

# Myanmar tallies 1,114 bird species, 20 previously unrecorded

January 29 2015, by Aye Aye Win

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An extensive survey of birds in Myanmar has revealed nearly two dozen not known to have existed in the country, including a large black seabird with a ballooning red neck sack and a tiny black and white falconet with a surprised, panda-like expression.

The Great Frigate and the Pied Falconet were among 20 previously undocumented [birds](#) spotted during a four-year field survey by the Bird and Nature Society, the Wildlife Conservation Society, Flora and Fauna International and several other bird-enthusiast associations, said Thet Zaw Naing, one of the surveyors.

The team tallied 1,114 species from 2010 to 2014, he said, adding seven were endemic to the country.

Myanmar is regarded as one of Asia's last bastions of biodiversity in part because decades of isolation under harsh military rule allowed the country to avoid the often rampant development seen in other parts of the region.

Environmentalists worry that could change as the country—now opening up more to foreign investors—sees economic development expand into agriculture land and grasslands

Poaching is another concern, said Thet Zaw Naing, who is secretary of the Myanmar Bird and Nature Society.

Many dead water birds, apparently victims of hunting, have been found in the Taungthaman and Paleik lakes near Mandalay, he said. Mandalay is the country's second-biggest city.

Pesticide use in farming is also a threat to birds, said Ngwe Lwin, Indawgyi Project manager of British-based Fauna & Flora International.

The nesting grounds of the Great Frigate, spotted in the Gulf of Martaban near Yangon, are normally found around the Pacific and Indian Oceans, with significant populations in the South Atlantic.

The Pied Falconet, seen by the surveyors in Shan state and northern Hukaung valley, is generally found in the forests of the Assam region of India and Southeastern China, Laos and surrounding areas.

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