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(Figure Heading:)

## **THE SUNDA SERIN *SERINUS ESTHERAE* IN SULAWESI**

by K. D. Bishop and Ben King.

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The Sulawesi race of the Sunda Serin *Serinus estherae renatae* was described as recently as 1982 (Schuchmann & Wolters) from Gng. (Mount) Rantekombola at the northern end of the south-west peninsula. Watling (1983) subsequently reported this species from Rano Rano (1900 m) at the southern end of the Lore Lindu National Park, north-central Sulawesi. Watling also alludes to a second probable sighting on Gng. Rorekatimbu which is located in the north-east corner of Lore Lindu. This note confirms the presence of this species on Gng. Rorekatimbu and reports for the first time a remarkable erythristic population presumed to belong to this species.

On the morning of 20 July 1985 while watching birds in *Agathis*-dominated Upper Montane forest (Wirawan 1981) on a logging track on the west slope of Gng. Rorekatimbu at c. 1900 m., we observed three birds we presumed to be Sunda Serins *Serinus estherae*, one in male plumage and two in female plumage. However, although the general proportions, size, shape, and plumage pattern were very similar to those observed in other 'Sulawesi' Sunda Serins (Bishop *pers. obs.*) they differed dramatically in having all the yellow/gold feathering replaced with red-orange. Unfortunately the female type birds only permitted a brief view (c.80 secs) before flying off. However, the male type remained in view for c. 20 mins. allowing observation through an assortment of binoculars and telescopes while it perched in good light in the exposed top of a tree.

The most distinctive feature of the presumed male was its brilliant red-orange rump and upper tail coverts. The remainder of this bird's plumage was as follows: forecrown red-orange becoming

olive-brown with slight dark streaking on the crown and back; tertials edged slightly paler red-orange with the deeper red-orange feathering of the upper tail coverts extending onto the slightly notched tail. Upperwing coverts red-orange although paler than the rump, underparts whitish with fine brown streaks; bill distinctly heavy, dull grey; iris colour not determined, but indistinct pale eye-ring present. Although these birds were not heard calling the senior author has seen and heard small groups of Sunda Serins calling in flight during previous visits to this site. The call is a dull metallic chittering very similar to calls heard from this species on Gng. Gede-Pangrango in West Java.

The Sunda Serin is a widespread but local species. To the north *S.e. mindanensis* is known only from a single specimen collected on Mt. Katanglad, Mindanao, Philippines (Ripley & Rabor 1961) and to the south and west *S.e. orientalis* occurs in East Java, the nominate race *S.e. estherae* in West Java and *S.e. vanderbilti* in north Sumatra (Peters 1968). The few reports concerning this species indicate that it inhabits alpine grassland and/or open scrubby areas above the treeline (Hoogerwerf 1949, Chasen & Hoogerwerf 1941, Schuchmann & Wolters 1982). However, Watling's (1983) observations and those of Bishop (*pers. obs.*) at this locality and in West Java (Andrew 1985, Bishop *pers. obs.*) suggest they also make extensive use of forest. On Gng. Rorekatimbu the Sunda Serin has been observed foraging in the upper crown of tall forest trees from c 1,600 to 2,200 m. They were not seen in open areas at all. On Gng. Gede — Pangrango groups of 4 to 10 birds were observed flying over the forest (c. 1550 m), feeding in the upper crown of mossy Montane Forest. On one occasion during July 1982 the senior author watched a group of three Sunda Serins feeding on the sepals of a large white terrestrial orchid in company with a flock of Chestnut-backed Scimitar-Babblers *Pomatorhinus montanus*. Birds on Gng. Gede — Pangrango have been recorded between 1,400 and 2,000 m. + (Andrew 1985).

Current knowledge of the known distribution of this attractive serin likely reflect the paucity of ornithological collecting and observers in the region. There are a number of localities throughout the species range that may reveal further populations of what has previously been considered a 'rare' species.

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## NOTES ON SOME BIRDS OF TIMOR

by Paul Andrew

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The standard works on the birds of Timor were published by Hellmayr (1914, 1916) and Mayr (1944). Both authors described the resident avifauna carefully but dealt as cursorily with migrants as had the collectors who provided the specimens. Consequently, after three short field trips made in 1973 to what is now the province of East Timor, McKean *et al.* (1975) added over 25 species to the Timor list (cf. Mees 1976). In 1985 the author made two trips to south-west Timor, the first from 27 February — 30 March and the second from 28 August — 3 October. A number of species which were previously either unknown or little known in Timor or the Lesser Sundas were recorded, often as quite common, and notes on 15 of them are presented here. A number of records were corroborated by Tom M. Gullick and these are followed by his initials (T.M.G.) All the records were made in 1985 and refer either to an area of mudflats at the head of the Bay of Kupang, West Timor (10° 2' S, 123° 6' E), or to the Bina Plain beside the Mina river near the south coast of West Timor (10° 8' S, 124° 7' E).

Seven species of Palaearctic waders are listed, all previously overlooked on Timor and not mentioned by Mayr (1944), McKean *et al.* (1975) or Mees (1976). All records refer to the mudflats at the head of the Bay of Kupang.

### *Pelecanus conspicillatus* Australian Pelican

At least 48 birds, all adult, were present throughout September in the Bay of Kupang and a further 37 were regularly seen on ponds on the Bina Plain in the same month. Local residents at Tambak Oebelo, a complex of fishponds on the mudflats at the head of the bay, insist that the species is resident. They also claim to have killed a thousand pelicans in a few days, insist that exhausted birds were plucked from the sea or run down on the mudflats, but are not clear as to the year in which this event took place. It was probably 1978 when there was an irruption of pelicans into Indonesian (Somadikarta & Holmes 1979). In mid-October 1981 approximately 150 pelicans were photographed on Lake Oendui, Roti, an island just west of Timor (Beudels 1981). Most of these records may be of birds remaining from the 1978 invasion as the only previous records from the Lesser Sundas are of one bird in Flores, in about September 1960 (Voous 1962) and of two birds in Timor in October 1973 (McKean *et al.* 1975).