

Note on the First record of Rusty-capped Fulvetta, *Alcippe dubia* (Hume 1874), for Thailand.

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During November 21-27, 2000, we started to survey the natural trail of Maewong National Park in Kamphaeng Phet province with its rangers for collecting necessary data to produce educational guidebook to natural resources of Doi Mogoju (15° 56' N, 99° 06' E), the highest point of the Park bordering Kamphaeng Phet and Nakhon Sawan provinces.

On November 23, 2000, we trekked up to 1,600 meters high from the sea level. The plant community change from Mix Deciduous and Dry Evergreen Forest at lower altitudes to Hill Evergreen Forest. On the mountain ridge, while we were walking along the shrub and secondary growth, we noticed a flock of 9-10 little birds at ten meters away. They actively hopped from branch to branch up to the 0.5-1 m. above ground and looked very cautious, moving around the area.

We all realized they were a kind of Fulvetta : *Alcippe* sp., which none of our group has never seen before. Their overall coloration made us, at first, think that they were Rufous-throated Fulvetta : *A. rufogularis*. On the contrary, there are no chestnut gorget across lower throat, which are the most outstanding character of Rufous-throated Fulvetta. Not far from the original spot, we observed 20 more

birds and all of them were in the same species.

They kept coming to our notices along the trail to the Mogoju peak, making us certainly feel that they had not been recorded yet in Thailand. As we were sure that these birds are not mentioned even in *A Guide to the Birds of Thailand*, by Boonsong Lekagul and Phillip D. Round, we, so, noted down some necessary details of the birds in order to identify their proper species later

Nevertheless, we could not identify species at the time, we recognized the Appendix 2 in *A Guide to the Birds of Thailand* mentioning other possibilities of finding other species of Fulvetta called Brown-capped Fulvetta in Thailand. On returning to the National Park Headquarter on December 28, 2000, we compared the written-down details with *A Field Guide to the Birds of Thailand and South-East Asia*, by Craig Robson. In conclusion, we realized that the birds found were Rusty-capped Fulvetta, *Alcippe dubia*, formerly a subspecies of Brown-capped Fulvetta : *A. brunnea*. At present, their common names are changed to Rusty-capped Fulvetta whereas the common name of *A. brunnea* is a Dusky Fulvetta (Inskipp.*et.al.*, 1996). Thus, this can be considered the first discovery of Rusty-capped Fulvetta in Thailand.

DESCRIPTION : Looks like other species of Fulvetta but their beaks are black and quite short. They have slim and long tails.

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Fig. 1 Photograph taken by W. Sanguansombat (Feb., 2001) from Doi Mokoju, Nakhon Sawan, Thailand.

Their neck, upperpart, underpart, including wings and tail are all dark brown. In bright light, the centre of their abdomen looked lighter brown to white with dark reddish brown crown. The most distinctive point of this bird is that its forehead and front are distinctively in orange-brown in color. Eyebrows white with many fine black lines between it and adjoining dark rufous head. Some of them have dark brown faces and ear-coverts whereas the others have them almost black. Also, there are pale feathers growing as a tiny thin line around this part.

Craig, (2000) informs that this species dwells in edge of broadleaved evergreen forest and secondary growth, scrub and bamboo between 1,000-1,600 meters which positively corresponds to the Mogoju peak's natural environment. This Fulvetta will be found in the open forest edge and along mountain ridge, where the trees sparsely grow and climbing plants thickly cover the ground. They are first discovered at the area of 1,600 meters high from the sea level up to the peak, around 1,960 meters high.

From our observations, this Fulvetta gathers and forages in group. They are easily frightened so they live and gather their foods on the ground, thickly covered with climbing plants. In our memory, the Rusty-capped Fulvetta will not hop or fly higher than 1.5 meters. They do normally appear in the clearings. Whenever they are frightened, they will swiftly hide themselves in the closest shrubs. That is why most bird watchers hardly observe them. However, they are generally found in flocks of 2-10 and they live together with other species in Birds Wave, especially Grey-cheeked Fulvetta : *A. morrisonia*, Rufous-winged Fulvetta : *A. castaneiceps*, Burmese Yunina : *Yuhina humilis* and Mountain Tailorbird : *Orthotomus cuculatus*.

Our first photograph of the birds was not very clear but can use to identify to confirm the present record. However, we had a second chance to take their photos again during our return trip on February 20, 2001.

After the first discovery, Rusty-capped Fulvetta was found again on the mountain of Doi Kajela (16° 10' N, 99° 02' E), Umphang

Wildlife Sanctuary, Tak province. (Round and Pattanavibool, 2003). A few pictures were taken.

Rusty-capped Fulvetta is originally found in the northeastern part of India and Bhutan. Even today they are rare and there is not much collected information about them. (Grimmett *et.al.*, 1998) Besides, this Fulvetta appears to be an uncommon resident in the southwest of China. (MacKinnon and Duckworth, 1996). In Southeast Asia, they are found in Myanmar, Indo-China (Robson, 2000) and the west of Thailand, Doi Mogoju. Lately, the birds were found, not far from Mogoju's peak, in the north of Tenasserim in Myanmar, which is opposite to the western side of Thai border line.

After several observations at Mogoju's peak and Khajela's peak, Rusty-capped Fulvetta appears to be encountered quite often to the bird watchers. In Thailand, we can conclude its status to be a fairly common locally resident.

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