

FEB 16 2023

MEMORANDUM

FOR

The Regional Executive Director

1515 DENR By the Bay Building,

Roxas Boulevard,

Barangay 668, Ermita, Manila

THRU

The ARD for Technical Services

FROM

The PENR Officer

SUBJECT

2023 ASIAN WATERBIRD CENSUS (AWC) IN APO REEF

NATURAL PARK OF CENRO SABLAYAN, OCCIDENTAL

MINDORO

Forwarded herewith is the memorandum dated February 13, 2023 of CENRO Sablayan regarding the conducted Asian Waterbird Census in Apo Reef Natural Park on January 14 to 16, 2023.

Attached are the AWC Report, filled out AWC Form, photo documentation of their activity.

For your information and consideration.

For the OIC, PENR Officer:

CELSO B. ALMAZA SVEMS/Chief, T

So. Pag-asa, Brgy. Payompon, Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro E-mail: tsdoccmin042@gmail.com / penroocc.mindoro@denr.gov.ph

February 13, 2023

MEMORANDUM

FOR

The Regional Executive Director

1515 DENR By the Bay Building, Roxas Boulevard,

Barangay 668, Ermita, Manila

THRU

The OIC, PENR Officer

Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro

FROM

The CENR Officer

SUBJECT

2023 ASIAN WATERBIRD CENSUS (AWC) IN APO REEF

NATURAL PARK

Respectfully forwarded is the report of the 2023 AWC in Apo Reef Natural Park (ARNP) conducted last January 14 to 16, 2023. The activity was conducted by personnel from ARNP – Protected Area Management Office, Mindoro Biodiversity Conservation Foundation Inc. (MBCFI), and the Municipal Environment and Natural Resource Office of Sablayan. Seven (7) species of waterbirds were recorded during the AWC in ARNP including the nationally threatened Greater Crested Tern (*Thalasseus bergii*) and Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*).

Attached herewith are the 2023 AWC Report and a duly accomplished AWC Count Form.

For information and record.

FOR. ANASTACIO A. SANTOS, MPA







Department of Environment and Natural Resources MIMAROPA Region APO REEF NATURAL PARK Protected Area Management Office



February 13, 2023

MEMORANDUM

FOR

The Regional Executive Director

1515 DENR By the Bay Building, Roxas Boulevard,

Barangay 668, Ermita, Manila

THRU

The OIC, PENR Officer

Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro

The CENR Officer

FROM

The Protected Area Superintendent

SUBJECT

2023 ASIAN WATERBIRD CENSUS (AWC) IN APO REEF

NATURAL PARK

Respectfully submitted is the report of the 2023 AWC in Apo Reef Natural Park (ARNP). The census was conducted last January 14 to 16, 2023 by personnel from ARNP – Protected Area Management Office, Mindoro Biodiversity Conservation Foundation Inc. (MBCFI), and the Municipal Environment and Natural Resource Office of Sablayan. During the AWC, seven (7) species of waterbirds were recorded during the AWC in ARNP. These include the nationally threatened Greater Crested Tern (*Thalasseus bergii*) and the Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*), and three winter visitors namely, the Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*), Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus calidus*), and Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*).

Attached herewith are the 2023 AWC Report and a duly accomplished AWC Count Form.

For information and record.

KRYSTAL DAYNE T. VILLANADA

ANNUAL ASIAN WATERBIRD CENSUS (AWC) 2023 APO REEF NATURAL PARK

Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro 14-16 January 2023

I. Introduction

Apo Reef Natural Park (ARNP) is a 15,799.23-hectare Marine Protected Area (MPA) located approximately 33 km off the coast of Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro. It features two adjacent atolls and a fringing reef. The MPA is one of the 228 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and 117 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in the Philippines (Mallari et al., 2001; Ambal et al., 2012). It hosts a wide range of bird species, from small island specialists to breeding seabirds. To date, 110 bird species have been recorded within the MPA.

The long-term monitoring of birds in ARNP is a joint initiative between the Protected Area Management of ARNP (ARNP-PAMO) and Mindoro Biodiversity Conservation Foundation Inc. (MBCFI). It started as a component of the rapid site assessment conducted by MBCFI in 2014, followed by more frequent bird surveys in the succeeding years. At present, the ARNP-PAMO and MBCFI conduct bird surveys across breeding and non-breeding seasons to assess the status of the waterbird and non-waterbird populations and inform management and conservation actions within the MPA. One of these surveys is conducted within the second and third weeks of January to participate in the Asian Waterbird Census.

