

around the side of the neck was short, and that it did not extend around the back of the neck as it did on the Rose-ringed Parakeets. Instead there was a fairly prominent pinkish hind-collar that was broader than that on the accompanying Rose-ringed Parakeets.

Alexandrine Parakeet is considered to be a scarce or locally common resident in Myanmar (except south Tenasserim) (C. Robson *in litt.* 2004). It has also been recorded at Bhamo, where Fea apparently noted it sometime in 1885–1886 (see Salvadori 1887) and described it as ‘found generally in numerous small groups’. There is also a specimen of Alexandrine Parakeet collected at Bhamo in the Natural History Museum, Tring, U.K. (S. Schoedel *in litt.* 2004). Robson (*in litt.* 2004) considered Rose-ringed Parakeet to be a locally common resident in Myanmar (except south Tenasserim) but there appear to be no historical records of Rose-ringed Parakeet from Bhamo or elsewhere in Kachin state, although the species was recently encountered there by van der Ven (2001). Rose-ringed Parakeet is recorded as a resident in eastern Myanmar, in the northern Shan States (as are the other two species) in a distribution list lacking details in Smythies (1953). The next closest records are to the south-west, in central Myanmar, from Shwebo (Sagaing Division), where it was found to be common by Roseveare (1949).

Rose-ringed Parakeet was described by Cheng (1987) as ‘very rare in the wild’ in China; he listed it from Hong Kong, Macao and Zhuhai in Guangdong. Unfortunately he did not make it clear whether he regarded these records as relating to a native or a feral population, but Carey *et al.* (2001) noted that ‘in the absence of records in China away from the Pearl River region, there is little doubt that the populations in Hong Kong and nearby are all of captive origin’. The Hong Kong population, introduced early in the 1990s, remains the only one in China about which there appears to be any information, although free-flying birds have also been seen in Macao in recent years (Liu Yang *in litt.* 2004). Rose-ringed Parakeet remains a popular cage bird throughout China, and it is possible that my Ruili sightings of this and Alexandrine Parakeet relate to free-flying escaped birds. This origin is perhaps all the more likely as N. Farrell (*in*

*litt.* 2004) reported what were probably the same birds (‘between eight and ten’) in this area on two dates between 28 January and 4 February 2003, and again ‘about eight’ there around 22 February 2004.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to: Geoff Carey and Jesper Hornskov for comments on the status of these species in China; Craig Robson and Tim Inskipp for equally knowledgeable, well-informed comments on the species’s status elsewhere in South-East Asia; and Simon Schoedel, Liu Yang and Norm Farrell for additional information.

## REFERENCES

- Cheng, Tso-hsin (1987) *A synopsis of the avifauna of China*. Beijing: Science Press.
- Dymond, N. and Thompson, P. (2000) Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush *Garrulax rufogularis*: a new species for China. *Forktail* 16: 183.
- Harington, H. H. (1909–1910) A list of the birds of the Bhamo District of Upper Burma. *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.* 19: 107–128, 299–313.
- Hornbuckle, J. (2002) Birding in Yunnan, Southwest China: 8–31 March 2002. Unpublished internet report.
- Hornskov, J. (1999). Birds seen in Western Yunnan, China. Unpublished internet report.
- MacKinnon, J. and Phillipps, K. (2000). *A field guide to the birds of China*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Robson, C. (2000). *A field guide to the birds of South-East Asia*. London: New Holland.
- Roseveare, W. L. (1949) Notes on birds of the irrigated area of Shwebo District, Burma. *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.* 48: 515–534, 729–749.
- Salvadori, T. (1887) Viaggio di L. Fea in Birmania e regioni vicine, 1. Uccelli raccolti nella Birmania Superiore (1885–1886). *Ann. Mus. Civ. Stor. Nat. Genova* (2a)4: 568–617.
- Smythies, B. E. (1953) *The birds of Burma*. Second edition. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd.
- van der Ven, J. (2001) Myanmar expedition, 1999–2000 report: second expedition, December 2000/January 2001. Unpublished report.

Paul I. Holt, New Laund Farm, Greenhead Lane, Fence, Burnley, Lancashire, BB12 9DU, U.K. Email: piholt@hotmail.com

# Cooperative provisioning of nestlings in the White-crested Laughingthrush *Garrulax leucolophus*

PHILIP D. ROUND

Most species of laughingthrush (Garrulacinae) are strongly social birds and some have long been suspected to be cooperative breeders, although none was identified as such in a recent review by Ligon and Burt (2004). Unlike some confirmed social breeders (e.g. *Turdoides* babblers, found in open, arid or semi-arid habitats, and relatively easily observed), laughingthrushes are usually shy denizens of dense, moist forest which renders detailed observation difficult. I present here the results of brief and opportunistic observations of a White-crested Laughingthrush *Garrulax*

*leucolophus* nest in Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary, Uthai Thani province, Western Thailand (15°36′N 99°16′E), which indicate that the species is a cooperative breeder.

