Grey-crowned Crocias crops-up in Kon Tum province, Vietnam

One of the rarest birds in the world, endemic to Vietnam, has just been discovered at a new location in Kon Tum Province, by David Bishop of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, significantly extending its known global range and offering hope that the species may not be as threatened with extinction as scientists fear.

Grey-crowned Crocias *Crocias langbianbis* is one of the least know birds of Asia: it was so rare it was known as the “babbler that wouldn’t come back.” It was first described by a Swedish aristocrat, Count Gyldenstolpe in 1939 from three specimens collected by young adventurer Bertil Bjorkgren. For over 50 years there were no further records until it was rediscovered by Jonathan C Eames, Le Trong Trai and Nguyen Cu at Chu Yang Sin National Park in 1994. The species is currently considered Endangered with extinction by IUCN.

On 19 March 2012 professional bird tour leader David Bishop was with clients leading a Victor Emanuel Nature Tour (VENT) at Mang Den in Kon Tum Province, when he first heard and then saw a pair of Grey-crowned Crocias.

“Soon after arrival at the site I immediately recognized the distinctive calls of Grey-crowned Crocias,” said David. “I made a sound recording and observed a pair calling and duetting from the nearby tops of trees in a small clearing.” A second pair was heard later some distance below within a steep valley.

“This is the first time this globally Endangered and little-known species has been recorded in Kon Tum Province. Previously it was known only from sites in Lam Dong and Dak Lak provinces. These records extend the range of this rather localized species by circa 250 km northwards,” said Le Trong Trai Senior Programme Officer with BirdLife Vietnam Programme.

“Hopefully the knowledge that this species actually occupies a larger range than previously thought will greatly enhance its conservation prospects. It perhaps also underlines the value of professionally led bird tours!” Added Richard Craik whose company Vietnam Birding was the ground agent for the VENT group.

### ENDS ###
MEDIA CONTACT:
Ms. Tran Thi Thanh Huong Communications Officer, Birdlife International in Indochina, Email: huong@birdlife.org.vn

VICTOR EMANUAL NATURE TOURS CONTACT:
Mr K. David Bishop kdbishop@ozemail.com.au

VIETNAM BIRDING CONTACT:
Richard Craik richard@vietnambirding.com

TECHNICAL INFORMATION CONTACT: Le Trong Trai, Senior Programme Officer, BirdLife Vietnam Programme, Phone: Email: Trai@birdlife.org.vn