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Front Cover: **WHITE-THROATED KINGFISHER**

The **white-throated kingfisher** (*Halcyon smyrnensis*) also known as the **white-breasted kingfisher** is a tree kingfisher, widely distributed in Asia from the Sinai, east through the Indian subcontinent to the Philippines. *Halcyon* is a name for a bird in Greek mythology generally associated with the kingfisher and the specific epithet *smyrnensis* is an adjective for the town of Izmir in Turkey. This is a large kingfisher, 27–28 cm in length. The adult has a bright blue back, wings and tail. Its head, shoulders, flanks and lower belly are chestnut, and the throat and breast are white. The large bill and legs are bright red. Sexes are similar, but juveniles are a duller version of the adult. They can be found in open country, wetlands, fishponds and farmlands. They are common in the north and central parts of Israel and recommended to see them in the region of Maagan Michael. The excellent pictures for the covers were gratefully provided by Mr. Moshe Tachnai.