

By

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### Summary

From 11 to 23 December 1989 a survey was carried out in agricultural and forested areas of north-west Obi. A total of 65 species was recorded, including Obi's only endemic the Carunculated Fruit-dove *Ptilinopus granulifrons*, in addition to 10 of the island's 19 endemic subspecies and 7 of the island's 15 Moluccan endemics. Nine species, at least four of which may represent resident populations, were recorded for the first time on Obi. Evidence is provided that the *Cacatua alba* may not occur on this island (*contra* White & Bruce 1986). Details of observations of species of particular interest are also provided together with an appendix listing other species recorded.

### Introduction

As part of the 'Manchester-Indonesian Islands Expedition 1989' the author visited the island of Obi (01°30'S, 127°45'E) in the province of Maluku, eastern Indonesia (Fig. 1). Observations were made around the settlements of Jikotamo and Laiwui (01°20'S, 127°37'E) on the north coast from 11-14 December, and in the forest east of Danau (lake) Manis (01°29'S, 127°26'E) in the northwest of Obi from 15-22 December 1989 (see Fig 2).

### Itinerary and Site Descriptions

The small settlements of Jikotamo and Laiwui lie 2 km apart and are surrounded by agricultural land, with gardens growing subsistence crops such as sago and cassava. Nearby there are also extensive coconut plantations and cocoa and cloves. There is secondary woodland including scattered large trees, within the cultivated areas. Cleared and cultivated land extends along the coast and south along the River Laiwui for at least 15 km. Areas of disturbed forest and secondary woodland increase with distance from Laiwui. Observations were made in low-lying, cultivated land with patches of secondary forest up to 5 km east of Jikotamo and up to 10 km south of Laiwui.

A logging road runs from the logpond of Jiko Dollong (01°26'S, 127°28'E) 28 km to the south, passing approximately 4 km to the east of Danau Manis and ending (as of December 1989) at the River Akelamo. Most of the forest on either side of the road is production forest and has been selectively logged, including some recent logging. At this time, undisturbed forest existed south of the River Akelamo for at least 10 km and at some distance (in places about 2 km) to the east of

the road. Here the terrain becomes increasingly hilly, rising to 1290m within 6 km Whilst based at

Jiko Dollong and a small camp at 11km on the logging road at an altitude of ca. 180m, excursions were made up to ca. 500m AMSL, mainly between the eastern side of the lake and up to 2 km east of the logging road, but also in forest on steep slopes south of the River Akelamo. Though somewhat larger in extent, this area is referred to here as the Danau Manis catchment.

The proposed land use plan for Pulau Obi (Fig. 3) indicates that most of the lowlands are allocated for conversion and commercial forestry operations. There was little or no commercial logging before the 1980s, and the subsequent massive changes to the lowlands are surely causing the island's bird populations to be undergoing considerable change.

