

Birding Trip to Indonesia - Java & Sumatra 2001

By Jens Hjerrild Hansen
 Nødebovej 77 A
 3480 Fredensborg
 Denmark

e-mail: jenshjerrild@hotmail.com

Itinerary

A.	6.- 7/7	- Jakarta (boattrip to Medan 8.- 9/7)
B.	10.- 12/7	- Mt. Sibayak and Berastagi city
C.	11/7	- Mt. Sinabung
D.	12.- 14/7 & 16/7	- Gunung Leuser National Park - Ketambe village and Gurah Recreation Area
E.	15.- 16/7	- Gunung Leuser National Park - 2 day trek to Waterfall and Hot Springs
F.	17.- 20/7	- Gunung Leuser National Park - Alas River (Muare Situlen to Gelombang)
G.	21.- 27/7	- Singkil city and Banyak Islands (P. Asok, Balai, Telana)
H.	29/7 - 2/8	- Lake Toba
I.	4.- 5/8	- Kerinci-Seblat National Park - Mt. Kerinci Trail (2x1 day)
J.	6.- 7/8	- Kerinci-Seblat National Park - Mt. Tujuh Trail (1x2 day)
K.	9.- 15/8	- Carita Bay and Sunda Strait (12/8)
L.	16.- 19/8	- Ujung Kulon National Park - 3 day trek to Karang Ranjang and Kalejetan
M.	21/8	- Bogor Botanical Garden

Check List

All numbers refer to the highest daily count

X = common, number only estimated (10-50 éx.)

Xx = very common, number only estimated (50-200 éx.)

Art	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
Little Pied Cormorant	X												
Christmas Island Frigatebird												1	
Grey Heron	3												
Purple Heron							2	16					
Cattle Egret												87	
Pacific Reef-Egret							11				2 [c]	4	
Intermediate Egret								80					
Little Egret	7							20					
Javan Pond-Heron	X												
Black-crowned Night-Heron													40
Cinnamon Bittern								3					
Wandering Whistling-Duck							20						
Brahminy Kite							4	4				1	
White-bellied Fish-Eagle							8				3 [c]	1	
Crested Serpent-Eagle						1					1		
Black Eagle			1			1				1		2 [d]	
Blyth's Hawk-Eagle										1			
Black-thighed Falconet						4							
Barred Buttonquail											3		
Great Argus						5							
Salvadori's Pheasant									1				
White-breasted Waterhen								2					1
Common Sandpiper												4	
Beach Thick-knee												3	
Whiskered Tern	4												
Roseate Tern							1						
Black-naped Tern	4 [a]						23						

Art	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
Blue-winged Leafbird				5		4							
Black-headed Bulbul				2		1					4	15	
Black-crested Bulbul						2							
Grey-bellied Bulbul						1							
Sooty-headed Bulbul	15							2				1	60+
Orange-spotted Bulbul		4	2										
Yellow-vented Bulbul	2		6	X		X		Xx			2 [c]	3	
Cream-vented Bulbul												10	
Grey-cheeked Bulbul											2	6	
Yellow-bellied Bulbul				2	2								
Hairy-backed Bulbul						4							
Sunda Bulbul				1						2			
Ashy Bulbul				5									
Black Drongo										2			
Ashy Drongo										2			4
Bronzed Drongo						4							
Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo									2	1			
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo					1	1						7	
Black-naped Oriole	2												20+
Green Magpie									4	1			
House Crow												1	
Slender-billed Crow						1							1
Great Tit	1							4	2	2		1	2
Velvet-fronted Nuthatch				1							1	2	
Blue Nuthatch		3							7	3			
White-browed Shortwing									3	1			
Black-capped Jungle Babbler											3+	1	
Horsefield's Jungle Babbler											4+		
Rusty-breasted Wren-Babbler									1				
Large Wren-Babbler												1	
Eye-browed Wren-Babbler									1				
Pygmy Wren-Babbler		3							5				
Golden Babbler		6							8	6			
White-breasted Babbler											2		
Grey-throated Babbler									15	8			
Grey-headed Babbler				6									
Chestnut-winged Babbler						2							
Grey-cheeked Tit-Babbler											10	6	
Striped Tit-Babbler				1									
Long-tailed Sibia									2	6			
Sunda Laughingthrush									1				
Chestnut-capped Laughingthrush										3			
White-browed Shrike-Babbler									1	3			
Magpie Robin			2	3		4	3	3		2			
Lesser Forktail					3					2			
Chestnut-naped Forktail				2		1							
Shiny Whistling-Thrush			1						5	3			
Sunda Whistling-Thrush										1			
Orange-headed Thrush													1
Sunda Warbler									5	8			
Yellow-bellied Warbler		1									1		
Mountain Leaf-Warbler		1	2						10	6			
Eastern Reed-Warbler	3												
Sunda Bush-Warbler									4				
Common Tailorbird											5		
Ashy Tailorbird				2									8
Olive-backed Tailorbird											7	2	1
Mountain Tailorbird		2							3	2			
Hill Prinia		10+	5+	X				3	2	3			
Yellow-bellied Prinia	4												
Bar-winged Prinia				4		4					5+		6
Fulvous-chested Jungle-Flycatcher						1							
Verditer Flycatcher				1	2								
Indigo Flycatcher		1								1			
Snowy-browed Flycatcher									6	1			
Grey-headed Flycatcher		2	1						5	2			
Rufous-vented Niltava										2			
Malaysian Blue-Flycatcher						2							

