

Threatened Birds of Asia:

The BirdLife International Red Data Book

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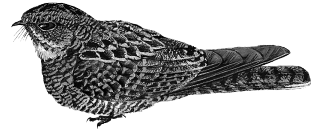
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SUNDA NIGHTJAR
Caprimulgus concretus

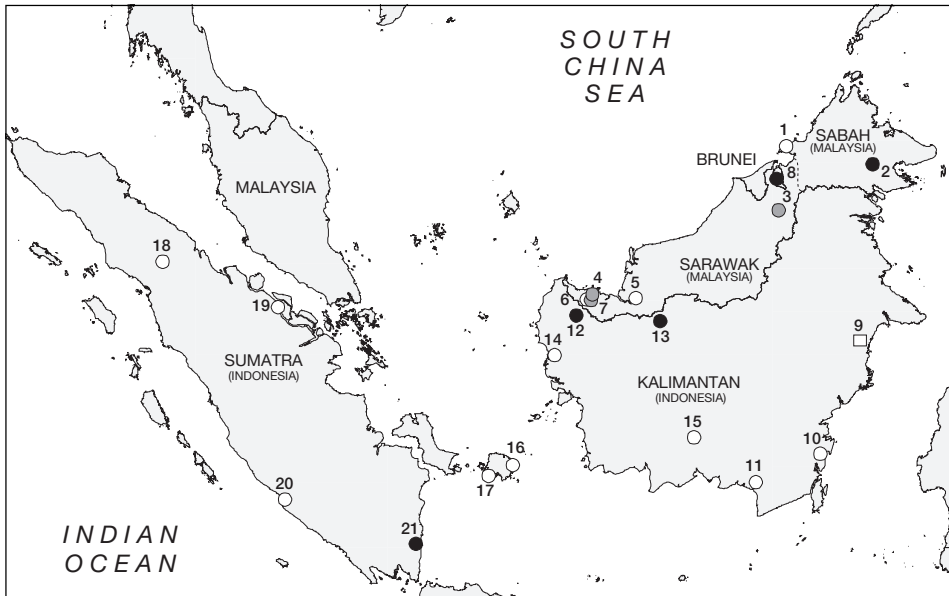


Critical —
Endangered —
Vulnerable **A1c; A2c**

This poorly known nightbird qualifies as Vulnerable because it is restricted to low-lying forest in a region where this habitat-type is being cleared and degraded at such a catastrophic rate that rapid and continuing population declines are inferred.

DISTRIBUTION The Sunda Nightjar is distributed in the islands of Borneo, Sumatra and Belitung (see Remarks 1). The maps in Cleere (1998) and del Hoyo *et al.* (1999) generalise from relatively few records to shade in all of Sumatra and Borneo, which conveys the mistaken impression that the species extends into montane areas; moreover, an examination of the map generated from the following records shows a relatively even spread, but with huge areas in the centre of both islands from which it is as yet unrecorded (but probably predictable). Records are as follows:

■ **MALAYSIA** ■ **Sabah** Lambidan, undated (Sharpe 1876–1879, Everett 1889); **Danum Valley Conservation Area** in the upper Danum valley, 900 m, February 1965 (Fogden 1965; see Remarks 2), and 5 km from the Danum Valley Field Station, October 1997 (C. F. Mann *in litt.* 2000);



The distribution of Sunda Nightjar *Caprimulgus concretus*: (1) Lambidan; (2) Danum Valley Conservation Area; (3) Kubaan river; (4) Kuching; (5) Sungai Paku; (6) Jambusan; (7) Semengo Forest Reserve; (8) Kuala Belalong; (9) Kutai National Park; (10) Sungai Sampanahan; (11) Banjarmasin; (12) Gunung Niut Nature Reserve; (13) Danau Sentarum; (14) Pontianak; (15) Parit; (16) Manggar; (17) Ambalong; (18) Sungaisilan; (19) Sungai Siak; (20) Talang Empat; (21) Way Kambas National Park.

○ Historical (pre-1950) ● Fairly recent (1950–1979) ● Recent (1980–present) □ Undated

■ **Sarawak** (see Remarks 3) **Kubaan river**, Tutoh, 400–600 m, February 1965 (Fogden 1976; see Remarks 4); **Kuching**, 1950/1954 (Smythies 1957) and “recently” within 10 km (Smythies 1981); **Sungai Paku**, Paku Saribas, October 1916 (two specimens in BMNH; also Robinson and Kloss 1924a, Smythies 1957); **Jambusan**, July 1880 (Blasius and Nehrkorn 1881); **Semengo Forest Reserve** (also called Semengok, Semenggoh), 20 km north of Kuching, October 1964–November 1965 (Fogden 1976);

■ **BRUNEI** unspecified locality, before 1877 (two specimens in BMNH; Sharpe 1876–1879, Everett 1889); **Kuala Belalong**, September 1992 (R. S. R. Williams *in litt.* 1999);

■ **INDONESIA Kalimantan** ■ **East Kalimantan Kutai National Park** based on a female (in MZB) from “East Kutai”, undated; ■ **South Kalimantan** (see Remarks 5) **Sungai Sampanahan**, March 1908 (Smythies 1957; female in USNM); **Banjarmasin**, 1860 and undated but from same collector (two specimens in BMNH); ■ **West Kalimantan Gunung Niut Nature Reserve**, 1986 (Simons 1986), August–September 1986, “in typical lowland dipterocarp forest” (Priemé and Heegaard 1988); **Danau Sentarum** region, March 1994 (van Balen 1996c, Holmes 1997); **Pontianak**, type locality, before 1850 (Smythies 1957); Sambas (record here treated as provisional), early 1980s (Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation *per* C. F. Mann *in litt.* 2000); **Parit**, “(Tjimpagu), Sampit”, July 1935 (male in AMNH; also Mayr 1938);