**FIG.1 THE MOLUCCAS SHOWING POSITION OF OBI**

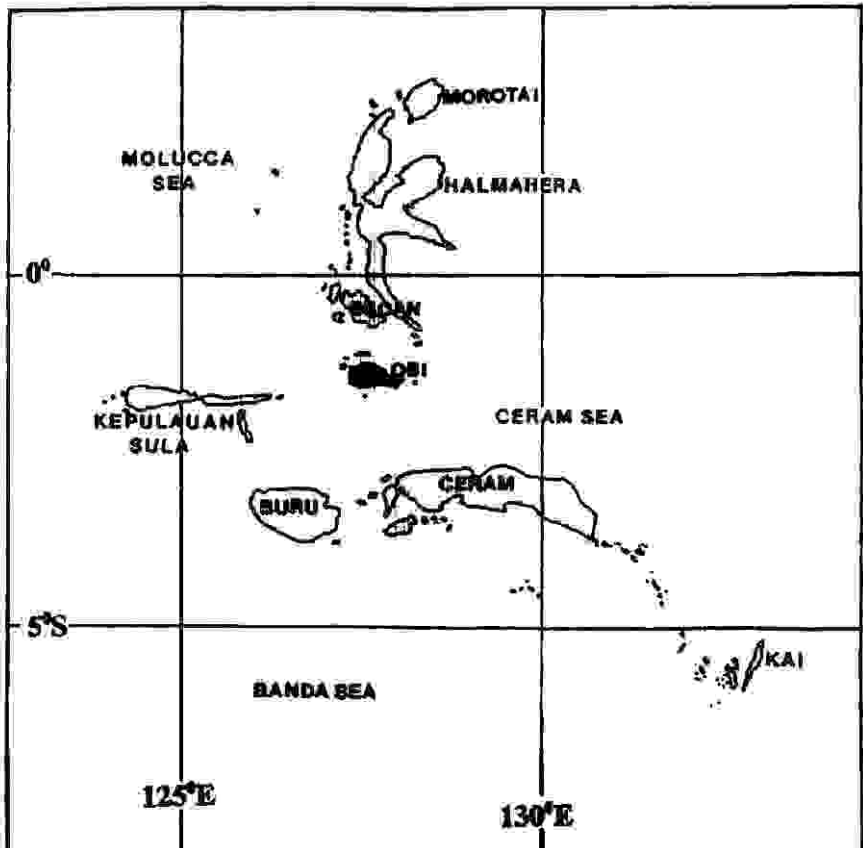
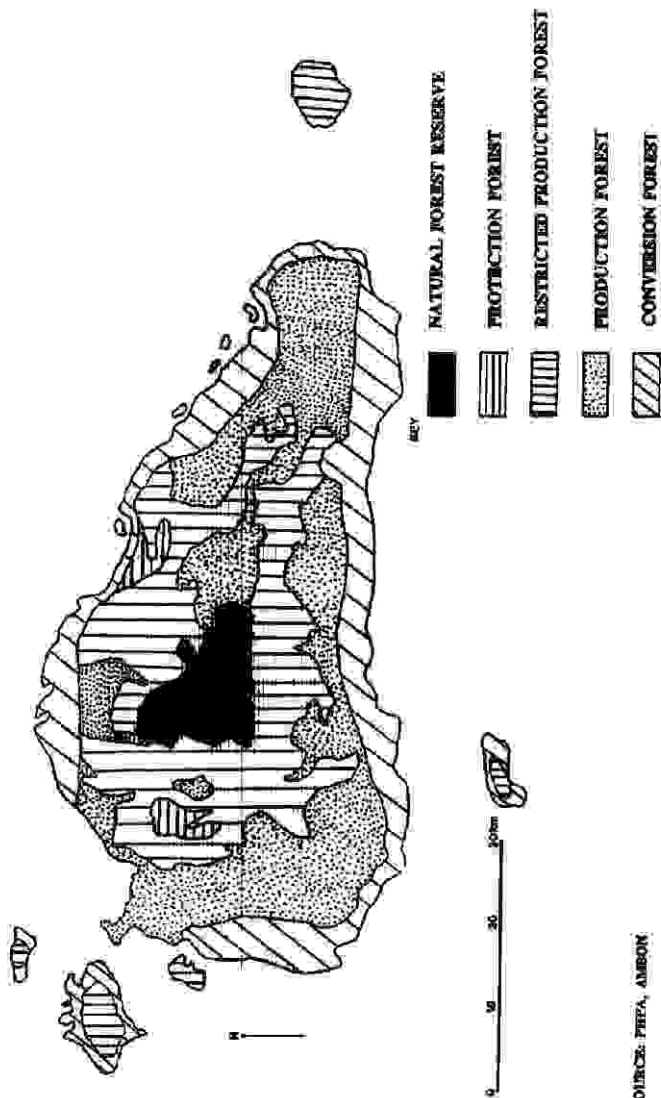




