

A second breeding record of Chestnut-naped Forktails *Enicurus ruficapillus* in Sumatra, and observations suggesting females alone incubate

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Ringkasan. Catatan ini mengenai publikasi perbiakan kedua Meninting Cegar *Enicurus ruficapillus* dan berasal dari individu betina yang teramati sedang aktif bersarang pada ketinggian 854 m dpl di jalur pendakian Gunung Talamau, Sumatera Barat. Sarang berada di pinggir sungai kecil dan berisi dua telur berwarna putih dengan bercak coklat merah muda pada bagian pangkal dan tengah telur. Selama tiga hari pengamatan, hanya induk betina yang terlihat aktif pada sarang, tanpa terpantau adanya pejantan yang membantu kegiatan pengeraman atau menjaga teritori bersarangnya.

Introduction and observations

Restricted to the Oriental region, the forktails (genus *Enicurus*) have long been considered to represent a distinctive tribe of thrushes (Turdidae). Recent molecular studies, however, suggest that they are more closely related to the Old World flycatchers (Muscicapidae) (Zuccon & Ericson 2010; Sangster *et al.* 2010). The Chestnut-naped Forktail *Enicurus ruficapillus* Temminck 1832 is a typically Sundaic species, occurring across the Thai-Malay Peninsula, Sumatra and Borneo (MacKinnon *et al.* 2000; Collar 2017a), though it does not occur on Java. In Sumatra, it is an uncommon inhabitant of small streams in lowland and hilly forest up to 1,300 m above sea level (Marle & Voous 1988, Holmes 1996, MacKinnon *et al.* 2000). While the basic breeding biology of the species is known from studies on the Thai-Malay Peninsula (Wells 2009), few data are available on its nesting in Indonesia. Indeed there were no breeding records for Sumatra until the discovery of a nest in Aceh province by Iqbal (2015). In this short note, we document another breeding record from Sumatra, and some observations suggesting that incubation is performed only by the female.

From 27 December 2015 to 3 January 2016, the authors (except RAN and HH) spent a week on the northwest ridge of Mount Talamau, about 122 km north of Padang, capital city of West Sumatra Province as part of a biodiversity survey. Our first camp was at 854 m asl. (0°6'31" N, 99°56'40" E) atop the bank of a small running creek. In the afternoon of our arrival day, we flushed a Chestnut-naped Forktail twice from one location on a slow running stream, c.50 m from the camp. Upon careful inspection of the location, a nest was found below a fallen tree on the stream (Plate 1A). The nest was placed about 1.5 m above the ground, in a shallow indentation on the vertical surface formed by soil bound to the roots of the fallen tree, and concealed by the tree's suspended rootlets on top of the nest (Plate 1B). It appeared that mud was used to attach the nest to the depression. The interior of the nest was a neat open cup lined with dry skeletonized leaves and fine roots. The nest contained two eggs which were white with dark brown spots and blotches at the larger end (Plate 1C). Some photographs were taken on the nest, but no measurements were taken in case the owner returned and was frightened by the observers' presence.

At around 08:30 hrs on 28 December, the incubating female was seen leaving the nest, and on the following day she was spotted leaving twice, at c. 08:30 hrs and 11:00 hrs, respectively. On those three occasions, we failed to notice when it returned to the nest. No males were seen in the nest vicinity during these two days. Unfortunately we were unable to conduct further observations.

