

# OBSERVATION ON THE AVIFAUNA OF SIBERUT ISLAND, 1992-1994

by

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## ABSTRACT

The recent studies were carried out in 1992-1994, and aimed at investigating recent status and distribution of the avifauna of Siberut Island. Ninety-six species were recorded during the observations, of which all endemic subspecies and one endemic species were observed. From all species, 11.5% were very common and 37.5% were common in the island, while 28.1% of them were uncommon and 22.9% were rarely found. Protected and endemic species were amongst the rarely found birds, except the nectar feeding birds which were abundant in the island. Most of these birds might have functioned as either secondary or tertiary consumers, which are vulnerable to habitat deterioration. Habitat conservation may be the best measures to be considered.

## INTRODUCTION

The establishment of Siberut National Park is aimed at conserving the uniqueness of the island's ecosystems that have outstanding unique properties accomodating a high degree of endemism. Amongst birds, there have been recorded one species and 13 subspecies which are endemic to the island (Chasen & Kloss 1926, Whitten 1980).

However, ornithological observations in the island have been quite irregular. The first ornithological expedition was done by Chasen & Kloss (1926), and the second was 54 years later which was conducted by Whitten (1980). Chasen & Kloss registered 87 bird species, while Whitten's study recorded 18 more bird species into the list, giving 105 bird species altogether recorded from the island. Marle & Voous (1988) added more records from various observers to the list and come up with 123 species. The genera *Sterna* and *Limosa* which were not recorded previously were added to the list, giving three other genera remained unidentified: *Accipiter*, *Batrachostomus*, and *Ficedula*.

In order to establish the current status of Siberut's birds three consecutive studies were carried out on the island between 1992 and 1994. The first study was done in July-August 1992, the second was in August-September 1993, and the third was in May-June 1994. The latest study was conducted in conjunction with the biodiversity survey for the purpose of Siberut National Park establishment, where ecologically important bird species were mapped.

### STUDY AREAS AND METHODS

The study areas consisted of the whole ranges of habitat types known in Siberut island (see Abdulhadi *et al.* 1981 & 1993; Adhikerana *in prep.*) where the study sought to obtain a comprehensively current information on the avifauna of the island. Study sites for the primary dipterocarp forests were in Serak, Alimoi, and Teiteibake, those for the primary mixed forests were in Kalio, Simabugai, and Leleu Karanggian, and those for the secondary forests were around Teiteibeluleleu, Teiteiokbuk, and Kampung Lama (Teileleu). The swamp forests study sites were in Batkoko/Simasokut, Pepei, and Onaja Malaming. The mangrove habitats were in Saliguma, Teluk Katurai, dan Pulau Buggai. Coastal forests observed were those in Tanjung Serak, Teluk Kalea, dan Siribabak; The logged over areas observed during this study were those in Lalai, Saliguma, and Sirimuri; While the observed plantation areas were those in Madobag, Ugai, and Saibi.

Bird observation was carried out in all habitat types described above as well as along the tracks *en route* from places to places, and the records were based on direct sightings with the aid of a pairs of binoculars (8x24), calls and songs, as well as capturing the specimens which were then morphologically studied. Collected bird specimens were disposed at the Museum Zoologicum Bogoriense, Bogor, Indonesia. Identification referred to King *et al.* (1983) and MacKinnon (1989); while codes for relative abundance referred to the categories used by Pearson (1975) as follows:

- Very common : seen regularly and in large to moderate numbers.
- Common : seen regularly but in small numbers.
- Uncommon : seen irregularly.
- Rare : seen only once or twice during the observations.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the observations 96 species were recorded, of which all endemic subspecies and one endemic species were observed. The only endemic species found was the Mentawai Scop Owl (*Otus mentawi*), and the thirteen subspecies were:

