

## REVIEWS

**Jepson, P. & R. Ounsted (eds.). *Birding Indonesia: a Bird-watcher's Guide to the World's Largest Archipelago*.** Periplus Action Guides. Periplus Editions (HK) Ltd. ISBN 962 593 071 X. 318 pp, 120 colour photographs and maps. Stiff covers. Price US\$ 19.95.

Periplus has produced a series of in depth travel guides covering each region of Indonesia that are generally a cut above other guide books. This progressive publisher has now launched a series of Action Guides covering diving, surfing, trekking and 'birding'. *Birding Indonesia*, produced in association with BirdLife International Indonesia Programme, is targeted at the keen ornithologist as well as the interested tourist and Indonesian resident. It is a splendid travel guide on where to watch birds in Indonesia and how to go about it. It is perhaps also a commentary on changing mores, in that a commercial publisher has sensed the market potential of specialist guides. Several authors have contributed (e.g. Bas van Balen, Victor Mason, Yus Rusila Noor, to a name but a few), but Paul Jepson, who headed the Indonesia Programme until recently, is the main contributor and (together with Eric Oey the publisher) the driving force behind the work.

This book is an excellent introduction to the diversity of landscapes, cultures and birds of the archipelago, and will attract the many for whom Indonesia's rich diversity creates confusion on where to focus their tour. The three frontispiece plates alone set the tone of what is to come, and the photographs and maps throughout are of an exceptionally high standard. The book is divided into a number of sections, the first being an introduction to the regional avifauna, explaining the reasons for its wealth, outlining the early explorers who first identified it, and then looking at the implications for conserving this remarkable heritage. Regional sections then follow, dividing the country into eight regions (perhaps inevitably, Bali is singled out for individual treatment although not usually considered

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a high priority on most birders' itineraries). Each section briefly discusses the main venues for the region, often but not always focussing on the well established and recognized national parks. Indeed the birder stuck with a day or two in Jakarta or Bogor (and of course Bali) is given advice on how to fill his time usefully. The text throughout is written in a jaunty style appropriate to a travel guide, which might not appeal to some purists, but the essence of the guide is that it is always practical. Most of the sections have one or more special features, such as edible nests in Java, pheasants in Sumatra, hombills in Kalimantan, mynas in Sulawesi, and of course birds of paradise in Irian Jaya. Particularly evocative are the three special features in the Introduction, entitled 'extinct species', 'discovering new species', and (appropriate to the subject of conservation) 'shorebirds on the menu'.

The second half of the book is devoted to Practicalities, including everything from standard travel tips, a language guide specifically for birders, and the most sensible tips I have yet seen on how to behave (whether in a bus, a private house, or a toilet). Each venue mentioned in the regional texts has a section on how to get there, where to stay, and what to see (and useful negative tips like which sites to avoid at weekends). Advice on hotels and eateries is particularly useful for the venues themselves, but necessarily brief for the provincial cities (the Periplus Travel Guides would be useful adjuncts, not merely for practicalities only). Finally the book closes with an appendix of bird clubs and conservation organizations, further reading (right up to date), and the Indonesian checklist.

This checklist is based on the *Kukila* checklist, but with some modifications such as the species limits (but thankfully not the sequence) adopted by Sibley & Monroe (which extends the Indonesian list by 22 species). Confusingly for those who have become familiar with the biogeographical regions defined in the *Kukila* checklist, this list has reverted to the provincial boundaries, as used in the regional descriptions. This is a practical requirement for coordination with government planners, and the term 'bio administrative boundaries' has been coined in the Indonesian Biodiversity Action Plan. Mostly this does not matter, except that the Moluccan biogeographic region is much more restricted than Maluku province, which includes the Sula Islands (Celebes fauna), Aru Islands (Irian fauna) and Wetar Tanimbar (Lesser Sundas fauna). It should be firmly stated here that *Kukila* will remain loyal to the biogeographic regions. A useful addition, though one fraught with problems, is the inclusion of a symbol for status.