Art	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
Hill Blue-Flycatcher													2
Mangrove Blue-Flycatcher											1 [c]		
White-throated Fantail									3	2			
Pied Fantail													1
Black-naped Monarch				1		1						1	
Mangrove Whistler												1	
White-breasted Wood-Swallow	4										4 [c]	3	
Long-tailed Shrike	4		2						X	3			
Grey Wagtail				3		3				2			
Richard's Pipit								2					
Short-tailed Starling											1 [c]		
Asian Glossy Starling	8												
Asian Pied Starling	1												
Common Myna	1												
Hill Myna						2							
Javan Myna						X							
Plain Sunbird				2									
Plain-throated Sunbird							X					5	5
Ruby-cheeked Sunbird				1							5	2	
Purple-naped Sunbird				2									
Purple-throated Sunbird							3				3	2	
Olive-backed Sunbird	2							8				2	
Javan Sunbird											1		
Temminck's Sunbird			1						2	3			
Little Spiderhunter													3
Spectacled Spiderhunter				1									
Grey-breasted Spiderhunter						2						3	
Yellow-breasted Flowerpecker				2	2								
Scarlet-headed Flowerpecker	6												8
Orange-bellied Flowerpecker				8	2						1		
Plain Flowerpecker													24
Crimson-breasted Flowerpecker				2									
Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker					1								
Oriental White-eye	2	9	4					15			4		
Black-capped White-eye									10	10			
White-rumped Munia				2									
Javan Munia												1	
Scaly-breasted Munia		6 [b]		1				20					
White-bellied Munia						4							
White-headed Munia						8		10					
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	Xx	Xx [b]						Xx				Xx	X
Otter										1			
Wild Pig					1								
Flying Fox												400+	220
Banded Langur									8	3			
Thomas Leaf Monkey		5		4	8								
Pig Tailed Macaque					2								
Long Tailed Macaque					30	X							
Black Monkey											10	2	
Orangutan				2	5								
White Handed Gibbon						1							
Black Gibbon						5							

[a] = Birds only seen on the Pelni Boat from Jakarta to Medan

[b] = Birds only seen in Berastagi Village

[c] = Birds seen on the islands of Krakatau and Rakata

[d] = 1 pair at nest

Guidelines

Most of the basic information is accessible in the litterateur:

- Jepson, P. (1997). "Birding Indonesia - A bird-watcher's guide to the world's largest archipelago"
- MacKinnon, J. & Phillips K. (1993). "A field guide to the birds of Borneo, Sumatra, Java and Bali"

The following information is based on my own experiences. Sometimes the birdwatcher's guide was quit out of date, even though it's rather new. I'll try to bring some more up to date information here.

All prices is in Indonesian Rupiah.

