

---

---

KUKILA 5 No. 1 (1990): 65 - 68

---

---

Paul Andrew 1/38B Mona Road, Darling Point, NSW 2027, Australia.

**NOTES ON THREE RAPTOR SPECIES NEW  
TO FLORES**

By

**Jan Verhoeve & Ben King**

(Received 18 January 1990)

**Summary**

Details are given of sightings of Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus*. Rufous-bellied Eagle *H. kienerii* and a Honey-Buzzard *Pernis* sp. on Flores, extending the known range of these species.

**Ringkasan**

Diberikan keterangan terinci tentang penemuan jenis-jenis *Hieraaetus fasciatus*, *H. kienerii* dan *Pernis* sp. di Flores, yang merupakan perluasan dari daerah jelajah yang diketahui untuk jenis-jenis tersebut.

Herein details are presented on the observation and identification of three raptor species that were previously unknown from Flores, according to White & Bruce (1986).

**1. BONELLI'S EAGLE *Hieraaetus fasciatus***

On many occasions small eagles were observed that belonged to a species not known from Flores so far. The birds were mostly soaring in pairs, at altitudes ranging from near sea level to  $\pm$  800 m, in hilly to mountainous terrain covered in cultivation and forest. Most were in adult plumage, but occasionally immature birds were seen. Details of the observations are given in Appendix 1.

Description of two birds seen on 17 April 1987 in Watuneso,  $\pm$  60m altitude:

Size and silhouette: small eagle with long, slender wings and tail. Upperwing and back: dark brown with a roughly triangular white patch on the upper back. Underwing: very dark coverts; lighter flight feathers, with a whitish base to the primaries, forming a pale patch; white leading edge of wing especially striking when the bird is seen "head on". Head and body: white with darker streaks, contrasting with the dark underwing and tail. Tail: grey with a broad, dark terminal band.

#### Discussion:

The only eagles known thus far from Flores are: White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*, Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*, and Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus cirrhatus* (White & Bruce, 1986). None of these species fits this description.

Only adult Bonelli's Eagle fits the description. Rufous-bellied Eagle *Hieraetus kienerii* has a sharp contrast between black cheeks and white throat, lacks white leading edge on wing, lacks white patch on back, and, in adult, has a dark rufous belly.

Bonelli's Eagle occurs in Africa, and south Eurasia (King, *et al.*, 1975). An isolated population is known from some islands in the Lesser Sundas such as Sumbawa and Timor (White and Bruce, 1986), but it had not yet been recorded from Flores.

## 2. RUFOUS-BELLIED EAGLE *Hieraetus kienerii*

On four occasions small eagles were observed that were neither Bonelli's nor belonged to any other species already known from Flores. The sightings are listed in Appendix 1.

Description of the bird seen on 30 July 1989 in Moni:

Size and silhouette: small eagle with long wings and tail. Upperwing and back: black, with a round pale patch at base of primaries. Underwing: dark coverts, lighter flight feathers, with a whitish base to the primaries, forming a pale patch. Head: black crown and cheeks contrasting with white throat. Body: white upper breast and dark rufous belly. Tail: dark.

#### Discussion:

See the discussion of Bonelli's Eagle above. The distinctive head pattern and dark rufous belly identify this bird as an adult Rufous-bellied Eagle.

This species occurs from India and Sri Lanka- to S.E. Asia and the Sundas (King, *et al.*, 1975; White & Bruce, 1986). In Wallacea it is a very scarce and local resident, with some recent observations from Sulawesi. In the Lesser Sundas it is known only from one specimen collected off the north coast of Sumbawa (White & Bruce, 1986).

## 3. HONEY-BUZZARD species *Pernis* sp.

On five occasions medium-sized raptors were observed that did not belong to any species known from Flores, according to White & Bruce (1986). The sightings are listed in Appendix 1. Description of the bird seen on 31 October 1989 in Paga:

Size: slightly larger than immature Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* with which direct comparison was possible. Silhouette: small, protruding head; long tail; the inner part of wing broader than the outer part of wing. Upperwing and back: dark grey-brown, the flight feathers slightly darker than coverts. Underwing: coverts light rufous, with dark markings forming a narrow dark bar; flight feathers white with a broad dark bar along the trailing edge. Head & body: light rufous-brown, mottled with white on the belly. Tail: brown with three dark bands, one terminal, two closely spaced on the basal half of the tail.

