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NOTE

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RECENT SIGHTING OF RED-BREASTED HILL-PARTRIDGE *ARBOROPHILA MANDELLII* FROM BUXA TIGER RESERVE, WEST BENGAL, INDIA

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The Red-breasted Hill-Partridge (*Arborophila mandellii*) is one of the nine threatened members of the suite of 19 bird species that are entirely restricted to "Eastern Himalaya Endemic Bird Area" (Birdlife International, 2001). Forest cutting, shifting agriculture and hunting for food are presumably among the deleterious pressure on population of this species (McGowan *et al.*, 1995). The Red-breasted Hill-Partridge has recently been determined as present in three protected areas, of which Singhalila National Park in West Bengal, Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary and Dibang Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh are considered irreplaceably important to the long-term conservation of Galliformes in East Asia (McGowan *et al.*, 1999).

The species was seen once during one of two visits to Buxa

Tiger Reserve, West Bengal (ca. 1200m). The place of sighting was between Buxaduar and Rupam during our bird watching trip in March 2001. Allen *et al.* (1996) have seen a group of this partridge briefly on four occasions in the same area of the Reserve. The habitat in Buxaduar-Rupam area is very suitable for this vulnerable bird species. The ecological territory of this area extends further into Bhutan. Such a vast hilly terrain can definitely hold a good population of this vulnerable species. We think that a concerted effort to locate this species might yield positive results. There could be moderate disturbance from some nomadic human population at the Indo-Bhutan border here. However, if there is no hunting, the movement of these people cannot be considered a threat.

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