A. Jakarta and boatrip to Sumatra. From the budget accommodation area on Jalan Jaksa, where we had some pleasant nights, it is easy to reach the Monas Park, via bus number 15 going to Gambir Station (5 min.). The park is best in the early morning before it gets too crowded by lokal people. Many bats in the evening but few swifts!. We also visited Muare Anke, mentioned in the guidebook. Take a train from Gambir Station to Kota Station. From here it is reachable in 20 min. with lokal bajaj. The area is almost completely transformed into fishingponds and highly polluted slum. I can't recommend going there, but it's still better than doing nothing on Jalan Jaksa. Two species, Yellow-bellied Prinia and Eastern Reed-Warbler, I was only able to find here. The 42 hour boatrip from Jakarta through the Strait of Malacca to the port of Belewan near Medan, was a bit disappointing. No seabirds at all, but a few terns and some pleasant calm waters.



foto Kim Aaen, Denmark

Ruby-cheeked Sunbird

- B. Medan, Berastagi and Mt. Sibayak (2300 m.).** From Tobali Tur in the center of Medan, there are one or two daily direct busses to Bukit Lawang. We had to turn around 10 km. from the rehabilitation center at Bukit Lawang, as a lokal gang was blocking the road. From Medan it took us 2 hours with a small lokal bus to reach the city of Berastagi in the mountain range. The village is a god base for exploring the two volcanoes – Sibayak and Sinabung. There are several accommodation possibilities in the center. In the circus, at the monument named "Tugu Perjuangar" we found a little breeding colony of the neat Little Swift. The trek to the crater of Sibayak is easy going and a guide is not really necessary. From the circus you can either take a minibus or walk the 2 km. uphill to the entrance (a little shelter at the forest edge, where we had to check in with full name and address and pay 1000 rp.). Just 100 m. past the entrance, at the first bambu vegetation I saw and heard several Pygmy Wren Babblers. The first 2/3 of the track up to an artificial water-reservoir is quite wide and accessible for a 4WD. This part of the track, is the most wooded and rewarding part in terms of birds. From the reservoir, the track continues uphill by a small cement paved path on your left side. From here the vegetation is changing into sub-alpine bush. A good place to see the Orange-Spotted Bulbul.
- C. Mt. Sinabung (2450 m.).** Exploring Mt. Sinabung is a bit more demanding than Sibayak, and you'll need a full day. The track to the summit was tough, as it was steep and slippery. In regards of birds the volcano, is not as good as Sibayak, as the farmers have cut their way far up the hill sides. The crater of Sinabung is not even more active, than the one of Sibayak, but the view from the top is quite impressive. I can only recommend to go with the local minibus from the busstation in Berastagi to the village of Singgarang Garang as early as possible. The "busride" took 1 hour and the trek to the summit from the village and back again, took us 7 hours. Ask your way, in the village or better - hire a boy/guide in the local village, who can lead the way, through the endless small fieldtracks, leading uphill to the forest edge. Reaching the forest you can't miss the track, as it is going straight up to the bushy sub-alpine zone. The last part of the track to the summit, is a bit more challenging as you have to fight your way through dense bush and furthermore the track divides several times. In misty weather you'll be better off sticking to the forest. In the nice mountain forest here, I was lucky to see a group of 8 Long-tailed Broadbills.



foto Kim Aaen, Denmark

Whiskered Treeswift

D. Gunung Leuser National Park - Ketambe Village and Gurah Recreation Area (300-500 m.). From Berastagi to the junction of Kabanjahe (½ hour). Kabanjahe to Kutacane (4 ½ hour). Kutacane to Ketambe (1 hour). We stayed one night at the "Pondok Wisata" but moved to the opposit and more relaxed bungalow. The area around Ketambe is very nice and beautiful. Also very divers and productive in bird species. Behind "Pondok Wisata" there is a small track leading up the hillside. The first part of the track is pretty steep, but very nice wooded. After ½ an hour walk, the hill flatten out and the vegetation transforms gradually into farmland. The paved main road in northern direction, through the park, is quit good and easy going. Opposite the sign "Gurah Recreation Area" posed near the very first buildings, there is a wanished mosque on your right hand coming from Ketambe. Behind the mosque there is a small track leading into the forest following a small creek. This track is very very nice and continues for several kilometers. It's advisable to go the same way back, as it is quit difficult to find one's bearings without a guide. On the left side of the road, coming from Ketambe, between "Gurah Recreation Area" and "Gurah Bungalow" there are several short distance tracks into the forest, which all leads back to the main road. Further up the road, approx. 2 km. from Ketambe, you'll reach a big green sign on the right side, just were the road starts descending. At this point I found some very rewarding trail-systems into the virgin rainforest, starting at both sides of the road. In this area we found wild Orangutangs.



foto Kim Aaen, Denmark

Pied Fantail

E. Gunung Leuser National Park - 2 days trek to Waterfall and Hotspring. We took on an arranged trip with a friendly guide with good "birdeyes" by the funny name: "John F. Kennedy". The trip was rewarding but uncomfortable, as we had to carry a tent and a lot of other equipment. I can only recoment to go on one or more of these trips with a guide.

