

A record of the Grey-bellied *Tesia* *Tesia cyalliventer*
(Aves: Sylviidae) from Doi Inthanon, Northern Thailand

Three species of the genus *Tesia* are known to occur in Thailand: Chestnut-headed *Tesia* *T. castaneocoronata*, Slaty-bellied *Tesia* *T. cyaniventer*, and Grey-bellied *Tesia* *T. cyaniventer* (KING *ET AL.*, 1975). Whereas the former two species are fairly common in the undergrowth of montane forest at several localities in northern Thailand (ROUND, 1983; LEKAGUL & ROUND, 1991), *cyaniventer* was hitherto known in Thailand from a single specimen in the collection of Dr. Boonsong Lekagul (No. K 3600), a male collected on 25 January 1959 at ca. 1,400 m, on Doi Phu Kha, located at ca. 19° 04' N, 101° 01' E in Pua District, Nan Province (P. D. Round, in litt.).

The identity of the grey-bellied *tesias* of mainland Asia has been debated in the literature for a long time. The two taxa have often been treated as dark- and pale-bellied forms of a single species, notwithstanding Ludlow's extensive account (in LUDLOW & KINNEAR, 1937) of their respective diagnostic characters and apparent altitudinal segregation (LUDLOW & KINNEAR, 1937; ALL & RIPLEY, 1973).

When examining the holdings of the genus *Tesia* in United States National Museum of Natural History (USNM), Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., the author noted a single specimen of *cyaniventer* which was identified by its collector as *olivea*, among a small series of *olivea* collected on Doi Inthanon (Chiang Mai Province, northern Thailand). The details are listed below.

Material examined: USNM 535404, male (testes 1.3 mm), collected on 9 December 1964 at ca. 1,490 m, Doi Inthanon, by Ben King, field number 425. Measurements: wing 53, tail 20, tarsus 23.5, bill (to base of skull) 16 mm. The bill-coloration was noted by the collector as "mx [maxilla] black; rictus and mand. [mandible] orange-yellow, mandible tipped blackish-brown; . . . mouth orange-yellow".

The specimen stood out among the series of *olivea* because of its paler underparts, especially the greyish-white centre of the abdomen. Furthermore, the bird showed a darker crown, concolorous with the nape and back, a paler green supercilium, and a noticeable dark eye-stripe. The specimen was critically compared with four *olivea* specimens from Doi Inthanon (USNM 535400–535403) collected by Ben King during 13 to 26 November 1964 at altitudes between 1,490 and 2,560 m. The colour of the bill of these specimens was noted as "maxilla black, tipped horn; mandible, rictus and mouth orange". This (subtle) difference corresponds well with the consistent difference first noted by Kinnear (in LUDLOW & KINNEAR, 1937; see also KING *ET AL.*, 1975). Other comparative material examined in USNM consisted of 8 specimens of *olivea* from Doi Chiang Dao and Doi Pha Hom Pok, Chiang Mai Province, and 17 specimens of *cyaniventer*, from Nepal and Viet Nam (Langbian Plateau).

Whereas the identification of museum specimens in good condition is relatively straightforward, separation of the two in the field is not, due to their generally restless, skulking

behaviour in the dark understorey of primary forest. Vocalizations of *cyaniventer* have not been previously critically compared with those of *olivea* (SMYTHIES, 1949; ALI & RIPLEY, 1973; KING *ET AL.* 1975) and the differences observed may be a good clue to their identification. KING (1989) figured sonagrams of *cyaniventer* and *olivea* when pointing out differences between the vocalizations of representatives of the genera *Tesia* and *Urosphena*. The occurrence of *cyaniventer* on Doi Inthanon is not unexpected in view of its occurrence at Nam Khueng in neighbouring northwestern Laos (DELACOUR & GREENWAY, 1940). Where they occur sympatrically, *olivea* is usually replaced by *cyaniventer* at higher altitudes (ALI & RIPLEY, 1973). It remains to be determined whether perhaps a small resident population of *cyaniventer*—previously overlooked—exists on Doi Inthanon. Seasonal altitudinal migration of both species in the Himalayas is well documented but no latitudinal movements have been reported from members of the genus *Tesia*. Although Doi Inthanon is a well known and—especially in winter and spring—well watched locality for northern migrant passerines, it may be useful to point out that several high altitude species with a mainly Himalayan range, such as Grey Bushchat *Saxicola ferrea*, Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thruhs *Monticola rufiventris* and Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker *Dicaeum melanoxanthum*—listed as migrants to northwestern Thailand by KING *ET AL.* (1975)—have in recent years been observed repeatedly on Doi Inthanon during the northern summer months, and breed in small numbers (ROUND 1983; LEKAGUL & ROUND, 1991).

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