

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.

© 2001 BirdLife International

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

BirdLife International is a UK-registered charity

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrical, chemical, mechanical, optical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

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

The presentation of material in this book and the geographical designations employed do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of BirdLife International concerning the legal status of any country, territory or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

GRACEFUL PITTA

Pitta venusta

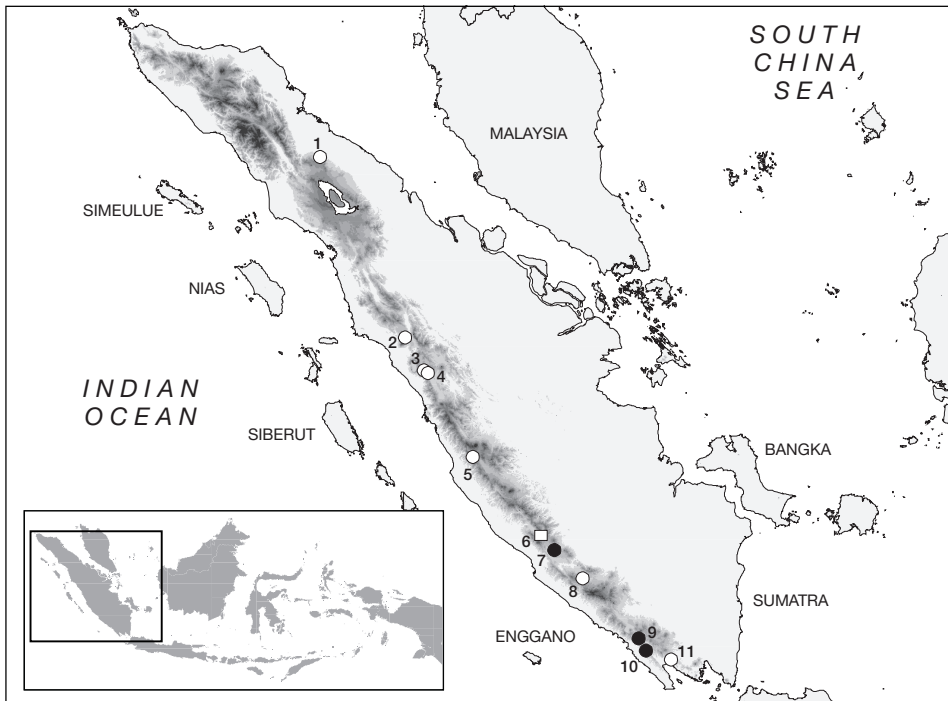
Critical —
Endangered —
Vulnerable C1



This poorly known species qualifies as Vulnerable because it is estimated to have a small population whose size is likely to be decreasing as a result of continuing forest loss and degradation.

DISTRIBUTION The Graceful or Black-crowned Pitta (see Remarks 1) is endemic to the highlands of Sumatra, Indonesia, having been found chiefly in the Barisan Range, at some of the same localities as the Sumatran Ground-cuckoo *Carpococcyx viridis*. Records are from:

■ **INDONESIA** *Sumatra* ■ **North Sumatra** **Bandar Baru**, 900 m, north of Berastagi, undated but in the 1910s (Rozendaal 1994); ■ **West Sumatra** **Gunung Talamau**, Ophir (“Ophir districts”), 1,300 m, 1913–1917 (Robinson and Kloss 1924a; see Remarks 3); foot of **Gunung Singgalang**, May 1836 (Rozendaal 1994, Erritzoe and Erritzoe 1998; see Remarks 2); **Padang Highlands**, from 400 m upwards, 1830s (Müller and Schlegel 1840); **Kerinci-Seblat National Park**, 750–900 m, at Siolak Daras, March 1914, and Sandanan (or Sandaran) Agong, May 1914 (Robinson and Kloss 1918a, Rozendaal 1994; two males in AMNH, BMNH), and at Tandai, 900 m, May



The distribution of Graceful Pitta *Pitta venusta*: (1) Bandar Baru; (2) Gunung Talamau; (3) Gunung Singgalang; (4) Padang Highlands; (5) Kerinci-Seblat National Park; (6) Rimbo Pengadang; (7) Gunung Kaba; (8) Gunung Dempo; (9) Liwa; (10) Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park; (11) Gunung Tanggamus.

