

First Record of Bare-headed Laughingthrush *Garrulax calvus* in Kalimantan, Indonesian Borneo

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Ringkasan. Poksai Kepala-botak *Garrulax calvus* sering ditemui di Sarawak dan Sabah, tapi belum ada pengamatan di Kalimantan. Saya mendengar jenis burung tersebut di Kalimantan Timur pada ketinggian 1200 m di hutan utama dekat Kampung Long Apari, Sungai Mahakam hulu. Burung tersebut tidak terlihat, tapi saya merekam suaranya untuk identifikasinya dan saya bisa memastikan bahwa burung endemik Borneo ini terdapat pada pegunungan Kalimantan, Indonesia. Kalimantan mencakup sebagian besar hutan pegunungan di Borneo dan kemungkinan merupakan habitat penting untuk jenis burung tersebut. Kelangsungan hidup burung-burung poksai di Indonesia terancam oleh perdagangan burung sangkar.

On 07 October 2012 at 07:50 hrs, RCB conducted an avian point count 12 km east of Long Apari village in the headwaters of the Mahakam River, East Kalimantan (0°56'10"N, 114°11'23"E), at 1,200 m above sea level (asl), near a peak at 1,448 m asl, identified on some local maps as Gunung Topap Oso (Fig. 1). Here I heard the song of a Bare-headed Laughingthrush *Garrulax calvus*. The bird was distant and never seen, but I obtained an audio recording ([eBird checklist S40965489](#)) to confirm identification (Fig. 2).

Until now the Bare-headed Laughingthrush (Plate 1) was one of only three Bornean montane endemics, along with Friendly Bush Warbler *Locustella accentor* and Black Oriole *Oriolus hosii* that were not recorded in Kalimantan (van Balen 1999; Irham *et al.* 2012). Most of Kalimantan's mountains are difficult to access (Potter 2009) and probably for this reason are much less visited by scientists and birdwatchers than are the better known sites of Malaysian Borneo.

The Bare-headed Laughingthrush was previously considered conspecific with the Black Laughingthrush *G. lugubris* of the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra (Smythies 1999; Mann 2008) but is now considered a distinct species (Thompson 2007; Clements *et al.* 2017). It is known from primary montane forest in Sarawak including that on Mount Dulit (Hose 1893), the Kelabit highlands (Smythies 1999), and Mount Mulu (Burner *et al.* 2016), as well as from many sites in Sabah above 800 m asl (Sheldon *et al.* 2001). Borneo's highest peaks (Kinabalu, Trus Madi, Tambuyukon, Murud and Mulu) are all located on the Malaysian side, but 75% of Borneo's forests above 1,000 m occur on the Indonesian side of Borneo's main mountain chain (Gaveau *et al.* 2014). This suggests that Kalimantan potentially provides important habitat for the Bare-headed Laughingthrush, which may be more widespread in Borneo than we currently realize.

I recorded the bird in primary forest, far from the disturbance of shifting cultivation along the Mahakam River (which typically occurs from 200 to 500 m asl) while conducting point counts to compare patterns of species richness on elevational gradients (Burner *et al.* 2018). Canopy height at this elevation averaged 33 m and the largest trees at each point were on average 60 to 90

cm in diameter. This was the only time the Bare-headed Laughingthrush was encountered in three months of fieldwork in Kalimantan conducted between June and November 2012, although only half of this time was spent above 1,000 m asl. Several other sub-montane and montane species were also present at the same point, including Ochraceous Bulbul *Alophoixus ochraceus*, Mountain Barbet *Megalaima monticola*, and Crimson-headed Partridge *Haematortyx sanguiniceps*.

