

## Short Note (短 報)

## First Description of the Nest and Eggs of the Calayan Rail

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**Abstract.** We describe for the first time the nest and eggs of the Calayan Rail *Gallirallus calayanensis*. The nest was built on the ground at the base of a fig tree and loosely constructed with dried leaves and stems. The eggs were pale pink and blotched reddish-brown and dark lilac, measuring 35 mm × 25 mm in size. Nest placement, construction and egg coloration was similar to its congener, the Okinawa Rail *G. okinawae*.

**Key words:** Breeding ecology, Calayan Island, *Gallirallus calayanensis*, Philippines.  
キーワード: 繁殖生態, カラヤン島, *Gallirallus calayanensis*, フィリピン.

The Calayan Rail *Gallirallus calayanensis* is a recently discovered near-flightless species endemic to the small (196 km<sup>2</sup>) island of Calayan in the northern Philippines (Allen *et al.* 2004). Presently classified as Vulnerable to extinction under the IUCN Red List (IUCN 2009), recent field surveys have found that the species occurs throughout most of the island's forests (Oliveros *et al.* unpublished data). However, little information is known about its breeding ecology apart from observations of young individuals and secondary information from local residents.

On 2 June 2009 while carrying out field surveys in the east central portion of Calayan Island (N 19° 17.411' E 121° 31.025' at an altitude of 170 m) a survey team including one of us (C. H. Oliveros) flushed a Calayan Rail along the banks of the Dibnong Stream at 08 : 53 h. Further inspection of the area revealed a nest with three eggs (Fig. 1).

The Calayan Rail nest was situated on the ground near the buttress of a fig tree *Ficus congesta* concealed amongst undergrowth of *Odontonema strictum* and exposed rocks in disturbed old growth forest (Fig. 1). Located 2 m away from a dry seasonal stream, the nest was a loose construction of dried leaves and stems forming a very shallow cavity 12 cm in diameter. The eggs were pale pink with blotches of reddish-brown and dark lilac. Each egg was elliptical and measured approximately 35 mm × 25 mm in size. The chorus calls of at least two Calayan Rails were heard 25 m away during the nest observation period. Digital photographs and video recordings of the nest site were taken. During a subsequent visit to the nest on 4 June 2009 three eggs were present but no attendant rail was observed.

This Calayan Rail nest and eggs are the first to be encountered in five years of rail