- Pernis ptilorhynchus ptilorhynchus* (Crested Honey Buzzard)
- Spilornis cheela sipora* (Crested Serpent Eagle)
- Macropygia phasianella elassa* (Large Brown Cuckoo Dove)
- Psittinus cyanurus pontius* (Blue-rumped Parrot)
- Phaenicophaeus curvirostris oenicaudatus* (Chestnut-breasted Malkoha)
- Calyptomena viridis siberu* (Green Broadbill)
- Dicrurus leucophaeus siberu* (Ashy Drongo)
- Dicrurus hottentottus viridinitens* (Spangled Drongo)
- Oriolus chinensis sipora* (Black-naped Oriole)
- Oriolus xanthonotus mentawi* (Dark-throated Oriole)
- Copsychus saularis pagiensis* (Magpie Robin)
- Orthotomus ruficeps concinnus* (Ashy Tailorbird)
- Hypothymis azurea leucophila* (Black-naped Monarch)

During the study there have been 97 species recorded, seven of which were recorded for the first time to the island, namely: *Accipiter trivirgatus* (Crested Goshawk), *Spizaetus alboniger* (Blyth's Hawk Eagle), *Chlidonias hybridus* (Whiskered Tern), *Pelargopsis capensis* (Stork-billed Kingfisher), *Sturnus sturninus* (Daurian Starling), *Nectarinia jugularis* (Olive-backed Sunbird), *Aethopyga mystacalis* (Scarlet Sunbird).

From all species found in the study, 36 species (37.5%) were common in the island, or regularly observed but in small number (5-10 birds per encounter). Uncommon birds were 27 species (28.1%), rarely found birds were 22 species (22.9%), while the very common birds were only 11 species (11.5%).

Important species in terms of conservation (either endemic birds, protected, or of both categories) were 31 species. Of these, nine species were rare which were all but birds of prey, three species were uncommon, eleven species were common, and eight species were very common. Nine of these important birds were carnivorous, another nine species were nectar feeders, and seven were insectivorous, while the others were granivorous and frugivorous birds. Protected birds which were common in the island included all the nectar feeding birds.

When their feeding categories were considered, the majority of the birds were of insectivorous and carnivorous. In the trophic level association, these birds could function as secondary consumers (i.e. insect feeding birds) and tertiary consumers (i.e. birds of prey). Habitat deterioration might not directly affect their life, but that would decrease their food resources; and they would severely get the consequences.

In the following systematic list, nomenclature and sequence follow rigidly those of Marle & Voous (1988), and descriptive information is here included whenever relevant to the discussion.

## NON PASSERIFORMES

### SULIDAE

*Sula sula* (Linnaeus) 1766 - Red-footed Booby

Four birds were observed flying across Muara Siberut at the very first day arriving in the island in 1992, never seen again in the two successive years. This species was a rare visitor to the island.

### FREGATIDAE

*Fregata ariel* (G.R.Gray) 1845 - Lesser Frigate Bird

Observed only once flying across the Ujung Karang coast during the survey to the mangrove forest in 1993. This is probably a rare species visiting the island.

### ARDEIDAE

*Ardea sumatrana* Raffles 1822 - Great-billed Heron

Probably rare in the island, since it was respectively seen once flying off the mangroves in Teluk Katurai, in 1992 and 1994.

*Butorides striatus* (Linnaeus) 1758 - Striated Heron

Regularly observed fishing, sometimes in pairs, along the estuary of Siberut River or by the Syahrudin Hotel in Muara Siberut. This looked different from that described in King *et al.* (1983) in that it has white tips on its primaries, and was probably the subspecies *sipora* (Marle & Voous 1988). However, this is uncommon in other areas of the island.

*Egretta sacra* (Gmelin) 1789 - Eastern Reef Heron

Irregularly observed flying over Muara Siberut, and hunting fish on the estuary of Siberut River, but it was rarely found in other areas.



*Egretta alba* (Linnaeus) 1758 - Great Egret

It was only seen once flying over the Katurai mangrove areas, probably rare.

## CICONIDAE

*Ciconia stormi* (Blasius) 1896 - Storm's Stork

Five birds were observed in 1992, flying over the forest garden in Muara Saibi village, and perching on a tree of about 30 m height. It was the only sighting during the survey, but rarely seen ever since.

## ANATIDAE

*Dendrocygna javanica* (Horsfield) 1821 - Lesser Whistling Duck

Irregularly seen amongst *Imperata* grass along the rivers. Probably common in the island. This was probably uncommon to the island.

## ACCIPITRIDAE

*Pernis ptilorhynchus* (Temminck) 1821 - Crested Honey Buzzard

Listed as *P. apivorus* in Whitten (1980). Observed once flying over Teiteibeuleleo and Teiteilecu, also in coastal forests in Taileleu area. This was a rare bird to the island.

