

Each species is illustrated with their English and scientific names, a diagnosis that highlights the more important characters including succinct descriptions of colour and markings. There are brief comments on the fish's habitat and abundance, followed by notes on their distribution in New Guinea. These notes are illustrated on a map of New Guinea on the top right hand corner of the page. A list of local names is also provided.

Good pictures and accurate illustrations of entire fish are arguably the quickest and most reliable tool to identify the various types of fishes, and this is adequately furnished for each and every species in this guide. Many species are illustrated in life with excellent photographs. Where good photographs are wanting, line drawings and paintings made by Australian artists Jill Ruse and Roger Swainston are effective substitutes.

Apart from the illustrations, the user can also refer to keys

that highlight important morphologic and meristic characters. There is a key that differentiates the 27 families of indigenous and five families of introduced freshwater fish in the area. If more than one species is present in a family, a key to the different species in that group is provided.

This book certainly lives up to its design as a quick identification guide to the freshwater fishes of the Timika region. It is a good reference for anyone who is generally interested in fishes, and/or the biodiversity of the Australia-New Guinea region.

Kelvin K. P. Lim

Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research
Department of Biological Sciences
The National University of Singapore
Blk S6, Science Drive 2
Singapore 117600, Republic of Singapore

A Photographic Guide to the
BIRDS
OF INDONESIA



Birding Indonesia edited by Paul Jepson and Rosie Ounsted and produced by the same publisher in 1997. Despite its size and weight, it is suitable for being carried away to the field.

Morten Strange has had close association with Indonesia over 20 years. He traveled all over the country to obtain the photographs of many bird species that had never been photographed especially those distributed only in Nusa Tenggara and Irian Jaya/West Irian. He showed his master in photography by illustrating most of the species taken by him though he was assisted by other 35 photographers to complete the book. The author has written the Photographic Guide to the Birds of Peninsula Malaysia and Singapore (1993) and the Photographic Guide to the Birds of South East Asia including Phillipine and Borneo (2000).

The book basically contains three main sections:

A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Indonesia. Strange, M., 2001. Periplus, Singapore, 416 pp. ISBN 962-593-402-2.

At last, the Indonesian birds can be compiled in one field guide gathering field guides on the Birds of Sumatra, Java, Bali and Kalimantan, Birds of Wallacea and Birds of New Guinea. This is another book dedicated to the geographical region. It may also be used as a complement to

introduction, how to use this book and systematic section. The introduction is very comprehensive and detailed. Terminology and names used in the book are clearly explained. However, there is an inconsistency in the explanation of some terminology, e.g. the term of Sunda in the 'How to use this Book' section is different from the Glossary. One spelling mistake of the scientific name of the Blue Nuthatch, should be *Sitta azurea* not *Sitta azrea*.

It provides some tips on birding techniques, photographing birds, documentation, information on habitats, birding time, interesting places for birding and conservation concerns. The section how to use this book explains the area covered, the nomenclature, taxonomy and sequence applied including some important references and guidance for the systematic section. The systematic section illustrates the species with coloured photograph, short description, information on voice and habits as well as a map of distribution. For some dimorphic species, photographs of both sexes are shown.

There are 1534 bird species recorded in Indonesian region. This book presents 686 species or less than 50% of total species. Each species is well described with brief information on voice and sufficient behaviour notes for field observation. Since the book is heavily relied on coloured photographs for species identification, we were a bit disappointed with their uneven quality. Some photographs (such as on pages 68, 70, 77, 145, 175, 176, 191, 283, 289, 296, 305, 322, 359 and 375) have poor quality and are less detailed, they could not be used properly for identification as the book intended to be.

Although it was mentioned that most photographs were taken on location in Indonesia or South East Asia, the photograph of Grey teal *Anas gibberifrons* was taken in Australian region because it is less accurate. The Indonesian (Sunda) grey teal

has a prominent forehead which is distinctive from the Australian Grey Teal.

The book covers 87 out of 93 families and 130 out of 381 endemic species.

The inclusion of map of distribution is very useful. Because Indonesian region has the highest number of endemic species, the map really helps to find specific locations for interesting species. We were a bit surprised when seeing the map of the Brahminy Kite (*Haliastur indus*). The author eliminates the presence of the species on Java island. Actually, last year we found an active nest of this species with two chicks in the mangrove of North Coast of Banten.

After all, we recommend the book to be used by beginners or professional bird watchers for observing the Indonesian birds. The concise text provides vital information that will ensure identification of some species in one of the world's most diverse avifauna regions. We appreciate all efforts of the author to produce such comprehensive photographs of the birds of Indonesia, especially for the photographs of tiny birds such as the Red-breasted Pygmy Parrot (*Microsittta bruijnii*), the Wallace's Hanging-parrot (*Loriculus flosculus*) and the Moluccan Hanging-parrot (*L. amabilis*).

Dewi M. Prawiradilaga and Darjono

Museum Zoologicum Bogoriense,

Research Centre for Biology-LIPI

Jalan Raya Bogor Km 46, Cibinong 16911, Indonesia



A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Malaysia and Singapore. Strange, M., 2000. Periplus, Singapore. 398 pp. ISBN 962-593-963-6.

There are numerous field guides available in the market on the birds of Southeast Asia. The question arises in my mind: do we need another bird guide for Southeast Asia? The answer in my mind is yes but only if such a guide

is illustrated with excellent photographs. Well, this book fills the bill. The author who is famous for his breathtaking bird pictures writes this photographic guide.

The book provides succinct introduction to the bird watching techniques. The introduction also contains beside other aspects, brief notes on Southeast Asian bird fauna, its habitats, and conservation.

Over six hundred bird species are covered in this book. Each species account includes a photograph (sometimes two) of the species. Most photographs contain diagnostic features of the bird. Included in the species description is a brief write-up of the diagnostic morphological features of the species with notes on its voice and habitats. Abundance status of all the species is indicated and so is the worldwide range. However, only the distribution within Southeast Asia is illustrated with a map.

With few exceptions, most of the photographs are of exceptional high quality. Somehow, the guide feels much better to use in the field and different than the previous other guides in the market. The glossy production of the book is of high quality.

I recommend this book to amateur and professional bird watchers alike. I know that I will be bringing it along for my future birding trips within Southeast Asia.

Nayjot S. Sodhi

Department of Biological Sciences

The National University of Singapore

Blk S2, 14 Science Drive 4

Singapore 117543, Republic of Singapore