

## COUNTRY FIRSTS

# The first record of Yellow-throated Bunting *Emberiza elegans* from Vietnam

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The Yellow-throated Bunting *Emberiza elegans* is a fairly common to locally common species in eastern Asia. Its breeding range covers the Russian Far East, north-east China and the Korean peninsula, with a separate population in central China (south Gansu and south Shaanxi to Yunnan, Guizhou and Hunan provinces); it winters mainly in Korea, southern Japan and south-east China and there are winter records south to north-east Myanmar, where its status is uncertain (Brazil 2009, Robson 2009, Copete 2017).

On 5 March 2017, LKQ and other members of the Vietnam Birdwatching Club were studying the wildlife on the Son Tra Peninsula, Da Nang, central Vietnam. The peninsula forms the

**Plate 1.** Habitat along the coast road on the Son Tra Peninsula, Da Nang, Vietnam, where the Yellow-throated Bunting *Emberiza elegans* was found.



HOANG HA

**Plate 2.** Male Yellow-throated Bunting in breeding plumage, Son Tra Peninsula, 5 March 2017.



LE KHAC QUYET

southern side of Da Nang Bay and protrudes to the east into the Gulf of Tonkin. At about 08h00 the group was on the coast road (16.146°N 108.235°E) at an altitude of about 85 m when LKQ saw a bunting-like bird in the roadside scrub and bushes (Plate 1) and quickly obtained some images before the bird flew away when it was disturbed by a passing local villager. LKQ could not identify the bird, which he had not previously seen, and he sent the images to LMH, who quickly identified it as a male Yellow-throated Bunting in breeding plumage—males of this species are easily distinguished from other *Emberiza* sp. by the black crown, ear-coverts, chin and breast-band, broad yellow supercilium and throat, and a distinctive erectile crest (Plates 2 & 3). To the best of our knowledge this is the first record of this species for Vietnam (Robson 2009, Copete 2017).

The images clearly show clearly that the bird was a male in full breeding plumage in early March, although the literature indicates that the breeding season of this species is from late April and May to July (Byers *et al.* 1995, Robson 2009, Copete 2017), with the nearest known breeding area being Yunnan, south-west China. There is very little data on the altitudinal range of this species in the published literature; only Robson (2009) mentions altitudinal range data—from 1,010 to 2,135 m—although Brazil (2009) mentions that it is 'often on low hillsides'.

Although the bird may have been an escape from the cage-bird trade, there are no records of trade in this species in Vietnam to date, and most of the wild bird trade is concentrated in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, both of which are a long distance from this site.

**Plate 3.** Male Yellow-throated Bunting, Son Tra Peninsula, 5 March 2017.



HOANG HA

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## First record of Ruddy-breasted Crake *Zapornia fusca* for Mongolia

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On 26 August 2016 KT observed a crake with which he was not familiar at a location (45.33°N 105.64°E) between the Khuld and Luus *sums* (districts) of Dundgobi province, Mongolia, by the main road linking Ulaanbaatar with Dalanzadgad town, the capital of Umnugobi province. He observed the bird at a distance of 10–15 m and managed to obtain some images (Plate 1). The area is characterised by desert steppe consisting of soft sandy soil, with the vegetation dominated by scattered *Caragana* sp., *Allium mongolicum*, *A. polyrhizum* and *Stipa* sp.. KT sent the images to TP who identified the bird as a Ruddy-breasted Crake *Zapornia fusca*, using various web sources, including the Oriental Bird Images database ([www.orientalbirdimages.org](http://www.orientalbirdimages.org)). The important field marks that helped to distinguish it from other similar crakes, notably Band-bellied Crake *Z. paykullii*, were the chestnut head and underparts, greenish-brown upperparts, unbarred lower underparts, and red legs and eyes.

Ruddy-breasted Crake is a widespread resident of South and South-East Asia, but is a breeding migrant in some areas, including eastern China, the northern Korean Peninsula, Far East Russia and northern Japan (Taylor & Kirwan 2017). It inhabits reedy swamps, oxbows, marshes, water-meadows and stream banks, reedbeds, wet grassland at the edge of lakes, ditches and canals and the edges of rice paddies (Taylor & van Perlo 1998). The species is not mentioned in Gombobaatar & Monks (2011) and this observation in south-central Mongolia is, to the best of our knowledge, the first confirmed record for Mongolia.

### Acknowledgements

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### References

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**Plate 1.** Ruddy-breasted Crake *Zapornia fusca*, Dundgobi province, Mongolia, 26 August 2016.

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