- F. Gunung Leuser National Park - Alas River from Muare Situlen to Gelombang.** The trip downstream the Alas River on a rubber raft was supposed to be a highlight on our journey to the nationalpark of Gunung Leuser, but the trip was only rewarding in terms of Hornbills. 31 birds spread out on 6 species was a memorable sight. At the time being (the dry season), the waterflow was very slowly. In quit long parts of the journey, we had to paddle to get any further at all. The distance between Muare Situlen and Gelombang could not have been done on less than 3 days. The Alas river from Ketambe and southwards is actually making the nationalpark boundary. The land on the onprotected eastern side of the river, was disappointingly deforested. Heavy ongoing illegal logging inside the nationalpark boundary was recorded several times every day. Huge loads of hardwood was shipped out from the reserve downstream the Alas river !! All the cutting and the extreme danger by floating, in an area, where the trees suddently fall from the riverbanks and into the river, didn't made the journey more amusing. The area around the so called "Soraya Camp" which is said to be very rich in birds, is no longer of special interest. We stayed there 2 nights and did a full day trek into the forest from this point. First of all. All the buildings at the Soraya Camp has been burnt down by local loggers which didn't like the presence of the naturalists. Secondly the forest is no longer an unspoiled primary lowland forest. All of the big hardwoods is gone, and the forest is therefore very dense by young and fast growing pioneer trees. We payed 2.8 mio. Rupiah for the 4 day journey with two guides and all included.
- G. Singkil city and Banyak Islands (P. Asok, P. Balai and P. Telana).** To reach the Banyak Isl. you need to go to the port of Singkil via the junction of "Subulus Salam". From Singkil there are almost daily public boat's going to and from the central island - P. Balai. We only explored the small islands named P. Telana, P. Asok and P. Balai, which all are of little interest as regards of birdwatching. Even though I managed to add two new species to the checklist for the Banyak Islands. Nice birds like White-bellied Fish-Eagle, Pied Imperial Pigeon, Collared Kingfisher, Black-naped Tern and Pacific Reef-Egret is quit common. Some interesting birding could be done on the bigger Bangkaru and Tuangku Islands, which should hold rather big undisturbed coastral forests. If you plan to go to the islands you must expect to be self-sufficient on the islands, as there are no places to stay and eat outside P. Balai. If you plan to stay more than a few days you should bring some food from Singkil, as it is only possible to buy the very basic things on P. Balai.