*Haliastur indus* (Boddaert) 1783 - Brahminy Kite

Observed once perching on a tree in Simabugai, once flying among coastal forests in Sagulubbe, and once in the primary forest of Teiteiokbuk. This was uncommonly found in the island.

*Haliaeetus leucogaster* (Gmelin) 1788 - White-bellied Sea Eagle

Regularly observed in Muara Siberut, but it was rare in other areas of the island.

*Spilornis cheela* (Latham) 1790 - Crested Serpent Eagle

Irregularly observed flying over the forests, also observed flying across Muara Saibi and Muara Siberut, but it was quite uncommon in other areas.

*Accipiter trivirgatus* (Temminck) 1824 - Crested Goshawk

Irregularly observed in the primary mixed forests in Teiteibati area, and once seen in secondary growth of Sirimuri in 1992. This was a new sighting in the island.

*Spizaetus alboniger* (Blyth) 1845 - Blyth's Hawk Eagle

Observed irregularly in primary forests of Taileleu area, but it was rarely seen in the other areas. New Record

## RALLIDAE

*Rallina fasciata* (Raffles) 1822 - Red-legged Crake

Frequently observed along the rivers where *Imperata* grass formed dominant stands, but on the whole it was quite uncommon.

*Amaurornis pheoncurus* (Pennant) 1769 - White-breasted Waterhen

Frequently observed along Rereget River, and abundant amongst *Imperata* grass along Sagulube River.

## CHARADRIIDAE

*Pluvialis dominica* (P.L.S.Muller) 1776 - Lesser Golden Plover

During all observations it was commonly seen along the eastern coasts of the island.

*Charadrius mongolus* Pallas 1776 - Lesser Sand Plover

Commonly observed on sandy shores of Muara Saibi and Muara Siberut, often more than 30 birds. Frequently found in mixed foraging flocks with Greater Sand Plover.

*Charadrius leschenaultii* Lesson 1826 - Greater Sand Plover

Irregularly observed on sandy shores of Muara Saibi and Muara Siberut. Often found in mixed flocks with Lesser Sand Plover.

## SCOLOPACIDAE

*Numenius phaeopus* (Linnaeus) 1758 - Whimbrel

Six birds were observed once in Muara Siberut in 1993, and never observed ever since.

*Tringa totanus* (Linnaeus) 1758 - Redshank

Commonly observed along the eastern coasts of the island.

*Tringa nebularia* (Gunnerus) 1767 - Greenshank

Regularly observed in Muara Siberut, but it was uncommon to other areas of the island.

*Actitis hypoleucos* (Linnaeus) 1758 - Common Sandpiper

Commonly observed along the eastern coast of the island.

*Arenaria interpres* (Linnaeus) 1758 - Ruddy Turnstone

Observed once along the coast of Tanjung Serak in 1992, but rare in other areas.

## BURHINIDAE

*Esacus magnirostris* (Vieillot) 1818 - Great Thick-knee

Observed once along the coast of Nipã, but rare in other areas.



## STERNIDAE

*Chlidonias hybridus* (Pallas) 1811 - Whiskered Tern  
Commonly observed in mixed flocks with Black-naped and Great Crested Terns, flying off the coast of Muara Siberut in 1992 and 1993. This was a new sighting in the island.

*Sterna sumatrana* Raffles 1822 - Black-naped Tern  
Commonly observed in mixed flocks with Whiskered and Great Crested Terns, flying off the eastern coast.

*Sterna bergii* Lichtenstein 1823 - Great Crested Tern  
Commonly observed in mixed flocks with other terns, and often found in flocks of single species, flying off the coast of Muara Siberut. This was probably new sighting from the island.

## COLUMBIDAE

*Treron curvirostra* (Gmelin) 1789 - Thick-billed Green Pigeon  
Uncommonly observed in the primary forests, coastal forests, and in logged over area in Taileleu.

*Treron fulvicollis* (Wagler) 1827 - Cinnamon-headed Green Pigeon  
Irregularly observed in Teiteibati area, and once found in Teiteibeuleleo forest in 1993, but it was rare in other areas.

