

Habitat of the Sulawesi Woodcock *Scolopax celebensis* in Lore Lindu National Park

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Ringkasan. Disajikan laporan-laporan mengenai Berkik-gunung sulawesi *Scolopax celebensis* termasuk deskripsi rinci pertama mengenai habitatnya. Pengamatan spesies ini didapatkan dalam survei keragaman hayati di Lore Lindu, yaitu pada lokasi-lokasi Hanggira, Toro, dan Tomado pada bulan Juli dan Nopember 2001.

Four species of woodcock are known from Indonesia, all inhabiting montane and sub-montane forests: Sulawesi Woodcock *Scolopax celebensis*, Moluccan (or Obi) Woodcock *S. rochussenii*, Javan (or Rufous) Woodcock *S. saturata* and New Guinea Woodcock *S. rosenbergii* (Kennedy *et al.* 2001). The ecology and distribution of all four species are little-known; *S. rochussenii* is regarded as Endangered, and *S. celebensis* as Near-threatened (Birdlife 2001). To date *S. celebensis* is known only from northern and central Sulawesi. Most information about the species derives from specimens. Raven discovered the species at Rano Rano in Central Sulawesi; Heinrich collected six specimens from the Latimojong mountains in northern South Sulawesi and three specimens from the Matinan mountains and Mount Mahawu in the north; and more recently it was reported from Morowali in East Sulawesi (Stresemann 1939-41; WWF 1980; White & Bruce 1986). During a hunting survey through the mountain forests of the Latimojong, Heinrich (in Stresemann 1941) flushed a woodcock from a shallow basin overgrown with lush rattan bushes, in which pig wallows were evident, at about 2200 m asl. He believed the woodcock "prefers, however, clearly the mountain ridges, on which also plains with little undergrowth and loamy ponds are found". Coates & Bishop (1997) stated that the species inhabits bamboo thickets, is secretive and rarely observed, but listed no new localities.

Scolopax celebensis is known to occur in Lore Lindu National Park, central Sulawesi (Fachry & Ma'dika 1990) but there are apparently no recently published records (Watling 1983; van den Berg & Bosman 1986). Recent reports from the park include birds sighted during 2000 close to Hanggira village in the Besoa valley in the south of the park (C. Mamengko, pers com. 2001). Between July and November 2001 we spent nine weeks surveying the biodiversity of Lore Lindu at three sites on the western side of the park: Hanggira (1°43'S, 120°10'E), Toro (1°30'S, 120°04'E), and Tomado (1°18'S, 120°02'E). At the last, most northerly, site we made four observations of single *S. celebensis* between 19 and 29 September. Here we describe these sightings and provide the first detailed information on the species' habitat. All observations were made along a 400 m transect through primary forest at 1400-410 m asl.

The first sighting of a woodcock was at a distance of just 2 m. The bird was investigating a cavity in the bank of a small rocky stream and, after being flushed by the observers, flew about 5 m along the stream before landing and running into dense vegetation along

the stream bank. Next, on 24 September, a single woodcock was seen flying into a mist-net that had been set at ground level close to the site of the first observation; the bird collided with the net, but escaped. On 27 September a woodcock was seen probing the sandy substrate some 250 m further along the same small stream. Finally, there was a brief observation of a bird along the same stretch of stream, before it ran up the river bank and into dense understorey vegetation.

We established seven 10 x 50 m vegetation plots along the transect to characterise the habitat at our woodcock sites. The seven plots supported 192 trees with a dbh \geq 10 cm, an average of 27.4 trees per plot and equivalent to a density of 549 trees per ha. Forty species were found among 180 identified trees, with common species belonging to the families Arecaceae (*Pinanga* sp), Fagaceae (*Lithocarpus* spp), Urticaceae (*Dendrocnide microstigma* and *Villebrunea rubescens*), Myrtaceae (*Eugenia* spp), Meliaceae (*Aglaia* sp), and Palmae (*Calamus* sp). There was little degradation or disturbance to the forest other than evidence of rattan collection. Close to the area where the woodcocks were sighted was a small shelter used by rattan collectors, around which the forest undergrowth had been cleared.

These observations provide the first detailed information on the habitat of *S. celebensis*. Clearly, whilst the species may occur in bamboo thickets in other areas, streambanks were the preferred habitat in Lore Lindu NP at the lower end of its altitudinal range. Further studies on this little-known endemic are still required and the area above Tomado, in Lore Lindu appears to be a suitable location.

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