Belitung Manggar, eastern part of the island, sea-level, April 1937 (four specimens in MZB); **Ambalong**, June 1888 (female in BMNH; also Vorderman 1891b); “Klekabensang” (possibly “Kleka Unsang or Untang”; untraced), June 1935 (male in MZB); “Kleka Datu” (untraced), mid-island, August 1935 (female in MZB);

Sumatra ■ **North Sumatra Sungaisilan**, Asahan, September 1916 (de Beaufort 1921); ■ **Riau Sungai Siak** (under the name *Caprimulgus mirificus*), December 1906 (Oberholser 1912); ■ **Bengkulu Talang Ampat**, 40 m, June 1916 (Robinson and Kloss 1924); ■ **Lampung Way Kambas National Park** at Pos Way Kanan, August 1995 (Parrott and Andrew 1996) and frequently in recent years (P. A. J. Morris *in litt.* 1999).

POPULATION As with many lowland forest night birds it is possible that this species will prove to be much more numerous than the current evidence above suggests; however, as with all exclusively lowland forest birds in the Sundaic region there can be no doubt that numbers must have been declining very steeply in recent decades (see Threats). In Sabah its status is uncertain, being thought probably resident but local (Gore 1968). In Sarawak four birds were estimated present in 20 ha at Semengo, and the species was judged common (defined as “seen regularly in small numbers”) at Tutoh, both in the mid-1960s (Fogden 1976; but see Remarks 4). On Sumatra the species had not been seen in over half a century (van Marle and Voous 1988) until it was found at Way Kambas (see Distribution), where it is fairly common in secondary habitat (P. A. J. Morris *in litt.* 1999), with (e.g.) at least three heard in one evening in forest beside the track approaching Pos Way Kanan (Parrott and Andrew 1996).

ECOLOGY Habitat This is believed to be a lowland bird throughout its range (Gore 1968, Cleere 1998, P. A. J. Morris *in litt.* 1999); the highest altitude recorded under Distribution is 900 m, although this may be unusual, since 0–500 m is given in Cleere (1998) and del Hoyo *et al.* (1999). The species appears to be one of primary lowland dipterocarp and riverine forest (Yong 1997, Priemé and Heegaard 1988), making use of clearings and forest edge (but see Food), also heath forest and secondary growth (Cleere 1998, del Hoyo *et al.* 1999). One or more birds have been recorded around a riverbank and by tree-trunks felled for a helicopter landing (Fogden 1965), and indeed recent evidence suggests that it may need the proximity of water (D. Yong verbally 1999). It is reportedly (but doubtfully) found on lowland plains and cleared land (Hose 1893; see Remarks 3).

Food The species seems to stay inside woodland and sally-glean from an upright perching position (P. A. J. Morris *in litt.* 1998).

Breeding The only hard information is from the label of the female in USNM, collected on 28 March 1908 on a nest containing one egg, “on ground in scrub jungle”. The Belitung specimens from April and August are marked as having inactive gonads (MZB label data). Tape-playback resulted in birds approaching in August, and a recording of Barred Eagle-owl *Bubo sumatranus* caused birds to call, but in November neither recordings resulted in responses (Parrott and Andrew 1996).

THREATS Deforestation in the Sundaic lowlands—biologically one of the most diverse biomes of the world—has proceeded at catastrophic speed in the past few decades, seriously compromising the future of every one of the uncountable multitude of primary-forest life-forms in the region, including that of this particular species, even inside key protected areas (for an outline of the crisis, see Threats under Crestless Fireback *Lophura erythrophthalma*).

MEASURES TAKEN Although legally protected in Sabah, the only real conservation this species has experienced is through protected areas (in which category “forest reserves” do not fall). It has been recorded from Danum Valley Conservation Area (Sabah), Kutai National Park and Gunung Niut Nature Reserve (Kalimantan) and Way Kambas National Park (Sumatra) (see Distribution, but also Threats).

MEASURES PROPOSED Urgent concerted survey of and conservation effort for major tracts of extreme lowland primary forest in the Sundaic region is called for in the equivalent section under Crestless Fireback.

This species has “a very odd voice” (P. A. J. Morris *in litt.* 1999), which should make it distinctive enough to form the basis of aural surveys on all three range islands.

The ecology of the Sunda Nightjar needs to be clarified through studies of population density, breeding success, feeding patterns, dispersal and survival in a number of carefully evaluated primary and secondary habitats at different elevations. The results of this work will allow for improved reserve design and habitat management in all future efforts to secure viable populations of the species.

REMARKS (1) Oberholser (1912) gave the name *mirificus* to birds from the Siak river, eastern Sumatra, but this taxon has been merged in *concretus*. Chasen (1937) could detect no differences between specimens from Belitung and elsewhere. (2) This record “needs to be re-evaluated” (Yong 1997); it is accidentally given as in Sarawak in Smythies and Davison (1999). (3) Hose (1893) reported the species from Gunung Dulit and Baram district, adding that it was “found on the plains and cleared land of the low country”. Although this record was repeated by Smythies (1957), and at least Baram is listed by Smythies and Davison (1999), it is slightly difficult to credit based on other evidence concerning habitat selection (a view shared by Yong 1997; see Ecology); moreover, Hose gave an account of its call (a night-long *tok-tok-ta-thar*) which does not conform with what is known today (see Cleere 1998, del Hoyo *et al.* 1999). (4) The record from Tutoh “may need reconfirmation” (Yong 1997). (5) A record from Barito Utara, South Kalimantan, August 1979 (Smythies 1981) is incorrect (Holmes and Burton 1987).