foto Kim Aaen, Denmark

Collared Kingfisher

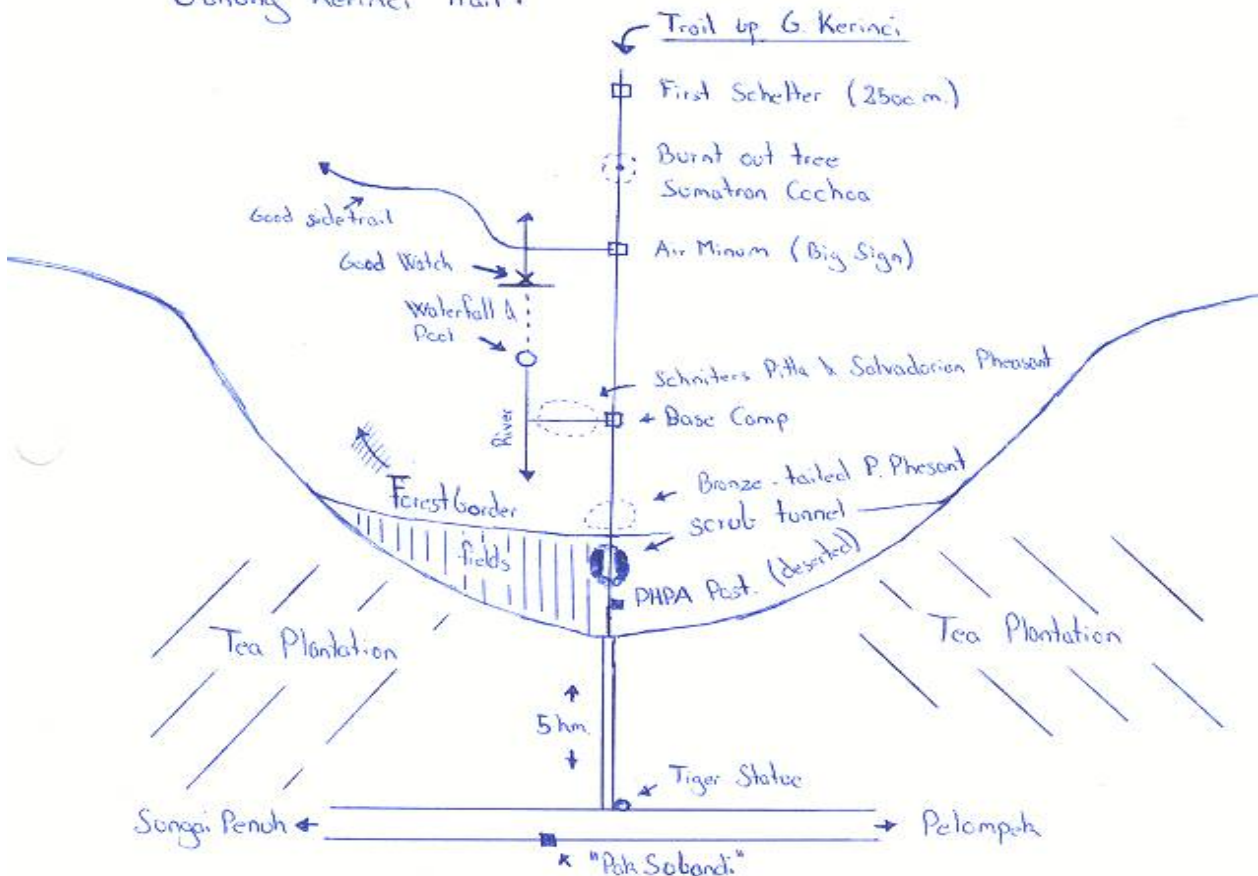
H. Lake Toba. Only of little interest for birdwatchers. I didn't see any wildfowl at the lake at all, but I found a small mixed breeding colony of Purple Heron and Little Egret, at the tourist spot named Simanindo on Pulau Samosir. Best birds around the tourist hot-spot "Tuk-Tuk" was 3 Cinnamon Bittern, 5 Pink-necked Green-Pigeons and 1 Coppermith Barbet.

I. Kerinci-Seblat Nationalpark - Gunung Kerinci Trail. We stayed at the nice and pleasant "Pak Subandi Homestay" in Keresik Tua. We payed 40.000 Rupiah for a room, 6000 for a proper meal and it was possible to rent a sleeping bag for 15.000 a day. The food is good and it is served punctually when ever you want (also before sunrise!). All of the mentioned (Jepson 1997) treks in the area - G. Kerinci, G. Tujuh and the small "Letter W" excursion is all easy going and it is not necessary to hire a guide.

G. Kerinci Trail. If you want to explore the lower forest in the early morning, you'll have to get up very early, as the forest edge is about 5 km. away, behind the huge tea fields. The best way to do the trip is to hire Pak Subandi to take you on the "ojek" motorcycle to the PHPA post and then walk your own way back in the afternoon. I only explored the trail up to "1. Shelter" at approx. 2500 m.. Consulting the birdlog kept at Pak Subandi, you'll find that most of the birds is seen at lower altitudes up to "Air Minum". After this point it gets more steep. I also found my best birds in the area around Air Minum and downwards. E.g. Salvadori's Pheasant, Rusty-breasted & Eye-browed Wren-Babbler, Snowy-browed Flycatcher, Sunda Laughingtrush and Green Magpie. Contrary I only found Sunda Bush-Warbler and White-browed Shortwing above Air Minum. Blue-tailed Trogon, Shiny Whistling Trush and Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo is also more frequently seen in the higher parts of the forest. According to the birdlog the rare Sumatran Cochoa is also most likely to be found above Air Minum and the Red-billed Partridge should only be possible to see above the first shelter. (see map for further details).

