

Threatened Birds of Asia:

The BirdLife International Red Data Book

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TIMOR GREEN-PIGEON

Treron psittacea

Critical —

Endangered A1c,d; A2c,d

Vulnerable C1; C2b



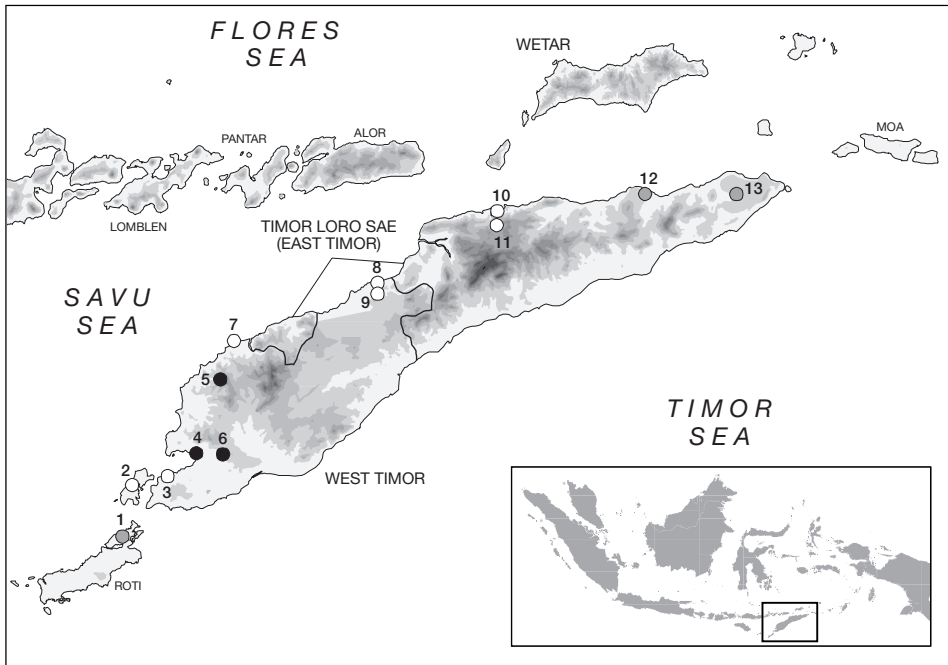
The population of this species is inferred to have undergone (and is forecast to undergo) a very rapid population decline concurrent with the rapid reduction in its lowland forest habitat. As a result, it is classified as Endangered.

DISTRIBUTION The Timor Green-pigeon is known from the islands of Timor, Semau and Roti, Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, and Timor Loro Sae (East Timor). Records are from:

■ **INDONESIA** *Roti Danau Bais*, March 1969 (Mees 1975, Verheijen 1976);

Semau unspecified locality, April 1829 (Schlegel 1862–1873), 1859 (female in BMNH; also Hellmayr 1914);

West Timor Kupang, August 1843 and 1859 (three specimens in BMNH); **Bipolo** (see Remarks 1), May 1984 (P. Andrew *in litt.* 2000), flock of 60, June 1986 (K. D. Bishop *in litt.* 1999; see Remarks 2), January 1990 (Gibbs 1990), August 1991 (B. F. King verbally 1998), October 1992 (N. Bostock *in litt.* 1999), July 1994 (Noske 1995), October 1995 (Verbelen 1996), March 1999 (I. Mauro *in litt.* 1999) and August 1999 (D. van den Schoor *per* R. Drijvers *in*



The distribution of Timor Green-pigeon *Treron psittacea*: (1) Danau Bais; (2) Semau; (3) Kupang; (4) Bipolo; (5) Gunung Timau; (6) Camplong; (7) Nasiko; (8) Atapupu; (9) Filaran; (10) Dili; (11) Saluki; (12) Baucau; (13) Los Palos.

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

litt. 1999); **Gunung Timau**, 600 m, May 1999 (D. Lesmana *in litt.* 2000); **Camplong** (160 m), January 1932 (Mayr 1944), August 1991 (Hornskov 1992); **Nasiko**, May 1829 (Schlegel 1862–1873); **Atapupu**, July–August 1897 (Hartert 1898c); **Filaran**, July 1897 (Hartert 1898c); Bouong (untraced), May 1829 (Schegel 1862–1873);

■ **TIMOR LORO SAE** (*East Timor*) (see Remarks 3) **Dili**, sea-level, April 1932 (Mayr 1944); **Saluki**, Bibičuçu, inland of Dili, April 1883 (female in BMNH; site traced using Forbes 1885); beach at **Baucau**, one, May 1974 (H. Thompson, I. Mason and J. McKean *per R. Noske in litt.* 1999); east of **Los Palos**, seven, May 1974 (H. Thompson, I. Mason and J. McKean *per R. Noske in litt.* 1999); Vero (untraced), two, May 1974 (H. Thompson, I. Mason and J. McKean *per R. Noske in litt.* 1999).

