

The Second Record of Band-bellied Crake *Porzana paykullii* for Thailand

On 7 November 2000, at ca. 1700 h, JW had climbed on to the roof of his house near Wat Laksi, Bangkok, with his binoculars, in order to check on a fire burning in nearby swampy areas. Satisfied that this posed no threat to property, he stopped to pick some tamarind pods and while doing so saw a movement in the swamp within a few metres of the wall of his house compound. He waited on the roof, and after several minutes a crake (Rallidae) emerged from the swamp. Using ROBSON(2000) and LEKAGUL& ROUND (1991) he was immediately able to identify the bird as Band-bellied Crake *Porzana paykullii*.

JW informed Ms. Sukanya Thanomphut who, in turn, informed PDR. PDR and ST arrived at JW's house at approximately 0630 h on 8 November. At JW's suggestion, he and PDR climbed on to the house-roof so as to overlook the swamp. ST remained at ground level. At 0745 h, the crake came into view and was seen by both observers on the house roof, though could not be seen by the observer at ground level. PDR and JW watched the bird for ca. 5 minutes at a range of about 10m. The bird walked back into denser vegetation and was lost from view. At around 0830 h PDR and JW again saw the bird. However, it was at this point apparently disturbed by some movement at ground-level by the house-compound wall, and ran off in the vegetation. It was not seen again that morning. ST and other observers looked for the bird again that afternoon without success, and others looked fruitlessly on the mornings of 9 November and 13 November. However, the same or another individual was again seen by JW on 19 November; by Mrs Sopitcha Tantitadapitak on 22 November (and again by JW roughly one week later; exact date not noted). There were no further sightings.

Description.—A small to medium sized crake, approximately the size and shape of Ruddy-breasted Crake *P. fusca*, with orange-rufous head and breast, and prominently black-and-white striped flanks and lower belly. No clear views of the under tail coverts were obtained. The upperparts were dark olive-brown, with some very fine white barring visible on the wing coverts. The crown and hindneck were dark olive brown and contrasted sharply with the orange-rufous sides of the head. The bill was grey-green; the legs reddish brown; the iris was red. No orbital ring was evident. The rather washed-out colour on the breast, and perhaps the brownish-tinged legs may suggest that the bird was an immature individual. (In reality, the colouration looked intermediate to that shown for adult and immature in ROBSON, *op. cit.*)

The habitat was a small swampy area in a suburb, more or less enclosed by houses and with no public access. The location, identified by use of an uncorrected Garmin 12 GPS, was 100° 34.3' E; 13° 53.8' N. Vegetation consisted predominantly of a dense bed of cat-tails *Typha angustifolia* with some *Colocasia*. There was a small open area close to the house wall in which the mud substrate was densely covered with fallen, rotting leaf-litter from the tamarind trees in the house yard, where the crake partly foraged. However, the crake largely kept in the vegetation, below the *Colocasia* leaves, sometimes being briefly in complete view, but more often not entirely visible.

This is the second record of Band-bellied Crake for Thailand. The only other was a specimen collected by H.M. Smith on 3 November 1925, also from Bangkok (RILEY,

1938). The coincidence of November dates for both records is interesting, suggesting that the species is a late autumn passage migrant. However crakes are notoriously hard to detect and there is a possibility that improved coverage may yield other Thai sightings for the non-breeding period.

Band-bellied Crake is a globally near-threatened species which breeds in NE China, the Amur Basin, and possibly the Korean peninsula, and apparently winters mainly in Borneo and Java (BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL, 2001). WELLS (1999) mentioned "a handful of records" for peninsular Malaysia, where most sightings accorded with likely passage, from 22 September to 20 November, and from 30 April to 2 May, though he also mentioned single records from late December and early February. The observed habitat was damp forest floor (in Taman Negara National Park) and open swamp on the western coastal plain. According to DEL HOYO *ET AL.* (1996) the Band-bellied Crake winters in wet grassland, swamps and paddyfields.

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