The annual AWC is conducted along two major global flyways: the East Asian – Australasian Flyway and Central Asian Flyway. It mainly aims to obtain information on an annual basis of waterbird populations in wetlands in the region during the non-breeding period of most species as a basis for evaluating sites and monitoring populations. Specifically, the AWC in ARNP aims to:

- Obtain information on waterbird populations during southern migration and non-breeding period
- Monitor the status and condition of the recognized wetland area of ARNP; and,
- Discover and document new records of waterbird species, if there is any.

II. Methodology

Transect cruises were done daily from January 14 to 16, 2023. The survey route primarily included the three islets: Apo Island, Apo Menor or Binanggaan, Cajos del Bajo or Tinangkapan. Other roosting sites within the MPA were also surveyed namely, Barkong Lutang and Parolang Putol. Aside from at-sea surveys, counters and recorders walked along the trails in Apo Island from 5:30 AM to 7:00 AM. All waterbirds observed during the surveys were identified and counted. Species of non-waterbirds and their corresponding counts were also noted.



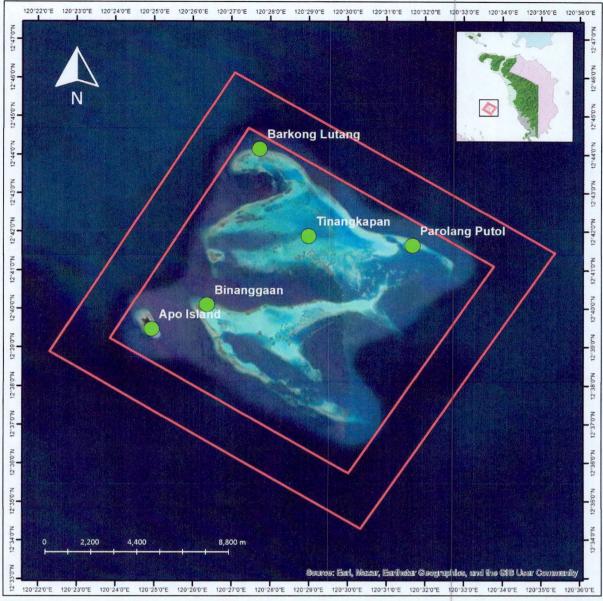


Figure 1. Apo Reef Natural Park map shows the three major counting sites during the waterbirds survey (Apo Island, Apo Menor, and Cajos del Bajo).

The highest count acquired for each waterbird and non-waterbird species during the three-day survey are presented in this report. Waterbird counts were also reported to Wetlands International using the site and count forms distributed by the DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau.

III. Results and Discussion

a. Waterbirds

54 individuals of waterbirds from 7 species were recorded during the survey (Table 1). Barred Rail (*Hypotaenidia torquata*) was the most numerous species with 43 individuals. Meanwhile, the other species recorded had three individuals at most. Two of which are nationally threatened seabirds: the Greater Crested Tern (*Thalasseus bergii*) and Brown Booby

(Sula leucogaster). The Greater Crested Tern was recorded displaying foraging movements (Figure 2).

Table 1. List of the Waterbird species recorded from January 14 to 16, 2023.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Dange	Conser Statu		Highest
	Scientific Name	Range	IUCN Red	PH Red	Count
			List	List	
Collared Kingfisher	Todiramphus chloris	R	LC		3
Common Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis	M	LC		3
Peregrine Falcon	Falco peregrinus calidus	M	LC		1
Greater Crested Tern	Thalasseus bergii	R	LC	VU	1
Barred Rail	Hypotaenidia torquata	R	LC		43
Common Sandpiper	Actitis hypoleucos	M	LC		2
Brown Booby	Sula leucogaster	R/M	LC	EN	1

^{*} R – Resident, M – Migrant, R/M – Resident and Migrant

^{**} LC – Least Concern, VU – Vulnerable, EN – Endangered

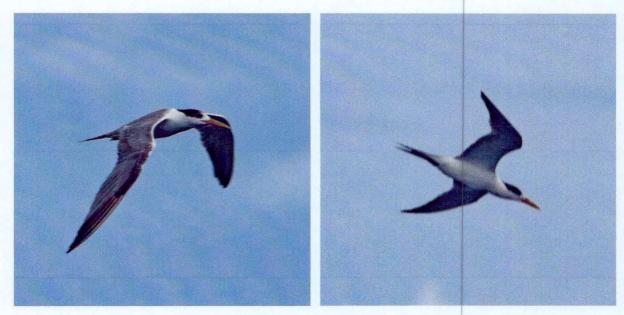


Figure 2. Greater Crested Tern recorded near Barkong Lutang on January 15, 2023. Photographs by E.H. Tan.