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

1996 (Holden 1997), also below Bukit Tapan, 900 m, five singing males, May and August 1998 (E. Vercruysee, F. Verbelen *in litt.* 1999), Tapan road at 600 m, July 1999 (K. D. Bishop *in litt.* 1999); ■ **Bengkulu Rimbo Pengadang**, Lebong, 1,000 m, undated (Rozendaal 1994); **Gunung Kaba**, 900 m, September 1881 (Nicholson 1883, Robinson and Kloss 1924a: 267), April 1989 (Rozendaal 1994), with several calling males in October 1995 and July 1997 (F. Verbelen *in litt.* 1999), June 1999 (*per* I. Mauro *in litt.* 1999), a specific area being Suban Ajam, Redjang, 1,200 m, undated (Rozendaal 1994; see Remarks 4); ■ **South Sumatra Gunung Dempo** at Air Njuruk, Palembang, 1,400 m, 1913–1917 (Robinson and Kloss 1924a); □ **Lampung** between **Liwa** and **Krui**, May–June 1991 (Holmes 1996, Lambert 1996), with two birds in song near Kubuprahu, Liwa, October 1995 (Holmes 1996); **Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park**, at some time since 1980 (O'Brien and Kinnaird 1996b) and at Kubuperahu between Liwa and Krui, several birds in October 1995 and July 1997 (F. Verbelen *in litt.* 1999), July 1998 (P. A. J. Morris verbally 1998); **Gunung Tanggamus**, near Kota Agung, 1,000 m, June 1935 (female in ZMB).

A record from Rimbo Kulit Manis, 800 m, West Sumatra, December 1985, almost certainly refers to this species but the identity was not confirmed at the time (Holmes 1996). Without remarking on the anomaly, Erritzoe and Erritzoe (1998) mapped “Palembang” (and provided supporting coordinates) as on the lowland east coast of Sumatra and as an entirely separate locality from Gunung Dempo, although it is in fact a qualifier for Dempo (see above).

POPULATION In the mid-1990s there had been very few records in recent years and the species was considered rare or very local (Lambert 1996); in fact, MacKinnon and Phillipps's (1993) claim that there had been no published records since 1918 was technically correct. On the other hand, the species is “a heavy skulker, even by pitta standards” (F. Verbelen *in litt.* 1999), and the number of “post-Lambert” records suggests that it must survive in low numbers in local pockets, and that the paucity of records principally indicated how seriously neglected the upland avifauna of Sumatra had been in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, a steep decline must have been in progress for years, given the clearance of lower-lying forest on Sumatra (see Threats under Crestless Fireback *Lophura erythrophthalma*).

ECOLOGY Habitat This is a bird of the floor and lower storey of hill and lower montane forest at 400–1,400 m (van Marle and Voous 1988). It occupies rainforest in the hills and submontane zone, frequenting dark, damp areas, in particular ravines under dense cover (Lambert 1996). Collecting stations include areas of primary and secondary forest with much rattan in the undergrowth (Robinson and Kloss 1924a). Its upper altitudinal limit seems to be 1,400 m on Kerinci (Lambert 1996).

Food Small molluscs, insects including small beetles, bugs, worms and seeds have been recorded in specimens; birds turn over leaves and moss to obtain such material (Müller and Schlegel 1840, Schlegel 1866, Nicholson 1883, Robinson and Kloss 1924a).

