

***Birds of the Indonesian Archipelago: Greater Sundas and Wallacea*
James A. Eaton, Bas van Balen, Nick W. Brickle and Frank E.
Rheindt. 2016. Lynx Editions, Barcelona. 496 pages. ISBN-13: 978-
84-941892-6-5**

I first visited Indonesia in the mid to late 1980s, when the only available field guide to birds covered just Java and Bali (MacKinnon 1988). It was not until 1993 that a guide to all of the Greater Sundas, including Borneo and Sumatra, was published (MacKinnon & Phillipps 1993), and another four years before a guide to the birds of Sulawesi, the Lesser Sundas and Moluccas (Coates & Bishop 1997) appeared. The latter two books, and a couple of recent field guides for Borneo (Myers 2009; Phillipps & Phillipps 2009), have until now been the only available field guides for the vast contiguous biogeographic regions of the Greater Sunda islands (Sumatra, Borneo, Java, and Bali) and Wallacea (Sulawesi, the Moluccas, and the Lesser Sundas). The aforementioned books, with exception of the Borneo guides, have meant that recent visitors to the region have had to make do with books that are now thoroughly outdated. During the last 5-6 years, James Eaton and his team have worked tirelessly, gathering data from publications, museums, fellow birders, and in particular from the field, to produce what has to be one of the most important field guides of recent times. *Birds of the Indonesian Archipelago: Greater Sundas and Wallacea* is truly a landmark publication, and the book itself excels in filling the niche for a desperately needed, thoroughly modern, user-friendly field guide to the birds of this fascinating, highly diverse region.

Scope and organisation

This guide covers a region that spans an arc of more than 16,000 islands that stretch almost 5,000 km along the Equator, including the small countries of Brunei and East Timor, as well as the East Malaysian (Bornean) states of Sabah and Sarawak and all of the territory of the Republic of Indonesia except for the eastern provinces of Papua and West Papua (formerly Irian Jaya or West New Guinea and its satellites). Maps inside the book covers show this region and name most of the important islands, although they lack any scale, which is unfortunate. With over 2,500 illustrations and 1,300 distribution maps, this very impressive guide describes a colossal 1,417 bird species that are known to occur in the region, including 601 endemics, 98 vagrants, and 18 tentative species yet to be formally described. Together these represent over 13% of global bird diversity, highlighting the huge importance of Indonesia as a global biodiversity hotspot.

Considering the number of taxa covered, this guide is relatively small. It won't fit in any pockets, but it is certainly not too large to carry in a small bag. One consequence of producing a book of a manageable size is that the font is rather small, though larger than that in Robson's (2000) excellent guide to the *Birds of Southeast Asia*. It is almost identical in size to Robson's book, but unlike it, the *Birds of the Indonesian Archipelago* includes maps for almost every species. The illustrations, most of which originate from Lynx's *Handbook of the Birds of the World* series, derive from 27 different artists, although a considerable number were also done especially for this field guide. The great majority of illustrations are very good to excellent. The individual species accounts, forming the bulk of the guide (about 450 pages), provide key information about taxonomy, voice, and identification features, including notes on similar species where relevant. Tick boxes alongside the maps enable users to record birds seen on up to five trips to Indonesia.

As with the recently published *HBW and BirdLife International Illustrated Checklist of the Birds of the World* (del Hoyo & Collar 2014, 2016), the maps are to be found on the plates

themselves. This rather novel but pleasing arrangement leaves more room for text on the facing page, where all the other details about the species are to be found. Like those in the HBW series, the maps in this guide show geographic ranges in three colours to distinguish regions where species are resident (green) from those only visited in the non-breeding (blue) season by migrants. However, whereas HBW uses different maps for different regions of the world depending on the species, the present guide uses only one, which covers the entire Indonesian archipelago. This means that for species with very small geographic ranges, which includes a large number of Wallacean endemics that are found on just one or two small islands, the coloured area on the map is barely visible without a magnifying glass. For many, but not all, such species these small islands are indicated with arrows. To make matters worse for those maps without arrows, the relevant islands are only mentioned in the text if the species is polytypic (comprising several subspecies), which is unlikely in the case of species with tiny ranges. This situation might have been avoided if one or two additional map designs had been used, one showing only Wallacea, and the other, the Greater Sundas.

The authoritative introduction to the book sets out to define the geographic limits of coverage and describes in detail the biogeography, topography, climate, and habitats. It also includes an ornithological history, a section on conservation, and, perhaps of more interest to many readers, has a detailed section on taxonomy and systematics.

Taxonomy and English names

In contrast to many field guides, *Birds of the Indonesian Archipelago* takes a very bold approach to the species that it includes, with taxonomy being a key issue addressed throughout the book. Having a professional taxonomist as one of the authors (Frank Rheindt), has obviously been key to this refreshing approach. Whilst I would anticipate some reluctance to accept some of the taxonomic decisions and suggestions found here, I suspect that the vast majority of the new species included will be widely adopted as valid within a few years' time.

