

Lesser whistling ducks on Pulau Ubin

Subjects: Lesser whistling duck, *Dendrocygna javanica* (Aves: Anseriformes: Anatidae).

Subjects identified by: Contributors.

Location, date and time: Pulau Ubin, pond along Sensory Trail; 6 & 7 March 2017; around 1000 hrs.

Habitat: Freshwater pond in parkland.

Observers: Contributors.

Observation: A pair of adults was observed on an islet in the pond (Fig 1). They were seen at the same location again the following day, preening (Fig. 2) and swimming about (Fig 3). The apparent lack of sexual dimorphism in the species prevents the confirmation of the sexes of the individuals.

Remarks: Lesser whistling ducks have been seen on Pulau Ubin since the early 1990s (Lim, 2009: 52; Robert C. H. Teo, personal observations). In Singapore, it is regarded as a 'nationally endangered' species (Yong et al., 2016: 21). The pond at Sensory Trail is a habitat enhancement project embarked in 2014 under The Ubin Project. Four separate ponds formerly used for aquaculture of fish were combined to create one large freshwater habitat. The bunds that separated the ponds were broken and converted to islets. Such habitat enhancement has successfully attracted waterfowl. Apart from the lesser whistling ducks featured here, herons, moorhens, crakes and waterhens have also been recorded from the pond.



Fig 1. Pair of lesser whistling ducks at the pond on 6 March 2017. Photograph by Noel Thomas

References:

- Lim K. S., 2009. *The Avifauna of Singapore*. Bird Group Records Committee, Nature Society (Singapore). 611 pp.
- Yong D. L., K. C. Lim & T. K. Lee, 2016. *A Naturalist's Guide to the Birds of Singapore*. Second edition. John Beaufoy Publishing Limited, England. 176 pp.



Fig 2. Lesser whistling ducks preening, on 7 March 2017.



Fig 3. One of the ducks swimming about, on 7 March 2017.

Photographs by Noel Thomas

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