*Treron vernans* (Linnaeus) 1771 - Pink-necked Green Pigeon  
Commonly observed in all observations in the primary mixed forests, mangroves, and logged over areas of Sirimuri, Saliguma, Simapitpit, and Taileleu.

*Ducula aenea* (Linnaeus) 1766 - Green Imperial Pigeon  
Commonly observed in all observations in the forested areas of the island, also seen in swamp forests and logged over areas.

*Ducula bicolor* (Scopoli) 1786 - Pied Imperial Pigeon  
Observed once in 1992, perching on a tree in Ujung Karang beach by the mangrove forest, but rarely found in other mangrove or swampy areas.

*Macropygia phasianella* (Temminck) 1821 - Large Brown Cuckoo Dove  
Common in all observations in secondary and primary forests, and in forest gardens surrounding the villages. Frequently found as food source for local people.

*Chalcophaps indica* (Linnaeus) 1758 - Emerald Dove  
Frequently observed in the formerly Teiteibati Nature Reserve in all observations. Often seen in secondary growths around the villages. A male bird was found in a cage belonged to people in Muara Saibi. Frequently found as food source for local people.

## PSITTACIDAE

- Psittinus cyanurus* (Forster) 1795 - Blue-rumped Parrot  
Frequently observed in flocks in the canopy of secondary forest in the Teiteibati area, but uncommon in other forested areas.
- Loriculus galgulus* (Linnaeus) 1758 - Blue-crowned Hanging Lorikeet  
Frequently observed in the canopy of secondary forest in the Teiteibati areas, but uncommon in other forested areas of the island.

## CUCULIDAE

- Clamator coromandus* (Linnaeus) 1766 - Chestnut winged Crested Cuckoo  
Frequently observed in secondary growth and bushes along the rivers, especially Siberut and Sakudai rivers, also in mangroves, coastal forests, and logged over areas.
- Cuculus fugax* Horsfield 1821 - Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo  
Uncommonly observed in all observations in the primary forests, coastal forests, and logged over areas.
- Cacomantis merulinus* (Scopoli) 1786 - Plaintive Cuckoo  
Commonly observed in all habitat types in the island.
- Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus* (Horsfield) 1821 - Violet Cuckoo  
Uncommonly observed in the primary forests, coastal forests, and logged over areas in the island.
- Eudynamis scolopacea* (Linnaeus) 1758 - Koel  
Uncommonly observed and heard in the forests.
- Phaenicophaeus curvirostris* (Lesson) 1830 - Chestnut-breasted Malkoha  
Commonly observed in the forested areas, mangrove and swamp forests, and sometimes in logged over areas of the island.
- Centropus sinensis* (Stephens) 1815 - Greater Coucal  
Commonly observed in the forested areas.

## STRIGIDAE

- Otus mentawi* Chasen & Kloss 1926 - Mentawai Scops Owl  
Irregularly observed in the Teiteibati areas, Teiteibake, Teiteibeuleleo, and Sakudai, but it was rare in almost all study sites.
- Ninox scutulata* (Raffles) 1822 - Brown Hawk Owl  
Regularly heard in Taileleu, Serak, Nipa, Sirisura, Saibi, and Teiteibati.
- Strix leptogrammica* (Temminck) 1831 - Brown Wood Owl  
Observed once in the Teiteibati Nature Reserve and Sakudai.  
Frequently heard in wooded areas surrounding the villages.



## APODIDAE

*Collocalia fuciphaga* (Thunberg) 1821 - Edible-nest Swiftlet  
Frequently observed in open areas in Teiteibati, Sirisura, Muara Saibi, Muara Siberut, Madobak, Sagulube, Malancan, and Simatalu, but quite uncommon in other areas.

*Collocalia esculenta* (Linnaeus) 1758 - White-bellied Swiftlet  
Commonly observed in open areas in Teiteibati, Sirisura, Muara Saibi, Sirimuri, Saliguma, Madobak, Sagulube, Sikabalan, Malancan, and Kulumen.

*Apus pasificus* (Latham) 1801 - Fork-tailed Swift  
Irregularly observed in open areas surrounding the villages.

## HEMIPROCENIDAE

*Hemiprocne longipennis* (Rafinesque) 1802 - Crested Tree Swift  
Observed once in the Teiteibati area and Teiteibeuleleo forest in 1992, and uncommon in other areas.