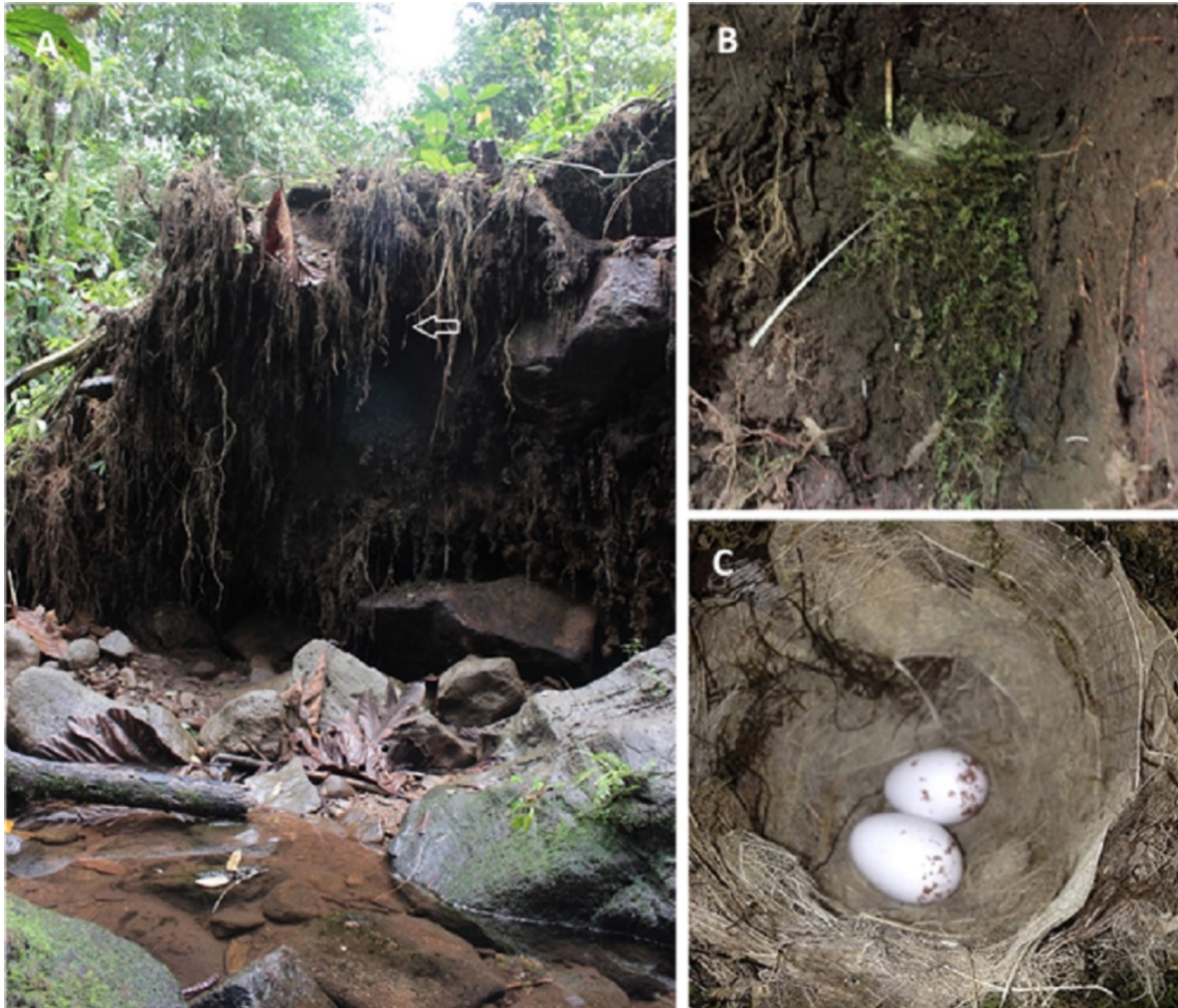


Plate 1. (A) Location of the nest of Chestnut-naped Forktail under roots of a fallen tree (arrow points to the nest position), (B) external view of nest, (C) clutch of two eggs in the nest (Photos by Muhammad Nazri Janra and Andri Saputra).

Discussion

Our observation of a nest of Chestnut-naped Forktails at Mount Talamau, West Sumatra, constitutes the second confirmed breeding record for the species on the island. The first record concerns a nest found on 17 January 2011 in Aceh (Iqbal 2015). Like the nest we observed, the Aceh nest contained two eggs, which successfully hatched into two nestlings during subsequent visit two weeks later. On the Thai-Malay Peninsula, the clutch size is normally two, but there is one instance of three eggs (Madoc 1936, 1957; Wells 2009).

Given their specialized foraging niche and nest location, forktails might be expected to have a well-defined breeding season that is timed either to avoid nest mortality due to flooding or to take advantage of increased availability of small fish and other freshwater stream prey (see Wells 2009). The Aceh clutch was probably laid in early January, while the clutch we found at Mount Talamau was apparently laid in December. A juvenile was also sighted in

Sumatra during mid-March (Collar 2017a; no other details available). These few records from the island suggest that egg-laying occurs at least from December to February, coinciding with the end of the rainy season (Voous 1950). However, in West Sumatra, Novarino *et al.* (2008) observed brood patches on one bird caught in July 2002, and another two captured in June 2004, suggesting the breeding season may extend to July. In Borneo, birds in breeding condition have been observed in February, March and May (Collar 2017a). These months fall within the main breeding season (January–June) of most forest birds in Borneo and Sumatra (Voous 1950; Fogden 1972). In contrast, on the Thai-Malay Peninsula, the species breeds mainly from July to September, within the wet season on the western side of the peninsula, although active nests have been found in all months except November (Wells 2009).

Little is known on the roles and contributions of the sexes in nesting among forktails, as all but two of the seven species are sexually monomorphic. Madoc (1936) reported a female Chestnut-naped Forktail sitting on eggs in Selangor, Malaysia, and all three of our observations at the Mount Talamau nest were of the female. These observations, albeit very limited, suggest that the female alone incubates in this and possibly other forktail species. Both sexes are known to provision nestlings and remove their faecal sacs (Madoc 1957; Wells 2009), and this is corroborated by photographs of this species in the Oriental Bird Images (2017), showing males taking an active part in raising hatchlings. Nest-building and incubation are normally performed solely by the female among species in the family Turdidae, to which the forketails were formerly assigned (Collar 2017b). However, forketails are currently placed in Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers), the majority of which show incubation by both sexes (Taylor 2017). Therefore it would be useful to confirm that the male Chestnut-naped Forktail takes no part in incubation.

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