

### Notes on sighting of Streaked Bulbul *Ixos malaccensis*

Date: 26 November 2002

Location: Summit of Bukit Timah Nature Reserve (BTNR) 165 m asl

Time: 9.25 am to 10.15 am

Weather: Cloudy, with light drizzles towards later part of morning

Distance: about 50 metres

Equipment: Swarovski & Leica 10 x 42 binoculars

Observers: Alfred Chia, Avian Chia & Tan Bee Lan

### Background & report

There have been reports on the WildBird egroup of 3 fruiting fig trees at BTNR from around 21/11 through to 25/11. I was at the stream along Rock Path while the other 2 were on the summit. A good accompaniment of species were sighted including all 3 resident leafbirds, Thick-billed Green-pigeons, Jambu Fruit-doves, probable Siberian Thrushes, Eye-browed Thrushes, Fairy-bluebirds, Yellow-vented Flowerpecker, Ashy, Cream-vented and Streaked Bulbuls and even a female Crimson-winged Woodpecker! I went up on this date, hoping to catch at least some of these actions, knowing full well that the fruiting was about to end.

Reaching the summit at about 9.10 am, some other birdwatchers were already there. These included Jimmy Chew, Richard Ollington, Elizabeth Loh, Ulf Remahl and Horst Flotow. I was right – the figs were almost done for, with only the one beside the transmitting tower having the last of the figs. Not much activity about as the birds had been chased away earlier on by the presence of 2 soaring White-bellied Fish-eagles above the summit (I was told by those who were earlier than me). A male Thick-billed Green-pigeon was scoped in, some Asian Glossy Starlings feeding nosily, Scarlet-backed Flowerpeckers flitting here and there and a good female Mugimaki Flycatcher perching on some dead branches for all to see. Ashy Bulbuls started to call from somewhere behind the dense fig tree. Finally flew in to good views, with at least 3 seen. Then, a soft rattling sound was heard when 4 birds began its flight from the canopy of the fig tree to another nearby. These were the Streaked Bulbuls, its large size and diagnostic flight call unmistakable. They then flew back to the fig tree and perched in the canopy yet again, hopping from branch to branch, affording decent views of their features. During the time of observation, they were flying periodically from tree-top to tree-top, each time accompanied by the rattling call.

### Description

- a large bulbul, when compared to our Yellow-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus goiavier*.
- Thin, white streaks on throat and breast were clearly seen
- Greyish throat
- Bill were noticeably longer, when compared to resident bulbuls
- Upperparts a dark shade of olive colour
- Belly dull whitish

- Vent or undertail coverts white
- Tail olive-brown

### **Discussion**

Lim, 1997 states that the Streaked Bulbul is a “very rare visitor to Bukit Timah (one record). However, just a week or two before this sighting, another *I. malaccensis*, was mist-netted at the Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserves. Some photos of this catch were taken and measurements made. This would then make the sighting at BTNR the third record. Thanks are in order for those who have seen the bird earlier and made known their sighting – Andrew Chow, Yong Dingli and Low Bingwen.

### **References**

- K.S.Lim & Gardner (1997). Birds: An Illustrated Field Guide to the Birds of Singapore. Sun Tree Publishing Ltd., Singapore
- Robson, C. (2000). A Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia. New Holland Publishers, U.K.

Report by Alfred Chia  
3 December 2002