*Hemiprocne comata* (Temminck) 1824 - Whiskered Tree Swift  
Observed once in the Teiteibati area, the forest in Teiteibeuleleo, and Sirimuri secondary growth in 1992. This was a rare bird in the island.

## ALCEDINIDAE

*Alcedo atthis* (Linnaeus) 1758 - Common Kingfisher  
This was commonly found along the rivers of Siberut, in all observations.

*Alcedo meninting* Horsfield 1821 - Deep Blue Kingfisher  
This was commonly found along the rivers of Siberut, in all observations.

*Ceyx erythacus* (Linnaeus) 1758 - Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher  
This was uncommonly seen along the rivers of Siberut, in all observations.

*Pelargopsis capensis* (Linnaeus) 1766 - Stork-billed Kingfisher  
Frequently observed in Muara Siberut in all observations, and quite common along the eastern coast of Siberut. This was a new record for the island.

*Halcyon pileata* (Boddaert) 1783 - Black-capped Kingfisher  
This was rarely observed in mangrove forests.

*Halcyon chloris* (Boddaert) 1783 - Collared Kingfisher  
In 1992 this was very common along the estuaries of main rivers in the island.

## MEROPIIDAE

*Merops philippinus* Linneus 1766 - Blue-tailed Bee-eater

Observed once in Ujung Karang mangrove forest, and uncommon in other areas of the island.

## BUCEROTIDAE

*Anthracoceros coronatus* (Boddaert) 1783 - Pied Hornbill

Commonly observed in all observations in the forested areas in the island.

## PASSERIFORMES

## EURYLAIMIDAE

*Calyptomena viridis* Raffles 1822 - Green Broadbill

This was rarely observed in the island.

## HIRUNDINIDAE

*Hirundo rustica* Linnaeus 1758 - Barn Swallow

Commonly observed in the forest edges of the island.

## CAMPEPHAGIDAE

*Coracina striata* (Boddaert) 1783 - Barred Cuckoo Shrike

Uncommon to the forested areas in the island.

*Coracina fimbriata* (Temminck) 1824 - Lesser Cuckoo Shrike

Uncommon to the forested areas in the island.

## PYCNONOTIDAE

*Pycnonotus melanoleucos* (Eyton) 1839 - Black-and-White Bulbul

Commonly observed in all forests during the surveys.

*Pycnonotus atriceps* (Temminck) 1822 - Black-headed Bulbul

Uncommonly observed in all forests, including forest gardens, during the surveys.

*Pycnonotus plumosus* Blyth 1845 - Olive Bulbul

Uncommonly observed in all forests, including forest gardens, during the surveys.

*Criniger phaeocephalus* (Hartlaub) 1844 - White-throated Bulbul

Uncommonly observed on the lower storey of the forests in the island.



## DICRURIDAE

*Dicrurus leucophaeus* Vieillot 1817 - Ashy Drongo

Commonly observed in all forests, including forest gardens, during the surveys.

*Dicrurus hottentottus* (Linnaeus) 1766 - Spangled Drongo

Uncommon to the island.

## ORIOOLIDAE

*Oriolus xanthonotus* Horsfield 1821 - Dark-throated Oriole

Rarely observed in the secondary forests of the island.

*Oriolus chinensis* Linnaeus 1766 - Black-naped Oriole

Commonly observed and heard in the forests and forest gardens surrounding the villages.

## IRENIDAE

*Irena puella* (Latham) 1790 - Asian Fairy Bluebird

Common in the forested areas of the island, particularly in the primary forest areas.

## CORVIDAE

*Corvus enca* (Horsfield) 1821 - Slender-billed Crow

Commonly observed in the island.

## TURDIDAE

*Copsychus saularis* (Linnaeus) 1758 - Magpie Robin

Very common in all habitat types of the island.

*Copsychus malabaricus* (Scopoli) 1788 - White-rumped Shama

Common in the primary, secondary, and mangrove forests in the island.

## SYLVIIDAE

*Orthotomus ruficeps* (Lesson) 1830 - Ashy Tailorbird

Very common in the forest edges, secondary growth and forest gardens in the survey areas, also common in the bushes and scrubs in the villages.