I was watching at least five White-crested Laughingthrushes in relatively open deciduous woodland at the sanctuary headquarters on the afternoon of 12 August 2005, when one member of the group flew in to a large, untidy cup-nest that I had not previously noticed. The nest was situated in a small leafy tree, close to the trunk, at a height of about 5 m, and contained two well-

grown nestlings. Because of the proximity of buildings and frequent human foot traffic, the laughingthrushes were relatively habituated to people and I was able to count at least five birds feeding mainly on the ground within a 30 m radius of the nest. The area around the nest encompassed open woodland, from which the underbrush had been removed, close to houses, as well as some denser forest with tangled undergrowth in a steep-sided gully.

I watched the nest without interruption from 14h53 to 15h28 at a range of about 20 m. At 15h08, three birds came to the nest tree and two of them delivered food in quick succession, while the third individual perched less than 0.5 m from the nest. At 15h20, two individuals again visited the nest and fed the young, while a third bird perched nearby with a spider in its bill. However, this bird did not visit the nest and probably consumed the spider itself. After dark (19h40) I checked the nest by flashlight from a range of about 15 m, and with the aid of binoculars could see an adult brooding the young.

On the following morning I watched the nest from 06h13 to 07h00, during which period the adults paid it a total of 15 separate visits. From 06h19 to 06h29, there were no fewer than eight visits to feed the nestlings (including three feeds by three different individuals within one minute). A fourth individual that fed the young at 06h17, and again at 06h33, was individually recognisable as it had a yellow gape-spot on the right side. In addition, because the habitat was rather open, most birds could be located in view simultaneously, aiding differentiation of individuals. The usual pattern was for one bird to feed the young, and then remain on the nest until another bird came in and displaced it. At least four different individuals in the group provisioned the young.

The young were already well-grown, with partly grown wing and tail feathers, a black-and-white face pattern, and rufous upperparts similar to the adult pattern. On the morning of 13 August, one of the nestlings clambered out of the nest and perched c.20 cm above it, flapping its wings for 20–30 seconds before returning to the nest. When I checked the nest that evening, it was empty and the young were presumed to have fledged.

In addition to the two visits (out of six) on 12 August when no food was delivered to the chicks, the 15 visits on the following day also included three cases when an adult

perched close to the nest but did not feed the young. Two of these visits involved the individual with the yellow gape-spot. In one of these, the bird came to the nest without food, while in the other it consumed the food itself. Such behaviours (adults either coming in to the nest without food or consuming the food themselves) are well known among other birds that have nest-helpers. Boland *et al.* (1997) termed the behaviour ‘deceptive helping’ and thought it was a form of advertisement that individuals used to enhance their status within the group, perhaps increasing their future likelihood of acquiring a mate (Putland 2001). However, Canestrari *et al.* (2002) observed these behaviours, which they termed ‘false feeding’, in instances when no other individuals were present as onlookers, and also at unassisted nests (those that lacked helpers). Since breeding females exhibited this behaviour more often than other group members, Canestrari *et al.* (2002) suggested that deception was unlikely to be involved, and that the decision to provision the chicks represented a trade-off between the chicks’ hunger and that of the provisioning adult.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Kihoko Tokue and Andrew Pierce for their comments on this manuscript.

## REFERENCES

- Boland, C. R. J., Heinshohn, R. and Cockburn, A. (1997) Deception by helpers in cooperatively breeding white-winged choughs and its experimental manipulation. *Behav. Ecol. Sociobiol.* 41: 251–156.
- Canestrari, D., Marcos, J. M. and Baglione V. (2002) False feedings at the nests of Carrion Crows *Corvus corone corone*. *Behav. Ecol. Sociobiol.* 55: 477–483.
- Ligon, J. D. and Burt, D. B. (2004) Evolutionary origins. Pp. 5–34 in W. D. Koenig and J. L. Dickinson, eds. *Ecology and evolution of cooperative breeding in birds*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K.
- Putland, D. (2001) Has sexual selection been overlooked in the study of avian helping behaviour? *Anim. Behav.* 62: 811–814.

Philip D. Round, Department of Biology, Faculty of Science, Mahidol University, Rama 6 Road, Bangkok 10400, Thailand.  
Email: pdround@ksc.th.com

# Nesting of the Scarlet-breasted Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus bernsteinii*

PETER S. LANSLEY and ROBERT F. FARNES

In September 2005, we found an active nest of the Scarlet-breasted Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus bernsteinii* at a site not far from Kali Batu Putih near Sidangoli, Halmahera, Indonesia, while searching for endemic bird species in the area. Scarlet-breasted Fruit Dove is a medium-sized, sexually dimorphic fruit dove endemic to Halmahera and its satellite islands of Bacan, Ternate and Obi, in the

Moluccas group of eastern Indonesia (White and Bruce 1986, Coates and Bishop 1997).

Over several days we birded a narrow logging track leading north from a site known locally as ‘Gunung Jen’, 12 km by road east of Sidangoli at c.0°55′N 127°34′E. The site was a remnant of selectively logged primary forest at c.400 m. On 10 September, we flushed a smallish pigeon