FIG.3 PROPOSED LAND USE ON OBI



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White & Bmce (1986 - hereafter annotated as W&B) lists 106 species as having been recorded on Obi. An additional eight species were subsequently reported by Lambert (1994). This author recorded a total of 55 species including nine species not previously reported from Obi. The latter are indicated with an asterisk. These and other records of interest are noted below. Trinomials are used for endemic sub-species. The full list is given in the Appendix

**\*Lesser Frigatebird** *Fregata ariel*

One adult female and two imm at Laiwui. Additionally, four unidentified frigatebirds observed over the coast between Laiwui and Jiko Dollong.

**\*Little Pied Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*

One adult and one imm. seen in a swampy area formed by a river flowing into Danau Mani.

**\*Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* Four birds were seen feeding amongst cattle near Laiwui.

**\*Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*

One fishing in coastal waters off Laiwui, and another along the river at Km 11 (see also Lambert 1994). It is not clear whether these observations refer to migrant or resident birds, however Bishop (1992) noted a pair nesting on the island of Bisa about 2 km north of Obi (Bishop 1992).

**Rufous-necked Sparrow-hawk** *Accipiter erythrauchen* A little known Moluccan endemic, there were five sightings of adults in cultivation east of Jikotamo (coconut, cocoa and cloves), one imm. on the logging road *ca.* 14 km south of Jiko Dollong, and one adult in secondary growth at Km 11.

**\*Oriental Hobby** *Falco severus*

Two adults were seen roosting in and hunting from a dead tree in logged forest 1 km south of the Km 11 camp. Although known to be resident on Ternate, Halmahera, Buru and Ambon (W&B), this appears to be the first record of this species for Obi

**\*Spotted Whistling-duck** *Dendrocygna guttata* Five birds seen in a swampy area at Danau Manis.

**Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*

A flock of ca. 30 on the sea *ca.* 1 km north of Pulau Bisa (01°15'S. 127°28'E) on 23 Dec. This species is now known to be a regular winter visitor to Wallacean waters (Kukila 1990, Bishop 1992).

**Carunculated Fruit-dove** *Ptilinopus granulifrons*

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Small groups (two to three) seen feeding at the edge of secondary forest in *ca.* 20m tall trees adjacent to cultivated land near Jikotamo, south of Laiwui, and at the edge of selectively logged forest near Km 11. Birds were seen in both the canopy and sub-canopy. All sightings were below 400m. Other species feeding in the same trees during these observations included *P. superbus*, *Ducula perspicillata*, *D. bicolor*, *Macropygia amboinensis* and *Lycocorax pyrrhopterus*. See also Lambert (1994). At *ca.* 150m, the eye appeared dark and the protuberance at the base of the cere pinkish. Goodwin (1983) states that the carunculation is huffish orange.

**White-eyed Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula perspicillata*

More frequently seen in the cultivated area around Laiwui than in the forest, with at least 10 seen each day; less frequently encountered in logged and primary forest (2-5 daily) in the Danau Manis Catchment.

**Cinnamon-bellied Imperial Pigeon** *Ducula basilica obiensis*

Groups of 3-6 seen daily in logged forest in the Danau Manis catchment with a single group of 3 in primary/logged forest edge. Often seen feeding with *D. perspicillata*. W&B state that this is a forest species occurring at *ca.* 850m and above, however all the 1989 observations were between 200-450m.

**Violet-necked Lory** *Eos squamatus obiensis*

At least four birds seen feeding at a flowering sago palm *Metroxylon* sp. near Jikotamo. A further *ca.* 10 were seen in an area of disturbed forest and secondary growth adjacent to cultivation near Jikotamo. In the Danau Mani catchment at least five birds were seen daily, often in groups, with one party of at least ten.