## MUSCICAPIDAE

*Muscicapa latirostris* Raffles 1822 - Brown Flycatcher

Commonly observed in the forested areas of the island.

*Culicicapa ceylonensis* (Swainson) 1820 - Grey-headed Flycatcher

Commonly observed in the forested areas of the island.

## MONARCHIDAE

- Hypothymis azurea* (Boddaert) 1783 - Black-naped Monarch  
Frequently observed on lower storey of the forests.

## PACHYCEPHALIDAE

- Pachycephala cinerea* (Blyth) 1847 - Mangrove Whistler  
Commonly observed in the forest edge along the rivers and in mangrove areas of the island.

## MOTACILLIDAE

- Motacilla flava* Linnaeus 1758 - Yellow Wagtail  
This was uncommon, and observed along the rivers, hopping about on a sandy shore of the rivers.

## LANIIDAE

- Lanius tigrinus* Drapiez 1828 - Tiger Shrike  
Rarely found in the island.

## STURNIDAE

- Aplonis panayensis* (Scopoli) 1783 - Philippine Glossy Starling  
A flock of more than 20 birds were observed perching on, and probably nesting in holes of a dead tree on the riverside of Siberut. A flock of more than a hundred birds flying over villages along the coast.

- Sturnus sturninus* (Pallas) 1776 - Daurian Starling  
Uncommonly observed in the forest edges, forest gardens surrounding the villages, secondary growths, and open areas. Seen once along the Sakudai river mimicking cuckoo's song (*Cacomantis merulinus*). This was a new sighting on the island.

- Gracula religiosa* Linnaeus 1758 - Hill Myna  
Common birds in the forests, secondary growths, and the forest edge in the island.

## NECTARINIIDAE

- Anthreptes malacensis* (Scopoli) 1786 - Brown-throated Sunbird  
Very common in open areas, in forest gardens surrounding the villages, secondary growths, and abundant in both coastal and mangrove forests.
- Nectarinia sperata* (Linnaeus) 1766 - Purple-throated Sunbird  
Very common in scrubby areas in all habitat types in the island.



*Nectarinia calcostetha* Jardine 1843 - Copper-throated Sunbird  
 Very common amongst scrubby places along the estuaries of main rivers. Seen feeding on the nectars of *Bruguiera's* flowers in mangrove forests.

*Nectarinia jugularis* (Linnaeus) 1766 - Olive-backed Sunbird  
 Very Common in all habitat types in the island. This was a new sighting on the island.

*Aethopyga siparaja* (Raffles) 1822 - Crimson Sunbird  
 Very common in open areas in all habitat types on the island.

*Aethopyga mystacalis* (Temminck) 1822 - Scarlet Sunbird  
 Very common in the forest edges, secondary growths, and open areas of almost all habitat types. This was a new record to the island.

*Arachnothera longirostra* (Latham) 1790 - Little Spiderhunter  
 Commonly observed on the lower storey of the forests, forest gardens and amongst plantation around the villages.

*Arachnothera chrysogenys* (Temminck) 1826 - Yellow-eared Spiderhunter  
 Commonly observed on the lower storey of the forests, forest gardens and amongst plantation around the villages.

*Arachnothera affinis* (Horsfield) 1822 - Grey-breasted Spiderhunter  
 Commonly observed on the lower storey of the forests, forest gardens and amongst plantation around the villages.

#### DICAEIDAE

*Dicaeum trigonostigma* (Scopoli) 1786 - Orange-bellied Flowerpecker  
 Very common on the lower storey of the forests, forest gardens and amongst plantation around the villages.

*Dicaeum cruentatum* (Linnaeus) 1758 - Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker  
 Commonly observed on the lower storey of the forests, forest gardens and amongst plantation around the villages.

#### CONCLUSION

It is apparent that Siberut island is able to support a variety of bird species, although the majority of the birds observed during the study were of uncommon birds. Protected and endemic species were found to be rare, except the nectar feeding birds which were abundantly found in the island. Most of the birds encountered in the study functioned as either secondary or tertiary consumers, which are vulnerable to habitat deterioration. Conservation measures should

then better consider the habitat preservation as well as their ecological characteristics. This would lead to the need for conserving the habitats that can support the lives of the birds' food (prey).

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