The layout is particularly eye catching, with a high quality photo or map on every page. The habitat maps are especially commendable in view of the problems that these are likely to have engendered in compilation. There are few typographic errors (I liked the 'Weather' Hombills on p. 109), but a scattering of technical or editorial errors (west instead of east Sumatra on p. 21, Central instead of East Kalimantan on p. 57, the Sumatran Wren babbler and Bronze tailed Peacock pheasant are not restricted to the south of Sumatra on p. 109, turn *left* over the railway (to Pulau Dua) on p. 207 is confusing, and is the Bali Bird Walk on p. 221 on Tuesdays and Sundays, or every day from Tuesday to Sunday inclusive?). The Ruteng area road map on p. 226 omits a useful road traversing (disturbed) forest that continues due east. Finally, most of Sulawesi is not volcanic (p. 137), especially Lore Lindu (p. 140). The superlatives are definitely overdone in places. Do the coastal wetlands of Sumba really *heave* with rarity potential? Is 2,601 m above sea level a *dizzy* height, and are the White necked Mynas *fantastically* long tailed (p. 140 141)?

More seriously, *Kukila* will be approaching authors for details of some of the species listed. Our data base needs to have the record of Crestless Fireback at Gunung Leuser (p. Ill), and would welcome a chance to review the Wasur bird list (p. 176). Particularly we would require full details of the "easy to spot" Rueck's Blue Flycatcher at Gunung Leuser. Some ornithological editing might have

commented on the relative ease of identifying Plaintive and Brush Cuckoos by one of the calls (p. 22), or would have added something on White-winged Duck calls (p. 118).

These comments may seem picky, but it is as well to place things in perspective. This is a travel guide, and as such it presents Indonesia as a bird-watcher's paradise. The sites listed surely justify the upbeat descriptions, but the excessive praise sometimes seems rather at variance with this reviewer's picture of the depressingly bird-less agricultural terrain to which he frequently has cause to visit, with bird-rich habitats perhaps a day's journey from the nearest good road and beyond access for a working visitor bound by time schedules. However, *Birding Indonesia* will serve a useful purpose if it promotes greater investment in the protection of the good habitats that remain. Touristic developments on Pulau Serangan, for example, may have already destroyed that island's shoreline as a birder's venue on Bali (p. 82).

There seems little doubt that this will become the standard birder's guide to Indonesia. And finally, this reviewer now has a ready-made answer to the many letters he receives seeking advice on where to go to the nearest bookshop that stocks Periplus!

DAH

**Whitten, T., Roehayat Emon Soeriaatmadja & Suraya A. Afiff.** *The Ecology of Java and Bali*. The Ecology of Indonesia Series, Volume n. xxiv + 969 pp with many maps, figures and 32 pp. colour plates.  
**MacKinnon, K., Gusti Hatta, Hakimah Halim & A. Mangalik.** *The Ecology of Kalimantan*. The Ecology of Indonesia Series, Volume in. xxiv + 802 pp with many maps, figures and xx pp. colour plates.

Readers of *Kukila* will be familiar with this series from a review made of *The Ecology of Sulawesi* in Volume 3:151-155. This actually forms Volume IV in the series, Sumatra being Volume I, while the forthcoming volumes V-VI will cover respectively Maluku & Nusa Tenggara, Irian Jaya, and Indonesian Seas (Volume V is now released). These two new volumes will need no introduction to anyone concerned with the study and conservation of the fauna and flora of Indonesia, and they not only maintain but further improve upon the very high standard achieved in the earlier two. The only complaint made previously related to the printing quality, but this criticism no longer applies now that Periplus Editions are the publishers. Highly recommended, but it is advisable to snop around to check prices. We have seen prices within Indonesia ranging from \$21 to \$38, and \$40 in Singapore.