**Chattering Lory** *Lorius garrulus*

At least eight in a tree on the edge of forest adjacent to cultivated land near Jikotamo. *Eos squamata*, *Chamosyna placentis* and *Geoffroyus geoffroyi* were also present. On each of six days in the Danau Manis catchment, observations were made of four to six birds. This was locally the most common captive parrot species.

**Red-flanked Lorikeet** *Chamosyna placentis*

One or two observations daily of groups of 4-15 birds on the coast, often associated with sago and coconut trees. In the Danau Manis catchment, two groups of four and six were seen plus a feeding aggregation of at least 20 on the side of the lake. Local parrot trappers said they do not make deliberate attempts to catch this species. The aggregation was in a small area that was inundated, together with three other small parrot species, this and *Eos squamatus* being the most numerous. The lorikeets appeared to be ingesting lichens and mosses off the trunks, branches and epiphytes.

**Eclectus Parrot** *Eclectus roratus*

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Only one bird seen in the wild, a male near Jikotamo. Several captive females seen at Laiwui. Lambert (1994) also reported only a single observation. Reported (Lambert 1993) to have been once common, it may be that the species has become rare due to excessive trapping.

**Red-cheeked Parrot** *Geoffroyus geoffrayi obiensis*

Daily observations of groups of 2-10, most frequently encountered in the coconut plantations etc. around Jikotamo and Laiwui. The vocalisations had much less of a ringing, alarm or bell-like quality compared to *G. g. floresianus* on Sumba and *G. g. rhodops* on Bum (see also Lambert 1994 for discussion of sub-specific variation in calls).

**Great-billed Parrot** *Tanygnathus megalorhynchus*

At least five seen in the Laiwui/Jikotamo area, in agricultural land (mainly coconuts) with secondary woodland.

**Barking Owl** *Ninox connivens*

A pair seen on three evenings calling and hunting from dead trees on the edge of disturbed forest adjacent to a small area of cultivation near the Km 11 camp.

**Large-tailed Nightjar** *Caprimulgus macrurus*

Three to four birds along the Jiko Dollong logging road, with two birds in song, a croaking 'rowk-rowk-rowk'.

**Blue-and-White Kingfisher** *Halcyon diops*

Two females in cultivation near Laiwui and a male seen on the forested edge of a swamp by Danau Manis.

**Biyth's Hornbill** *Rhyticeros plicatus*

A pair seen over a coconut plantation near Laiwui and at least four pairs seen along the logging road south of Jiko Dollong. It is reported that this species is sometimes hunted for food on Obi.

**\*Pacific Swallow** *Hirundo tahitica*

Frequently seen around the villages, and not previously recorded from Obi (W&B).

**\*Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*

At least eight birds were seen in a clear-felled area south of Laiwui on 13 December. With the 1992 records of Lambert (1994), these appear to be the first records for Obi.

**\*Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

Three by the Laiwui river and at least three seen with the previous species. Most rivers and streams flowing into Danau Manis held birds, as did the logging road. With the 1992 records of Lambert (1994), these appear to be the first records for Obi.

**Pale Cicadabird** *Coracina ceramensis Hoogerwerfi* Sightings of one and three birds in logged

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forest east of Danau Manis.

**Rufous-bellied Triller** *Lalage aurea* One pair seen in secondary growth near the coast east of Jikotamo.

**Golden Bulbul** *Hypsipetes affinis lucasi*

Small numbers (less than ten) were recorded daily. One bird was seen carrying nest material and another feeding fledged young, both in scrub on the edge of disturbed forest. A frequently heard call was a repeated, whistled 'tweeuwip', while groups gave raucous calls reminiscent of *Charmosyna placentis* although without the harsh or scratchy quality of that species.

**Spectacled Monarch** *Monarcha trivirgatus diadematus*

Small numbers (three to five) recorded daily in the Danau Manis catchment, mainly in logged forest. Calls included a short, husky 'shuk' followed by a wheezy whistle 'tut-tut-tut-tut-tut-Tooou'.

