

First record of Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* in Flores

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Ringkasan. Cagak Abu *Ardea cinerea* diketahui sebagai pengembara langka untuk kawasan Wallacea, khususnya Pulau Sumba dan Sumbawa, tetapi jenis ini belum pernah tercatat ditemukan di Pulau Flores. Pada tanggal 18 Mei 2012 kami mengamati dan memotret seekor Cagak abu *Ardea cinerea* sedang terbang melintas tambak ikan di desa Goron Talo, Kecamatan Komodo, Manggarai Barat Flores. Statusnya di Flores and pulau-pulau di sekitarnya kami diskusikan.

During a brief morning visit to the fish ponds near Goron Talo village (8°31'S; 119°52'E; Komodo district, Manggarai Barat regency, Flores) on 18 May 2012 a large grey-coloured heron was seen flying across a pond, c. 1 km from the coastline. Although at first sight we could not convincingly exclude the locally common Great-billed Heron *Ardea sumatrana*, the photo taken of the bird (Plate 1) confirmed the contrasting black and pale grey upper wings, whitish head, neck and underparts with black crest and long stripe on the flanks typical of the adult Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*.



Plate 1. Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*, west Flores, 18 May 2012.

The Grey Heron has not previously been recorded for Flores (Verheijen 1964; Schmutz 1977-78; Verhoeve & Holmes 1999; Mees 2006), but its presence was not entirely unexpected. In Wallacea it is a rare vagrant to Sumba and Sumbawa, where it frequents coastal wetlands, river banks and paddy fields (White & Bruce 1986; Coates & Bishop 1997). A single immature female was collected on 30 May 1927 in the coastal swamps near Dompou in eastern Sumbawa (Rensch 1931), and two were seen on 13 May 1988 in the far west of the island (Johnstone *et al.* 1996). A total of

four birds were also seen on Moyo Island off Sumbawa in November and December 1999 (Trainor *et al.* 2006). Sumba records include several observations in March 1925 at Payeti near Waingapu (Dammerman 1926), an immature in February 1990 (unknown locality), a singleton in June 1994 near Malinjak in the interior of West Sumba (Linsley *et al.* 1998), present on 31 August 2004 at Kadumbul, southeast of Yumbu on Melolo road (Milton & Harding 2004), and most recently one reported from the Maka Timbi wetland on 24 July 2011 (Borg & Sultana 2011), and two in east Sumba in February 2012 (Roberts 2012). The sighting of a bird at Pan Muti, Kupang Bay, during 16-17 November 2010 represents the first Timor record (Vermeulan 2010).

Rensch (1931) argued that the age of his bird and time of collection (May) on Sumbawa indicate breeding, and Coates & Bishop (1986) suggest a residential status for the Sumba birds. However, Linsley *et al.* (1998) had doubts about the residential status of the Sumba birds. More likely the heron is a casual visitor from Southeast Asia (White & Bruce 1986), where the nearest breeding colonies are found in Java. The occurrence and possible breeding of Grey Herons as reported by Mann (2008) for the southern coast of Kalimantan, is based only on a tentative identification from a slide made in Tanjung Puting National Park (Galdikas *et al.* 1985). On Java Grey Herons lay eggs between October and May (Hellebrekers & Hoogerwerf 1967), which means that, with a nesting cycle completed in three months (Martinez-Vilalta & Motis 1992), juveniles can be independent and disperse before February, the month in which an immature was observed on Sumba. The bird in Flores in May, on the other hand, was an adult, possibly undertaking post-breeding dispersal.

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