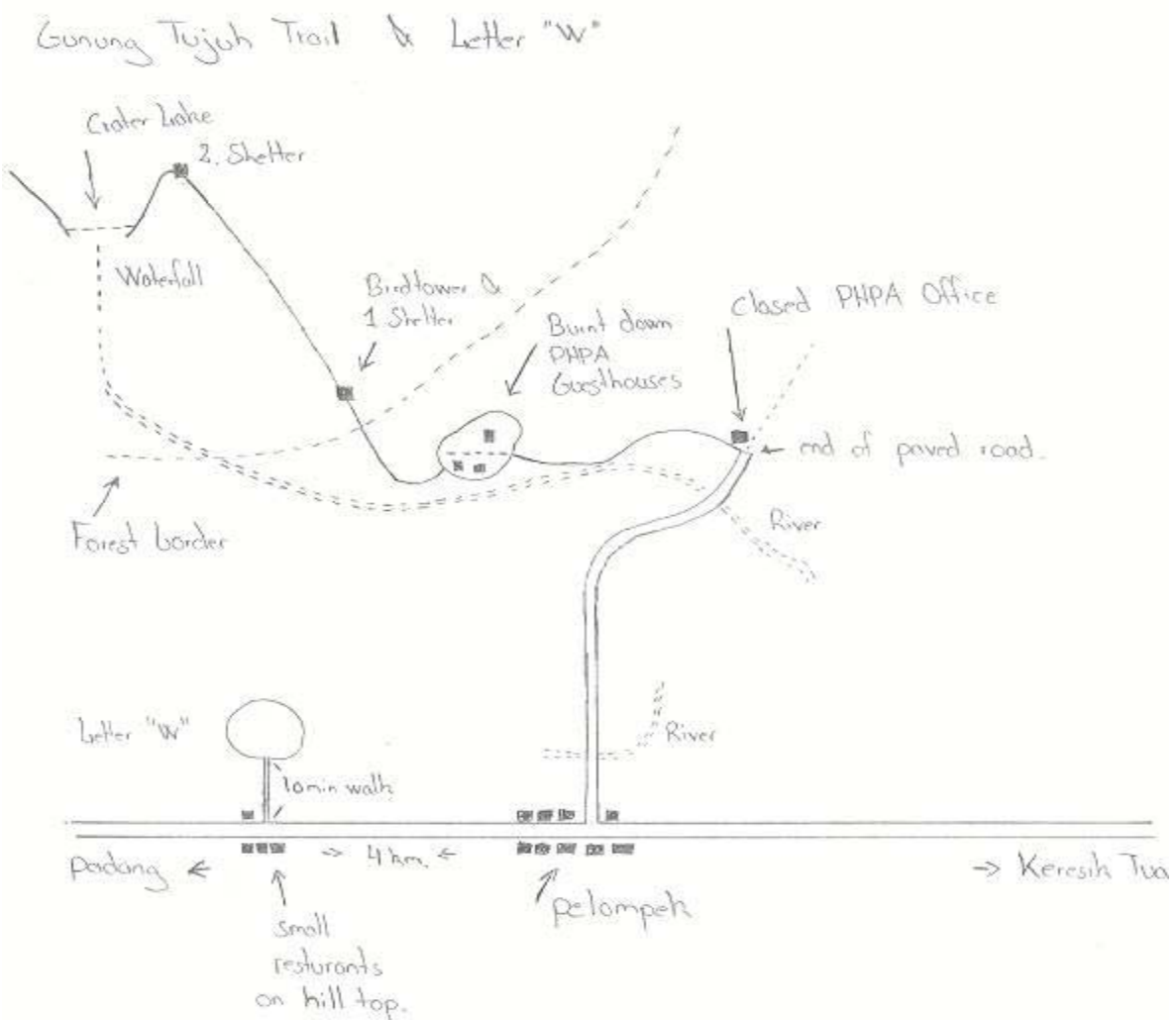
Kerinci-Seblat National Park

Gunung Kerinci Trail:



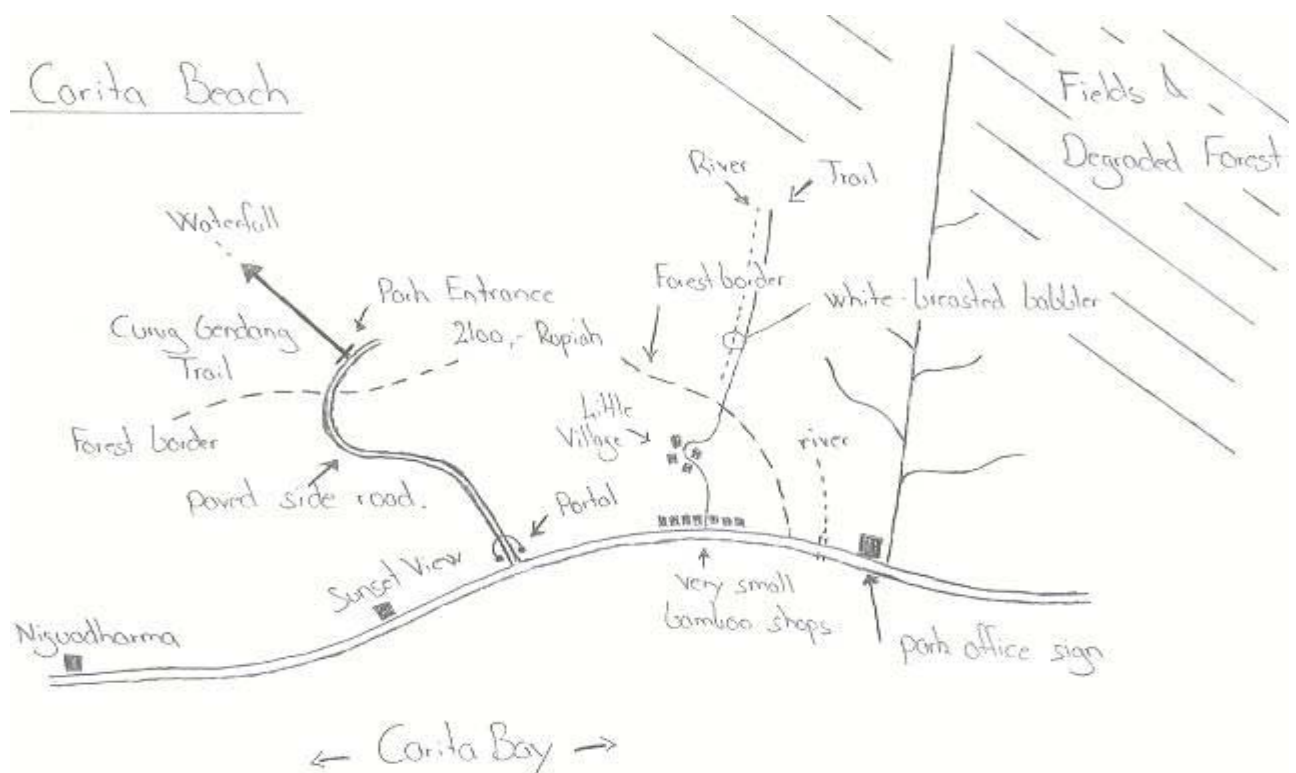
J. Kerinci-Seblat National Park - G. Tujuh Trail. Reaching the trail. From the eastgoing road in Pelompek, there is approx. 2 km. to the closed PHPA office. On your left side a gravel road leads to an area with some burnt down PHPA guesthouses. Behind the buildings on your left side, a small track will lead you to the forest edge through the latest clearing. Reaching the forest, the track is infallible. It is going up the volcano to the crater edge in one straight line without any side-tracks. From the crater edge, the track is descending 2-300 meters to the crater lake at a very short distance. The understory vegetation is not as good for the forestfloor birds, compared to the Kerinci Trail. Contrary the very steep terrain, gives a good view to the treetops of the trees below. At the crater lake there are suitable deforested camping grounds with plenty of freshwater. Our morning descending from the crater edge and back to the forest edge, was the most enriching day, in regards of bird species, on the hole holiday. Several species I only recorded here. E.g. Blyth's Hawk Eagle, Brown Hawk-Owl, Greater Yellownappe, Chestnut-capped Laughingthrush, Sunda Whistling-thrush and Rufous-vented Niltava. The trail can only be recommended.

