

**THE INDIAN PYGMY GOOSE, NETTAPUS COROMANDELIANUS,
IN BASRAH, IRAQ**

P. V. GEORGE KAINADY

Natural History Museum, University of Basrah, Basrah, Iraq

On 19 November 1975 I saw two Indian Pygmy Geese **Nettapus coromandelianus** (Gmelin) kept for sale in the Ashar market, Basrah. Both were alive and in healthy state except for the removal of outer wing feathers (Fig. 1). I was told that both the birds were caught from the southern part of the Hor Hammar marshes (c. 30.30 N 47.35E) on the previous day. He could not give me the exact locality for the birds were sold to him by the hunter. The skins prepared from the specimens are kept in the Bird Collection of the Museum.

Measurements of the specimens are : Bs Nov 1/75, female, weight 175 g on 19 November 14:30 hrs., tarsus 24, bill (from feather) 23 ; Bs Nov 2/75, female, weight not taken, tarsus 25, bill (from feathers) 22. Tips of tail feathers are broken in both, hence not measured.

N. coromandelianus is an Asiatic-Malaysian species, which has a distribution as follows: (**N. c. coromandelianus**) China from northern Hopeh (Peking), south to Hainan, Indo Chinese countries, Pakistan , India, Sri Lanka, eastward through Bangladesh, Malay Peninsula and Greater Sundas (including Rhio Archipelago and Banka) to northern Celebes, also northern Luzon, and northern New Guinea; (**N. c. albipennis** Gould) northeastern Australia (Vaurie 1965, Ali & Ripley 1968).

During the breeding season (June to September, Ali & Ripley 1968), the Indian Pygmy Goose has been twice sight recorded in

Afghanistan from two localities close to Pakistan border; one bird, Kargah lake near Kabul (34.30N 69.11E) on 25 August 1964 and two birds, Kabul river near Jalalabad (34.26N 70.25E) on 19 August 1966 (Neithammer, G. & J. 1967). Scott (1975) records this species for Iran as accidental. Francis Argyle (per. comm.) of the Department of Environment, Tehran, informs me that a hunter shot this bird in Jan./Feb. 1973, from Hamun-e Saberi (31.30N 61.20E) in Seistan

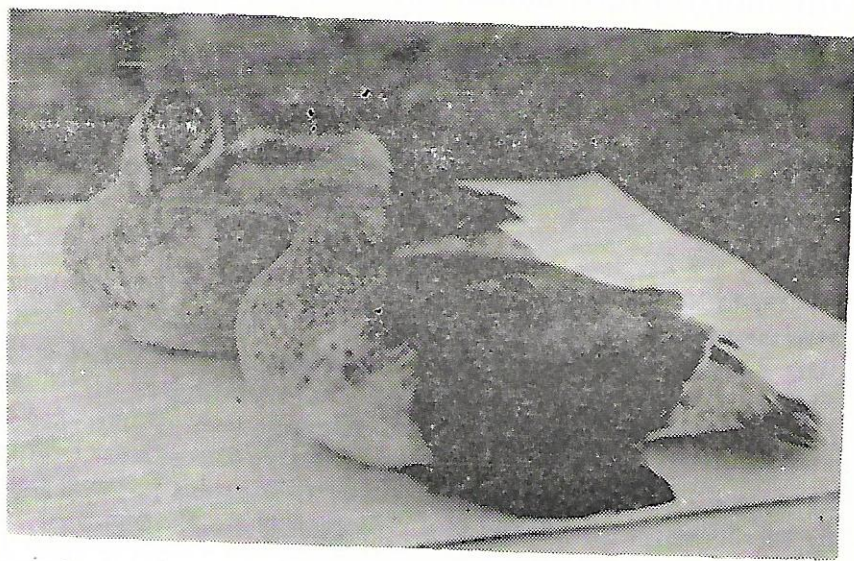


Fig. 1. Two female Indian Pygmy Geese *Nettapus coromandelianus* collected in November 1975 from Basrah, Iraq. (George Kainady)

Baluchistan close to Afghanistan border, and, 'not knowing what he had shot, took the head to Department personnel by whom it was reliably identified'. Sexes are not given in any of the above cases. The present finding and the above two recent westward recordings outside the bird's traditional distribution area may indicate a tendency for westward extension of its range.

The Indian Pygmy Goose, the smallest of all ducks, can be identified from the other twenty-seven species of anatids recorded for Iraq by its goose-like bill and small size. From these two salient features

the bird derives its vernacular name. In the Indian subregion the bird is known as Cotton Teal, and Quacky-duck.

The present collection of **Nettapus coromandelianus** from south Iraq makes the genus and species new additions to the avifaunal list of Iraq.

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الخلاصة

(Indian Pygmy Goose) اصغر انواع البط هو البط الاقزم الهندي
والذى سجل فى العراق لأول مرة فى هذا البحث وبهذا سجلت جميع انواع
البط فى العراق والتى عددها (٢٨) نوعا .