Three of the eight waterbird species are winter visitors to the Philippines based on Allen (2020): the Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus calidus*), Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*) (Figure 3). Notably, only one Peregrine Falcon was also observed during the first AWC of ARNP in 2022. The *calidus* subspecies exhibit high fidelity to its winter ranges (Sokolov et al., 2018) hence, the same individual may have been observed in survey periods.



Figure 3. Wintering waterbirds recorded from January 14-16, 2023. A) Common Kingfisher, B) Peregrine Falcon, and C) Common Sandpiper. Photographs by K.J. Zubiri (A) and E. H. Tan (B, C).

b. Non-waterbirds

Several non-waterbird species were also encountered during the AWC. A total of 35 individuals from 14 species were recorded (Table 4). Only two of which are nationally threatened: the Philippine Megapode (*Megapodus cumingii*) and Nicobar Pigeon (*Caloenas nicobarica*). Another notable species on the list is the Daurian Redstart (*Phoenicurus auroreus*). This vagrant species was first recorded in Apo Reef Natural Park in November 2021. Both adult female and male individuals have been recorded to date (Figure 4). The male individual sighted during the AWC is presumably the same individual that was recorded by the rangers last December 2022.

4

Table 2. Non-waterbird species recorded from January 14 to 16, 2023.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Residency	Conser Stati		Highest
Common Name	Scientific Name	Status*	IUCN Red List	PH Red List	Count
Pied Triller	Lalage nigra	R	LC	Bist	2
Nicobar Pigeon	Caloenas nicobarica	R	NT	EN	1
Pied Imperial Pigeon	Ducula bicolor	R	LC		2
Philippine Megapode	Megapodus cumingii	R	LC	VU	1
Asian Koel	Eudynamys scolopaceus	M	LC		2
Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica	M	LC		1
Daurian Redstart	Phoenicurus auroreus	V	LC		1
Olive-backed Sunbird	Cinnyris jugularis	R	LC		3
Black-naped Oriole	Oriolus chinensis	R	LC		8
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	Passer montanus	I	LC		1
Philippine Pied Fantail	Rhipidura nigritorquis	Е	LC		4
Leaf-warbler sp.	Phylloscopus sp.				1
White's Thrush	Zoothera aurea	M	LC		1
Swift sp.					7

^{*} R – Resident, M – Migrant, NE – Near Endemic, I – Introduced, V – Vagrant

^{**} LC – Least Concern, NT – Near Threatened, VU – Vulnerable, EN – Endangered

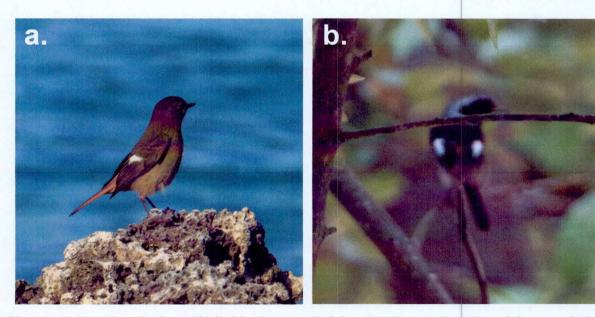


Figure 4. Daurian Redstart individuals recorded in ARNP. A) Female adult recorded in November 2021 and B) male adult recorded in January 2023. Photographs by E. H. Tan (A, B).

A

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

A total of 21 species of birds were recorded during the survey from January 14 to 16, 2023. Seven were species of waterbirds, of which two are nationally threatened species (Greater Crested Tern and Brown Booby) and three are wintering species (Common Kingfisher, Peregrine Falcon, and Common Sandpiper). Similar to the findings of the AWC in the previous year, the waterbird species number and count recorded this year were low. Continuous participation in the AWC is still recommended despite this.