**Dark-grey Flycatcher** *Myiagra galeata*

Three or four pairs noted around Laiwui and Jikotamo, fewer in the Danau Manis catchment. Birds were seen carrying nesting material and courtship feeding. Calls included a repetitive, harsh, rasping 'skwech' or 'zhirch' and a rapid, high-pitched 'tip-tip-tip-tip' or 'pin-pin-pin-pin'.

**Northern Fantail** *Rhipidura rufiventris obiensis* Observed daily in small numbers in all areas visited.

**Common Golden Whistler** *Pachycephala pectoralis obiensis* Up to ten birds seen daily in the Danau Manis catchment.

**Dusky Myzomela** *Myzomela obscura rubritincta*

Sightings of one to three birds on most days in the Danau Manis catchment, usually at the forest edge. The call is a thin, high 'sut-sit, sut-sit, sut-sit'.

**Hair-crested Drongo** *Dicrurus hottentottus guilemardi* Frequently encountered in all areas visited, often in pairs.

**Paradise Crow** *Lycocorax pyrrhopterus obiensis*

Up to ten sightings daily throughout the survey, once a group of four. Often seen feeding in fruiting trees with Imperial Pigeons and Fruit-doves. Vocalisations included a deep two-note 'woo-up', the latter note rising, often followed by a harsh and rasping 'krek' or 'rek', although this sound is often made alone.

Species not recorded during this visit included the White Cockatoo *Cacatua alba*, which is cited



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by W&B as occurring on Obi. Local people and two parrot trappers believed that this species does not occur on Obi, even though the trappers were aware of its existence on Bacan and Halmahera. This question is more fully discussed by Lambert (1994).

### Acknowledgements

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### APPENDIX

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**Other species recorded on Obi:**

+ recorded near Laiwui \* recorded in the Danau Manis catchment

<i>Sula leucogaster</i>	Brown Booby	(near Pulau Bisa)
<i>Egretta sacra</i>	Reef Egret	(one dark morph near Jiko Dollong)
<i>Ixobrychus flavicollis</i>	Black Bittern	*
<i>Haliastur indus</i>	Brahminy Kite	+*
<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	White-bellied Sea-eagle	+
<i>Falco moluccensis</i>	Spotted Short-eagle	+*
<i>Tadorna radjah</i>	White-headed Shelduck	*
<i>Megapodius freycinet</i>	Dusky Scrubfowl	*
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Common Sandpiper	+*
<i>Ptilonopus superbus</i>	Superb Fruit-dove	+
<i>Ducula bicolor</i>	Red Imperial Pigeon	+
<i>Macropygia amboinensis</i>	Slender-billed Cuckoo-dove	*
<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	Spotted Dove	+
<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	Emerald Dove	+*
<i>Cacomantis variolosus</i>	Brush Cuckoo	+
<i>Collocalia esculenta</i>	Glossy Swiftlet	+*
<i>Hemiprocne mystacea</i>	Moustached Tree-swift	+
<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Common Kingfisher	+*
<i>Halcyon chloris</i>	Collared Kingfisher	+
<i>Coracina papuensis</i>	White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	+
<i>Locustella fasciolata</i>	Gray's Warbler	+*
<i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>	Arctic Leaf-warbler	+*
<i>Muscicapa griseisticta</i>	Grey-streaked Flycatcher	*
<i>Piezorhynchus alecto</i>	Shining Flycatcher	+*
<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>	Willie Wagtail	+* (1 carrying food near D. Manis)
<i>Dicaeum erythrorhox</i>	Flame-breasted Flowerpecker	*
<i>Nectarinia aspasia</i>	Black Sunbird	+*
<i>Nectarinia jugularis</i>	Olive-backed Sunbird	+*
<i>Lonchura molucca</i>	Black-faced Munia	+*
<i>Aplonis mysolensis</i>	Moluccan Starling	+*
<i>Corvus orru</i>	Torresian Crow	+