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All Authors	Sai Sein Lin Oo, Myint Kyaw, Koen Meyers & Swen C. Renner
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NOTEBOOK

White-winged Duck *Asarcornis scutulata* recorded in the Hkakabo Razi Landscape, Kachin State, Myanmar

SAI SEIN LIN OO, MYINT KYAW, KOEN MEYERS & SWEN C. RENNER

Introduction

White-winged Duck *Asarcornis scutulata* occurs in north-east India, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia (Choudhury 2007, Tordoff *et al.* 2007, Robson 2008, Selvan *et al.* 2013, Renner *et al.* 2015) and is listed as Endangered (BirdLife International 2018). Information from Myanmar post-1948 is lacking, especially from Kachin State in the far north. Tordoff *et al.* (2007) noted that in 2003–2005, White-winged Duck was recorded from three different localities in Kachin State—Tania River, Warazup and Kamaing—with a total of 20 birds observed in ox-bows and small pools during a series of surveys. In 2001 White-winged Ducks were reported along the Nam Tamai River around Nagwa and in 2006 around U Ring Ga (Renner *et al.* 2015). However, in total there are few reliably-documented records of White-winged Duck from Myanmar.

Observations

On 17 December 2017 a male and a female White-winged Duck were observed on a small pond (Plate 1) between Hpan Khaing and Man Say Khun villages, Putao township, Kachin State, which is within the Hkakabo Razi Landscape—a proposed World Heritage Site. Subsequently, the pair was recorded twice more at the same place, on 18 and 26 December 2017. These are the first records for the Putao Plains.

Plate 1. A pair of White-winged Duck *Asarcornis scutulata* in the Hkakabo Razi Landscape, Kachin State, Myanmar, 17 December 2017.



The small pond where the birds were seen is located in swampy lowland riparian forest with dominant rattan and shrubby vegetation (Plate 2); this area is relatively inaccessible due to the swampy nature of the terrain and has a low level of anthropogenic activity.

Discussion

The world population of White-winged Duck is estimated to be between 250–999 individuals, with ‘a few hundred’ in Myanmar (BirdLife International 2018), and is declining throughout its range due to habitat loss and degradation, and disturbance. The species is mostly associated with small streams and pools within evergreen forests (Smythies 1986, Das & Deori 2012); it is shy in nature, hence most likely under-recorded. Since all records that we are aware of from north Myanmar are between December and April, we assume that the species is at least wintering in the area, but breeding has not yet been established for Kachin State.

The Hkakabo Razi Landscape is one of the few sites worldwide where large areas of ‘untouched’ forests remain (Suarez-Rubio *et al.* in prep.). Leimgruber *et al.* (2005) and Renner *et al.* (2007) show that northern Kachin State holds South-East Asia’s last large tracts of relatively undisturbed forest. Therefore, suitable habitats still exist in the Hkakabo Razi Landscape and protection as a World Heritage Site under the UNESCO conventions

Plate 2. Habitat where the White-winged Ducks were recorded, 17 December 2017.



criteria (ix) and (x) would support the population of White-winged Duck there.

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SAI SEIN LIN OO

Department of Zoology, University of Mandalay
05032 Maha Aung Myay Township, Mandalay
Myanmar

MYINT KYAW

Hponkan Razi Wildlife Sanctuary Headquarters
Putao, Kachin State, Myanmar

Koen MEYERS

Nairobi, Kenya

Swen C. RENNER


Institute of Zoology, BOKU
Gregor-Mendel-Straße 33, 1180 Vienna, Austria
Email: swen.renner@boku.ac.at

Birding Thailand



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Nature Trails Thailand
www.naturetrails-thailand.com
 email: ntrails@truemail.co.th and
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 +66 83 615 5526



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