

# Letters to the Editors



## Pelicans in Pakistan

Dear Sirs,

With great interest I read the note "Apparent unrecorded migratory route of Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus* in Nag Valley, Pakistan" by Nadeem *et al.* in *BirdingASIA* 5: 73–74. Information on the occurrence of pelicans in this area is certainly well worth publishing. However, when I looked at the accompanying photograph I had the immediate impression that the birds shown here are not Dalmatian but Great White Pelicans *P. onocrotalus* (GWP). My opinion is based on the following features:

- typical jizz of GWP, especially the head shape with a short drooping nape-crest visible in some individuals (rather than the recurved crest of Dalmatian);
- head pattern like GWP, with pouch extending far back on sides of neck;
- strong contrast (white/brown) on upperparts, especially in immature birds;
- bird number two from left seem to have pale pinkish legs.

Krys Kazmierczak kindly sent me the original photograph. I forwarded it to Dr Alain Crivelli, Chair of the IUCN Pelican Specialist Group, asking for his opinion on the specific

identity of the birds. He replied (pers. comm., August 2006) "No problems, those pelicans are Great White Pelicans *Pelecanus onocrotalus*, most of them adults and several one- and two-year-old birds (with dark brown feathers)". Meanwhile I have shown the photograph to a number of birdwatchers and they are divided about 50:50, with a number of "don't knows" (Brian Sykes pers. comm., September 2006).

I appreciate that the quality of the photograph is rather poor (low resolution of the file which was sent to OBC), and that identification based on this kind of source is difficult. However, the note in *BirdingASIA* contained nothing on how the birds had been determined as Dalmatian Pelicans. I suggest to follow up the identification (obtaining further photographs and probably field notes by the authors) so that the specific identity of the pelicans in Nag Valley (Dalmatian, Great White, or both species) can be established beyond doubt.

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## Five new species for the Oriental Bird Club region (north-west border)

Dear Sirs,

Recently, the territory that the Oriental Bird Club (OBC) covers was extended up to the Russian North East (E of 90°E) and as far as the Arctic and Pacific Oceans. Consequently the current OBC Checklist (Inskipp *et al.* 1996) now includes 71 new bird species from this area (OBC Bull. 31: 6–7). Unfortunately, most of the ornithological information from these regions is in Russian, and in most cases only the names of local villages are given without further information on the localities, without any details of other geographical coordinates. I have worked near the western border of the Oriental Region and made personal observations and collected information from the literature on five more bird species located east of 90°E which need to be included in the OBC checklist; further details can be found in the new Russian checklist (Koblik *et al.* 2006).

### Great Skua *Catharacta skua*

Three observations from Bolshevik Island (79°16'N 101°45'E) (Severnaya Zemlya Archipelago). On 23 July and 10 August 1991 two birds were observed, and one individual registered on 5 August 1991 (Volkov & Pridatko 1994).

### Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

Very rare breeding species, registered only once east of 90°E. On 16 June 1983 a pair building a nest on the birch tree (56°02'N 90°23'E) (Zhukov 1995).

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### Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Rare breeding species. Pair with 3 eggs in nest found on 17 June 1934 near Krasnoyarsk (92°45'E) (Yudin 1952); rare breeder on the Kacha river (56°14'N 92°25'E) in 1993–1998 (Baykalov *et al.* 1999); female with brood in the Stolby reserve on 16 July 2001 (55°55'N 92°40'E) (Arkhipov & van Steenis 2004).

### Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Rare breeding species. There are two breeding records from the area around Krasnoyarsk: female with brood-patch collected on 15 July 1927 (56°05'N 92°45'E), and juveniles from the brood collected on 9 August 1943 (Yudin 1952). Many records of birds from the Yenisei river valley, north and south of Krasnoyarsk, throughout the twentieth century (Rogacheva 1992). Some birds observed in August 1983 (56°02'N 90°23'E) (Zhukov 1995).

### Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*

This species was regularly registered in the Yenisei river valley and up to the Angara river in the twentieth century (Sushkin 1938, Rogacheva 1992).

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