There has been an improvement observed in the capacity of park rangers in conducting the AWC. More adequate birding equipment is now available to the park rangers, including birding camera, binoculars, and field identification guides. Several park rangers have also become more skilled in bird identification, although training activities related to bird surveys should be continued. Future training activities should also include a more in-depth bird photography course. Establishing solid bird photography skills amongst the rangers will allow them to conduct the AWC even without on-site expert supervision thus, reducing the logistical costs of the activity.

Prepared by:

HUGO/G. SALVADOR CMEMP Extension Officer Reviewed and submitted by:

KRYSTAL DAYNE T. VILLANADA
Protected Area Superintendent

V. References

- Allen, D. (2020). Birds of the Philippines. Lynx Edicions.
- Ambal, R.G.R., Duya, M.V, Cruz, M.A., Coroza, O.G., Vergara, S.G., de Silva, N., ... Tabaranza, B., Jr. (2012). Key Biodiversity Conservation Areas in the Philippines: Priorities for conservation. *Journal of Threatened Taxa*, *4*(8), 2788-2796. https://doi.org/10.11609/JoTT.o2995.2788-96
- Mallari, N.A., Tabaranza, B., Jr., & Crosby, M. (2001). Key conservation sites in the Philippines: A Haribon Foundation & Birdlife International directory of Important Bird Areas. Bookmark, Inc.
- Sokolov, V., Sokolov, A., & Dixon, A. (2018). Migratory movements of Peregrine Falcons *Falco peregrinus*, breeding on the Yamal Peninsula, Russia. *Ornis Hungarica 26*(2), 222-231. https://doi.org/10.1515/orhu-2018-0030

VI. Appendices

Appendix A. Itinerary of the waterbirds survey last January 14 to 16, 2023.

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	REMARKS
January 14	08:00 AM	Assembly at ARNP Jump-off, Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro	Breakfast at ARNP Jump-off or boat
	09:00 AM	Travel from Sablayan Mainland to ARNP	Birds encountered during transit were recorded; two islets Apo Menor (Binanggaan) and Cajos del Bajo (Tinangkapan) were also surveyed
	12:00 NN	Lunch	
	03:30 PM	Waterbird Monitoring:Apo IslandBinanggaanTinangkapan	
	06:00 PM	Dinner	
	08:00 PM	Ramsar application review	
January 15	06:30 AM	 Waterbird Monitoring: Apo Island Apo Menor Cayos del Bajo Barkong Lutang Parolang Putol 	
	12:00 NN	Lunch	
	03:45 PM	Waterbird Monitoring:	
	06:00 PM	Dinner	
	08:00 PM	Ramsar application review	
January 16	05:45 AM	Morning Bird Walk within Apo Island	
	07:00 AM	Breakfast	
	09:30 AM	AWC Refresher ARNP AWC 2023 Results and other activities	Facilitated by Elyza Hazel Tan
	11:00 AM	Travel back from ARNP to Sablayan Mainland	Birds encountered during transit were recorded
	2:00 PN	Lunch at Sablayan Mainland	

counts per location across survey dates. Appendix B. Count data from the 2023 AWC in Apo Reef Natural Park from January 14 to 16, 2022. Values marked highlighted with yellow are the highest

				Day 1 (July 16)	July 1	9		Day 2 (July 17)	Clulv	7		Dav	Dav 3 (July 18)	V 18		Total
Family	Common Name	Scientific Name	Al	JK.	BG	II	A	JK.	BG	II	N		F	BG	IT	Highest Count
Alcedinidae	Common Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis					ယ									3
Alcedinidae	Collared Kingfisher	Todiramphus chloris	_				2		-		_					3
Apodidae	Swift sp.					5	_	_								7
Campephagidae	Pied Triller	Lalage nigra					1				2					2
Columbidae	Nicobar Pigeon	Caloenas nicobarica									_					1
Columbidae	Pied Imperial Pigeon	Ducula bicolor					2									2
Cuculidae	Asian Koel	Eudynamys scolopaceus					2									2
Falconidae	Peregrine Falcon	Falco peregrinus calidus	_						_							1
Hirundinidae	Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica					Ē				1					1
Laridae	Greater Crested Tern	Thalasseus bergii								_						1
Megapodiidae	Philippine Megapode	Megapodius cumingii					_									1
Muscicapidae	Daurian Redstart	Phoenicurus auroreus					_				_					1
Nectariniidae	Olive-backed Sunbird	Cinnyris jugularis					သ									3
Oriolidae	Black-naped Oriole	Oriolus chinensis			3,8		5				8					8
Passeridae	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	Passer montanus	1													1
Rallidae	Barred Rail	Hypotaenidia torquata	15				30				43					43
Rhipiduridae	Philippine Pied Fantail	Rhipidura nigritorquis					4									4
Scolopacidae	Common Sandpiper	Actitis hypoleucos					2				_					2
Sulidae	Brown Booby	Sula leucogaster		p nedj.j											1	2
Sylviidae	Leaf-warbler sp.	Phylloscopus sp.					1									1
Turdidae	White's Thrush	Zoothera aurea														1
AI - Ano Island	TK - Tinangkanan BG	Al - Ano Island TV - Tinangkanan RG Rinanggaan IT In transit	****													

