

Sunda Coucal *Centropus nigrorufus* eating young rice seeds

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Ringkasan. Catatan ini mendokumentasikan pengamatan tiga Bubut Jawa sedang memakan biji padi mudah di sawah yang baru dipanen di daerah Jawa Timur. Ini mungkin laporan pertama perilaku makan seperti itu diantara jenis bubut yang biasanya memangsa serangga atau vertebrata.

The Sunda Coucal *Centropus nigrorufus* is endemic to Java, and considered Vulnerable due to habitat loss and trapping (Andrew 1990; MacKinnon & Phillipps 1993; BirdLife International 2013). Its major habitats are coastal wetlands, including mangroves and both wet and dry marshlands (Andrew 1990; Payne 2005). Coucals eat large insects and small vertebrates including snakes, lizards, tree frogs, mice and rats, and small birds (Payne 2005). The Sunda Coucal is known to feed on grasshoppers, Carabid beetles, large moths, hairy and smooth caterpillars, large bugs, insect pupae and eggs, snails and slugs, centipedes, crabs, birds' eggs, frogs and tree snakes (Bartels 1915-1930; Sody 1953, 1989). In one study 34% of food items (n = 50) was insects, 24% geckos and snakes, 16% frogs, 2% rats and the remaining 24% unidentified (Arifin 1997).



Plate 1. Sunda Coucal feeding on unripe rice seeds in Sooko, East Java

On 19 August 2012, I was able to watch up to four Sunda Coucals from 16:30 to 17:00 hrs near Modongan village (7°29'42.6"S, 112°23'52.6"E), Sooko, Mojokerto District, East Java. The four individuals were only c. 4 m apart, and were walking in a paddyfield that had been harvested about four weeks earlier. At first I thought that

they were eating insects, but when I looked again with binoculars, it appeared that at least three birds were feeding on green seeds from young rice plants *Oryza sativa* (Plate 1). Rather than eat spilled ripe rice seeds from the ground, they were picking unripe seeds directly from plants. This behaviour lasted for about three minutes. These observations appear to represent the first record of coucals feeding on seeds or plant matter of any sort, even though some members of this genus live entirely in grassland, e.g. Lesser Coucal *C. bengalensis* (Payne 2005). I returned to the site on 14 September 2012, and although I located the birds in the same place, they were not observed feeding.

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