#### Discussion:

The peculiar silhouette, and the underwing and tail pattern, all point toward a *Pernis* species. The only possible confusion species on Flores is the Short-toed Eagle. This raptor has superficially similar underwing and tail pattern, but is obviously larger and has a very different silhouette.

It is not yet clear which *Pernis* species is involved. The observations dating from October till March could refer to Crested Honey-Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhyncus*. This East Palearctic species is a common migrant to S.E. Asia east to the Greater Sundas and the Philippines. Only two records are known so far from Wallacea, but the species may occur more frequently (White & Bruce, 1986).

The birds observed in montane forest in August 1987 might either be very early migrants or could belong to a resident *Pernis* population that has been overlooked hitherto (possibly *Pernis celebensis*).

#### References:

King, B., M. Woodcock & B.C. Dickinson, 1975, *A field guide to the birds of South-East Asia*. Collins, London.

White, C.M.N. and M.D. Bruce, 1986. *The Birds of Wallacea (Sulawesi, The Mollucas & Lesser Sunda Islands, Indonesia)*. Brit.Orn.Un. Checklist No. 7, London:

#### Addresses:

Jan Verhoye, Kotak Pos 20, Maumere 86101, Flores, N.T.T., INDONESIA.

Ben King, Ornithology Dept. American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th St., New York, NY 10024, USA.

**Appendix 1. Details of sightings.****1. Sightings of Bonelli's Eagle**

- 05/08/1986: 2 birds (Watublapi-Sikka, hills covered in cultivation and coconut plantation,  $\pm$  550 m).
- 10/08/1986: 2 birds (Talibura-Sikka, hills covered in secondary forest,  $\pm$  150 m).
- 22/02/1987: 2 birds (Watuneso-Ende, hills covered in cultivation and secondary forest,  $\pm$  60m).
- 17/04/1987: 2 birds (Watuneso-Ende, hills covered in cultivation and secondary forest,  $\pm$  60m).
- 10/10/1987: 2 birds (Pulau Damhila-Sikka), hills covered in scrub, sea level).
- 15/11/1987: 2 birds (Watublapi-Sikka, hills covered in cultivation and coconut plantation,  $\pm$  550 m).
- 04/04/1988: 2 birds (Watublapi-Sikka, hills covered in cultivation and coconut plantation,  $\pm$  550m).
- 24/11/1988: 2 birds (Kaliwajo-Sikka, hills covered in cultivation and secondary forest,  $\pm$  100m).
- 09/12/1988: 2 birds (Watuneso-Ende, hills covered in cultivation and secondary forest,  $\pm$  60m).
- 27/03/1989: 2 birds (Watublapi-Sikka, hills covered in cultivation and coconut plantation,  $\pm$  550 m).
- 13/05/1989: 1 bird (Hepang-Sikka, hills covered in cultivation and coconut plantation,  $\pm$  300 m).
- 14/08/1989: 2 birds (Ruteng-Manggarai, plain covered in cultivation and scrub,  $\pm$  800 m).
- 16/08/1989: 2 birds (Kisol-Manggarai, hills covered in cultivation and forest,  $\pm$  200 m).
- 18/08/1989: 2 birds (Nangarawa-Manggarai, hills covered in cultivation and secondary forest,  $\pm$  500 m).

**2. Sightings of Rufous-bellied Eagle**

- 22/08/1986: 1 bird (Keli Mutu-Ende, disturbed montane forest, J: 1500 m altitude).
- 30/07/1989: 1 bird (Moni-Ende, hills covered in cultivation and secondary forest,  $\pm$  800m).
- 16/08/1989: 1 bird (Rana Mese-Manggarai, montane forest,  $\pm$  1200 m).
- 03/09/1989: 1 bird (Moni-Ende, hills covered in cultivation and secondary forest,  $\pm$  800m).

**3. Sightings of Honey-Buzzard sp.**

- 12/03/1987: 1 bird (Maumere-Sikka, cultivated plain,  $\pm$  100m).
- 18/08/1987: 6 Birds (Rana Mese-Manggarai, montane forest,  $\pm$  1200 m).
- 22/08/1987: 1 bird (Rana Mese-Manggarai, montane forest,  $\pm$  1200m).
- 15/03/1989: 9 birds (Moni-Ende, hills covered in cultivation and secondary forest,  $\pm$  600m).