The Java and Bali book does not hesitate to tackle the sensitive social and indeed political issues on which the future environmental well-being of these islands will ultimately depend, issues such as, *inter alia*, population growth, consumption patterns, carrying capacity, land use conversion, agro-chemicals. While an ornithological journal is not an appropriate medium for a review of such a work, it is worth stating that this is absolutely encyclopaedic in its coverage (some 2,900 references alone!), and essential source material for anyone concerned with physical and social planning in any form. Obviously such a compendium is not intended for the majority of ornithologists visiting the country (who might regret the error on p. 529 where *Twdvs poliocephalus* should be named Island Thrush, not Sunda Whistling thrush), but both books cannot be too strongly recommended.

Since preparing this review, the fifth volume in the series has been released in local bookshops. *The Ecology of Nusa Tenggara and Maluku*, by Kathryn A. Monk, Yance de Fretes, and Gayatri Reksodiharjo Lilley].

DAH

**Holmes, D. & K. Phillipps. 1996. *The biros of Sulawesi*.** Oxford University Press: Kuala Lumpur. xii+86pp+21pls.

This is the third in the linages of Asia series on the birds of Indonesia. Like the earlier Birds of Java & Bali and Birds of Sumatra & Kalimantan it is designed as an introduction to the birds of a faunal region.

Of the approximately 500 species recorded from Sulawesi, 160 species are discussed in the text and 142 are illustrated in colour. For the most part these are the birds most likely to be seen by the casual observer, whether itinerant visitor or local resident.

As might be expected from such an experienced author, the text is full of behavioural observations that can only be gained from years in the field. The plates are bright and accurate and the combination will inspire the nascent ornithologist. This is crucial. Visiting birdwatchers are usually much better served by technical publications than the local populace.

Unlike the earlier books, however, it also includes some of the more obscure Sulawesi endemics; the Sulawesi Woodcock and the Great Shortwing, for example, will be seen by only the most dedicated birdwatcher. No doubt the authors could not resist including some specialities that had not been illustrated before.

A book like this must give the reader some sense of the uniqueness of Sulawesi birds. For whilst birdwatchers have long celebrated the staggering level of endemism found on the island, it is the local students of wildlife who will decide whether or not it will be conserved. Hopefully the fluent and accessible text and the vibrant plates will encourage such stewardship from the people of Indonesia.

The publishers of Images of Asia are to be commended. They must also be encouraged to produce editions in the Indonesian language to ensure that these books reach the people who will eventually decide how long the six note whistles of the Great Shortwing will be heard in the mountains of Sulawesi.

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[Notice: at time of going to press, for technical reasons this book has regrettably still not been released for sale within Indonesia. Visitors to Sulawesi from overseas should obtain their copies before arrival].

**Also received:**

**Inskipp, T., N. Lindsey & W. Duckworth. 1996. *An annotated checklist of the birds of the Oriental Region*.** Oriental Bird Club, Sandy, UK. A review is in preparation.

**Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle. *On a marchè sur la Terre*.** 1991. 223 pp. This publication accompanied an exhibition on evolution at the museum. It gives an account of evolution in all its aspects from prehistoric times to the modern world. Contributions were made by 59 eminent scientists, mostly French, in a variety of disciplines: biochemistry, herpetology, physiology, botany etc.). The book is presented in a lively and popular style, richly illustrated with photographs, ancient drawings, diagrams etc.

**Blomert, A M., B.J. Ens, J.D. Goss Custard, J.B. Hulscher & L Zwarts (eds.). 1966. *Oystercatchers and their estuarine food supplies*.** Special issue of *Ardea* No. 84A. Journal of the Netherlands Ornithologists' Union, pp. ix+538.