There are so many recently accepted and proposed splits in this book that it is impossible to mention them all in a short review. The section entitled "Taxonomy and Systematics" in the Introduction provides an overview of the family sequence, genus arrangements, English group names, species concepts, and taxonomy adopted in the book. This section provides a valuable insight into the approach followed in the species accounts, including the choice of various English names and the species taxonomy that is followed.

A good number of new English names have been adopted that will certainly surprise and confuse some users, such as Bloodhead instead of Crimson-headed Partridge *Haematortyx sanguiniceps*, Heinrichia instead of Great Shortwing *Heinrichia calligyna*, Rhinortha instead of Raffles's Malkoha *Rhinortha chlorophaea*, Jay Shrike instead of Crested Jay *Platylophus galericulatus*, and Mountain Leaftoiler instead of Mountain Tailorbird *Phyllergates cuculatus*. Such changes may be justified on taxonomic grounds, but there are other English name changes that seem unnecessary, such as changing White Cockatoo to Umbrella Cockatoo *Cacatua alba*, Long-tailed Fantail to Charming Fantail *Rhipidura opistherythra*, White-shouldered Triller to Lesueur's Triller *Lalage sueurii*, and Violet-necked Lory to Scaled Lory *Eos squamata*. With so many new names adopted for taxonomic reasons, the dropping of a significant number of familiar English names that did not really have to be changed only adds to confusion.

Whilst many of the English names for new species make a lot of sense and will be easy to remember because they relate to the species range, for example Sangihe Lilac Kingfisher *Cittura sanghirensis* (endemic to Sangihe Island), Javan Flameback *Chrysocolaptes strictus*, Enggano Parakeet *Psittacula modesta*, and Mentawai Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus oeneicaudus*,

others may be harder to recall, such as those adopted for some of the new cuckoo doves, such as Parzudaki's, Barusan, Sultan's, Amboina, and Eucalypt Cuckoo Doves.

The cuckoo doves are one of the polytypic groups for which recent splitting has resulted in numerous new species – something that many seasoned Indonesian birders will consider long overdue. Other polytypic groups with significant numbers of new species (or potential new species – termed “limbo splits” by the authors, and in bold type under the relevant species accounts) – include the boobooks, whistlers, leaf warblers, shortwings, drongos, fantails, and myzomelas, all of which have received a severe taxonomic shake-up. For example, three of the five species of drongos that were included in Coates & Bishop (1997) are now treated as 19 Wallacean endemic species of Spangled Drongos; resident leaf warblers treated under three species in the latter guide are now recognised to comprise 11 endemics (and have changed genus from *Phylloscopus* to *Seicercus*); the five species of cuckoo dove are now treated as 13 species; and myzomelas have increased from six species to 13 species. The Golden Whistler *Pachycephala pectoralis* has been split into five species groups with more likely splits on the way. Recent proposed splits within the Red-bellied Pitta *Erythropitta erythrogaster* complex are reflected here by the recognition of five limbo species (i.e. not treated as full species in the book, but likely to be split in the future), grouped under a newly proposed name, “Sahul Pitta”.

There are numerous other splits and recently recognised species in the book, including a significant number of taxa elevated to species level in the chain of islands off west Sumatra – the Barusan Islands, stretching from Simeulue to Enggano. Some of the more notable inclusions not specifically mentioned above include Bornean Wood Owl *Stix leptogrammica*, Bornean Crested Fireback *Lophura ignita*, Simeulue Parrot *Psittinus abbotti*, Sunset Lorikeet *Trichoglossus forsteni*, Sumatran Woodpecker *Picus dedemi*, Alor Cuckooshrike *Coracina alfrediana*, Sulawesi Crow *Corvus celebensis*, Penan Bulbul *Alophoixus ruficrissus*, Javan Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus montanus*, Bacan White-eye *Zosterops atriceps*, Maratua Shama *Copsychus barbouri*, Crocker Jungle-flycatcher *Cyornis ruficrissa*, Flores Warbling-flycatcher *Eumyias oscillans*, Salvadori's Flowerpecker *Dicaeum keiense*, and Obi Paradise Crow *Lycocorax obiensis*. As mentioned previously, there are 18 completely new species that have yet to be described, but all are illustrated and have full species accounts, including Alor Myzomela, Bacan Spangled Drongo, Wangi-wangi White-eye, Rote Leaf Warbler, and Mount Mutis Parrotfinch. Whilst many of the species mentioned above have been recently described in the literature, a considerable number have not, and many readers will be unaware of the huge changes in taxonomy that are currently underway in this remarkable part of the world. One would hope that just reading this mouth-watering list will encourage more people to visit or re-visit.

Concluding remarks

Birds of the Indonesian Archipelago is an outstanding field guide. The authors' vast experience and knowledge of the region's birds has provided us with an indispensable addition to the growing number of field guides to the Oriental Region. Indeed, this should be the region's standard field guide for many years to come, one that will encourage more visitors to this remarkably diverse region. I, for one, am very much looking forward to using it on my next visit to Indonesia!

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