M E (1961): Sea birds in the river Hooghli. SEA SWALLOW. 14:58.
3. Simpson, D M (1984): Autumn migration of land birds in Bombay offshore waters. SEA SWALLOW. 33:53-58.

These will be for my database.

Thanking you and wishing you and the family all the very best.

Sincerely,



2 St. Georges Terrace
Blockley
Moreton-in-Marsh
Gloucestershire GL56 9BN
U.K.

1/10/94
95

5 June 1994

Dear Aasheesh,

I hope this letter finds you and your family flourishing and enjoying life. It is nearly a year since we've been in touch, which is much too long, not least because you have the most attractive wife of any of my friends in India, and one of the few that it is possible to have a decent conversation with! Really, we must get together again this winter. Why don't you plan a short break in the Western Ghats somewhere - Nilgiris or Periyar - and we can do a bit of exploring. Did you ever get a new pair of binoculars?

I imagine that you were behind the copy of *Mayura* which arrived in the post recently, and if so, thank you. It is nicely produced and interesting reading. Tim Inskipp doesn't seem to have been able to collate more than a single issue for his bibliography and I wonder if anyone in UK has a complete set of issues? It would be useful to have access to such a thing and if it exists, even in xerox form, perhaps you could send me one. I'll be happy to pay whatever it costs into the Birdwatcher's Society of AP coffers and will make sure Tim has access to it in order to update his bibliography.

Our little booklet for the OSI has rapidly become out-of-date, even disregarding the mistakes that were in it - for which I was very largely responsible - and the fact that firm decisions seem no nearer to being accepted. Have you yet come across a checklist of Palearctic birds by Mark Beaman? He goes into the changes in taxonomy and the question of English names in some detail and there are a surprising number of species included that are relevant to India. I was thinking of extracting some of these and writing a note to Zafar Futehally, but I'm not sure that there is really much interest in this long drawn out argument. However, I think you would probably find it useful -

"Palearctic Birds. A checklist of the birds of Europe, north Africa and Asia north of the foothills of the Himalayas." by Harrier Publications.

Would you like me to send you a copy?

AASHEESH PITTIE

14-7-370 Begum Bazaar, Hyderabad - 500 012. India. Phone : R:315603 / O:43264.

[1/1]

REF: Your: Nil.

June 22, 1994

Mr. Andrew Robertson
2 St. Georges Terrace
Blockley
Moreton-in-Marsh
GLOS. GL56 9BN
UNITED KINGDOM

Dear Andrew,

I am looking out for a new pair of binoculars and would like to purchase the best available for birding. Some of the brands I had in mind are Leica, Zeiss, Nikon, Bushnell.

Which glass do you recommend? I have written to all the above manufacturers, to offices in England, but I am not sure if they will reply. Could you do me a favour and have them send me brochures of their top-of-line binocs for birding, with indicated prices if possible? I would appreciate that very much indeed.

The only hitch, if it is that, is that I will purchase the pair in Singapore in late July 1994, and if these manufacturers could also mention the name of a dealer/dealers where I could get these binocs, it would be so much more useful.

I know I am giving you very short notice, but I would be very grateful if you could oblige.

With best wishes to the family,

Thanking You,

Yours sincerely,



2 St. Georges Terrace
Blockley
Moreton-in-Marsh
Gloucestershire GL56 9BN
U.K.

2 July 1994

Dear Aasheesh,

Got your letter re. binoculars. If I get in touch with dealers here you are unlikely to get any response from them before you leave for Singapore; so I will tell you what I know off the top of my head.

Firstly, with a good pair of bins that have a long guarantee period (up to 30 years with Leica) it is vital to buy them from a recognised dealer and keep the sales slip, etc. If something should go wrong you may need proof of purchase.

When I came back through Dubai last May I checked prices in the Duty Free. They were:

Leica	10x42BA	£600
	8x32BA	£520
	7x42BA	£680
	8x42BA	£680
	10x25BCA	£225
	8x20BCA	£210
	8x20BC	£176
Zeiss	6x20B	£270
	10x25B	£375
Nikon	10x25CFIII	£75
Habicht	8x20B	£275

These prices are around 20-25% less than what we would pay here.

Eighteen months ago Kumaran asked me to get him a pair of bins and in the end we decided on Habicht (Swarovski) SLCMkII 8x30B, which at that time cost about £380. The main reason was that these are the only ones that are fully guaranteed waterproof, which he felt was important in a humid monsoon climate. The other good makes are certainly water-resistant, but they are not actually guaranteed as such. The newest Leica and Zeiss are of course now filled with some liquid chemical so they must in fact be waterproof or else it would leak out.

Habicht is an Austrian glass and lens manufacturer that made a decision some years ago to challenge the best binocular manufacturers and they have established a very good reputation. I was talking to someone from the In Focus sales team at a recent OBC meeting and he confirmed that a lot of people are buying them and they are up to a very high standard. Kumaran is certainly very pleased with his.

Personally, I think Leica are unbeatable, and my 8 year old 8x40BA is quite superb and perfect for birdwatching. I can use them all day, day after day, without any noticeable eye-strain at all. When one of the lenses worked loose inside some years ago (I had left them in the glove box of a jeep while we were bashing around in the desert) Leica fixed it for nothing, no questions asked. But of course they are now selling for something in excess of £800.

There is no doubt that in binoculars you get what you pay for, with the possible exception of Swarovski where you can still get a little more than you are actually paying for.

Buy the best you can possibly afford.

all the best,

Andrew

57
94

Blockley

27.6.94

Dear Aasheesh,

Sorry to be so long replying to your letter. The only one of the Sea Swallow articles that I have in my collection is enclosed; it will be some time before I get back to the library where I know they have the others, but I'll try to remember to copy them for you some time.

Our project for a Newsletter for the Western Ghats seems to be making positive progress, and I hope the first issue may come out in 1995. Other things are all moving rather slowly and I plan to spend the rest of this summer concentrating on domestic issues, eg. house extensions, etc.

Hope you are all keeping well in Hyderabad.

best wishes and kind regards,