- Spizaetus barteisi* by the same authors in our last issue ed].
- O'Brien, Timothy. G. & Margaret. F. Kinnaird. 1996. Birds and mammals of the Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park, Sumatra, Indonesia. *Oryx* 30 (3) 207-217. [A list is presented of 276 species recorded in the park, derived from surveys by the authors in 1995, also by Thiollay, J.M. (1995: Are traditional agroforests an alternative for the conservation of rain forest bird diversity? Three case studies in Sumatra. *Conservation Biology* 9:335-353), and FAO (1981: *Barisan Selatan Game Reserve Management Plan, 1982-1987*. FAO Field Report, Bogor).]
- O'Brien, T.G. 1997. Behavioural ecology of the North Sulawesi Tropicbird Hombill *Penelopides exarhatus exarhatus* during the breeding season, *Ibis* 139 (1): 97-101.
- Operation Wallacea (Wallacea Development Institute, Ecosurveys Ltd, Indonesian Institute of Sciences, and DG Forestry and Conservation Indonesia). *Results of the 1996 bird survey of Buton Island, Sulawesi, Indonesia*, pp 137 including 75 pages of grid survey data tables. Also received: *Training programme for the 1997 wildlife survey* (pp 38), and a privately circulated manuscript by Clive Viney: *Operation Wallacea: Buton Island and Hoga Island, Sulawesi, Indonesia. November 1995*. pp 79. [Many extremely interesting data are emerging from this ongoing operation, with a substantial list of species new to Buton, including several endemic hill species (on this essentially lowland island), and we look forward to the final report in due course.]
- Project Orang Pendek (Flora and Fauna International). *Bird list: Kerinci Seblat National Park, Sumatra and adjoining areas. April 1997*. Compiled by Jeremy Holden. Private ms. pp 81. [An annotated list of observations by the author over a period of up to 22 months since 1994. All observations are those of the compiler, and there are many records of great interest. The surveys are ongoing, and we hope we can look forward to a full report at a later date.]
- Restall, R.L. 1995. Proposed additions to the genus *Lonchura* (Estrildinae). *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 115:140-157.
- Restall, R.L. 1996. A proposed new species of munia, genus *Lonchura* (Estrildinae). *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 116:137-142. (See also Balen, S. van, in print. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.*)
- Robson, Craig. 1997. Wildlife Conservation Society surveys for Bornean Peacock pheasant. *WPA News-No. 53*: 13-15. World Pheasant Association.
- Rusila, Y. & Enis, W.H. *A preliminary survey on the ecological potential of the Cagar Alam Muara Kendawangan, West Kalimantan*. PHPA/AWB Indonesia Programme, 1995. [The most significant records from this have been incorporated in the Kalimantan Bird Report in this issue].
- Rusila Noor, Y., Noviana Andalusi, Umar, Sueb & Madsahi. *Waterbird counting at Pulau Dua and Pulau Pamujan Besar, Banten Bay, West Java*. PHPA/Wetlands International Indonesia Programme (1996). [A survey in 1996 showed that the breeding population on Pulau Dua has decreased during the past decade although the population may have been higher than actually recorded. A new waterbird breeding colony is located on Pulau Pamujan Besar, a 30 ha island located 8 km northeast of Pulau Dua, with at least 6 species breeding, a useful discovery with important implications].
- Sözer, R. & V. Nijman. The Javan Hawk eagle: new information on its distribution in Central Java and notes on its threats. *Tropical Biodiversity* 3(1):49-55.
- Sulawesi '95 Ornithological Expedition, University of Leeds. *The report of the ornithological expedition to the Rawa Aopa Watumohai National Park, South east Sulawesi, Indonesia. 9 September - 9 November 1995*. Compiled by J.C. Wardill. pp 30. [The compiler has now

The following papers have been received or seen that relate to the Indonesian avifauna:

- Baker, Gillian. 1997. The Moluccan Megapode: Bird of the Spice Islands. *WPA News* No. 53: 21-24. World Pheasant Association.
- Balen, S. van, D. Dewi & P.R. Jepson. 1994. Observations at a Jawa Hawk eagle nest. *Tropical Biodiversity* 2(2):329-331.
- Balen, S. van & V. Nijman. 1996. Notes on the breeding of the Crested Jay *Platylophus galericulatus*. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 116(3):173-174.
- Collar, N.J. & A.J. Long. 1995. Taxonomy and names of *Carpococcyx* cuckoos from the Greater Sundas. *Forktail* 11:135-150. [Proposes the separation of nominate *Carpococcyx radiceus* on Borneo and *viridis* on Sumatra as distinct species].
- Eastwood, C. A trip to Irian Jaya. *Muruk* 8 (1): 12-23 (1996). [This article in the Journal of the Papua New Guinea Bird Society lists the birds (in nearly every case without any details) observed at several locations in Irian Jaya (from Batanta in the west to Lake Habbema in the east)].
- Fachry Nur Mallo. 1996. *Kehidupan burung di Lembah Palu: study pendahuluan dari hasil pengamatan terhadap keberadaan jenis, kelestarian dan kondisi habitatnya*. Birds of the Palu valley [Sulawesi], a preliminary study resulting from species surveys, their protection and condition of the habitat. Pp v+63 with attachments. Private ms.
- Fachry Nur Mallo and Iwan Setiawan. *Telaah Status Cacatua sulphurea sulphurea di Sulawesi Tengah*. PHPA/BirdLife International Report No. 7 (1996). [A rapid status assessment through semi structured interviews and direct observations in 1995 confirmed that a major decline has taken place in the province over the past 20 years; only 24 observations were made at five locations, almost entirely outside protected areas].
- Iwan Setiawan. *The status of Cacatua sulphurea parvula on Nusa Penida, Bali and Sumbawa, West Nusa Tenggara*. PHPA/BirdLife International Report No. 6 (1996). [A rapid status assessment through interviews and surveys in 1994 showed that there has been a sharp population decline. Just six birds remain on Nusa Penida (off Bali); the situation is less critical on Sumbawa although there have been local extinctions].
- Johnstone, R.E., P. Jepson, S.H.M. Butchart, J.C. Lowen and D. Prawiradilaga. The birds of Sumbawa, Moyo and Sangean Islands, Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. *Records of the Western Australian Museum* 18: 157-178 (1996). [The paper summarizes observations gathered during a number of different surveys. Details are given of the records of 172 species, including 37 that are new to the Sumbawa region].
- Kinnaird, M.F., T.G. O'Brien & Suer Suryadi. 1996. Population fluctuation in Sulawesi Red knobbed Hombills: Tracking figs in space and time. *Auk* 113 (2):431-440.
- Mason, I.J. & R.I. Forrester. Geographical differentiation in the Channel billed Cuckoo *Scythrops novaehollandiae* Latham, with description of two new subspecies from Sulawesi and the Bismark Archipelago. *Emu* 96: 217-233. [The delineation of a subspecies from Sulawesi implies the resident status of an isolated population, whether or not migrants also reach that island, ed.].
- Nijman, V. & R. Sözer. 1997. New information on the distribution of Chestnut bellied Partridge *Arborophila javanica* in the central part of Java. *Bird Conservation International* 7(1):27-33. [Many records fill a gap in the known distribution, illustrating the hitherto paucity of distributional data from Central Java cf. the review of a report on the Javan Hawk eagle

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prepared an annotated checklist for publication in a forthcoming issue of *Kukila*).

Yusup Cahyadin, P. Jepson & Sukari Arif. *The status of *Cacatua sulphurea abbotti* on the Masalembu Islands*. PHPA/BirdLife International Report No. 2 (1994). [A survey in 1994 confirmed that this taxon is extinct on Masalembu island but that 8–10 birds may remain on Masakambing].

Yusup Cahyadin, Paul Jepson & Masykur Syarief. *A rapid status assessment of *Cacatua sulphurea sulphurea* in South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia*. PHPA/BirdLife International Report No. 3 (1994). [Surveys during 1994 confirmed that the species has suffered a dramatic population decline in South Sulawesi, being now very rare throughout the province with local extinctions].