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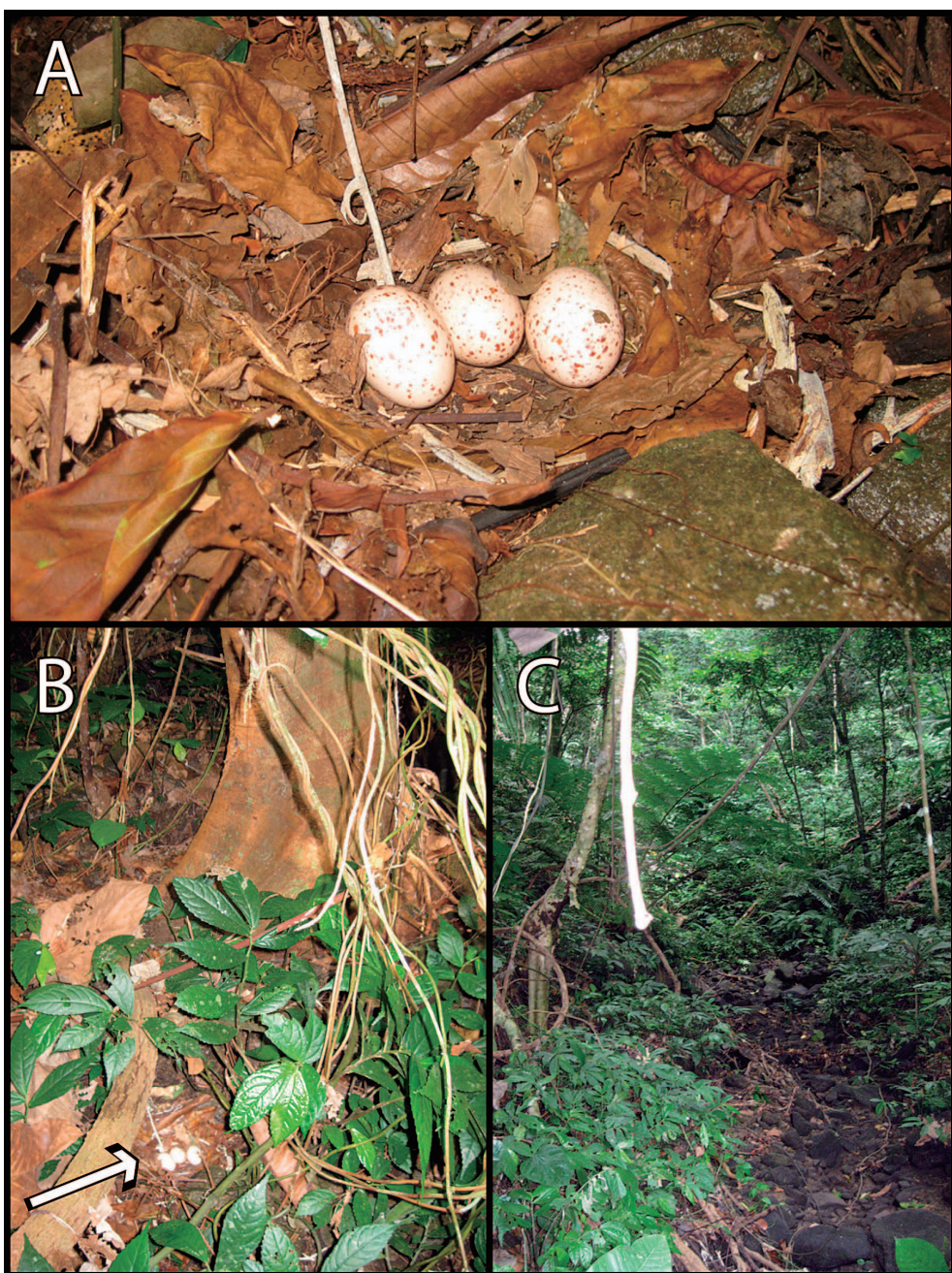


Fig. 1. (A) Calayan Rail nest and eggs; (B) Nest (shown by arrow) near the buttress of fig tree and herbaceous undergrowth; (C) Habitat near nest location, showing seasonal stream.

survey work on Calayan, although fledged rail chicks have been observed as early as 6 April (C. Española and Oliveros unpublished data) and juveniles have been observed during the month of May (Allen *et al.* 2004). The discovery of the nest and eggs extends the known breeding period of the species to June. Our observation of three eggs in the nest is consistent with anecdotal information from local residents that indicates clutch size to vary from 3 to 7 (C. Española and Oliveros, unpublished data) although the upper limit has yet to be verified. The nest placement and construction of this species is similar to that of the Okinawa Rail *G. okinawae*, another island-endemic forest specialist. Eggs of both species are also similar in color, except that Calayan Rail eggs have smaller sized blotches that are more numerous and more spread out throughout the egg; however, Calayan Rail eggs are smaller in size (Chigira *et al.* 1993; K. Ozaki, unpublished data). We recommend further research on the ecology and breeding biology of the Calayan Rail to enable sound conservation initiatives for the species, as ground nesting birds endemic to small islands are especially vulnerable to extinction (Duncan & Blackburn 2004).

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#### カラヤンクイナの巣および卵の初記載

カラヤンクイナ (仮称) *Gallirallus calayanensis* の巣と卵を初めて記載する。巣はイチジク類の根元の地上にあり、乾いた葉と茎でゆるく作られていた。卵は薄いピンク色で、赤褐色あるいは暗紫色の斑があり、大きさは 35 mm × 25 mm であった。巣の配置、構造、卵の色は同属のヤンバルクイナ *G. okinawae* に似ていた。

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