Breeding A domed nest with two eggs was placed a few feet up among orchids on a fallen tree trunk in a wooded valley, May 1834; it was made of dry leaves, small roots, moss, bamboo leaves and other soft, often rotting material, and lined with dry leaves (Müller and Schlegel 1840, Schlegel 1862–1873, 1866); Rozendaal (1994) treated this record with caution, noting that the coloration of the eggs was unlike that of any other *Pitta* on Sumatra. Other evidence (juveniles in museums) supports breeding in the first half of the year, from around March (possibly February) to June or July, with a large nestling from mid-June and a newly fledged bird from early July (Lambert 1996); where a territorial male was present in mid-July, Gunung Kaba, young birds were seen in early August (F. Verbelen *in litt.* 1999). However, singing males have been heard in October (Holmes 1996, F. Verbelen *in litt.* 1999).

Migration The species is assumed to be resident (“the strongly curved wings and wing formula” support this view: Erritzoe and Erritzoe 1998), but it may perhaps make local elevational movements.

THREATS The Graceful Pitta is a threatened bird species in the suite of 20 that are entirely restricted to the “Sumatra and Peninsular Malaysia Endemic Bird Area”, threats and conservation measures in which are profiled by Sujatnika *et al.* (1995) and Stattersfield *et al.* (1998). It has suffered from forest clearance particularly in the lower reaches of its elevation range (Lambert 1996). Thus for example in July 1999 some of the best remaining areas of lowland forest within Kerinci-Seblat National Park were being logged from just above Muara Sako down to Tapan (K. D. Bishop *in litt.* 1999). The extent of deforestation in the lower elevational range of this species, the general plight of upland forest on Sumatra and the particular plight of Kerinci-Seblat National Park are outlined in Threats under Sumatran Ground-cuckoo.

Hunting with air rifles is widespread in the lower forest at Kerinci, which may be a threat to the species (F. Verbelen *in litt.* 1999). Moreover, ground snares are widespread and likely to be a particular problem for this species (K. D. Bishop *in litt.* 2000).

MEASURES TAKEN This species has been protected under Indonesian law since 1931 (Inskipp 1986). It has been recorded in Kerinci-Seblat and Bukit Barisan Selatan National Parks. Gunung Singgalang is a 97 km² protection forest, but with garden (“ladang”) encroachment along the lower peripheries (SvB). Bukit Dingin/Gunung Dempo consists of c.380 km² protection forest (SvB). Gunung Kaba is an forested volcanic peak currently designated a recreation park (but see below) (D. A. Holmes *in litt.* 1999).

MEASURES PROPOSED Careful study of the species to understand its status, distribution, ecology and threats is clearly essential, but the preservation of habitat at the lower levels on Gunung Kerinci is more essential still at this stage (see Threats under Sumatran Ground-cuckoo *Carpococcyx viridis*). A strict hunting ban is needed there (F. Verbelen *in litt.* 1999). The species should be searched for in appropriate habitat north of its known range as far as Gunung Leuser National Park (D. A. Holmes *in litt.* 1999). A 250 km² wildlife reserve has been proposed between 1,000 and 1,938 m on Gunung Kaba (SvB), and both Gunung Singgalang and Bukit Dingin/Gunung Dempo are proposed for upgrading to reserves (D. A. Holmes *in litt.* 1999).

REMARKS (1) This species has previously been regarded as conspecific with Garnet Pitta *Pitta granatina* or Black-headed Pitta *P. ussheri*, but is distinct from both (van Marle and Voous 1988, Rozendaal 1994, Lambert 1996). (2) Lambert (1996) gave Holmes (*in prep.*) as the source for this record; it is not in Holmes (1996) but mentioned, without attribution to source, in Rozendaal (1994). (3) The specimen “of uncertain provenance” mentioned by Lambert (1996) as from “Batang Tingalang, south-west Sumatra” is from this, the type locality (*batang* means river, indicating foothills; and the capital T is very likely a capital S written in a particular nineteenth-century manuscript). (4) In his list of specimens examined, Rozendaal (1994) enumerated five from “Suban Ajam”, without indicating (perhaps without knowing) that this was at Gunung Kaba, where he himself observed the species in 1989. That this is so can be determined by reference to (e.g.) Distribution under Schneider’s Pitta *Pitta schneideri*.