

Threatened Birds of Asia:

The BirdLife International Red Data Book

Editors

N. J. COLLAR (Editor-in-chief),
A. V. ANDREEV, S. CHAN, M. J. CROSBY, S. SUBRAMANYA and J. A. TOBIAS

Maps by

RUDYANTO and M. J. CROSBY

Principal compilers and data contributors

■ **BANGLADESH** P. Thompson ■ **BHUTAN** R. Pradhan; C. Inskipp, T. Inskipp ■ **CAMBODIA** Sun Huan; C. M. Poole ■ **CHINA** ■ **MAINLAND CHINA** Zheng Guangmei; Ding Changqing, Gao Wei, Gao Yuren, Li Fulai, Liu Naifa, Ma Zhijun, the late Tan Yaokuang, Wang Qishan, Xu Weishu, Yang Lan, Yu Zhiwei, Zhang Zhengwang. ■ **HONG KONG** Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (BirdLife Affiliate); H. F. Cheung; F. N. Y. Lock, C. K. W. Ma, Y. T. Yu. ■ **TAIWAN** Wild Bird Federation of Taiwan (BirdLife Partner); L. Liu Severinghaus; Chang Chin-lung, Chiang Ming-liang, Fang Woei-horng, Ho Yi-hsian, Hwang Kwang-yin, Lin Wei-yuan, Lin Wen-horn, Lo Hung-ren, Sha Chian-chung, Yau Cheng-teh. ■ **INDIA** Bombay Natural History Society (BirdLife Partner Designate) and Sálím Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History; L. Vijayan and V. S. Vijayan; S. Balachandran, R. Bhargava, P. C. Bhattacharjee, S. Bhupathy, A. Chaudhury, P. Gole, S. A. Hussain, R. Kaul, U. Lachungpa, R. Naroji, S. Pandey, A. Pittie, V. Prakash, A. Rahmani, P. Saikia, R. Sankaran, P. Singh, R. Sugathan, Zafar-ul Islam ■ **INDONESIA** BirdLife International Indonesia Country Programme; Ria Saryanthi; D. Agista, S. van Balen, Y. Cahyadin, R. F. A. Grimmett, F. R. Lambert, M. Poulsen, Rudyanto, I. Setiawan, C. Trainor ■ **JAPAN** Wild Bird Society of Japan (BirdLife Partner); Y. Fujimaki; Y. Kanai, H. Morioka, K. Ono, H. Uchida, M. Ueta, N. Yanagisawa ■ **KOREA** ■ **NORTH KOREA** Pak U-il; Chong Jong-ryol, Rim Chuyon. ■ **SOUTH KOREA** Lee Woo-shin; Han Sang-hoon, Kim Jin-han, Lee Ki-sup, Park Jin-young ■ **LAOS** K. Khounbolin; W. J. Duckworth ■ **MALAYSIA** Malaysian Nature Society (BirdLife Partner); K. Kumar; G. Noramly, M. J. Kohler ■ **MONGOLIA** D. Batdelger; A. Bräunlich, N. Tseveenmyadag ■ **MYANMAR** Khin Ma Ma Thwin ■ **NEPAL** Bird Conservation Nepal (BirdLife Affiliate); H. S. Baral; C. Inskipp, T. P. Inskipp ■ **PAKISTAN** Ornithological Society of Pakistan (BirdLife Affiliate) ■ **PHILIPPINES** Haribon Foundation for Conservation of Natural Resources (BirdLife Partner); N. A. D. Mallari, B. R. Tabaranza, Jr. ■ **RUSSIA** Russian Bird Conservation Union (BirdLife Partner Designate); A. V. Andreev; A. G. Degtyarev, V. G. Degtyarev, V. A. Dugintsov, N. N. Gerasimov, Yu. N. Gerasimov, N. I. Germogenov, O. A. Goroshko, A. V. Kondrat'ev, Yu. V. Labutin, N. M. Litvinenko, Yu. N. Nazarov, V. A. Nechaev, V. I. Perfil'ev, R. V. Ryabtsev, Yu. V. Shibaev, S. G. Surmach, E. E. Tkachenko, O. P. Val'chuk, B. A. Voronov. ■ **SINGAPORE** The Nature Society (Singapore) (BirdLife Partner); Lim Kim Seng ■ **SRI LANKA** Field Ornithology Group of Sri Lanka (BirdLife Affiliate); S. Kotagama; S. Aryaprema, S. Corea, J. P. G. Jones, U. Fernando, R. Perera, M. Siriwardhane, K. Weerakoon ■ **THAILAND** Bird Conservation Society of Thailand (BirdLife Partner); U. Treesucon; R. Jugmongkol, V. Kongthong, P. Poonswad, P. D. Round, S. Supparatvirkorn ■ **VIETNAM** BirdLife International Vietnam Country Programme; Nguyen Cu; J. C. Eames, A. W. Tordoff, Le Trong Trai, Nguyen Duc Tu.

