

**SHORT NOTE ON PURPLE HERON
CONSISTENTLY FEEDING IN A COFFEE PLANTATION**

by
Mark Grantham

Over several days in early May 1998, Dibyoo from AKASIA Nature Club (Jember University), observed a heron *Ardea* sp. repeatedly feeding in a coffee plantation in Meru Betiri National Park, SE Java (113°58'10"E, 8°33'10"S). On 29 May, I accompanied him to the area and we flushed an adult Purple Heron *A. purpurea* from the plantation in exactly the same area as the previous sightings.

When perched near the observers, the crop of the bird was seen to be very swollen, indicating, that it was actively feeding in the area. The coffee plantation is very dry, with no standing water or irrigation channels. The relatively open canopy covers a short grass dominated ground layer. Several mature, ornamental trees were scattered around the plantation, in which the bird occasionally perched, together with some rubber trees along tracks and roads. The site was some 500 m from the nearest river, and over 2 km from the nearest coast, which is steep and rocky. It was not clear what the bird was feeding on, as it was not possible to approach closely while it was feeding. There appeared to be: no obvious large prey items on the ground (e.g. frogs or invertebrates), although probably small lizards are common.

Following this record, two Woolly necked Storks *Ciconia episcopus* were seen in the same area on 29 August 1998. After two days of intermittent heavy rain, these birds were feeding in small puddles along the rough track, but also spending time searching for prey in the (now rain soaked) plantation itself. Under such conditions, prey such as amphibians presumably would be more active and available.