Kerinci - Seblat National Park



K. Carita Bay and Islands in Sunda Strait (Krakatau & Rakarta). A nice, quiet and cheap place to stay with swimmingpool and a small breeding coloni of Cave-swiflets, is the Niguadharna Hotel in the northern outskirts of Carita. Even though the hole area is strongly effected by tourists and agriculture I found the bird fauna to be surprisingly good. The best birding area in the vicinity of Carita is the so called "Recreation Forest" and the area around the Curug Gendang Waterfall within. In Carita there are no signs telling you where to find the forest, as a

lot of young local guides, has a strong desire to earn some money, by showing you the way. If you keep an eye for the only paved sideroad in Carita, you'll probably find the site (see the map below). Once in the forest I discovered an excellent birding area, even though most parts of the forest, now is degraded. The area holds many skulky and exciting Jungle-babblers. You can easily spend a full day here. An other area worth while exploring is the heavily reduced forest south of the Recreation Area. Here I was very lucky to find a little group of the rare and endemic White-breasted Babbler, in a small patch of forest scrub along the small river. Boattrip in Sunda Strait. Safe, fast and convenient speedboats can be hired for 1.2 mio (6 pers.) or 1.5 mio (8 pers.) through the tour-agencies in Carita. I can only recommend avoiding a weekend trip as hundreds of Indonesian tourists fill the beach with a strong desire of hiring a boat for a short cruise in the bay. On a Saturday or Sunday your boatsman will have a really good reason to hurry back and shortening your trip with several hours. There are very few birds present on the active volcano - Anak Krakatau. After visiting the amazing volcano, you'll have a good opportunity to visit the unspoiled neighbor island - Rakarta. Around the dense forested Isl. there is some good coral reefs. A short ½ hour walk in the forest revealed birds like Short-tailed Starling, Mangrove Blue-Flycatcher and Yellow-throated Hanging-Parrot.



- L. Ujung Kulon National Park - 3 day trek to Karang Ranjang and Kalejetan.** For the birder with a tight budget the best starting point is the village of Tamanjaya. A direct bus to the village is leaving Labuan daily at 11 AM. Once in Tamanjaya I can highly recommend to stay or pay the owner of the "Wisma Wisata Alam" a visit. (35000,- incl. free hot drinks). Being a very helpful and a good english speaking guide, he is your best chance of making an enjoyable trip into the National Park. It is not necessary to hire a guide (50000,- a day), but at least you have to take a porter (20000,- a day plus food and cigarets) as you are not allowed to walk around unattended. Most of the porters don't speak any english, but they know the forest, and will carry all the food and cooking gear, as well as leading the way, when the trail is lost in coastal scrub etc.. I only explored the 3 day trek to Karang Ranjang, Kalejetan and back to Tamanjaya. I can't really recommend this circuit, as most of the daytrip from Karang Ranjang to Kalejetan is spent finding a way through the birdless coastal scrubforest here. The first morning is also of low value, as it takes about 3 hours of fast walking, to reach some proper birding habitats. Furthermore the primary forest here seemed surprisingly birdless and low in diversity. The most interesting part of the circuit, is the stretch from Kalejetan to Tamanjaya. After three days I was pretty tired of encountering the three very common

Bulbuls; Black-headed Bulbul, Cream-vented Bulbul and Grey-cheeked Bulbul. The understory is not as good for Babblers as in Carita. You'll probably come out with a better result, visiting the more remote and geographically diverse western part of the reserve.



foto Kim Aaen, Denmark

Little Spiderhunter

M. Bogor Botanical Garden. The garden is a nice and relaxing place to visit, as a final destination on your birding trip. Here you can combine the beautiful and bird rich garden, with some good food and comfortable accommodation in the city. Seven species of birds I only came accrose here. E.g. Black-naped Fruit-Dove, Orange-headed Thrush, Hill Blue Flycatcher, Pied Forktail and Little Spiderhunter. Due to the high diversity of flowing trees and bushes, the garden host a lot of flowerpeckers as well as, a lot of Black-naped Orioles wich filles the air with a gloomy atmosphere in the morning.

End of story. I'll hope that some of the information in the report, actually will contribute or improve the outcome and make your future journey to the exciting forests of Sumatra and Java to an enjoyable experience.

Yours sincerely
Jens Hjerrild Hansen