

## SURVEY ON BIRDS OF PREY AND OWLS (FALCONIFORMES AND STRIGIFORMES) ON JAVA SEA ISLANDS: CORRECTION AND ADDITIONS

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**ABSTRACT.** – In Southeast Asia the short-eared owl *Asio flammeus* is a northern migrant and is normally not recorded south of Singapore and, rarely, northern Borneo. The occurrence of short-eared owl in the Kangean archipelago, Java Sea, has been noted in several publications, including a recent one in this journal (Nijman, Raffles Bull. Zool. 2004, 52(2): 647-651). Kangean would represent the southernmost locality for the species and the first for Indonesia. The contention that short-eared owl does occur on Kangean probably all traces back to Hartert (Novit. Zool. 1902, 9: 419-441) who listed *Strix flammea javanica* in his list of birds of Kangean. *Strix flammea* is a synonym for the Barn owl *Tyto alba* and not of *Asio flammeus*. The description provided by Hartert clearly point to a barn owl and not to a short-eared owl. There are no indications that short-eared owl has ever been recorded on Kangean, and only two species of owl are present in the archipelago, i.e. barn owl and Sunda scops-owl *Otus lempiji*.

**KEY WORDS** – Aves, avifauna, Bawean, Indonesia, migration, zoogeography.

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Recently I (Nijman, 2004) published the results of a survey on the birds of prey (Falconiformes) and owls (Strigiformes) of the island of Bawean in the Java Sea. Some raptors (most notably the Brahminy kite *Haliastur indus* and white-bellied sea-eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*) were inexplicably absent from the island and the data from the owls were rather scant. In the discussion section of my paper I, therefore, made a comparison of the raptor community of Bawean with three other archipelagos in the Java Sea and stressed the need for a more detailed analysis of the distribution patterns of owls in the region. One of the archipelagos included in the comparison was Kangean situated some 300 km east of Bawean and 125 north of the island of Bali on the edge of the Sunda Shelf. It comprises some 30 islands, the main island after which the archipelago is named measuring 487 km<sup>2</sup>. For Kangean I tabulated five species of Falconiformes and three Strigiformes, referring to a report by de Iongh et al. (1982) and my own unpublished data from a trip I made to Kangean in 1997. One of the owls listed is the short-eared owl *Asio flammeus*. The occurrence of this species on the Kangean Islands was also noted by Wells (1999) adding that it is a rare vagrant to the Java Sea. Likewise, MacKinnon (1990) reported the short-eared owl for Kangean Islands, again as a rare winter migrant.

The short-eared owl has a wide, largely Holarctic distribution and East Asian populations migrate down south as far as Singapore (November to March: Wells, 1999) and, rarely, Sarawak (November) and Brunei (January), northern Borneo

(Smythies 1999). The occurrence of short-eared owls on Kangean would represent the southernmost record of the species, and indeed the first record for Indonesia.

Both my trip and that of de Iongh et al. (1982) were made in the boreal summer (June and August, respectively), and no short-eared owls were recorded. Short-eared owls have not been recorded by other ornithologists visiting the islands, i.e. Vorderman (1893), Hoogerwerf (1962), or A.P. Setiadi (pers. comm.). De Iongh et al. (1982: 51) however, do list the species in their appendix 3 and this was the basis for inclusion of the species in my paper. De Iongh et al. (1982) refer to Hartert (1902) as the source for the occurrence short-eared owl on Kangean but contrary to proper practise I did not check this publication. Neither Wells (1999) nor MacKinnon (1990) do provide a source for the occurrence of short-eared owl on the Kangean Islands.

Hartert (1902) described the avifauna of Kangean based on a collection made by Ernst Prillwitz. It is not clear when the collection was made, but from the general lack of (northern) migrants in the species list we can assume that it did not occur during the boreal winter. Hartert (1902: 428) includes *Strix flammea javanica* in his list of birds of Kangean. *Strix flammea* is a synonym for the Barn owl *Tyto alba* and not of *Asio flammeus*. From the description provided it is clear that indeed a barn owl has been collected and not a short-eared owl.

As such there is no evidence for the occurrence of short-eared owl on Kangean, and the only owls that occur on the island are the barn owl and Sunda scops-owl *Otus lempiji*.

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