With contributions from: S. H. M. Butchart, D. S. Butler (maps), P. Davidson, J. C. Lowen, G. C. L. Dutson, N. B. Peet, T. Vetta (maps), J. M. Villasper (maps), M. G. Wilson

Recommended citation

BirdLife International (2001) *Threatened birds of Asia: the BirdLife International Red Data Book*. Cambridge, UK: BirdLife International.

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Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge, CB3 0NA, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 1223 277318 Fax: +44 1223 277200 Email: birdlife@birdlife.org.uk

Internet: www.birdlife.net

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ISBN 0 946888 42 6 (Part A)

ISBN 0 946888 43 4 (Part B)

ISBN 0 946888 44 2 (Set)

British Library-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

First published 2001 by BirdLife International

Designed and produced by the **Nature**Bureau, 36 Kingfisher Court, Hambridge Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 5SJ, United Kingdom

Available from the Natural History Book Service Ltd, 2–3 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5XN, UK. Tel: +44 1803 865913 Fax: +44 1803 865280 Email nhbs@nhbs.co.uk
Internet: www.nhbs.com/services/birdlife.html

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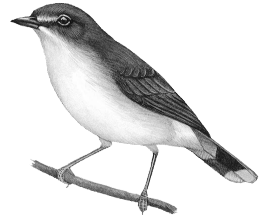
BIAK GERYGONE

Gerygone hypoxantha

Critical —

Endangered B1 + 2b,c,e

Vulnerable C1; C2a



This poorly known species is classified as Endangered on the basis of an estimated very small range that is both declining and experiencing severe fragmentation from logging and habitat clearance for agriculture.

DISTRIBUTION AND POPULATION The Biak Gerygone is endemic to and apparently very rare on the twin islands of Biak-Supiori in Geelvink Bay, Papua (formerly Irian Jaya), **Indonesia**, where there are very few historical records (Mayr and Meyer de Schauensee 1939), and just four recent records, some of which may refer to a different species: three observations at Warafri, eastern Biak, in 1991–1994 (Gibbs 1993, P. Gregory, I. Burrows and R. Burrows *in litt.* 1994, N. Bostock *in litt.* 1999), and several records in and around Biak-Utara Reserve in 1997 (S. van Balen *in litt.* 2000). It was not recorded during three visits to the islands during the 1980s (K. D. Bishop *in litt.* 1987), nor on three visits during the 1990s (Poulsen and Frolander 1994, Eastwood 1996, M. van Beirs *in litt.* 2000).

ECOLOGY The recent observations have been in lowland forest and also scrubby vegetation; Large-billed Gerygone *G. magnirostris* inhabits mangroves, scrub and forest edge habitats, usually beside water, in the lowlands (Coates 1990).

THREATS Much forest on Biak (particularly the southern plains) has been destroyed or damaged by logging and subsistence farming, and the remainder is under pressure (Bishop 1982, K. D. Bishop *in litt.* 1996, D. A. Holmes *in litt.* 2000). However, Supiori possesses much virtually impenetrable forest on steep limestone which is likely to be safe from clearance (Bishop 1982).

MEASURES TAKEN There are two protected areas on the islands, Biak-Utara (110 km²) and Pulau Supiori (420 km²) Nature Reserves (Sujatnika *et al.* 1995). The species was recorded in Biak-Utara reserve in 1997 (S. van Balen and B. M. Beehler *in litt.* 2000).

MEASURES PROPOSED • Conduct surveys on both islands to establish its current distribution, population status and habitat requirements. • Afford formal protection to further key sites, particularly mangrove habitats. • Investigate taxonomy and field identification of *Gerygone* species on Biak.

REMARKS This bird has been treated as a race of Large-billed Gerygone *G. magnirostris* but is provisionally here given species status on the basis of morphology and behaviour (Collar *et al.* 1994, P. Gregory *in litt.* 1994, I. Burrows *in litt.* 2000), following Mathews (Mathews 1927). However the features of this taxon are poorly documented and require clarification; some recent records refer to birds showing features of Fairy Gerygone *G. palpebrosa* which is not known from Biak (Gibbs 1993, S. van Balen *in litt.* 2000).