POPULATION In the nineteenth century the species appeared to be “not rare” (Hellmayr 1914). In recent times, however, it seems to have become uncommon at best, as suggested (“uncommon or rare”) by Coates and Bishop (1997), although they also noted that it is “quiet... inconspicuous... very wary”, which gives hope that it may often be overlooked. The remark in Coates and Bishop (1997) that it is usually found in small flocks of up to 20 birds reflected a mistaken impression based on a first encounter in 1986 (K. D. Bishop *in litt.* 1999), when a flock of 60 was seen at Bipolo (K. D. Bishop in Collar *et al.* 1994; see Ecology). Subsequently the evidence has been that the species is in serious trouble: of six August visits to Timor spread evenly over 11 years, 1987–1997, the species was seen once (two birds, at Bipolo) (B. F. King verbally 1998). Four days were spent searching before a single bird was found at Bipolo in 1992, and none was observed elsewhere, suggesting that the species is indeed fairly rare (N. Bostock *in litt.* 1999); back in 1984–1985 P. Andrew (*in litt.* 2000) spent around six months on Timor, spread over four visits, and his only record was of five birds at Bipolo. It was not encountered in two months spent on the island in 1993, although some time was spent at Bipolo (Holmes 1993b); other fieldwork in West Timor also failed to pick it up that year (Noske 1995). The species seems likely to have disappeared from Camplong (Noske 1995), and it appears to have declined recently throughout West Timor (Noske and Saleh 1996). J. McKean expressed the view (to P. Andrew *in litt.* 2000) that the species was commoner in East Timor (see Remarks 3).

ECOLOGY Habitat This is a bird of primary and tall secondary lowland monsoon forest, with a highest recorded elevation of only 160 m (Coates and Bishop 1997); however, there is now a record from 600 m on Gunung Timau (see Distribution).

Food Birds have been seen foraging in fruiting trees, including figs, sometimes with other pigeons (Coates and Bishop 1997). The flock of 60 at Bipolo in 1986 (see above) was encountered shortly after dawn as part of a “feeding frenzy” involving macaques, cuckoo-shrikes and friarbirds at a fruiting fig within tall evergreen forest (K. D. Bishop *in litt.* 2000).

Breeding Two immature birds were among the eight specimens collected at Camplong in January 1932 (Mayr 1944), and one male among them had testes half-enlarged (in AMNH). A male collected on Roti, March, had developed testes (Verheijen 1976).

Migration The species may be nomadic in relation to the fruiting cycle of figs within its island ranges, as is suspected for Flores Green-pigeon *Treron floriss* (see relevant account).

THREATS Loss of monsoon forest has been extremely severe in West Timor: the size of the isolated lowland rainforest at Bipolo is only 2 km², and such habitat is virtually eradicated elsewhere in West Timor (Noske 1995); the Bipolo patch is rapidly being cut down (K. D. Bishop *in litt.* 1999; see Remarks 1). Further information on this problem and on the reportedly considerable rate of forest loss in East Timor in the past two decades is in the equivalent section under Wetar Ground-dove *Gallicolumba hoedtii*.

Moreover, the species is hunted by local people at Bipolo (N. Bostock *in litt.* 1999, P. Andrew *in litt.* 2000); the problem of the over-arming of people on Timor in relation to hunting was highlighted under this species in the 1980s (Collar and Andrew 1988), and hunting of all pigeons and doves with shotguns, air-rifles and slingshots appears to be widespread in West Timor (K. D. Bishop *in litt.* 2000). Moreover, the way this species concentrates at individual fruiting trees may make it extremely easy for unwitting hunters to wipe out the last birds (K. D. Bishop *in litt.* 2000) (as appears almost to have happened with the Visayan Wrinkled Hornbill *Aceros waldeni* on Panay: see relevant account). Generally, therefore, this is feared to be one of the most threatened bird species in Wallacea (K. D. Bishop *in litt.* 1999).

The Timor Green-pigeon is one of five (but note composition now different) threatened members of the suite of 23 bird species that are entirely restricted to the “Timor and Wetar Endemic Bird Area”, threats and conservation measures in which are profiled by Sujatnika *et al.* (1995) and Stattersfield *et al.* (1998).

MEASURES TAKEN Gunung Mutis was gazetted as a nature reserve in 1983, the area in question, when combined with an adjoining area of protection forest, amounting to 100 km² (D. Lesmana *in litt.* 2001).

MEASURES PROPOSED Gunung Mutis is currently being proposed by WWF Nusa Tenggara for redesignation (along with Gunung Timau) as a national park (D. Lesmana *in litt.* 2001). The need for a full survey of and comprehensive conservation strategy for Timor’s forests is emphasised in the equivalent section under Wetar Ground-dove *Gallicolumba hoedtii*, along with information on current proposals to protect Gunung Timau (Timor) and Gunung Arnau (Wetar), plus various sites in Timor Loro Sae.

REMARKS (1) K. D. Bishop (*in litt.* 2000) has remarked that the patch of tall, semi-evergreen forest on an alluvial fan at Bipolo is notably rich in birds, especially pigeons and doves, but is “now rapidly being destroyed by unbridled woodcutting by local people and transmigrants”. (2) Collar *et al.* (1994) mistakenly gave the year as 1989 for this remarkable observation. (3) Observations by the late J. McKean found the species commoner and widespread in East Timor than in West Timor (Collar and Andrew 1988, Collar *et al.* 1994; see also Population), but details of localities and numbers are unavailable.