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**NOTES ON THE TAXONOMY OF SOME BORNEAN BIRDS****G.W.H. Davison****ABSTRACT**

Notes are given on the approach adopted towards four difficult taxonomic problems in a new edition of "The Birds of Borneo" by B.E. Smythies (1999).

Two forms of partridge in the genus *Rhizothera* show no evidence of interbreeding, and are ranked here as full species. Two forms of shama in the genus *Copsychus* are retained as full species following Inskipp et. al. (1996), so as to conform with other recent literature, but intermediate specimens are interpreted as evidence of intergradation between the two forms, not overlap. Two forms of fork-tail in the genus *Enicurus* are retained as subspecies of *E. leschenaultii*. Two forms of spiderhunter in the genus *Arachnothera* are recognized as full species, but this requires a name change for the commoner form throughout Southeast Asia, from *A. affinis* to *A. modesta*.

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by

G.W.H. Davison

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## INTRODUCTION

In working on a revised edition of "The Birds of Borneo", a book which has already undergone three editions (Smythies 1960, 1968, 1981), it has been necessary to address several taxonomic problems. Four of these are set out below. Otherwise, it is intended that nomenclature in the fourth edition will generally follow that used by Inskipp *et. al.* (1996).

## TAXONOMIC CONCLUSIONS

### *Rhizothera longirostris* and *R. dulitensis*

The Long-billed Partridge *Rhizothera longirostris* was first described by Temminck as a member of the genus *Perdix*, but two dates are quoted for his description. Smythies (1957, 1960, 1981), van Marle & Voous (1988) and Sibley & Monroe (1990) give the reference as Temminck 1807 but do not quote title or page details. Ogilvie-Grant (1893, 1896), Peters (1934), Chasen (1935) and Johnsgard (1988) give the reference as Temminck 1815. This

reference is to the *Histoire des Pigeons et des Gallinacés*, iii, pp. 323 and 721, and the correct date of publication is 1815. The type locality was Sumatra (Peters 1934). It was quoted as North Sumatra by Smythies (1957) but there is no extant specimen in Dutch collections from there; all known Sumatran specimens are from the southern half of that island (van Marle & Voous 1988).

From Borneo a second taxon was described from a male and female collected by Charles Hose on Mount Dulit, Sarawak. This second taxon was originally described as a species, *Rhizothera dulitensis*, by Ogilvie-Grant (1895). Ogilvie-Grant (1896) gave a description and illustration. With a shift in breadth of the species concept Peters (1934), Chasen (1935), and apparently all subsequent authors have accepted the taxon *dulitensis* as a subspecies of *Rhizothera longirostris*, making this genus monospecific.

The taxon known as *R. l. longirostris* has now been recorded from lowland forest in the Malay Peninsula from nearly sea level up to 1500 m (Medway & Wells 1976; Wells 1983), lowland Sumatra up to 1000 m (van Marle & Voous 1988), and lowland Borneo. This taxon is morphologically uniform throughout its wide range. All the Borneo records are from the lowlands. They include a breeding record from the vicinity of Pontianak, West Kalimantan (Coomans de Ruiter 1946); Kota Waringin in West Kalimantan (collection by Meyen, now in the American Museum of Natural History); Muara Tewe in Central Kalimantan (collection by G. Fischer, formerly in the Hesse Museum, Darmstadt, Germany but destroyed in the Second World War: Smythies 1960); Banjarmasin in South Kalimantan (collection by H. Breitenstein: Everett 1899); southwestern Sarawak in the vicinity of Kuching and at Paku on the Saribas river (Smythies 1957); and a previously overlooked collection by Everett at Paitan, Sabah (specimen in Royal Ontario Museum). Birds presumably this form have been reported from Danum Valley, southeastern Sabah (Showler 1993), and two localities close to Lempuneh on the lower Mahakam river, East Kalimantan (Gönnér in press a, b). All these sites are below 200 m altitude. The records from southwestern Sarawak, Kota Waringin and Paitan are apparently supported by extant specimens, all of them being typical *longirostris*.

There are very few records of the taxon *dulitensis*. It was first collected at 4000 ft (1220 m) on Mount Dulit (Hose 1893), and has subsequently been obtained at 3000 ft (915 m) on Mount Batu Song (Smythies 1957) and on Mount Murud, Sarawak (one skin in NHM, Tring). There is a reference to *Rhizothera longirostris* in a compilation of native bird names by Comber (1971), compiled in the vicinity of Sapong Estate, which lies at about 550 m altitude in fairly level country about 25 km south of Tenom, Sabah, northern Borneo. This list was compiled when all of the standard literature regarded