Al – Apo Island, TK – Tinangkapan, BG – Binanggaan, IT – In transit

Appendix C. Photo-documentation of the 2023 AWC in ARNP.



Kelvin John Zubiri (left) taking photographs | White's Thrush (Zoothera aurea) at the Picnic

Ground

of birds in Binanggaan



Monitoring team surveying birds along the trails



Elyza Hazel Tan (left) training Kelvin John Zubiri and Sherwin Benoza on bird photography



Green Sea Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) nesting within Bora-boracay



Roberto Beringuela (center) tagging the rescued Olive Ridley Turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) prior to its release



Geoffroy's Rousettes (*Rousettus* amplexicaudatus) observed and measured in Apo Island



Members of the monitoring team reviewing the Ramsar Site Information Sheet (RIS) of Apo Reef Natural Park



Presentation of ARNP AWC 2023 initial results

Participants of the 2023 Asian Waterbird Census in Apo Reef Natural Park

Appendix D. Contributions to the 2023 ARNP AWC Report.

Data observations: ARNP AWC Participants

Identification and verification of species: Bob Natural (Wild Bird Club of the Philippines)

Kathy Lene Cielo (MBCFI)

Report Drafting: Hugo Salvador (ARNP-PAMO)

Report Review: Elyza Hazel Tan (MBCFI)

Final Review: Krystal Dayne T. Villanada (ARNP-PASu)

Asian Waterbird Census (Southeast Asia)

Please return to your National Co-ordinator or Wetland International, 3A39, Kelana Centre Point, No. 3, Jalan SS7/19, Kelana Jaya 47301, MALAYSIA (before March) Country:

Philippines



Name of Site: Apo Reef Natural Park	Date: January 14-16, 2023
Province/State/Prefecture: Occidental Mindoro	Site Code (only for official use):
Nearest Large Town: Sablayan	and a strong and a strong a st
Type: A - Aerial, F - On foot, B - By boat, M - Mixed	Has the site been counted before?
Coverage: V-25%, W-25-50% X-50-75%, Y-75-99%, Z-100%	Yes ☑ No □
Waterfowl Counts	
Little Grebe Tachybaptus ruficollis	GEESE & DUCKS
CORMORANTS & DARTERS	Spotted Whistling Duck Dendrocygna guttata
Great Cormorant Phalacrocorax carbo	Fulvous (Large) Whistling Duck D. bicolor
Indian Shag P. fuscicollis	Wandering Whistling Duck D. arcuata
Little Cormorant P. niger	Lesser Whistling Duck (Lesser Tree Duck) D. javanica
Unidentified cormorants	Greylag Goose Anser anser
Oriental Darter Anhinga melanogaster	Bar-headed Goose A. indicus
HERONS & EGRETS	Ruddy Shelduck Tadorna ferruginea
Great Bittern Botaurus stellaris	Common Shelduck T. tadorna
Yellow Bittern Ixobrychus sinensis	White-winged Wood Duck Cairina scutulata
Schrenck's Bittern I. eurhythmus	Comb Duck Sarkidiornis melanotos
Cinnamon Bittern /. cinnamomeus	Indian Cotton Teal Nettapus coromandelianus
Black Bittern I. flavicollis	Eurasian Wigeon Anas penelope
Japanese Night Heron Gorsachius goisagi	Falcated Teal A. falcata
Malayan Night Heron (Tiger Bittern) G. melanolophus	Gadwall A. strepera
Black-crowned Night Heron Nycticorax nycticorax	Common (Green-winged) Teal A. crecca
Rufous Night Heron N. caledonicus	Grey Teal A. gibberifrons
Indian Pond Heron Ardeola grayii	Mallard A. platyrhynchos
Chinese Pond Heron A. bacchus	Spot-billed Duck A. poecilorhyncha
Javan Pond Heron A. speciosa	Philippine Duck A. Iuzonica
Cattle Egret Bubulcus ibis	Northern Pintail A. acuta
Striated (Little Green) Heron Butorides striatus	Garganey A. querquedula
Eastern Reef Egret Egretta sacra	Northern Shoveler A. clypeata
Chinese (Swinhoe's) Egret E. eulophotes	Red-crested Pochard Netta rufina
Little Egret E. garzetta	Common Pochard Aythya ferina
Intermediate Egret E. intermedia	Baer's Pochard A. baeri
Great Egret E. alba	Ferruginous Duck A. nyroca
Purple Heron Ardea purpurea	Tufted Duck A. fuligula
Grey Heron A. cinerea	Goosander M. merganser
Great-billed Heron A. sumatrana	Unidentified ducks
Unidentified herons and egrets	CRANES
STORKS	Common Crane Grus grus
Milky Stork Mycteria cinerea	Sarus Crane G. antigone
Painted Stork M. leucocephala	RAILS, GALLINULES & COOTS
Asian Openbill Anastomus oscitans	Water Rail Rallus aquaticus
Black Stork Ciconia nigra	Slaty-breasted Rail R. striatus
Wooly-necked Stork C. episcopus	Banded Rail R. philippensis
Storm's Stork C. stormi	43 Barred Rail R. torquatus
Black-necked Stork Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus	Red-legged Crake Rallina fasciata
Lesser Adjutant Leptoptilos javanicus	Slaty-legged Crake R. eurizonoides
Greater Adjutant L. dubius	Baillon's Crake Porzana pusilia
Unidentified storks	Ruddy Crake P. fusca
IBISES & SPOONBILLS	Band-bellied Crake P. paykullii
Black-headed (White) Ibis Threskiornis melanocephalus	Spotless Crake P. tabuensis
White-shouldered Ibis Pseudibis davisoni	White-browed Crake P. Cinereus (Poliolimnas cinereus)
Giant Ibis Thaumatibis gigantea	Brown Crake Amaurornis akool
Glossy Ibis Plegadis falcinellus	Bush-Hen A. olivacea
White Spoonbill Platalea leucorodia	White-breasted Waterhen A. phoenicurus
Black-faced Spoonbill P. minor	Watercock Gallicrex cinerea
Unidentified Spoonbills	

Eurasian Woodcock Scolopax rusticola Pintail Snipe Gallinago stenura
Swinhoe's Snipe G. megala
Common Snipe G. gallinago
Asiatic Dowitcher Limnodromus semipalmatus
Red Knot Calidris canutus
Great Knot C. tenuirostris
Sanderling C. alba
Red-necked (Rufous-necked) Stint C. ruficollis
Temminck's Stint C. temminckii
Long-toed Stint C. subminuta
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper C. acuminata
Dunlin C. alpina Curlew Sandpiper C. ferruginea
Spoon-billed Sandpiper Eurynorhynchus pygmeus
Broad-billed Sandpiper Limicola falcinellus
Unidentified shorebirds
GULLS, TERNS & SKIMMERS
Herring Gull Larus argentatus
Brown-headed Gull L. brunnicephalus
Black-headed Gull L. ridibundus
Saunders' Gull L. saundersi
Unidentified gulls
Whiskered Tern Chlidonias hybridus
White-winged Black Tern C. leucopterus
Gull-billed Tern Gelochelidon nilotica
Caspian Tern Hydroprogne caspia Indian River Tern Sterna aurantia
Common Tern S. hirundo
Black-naped Tern S. sumatrana
Black-bellied Tern S. melanogaster
Little Tern S. albifrons
1 Great Crested Tern S. bergii
Lesser Crested Tern S. bengalensis
Unidentified terns
Indian Skimmer Rynchops albicollis
ADDITIONAL SPECIES
1 Brown Booby (Sula leucogaster)
3 Collared Kingfisher (Todiramphus chloris)
3 Common Kingfisher (Alcedo atthis)
1 Peregrine Falcon (Falco peregrinus calidus