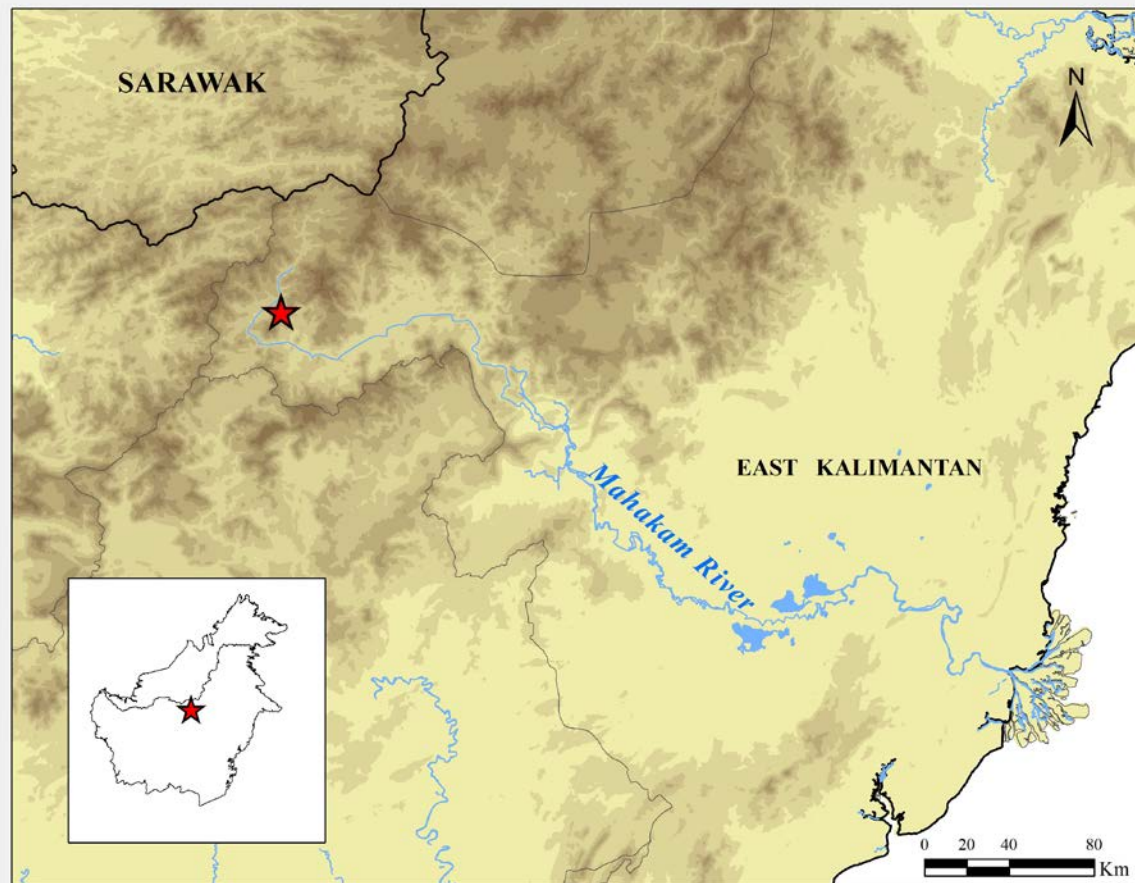


Figure 1. Location of Bare-headed Laughingthrush (*Garrulax calvus*) record east of the upper Mahakam River, Mt. Topap Oso, East Kalimantan, Indonesia.

All publically available recordings of this species (macaulaylibrary.org and xeno-canto.org) are from the Mount Kinabalu area in Sabah, but the song of the birds I recorded seems to fit within the variation that occurs in Sabah. It makes a grating, low (~1.6 kHz), hollow ‘queer-queer’ vocalization, repeated every 1.5 to 2 seconds that is often preceded by an even lower, hollow ‘hoop’ (1.1 kHz) as described by Smythies (1999). At several points in the recording it appears that there may in fact be two individuals calling simultaneously.

The Bare-headed Laughingthrush is an IUCN ‘species of least concern’ (IUCN 2017), and is afforded some habitat protection by the high elevations it inhabits, but even montane forest habitat is declining across Borneo (Gaveau *et al.* 2014). In addition to habitat loss, many species of laughingthrushes are sold in the cage bird trade in Indonesia, including the formerly conspecific *G. lugubris* (Shepherd 2007, 2011; Eaton *et al.* 2015; Shepherd *et al.* 2016), although I am not aware of any records of *G. calvus* being found in a market.

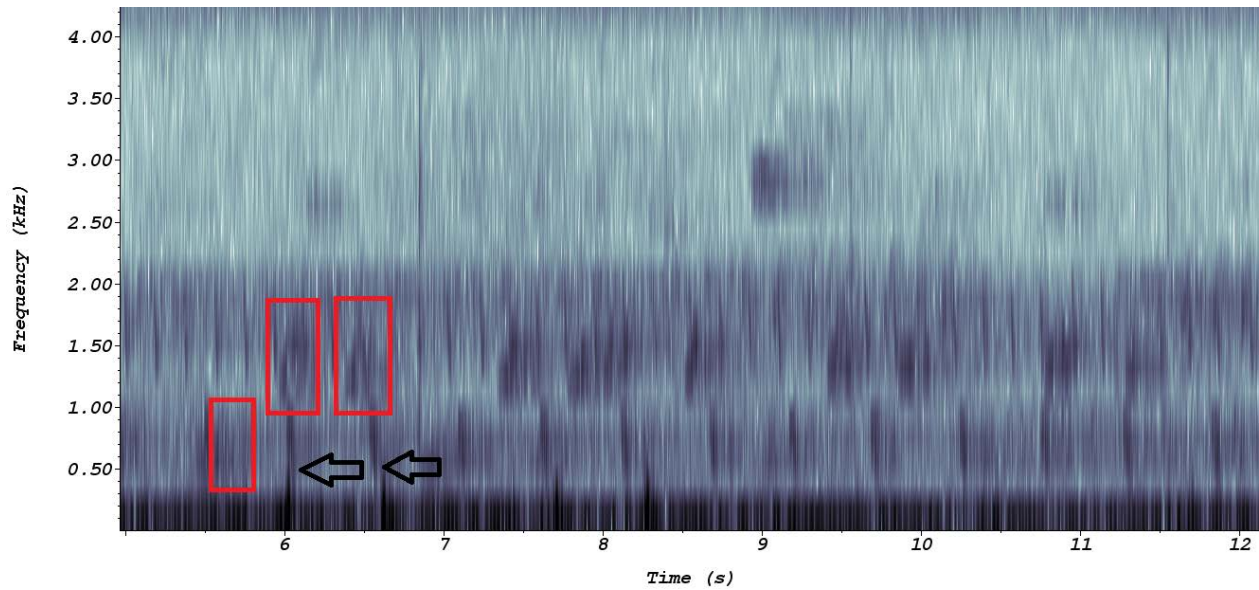


Figure 2. Sonogram of recording of Bare-headed Laughingthrush *Garrulax calvus* east of the upper Mahakam River, Mt. Topap Oso, East Kalimantan, Indonesia. Song is mixed with that of a louder repeating Red-throated Barbet *Megalaima mystacophanos*. Red boxes mark the first three-note phrase of the laughingthrush, while black arrows indicate the first two repeated notes of the barbet. Image created in Raven Lite 2.0.0 (Charif *et al.* 2006).



Plate 1. Bare-headed Laughingthrush *Garrulax calvus* from Mt. Kinabalu National Park, Sabah. © James Eaton / Birdtour Asia.

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