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Front cover image: Tītī feather, drawn as part of the Kia Mau Te Tītī Mō Ake Tōnu project, Rakiura Island, New Zealand. Māori use the term tītī for a chick, or more generally for the species Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea*. (Line drawing: Maggie Atkinson, pencil and watercolour on paper.)



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RECENT RECORDS OF LITTLE CORMORANT *MICROCARBO NIGER* IN SUMATRA, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

SETIAWAN, A., IQBAL, M., PORMANSYAH, YUSTIAN, I. & ZULKIFLI, H. 2020. Recent records of Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger* in Sumatra, Indonesia. *Marine Ornithology* 48: 161–162.

We summarize observations of the Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger* in Sumatra from 2016 to 2019. Based on these observations, we suggest that Little Cormorant has become widespread in Sumatra.

Keywords: status update, Little Cormorant, Sumatra

INTRODUCTION

Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger* is one of four cormorant species that occurs in the Indonesian archipelago (Greater Sundas and Wallacea; Eaton *et al.* 2016). This species is widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent, China, and Southeast Asia (Orta 1992, Johnsgard 1993); within the Indonesian archipelago,

it has been recorded in Sumatra, Java, and Borneo (Iqbal *et al.* 2013, Eaton *et al.* 2016). Three black-coloured cormorants (Little Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*, and Great Cormorant *P. carbo*) have been recorded within the Indonesian archipelago. A fourth species, Little Pied Cormorant *M. melanoleucos*, is not considered here due to its striking black-and-white plumage (see Harrison 1983, Johnsgard 1993, Sonobe & Usui 1993, Robson 2011, Eaton *et al.* 2016).

Little Cormorant was previously considered to be a non-breeding species in Sumatra (MacKinnon & Phillipps 1993, Eaton *et al.* 2016), but breeding has been observed recently (Iqbal *et al.* 2013). In addition to Iqbal's observations, we provide six more sighting records, which indicates the spread of the species in recent years (Fig. 1). First, on 28–29 November 2016, 10 birds were observed by the first (AS) and second authors (MI) in Sungai Batang village, Air Sugihan subdistrict, Ogan Komering Ilir district; at one point, eight birds roosted in a dead tree (Fig. 2A). Second, on 11 August 2018, three of us (AS, MI, P) saw a single bird roosting in a dead tree in Indrapura village, Muara Sugihan subdistrict, Banyuasin district (Fig. 2B). Third, on 02 September 2018, AS visited Jeruju River, Tulung Selapan subdistrict, Ogan Komering Ilir district, and encountered a Little Cormorant caught in the fishing gear of a local fisherman (Fig. 2C). Fourth, on 24–26 August 2018, a Little Cormorant was regularly observed by P and MI in Bungin River, Banyuasin Dua subdistrict, Musi Banyuasin district. Fifth, on 26 August 2018, a group of 10 Little Cormorants was observed by P in Barong River, Banyuasin Dua subdistrict, Musi Banyuasin district. Sixth, on 29 October 2019, up to 50 Little Cormorants were reported in Kuro Bangsal floodplain, Pampangan subdistrict. All six locations where we sighted Little Cormorants were on the east coast of South Sumatra province (Fig. 1). Our observations add to the seven sightings recorded in northern Sumatra between 2017 and 2020 and two in Lampung province (eBird 2020).

Due to the similarity of Little and Black cormorants by size and morphological characteristics, we were cautious in citing reports of

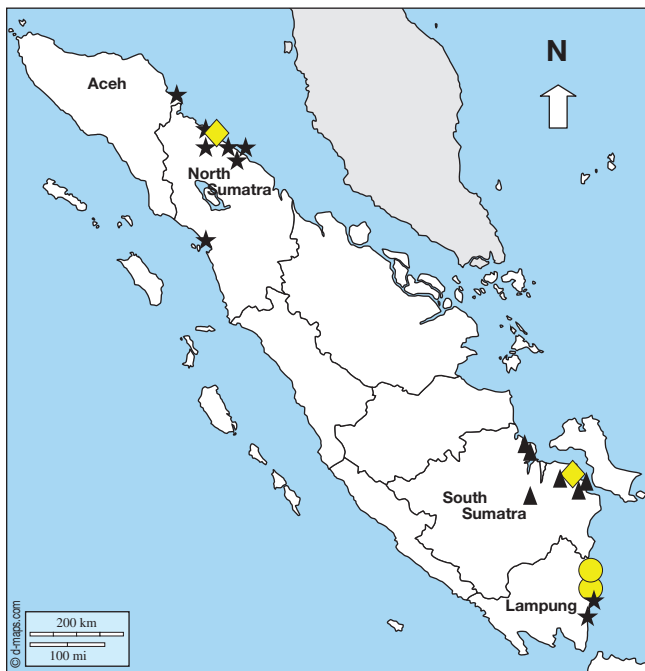


Fig. 1. Locations of Little Cormorant observations. Previous Sumatran records are in yellow, as summarized in Iqbal *et al.* (2013); circles are observation records, diamonds are breeding records. Recent records are in black (triangles are observations reported here, stars are from eBird (2020)).

Little Cormorant pending confirmations (van Marle & Voous 1988, Holmes 1996). Little Cormorant is a basically sedentary species but may move as a result of monsoon rainfall patterns and changing water levels (Johnsgard 1993). This species probably occupies freshwater lowlands, including ponds, rivers, lakes, swamps, and rice fields (Orta 1992). However, most confirmed records in Sumatra have been in estuarine habitats, except a very recent record from the Kuro Bangsal flood plain in October 2019.

Little Cormorant may have been overlooked in the past or it may have expanded its range to Sumatra, particularly from Java or maybe from the Thai-Malay Peninsula, where there are many observations and breeding records. Recent records from Java are listed in eBird (2020). In Malay Peninsula, Little Cormorant is a very rare non-breeding visitor to a few locations at low elevation, from Thailand south to Malaka. For instance, sightings were made in 2007 and 2009 at Sungai Cenang and Pantai Cenang, Pulau Langkawi, Kedah, and a single bird was seen at Bidor (Perak) on 25 January 2007 (Jeyarajasingam & Pearson 2012). However, a rise in Little Cormorant sightings between 2016 and 2020 suggests the possibility of a recent expansion south from Thailand to the Malay Peninsula (eBird 2020). The species has been observed breeding in Tanjung Tualang, Kinta district, Perak, in late 2016 and early 2017 (Yeap Chin Aik, Chan Kai Soon, and Sein Chiong Chiu pers. comm.).

A growing population of birdwatchers and researchers in Sumatra, as well as easier access to birdwatching equipment and field guides, has led to increased communication related to rare and vagrant birds in this region during the last decade (Iqbal *et al.* 2009, Iqbal *et al.* 2010, Imansyah & Iqbal 2015, Putra *et al.* 2018). Our report, at least in part, is a testament to this change. Additional sightings are needed to better

establish the status of this species and other waterbirds in Sumatra, to detect population trends and the condition of wetland habitats, and to establish conservation efforts for these species.

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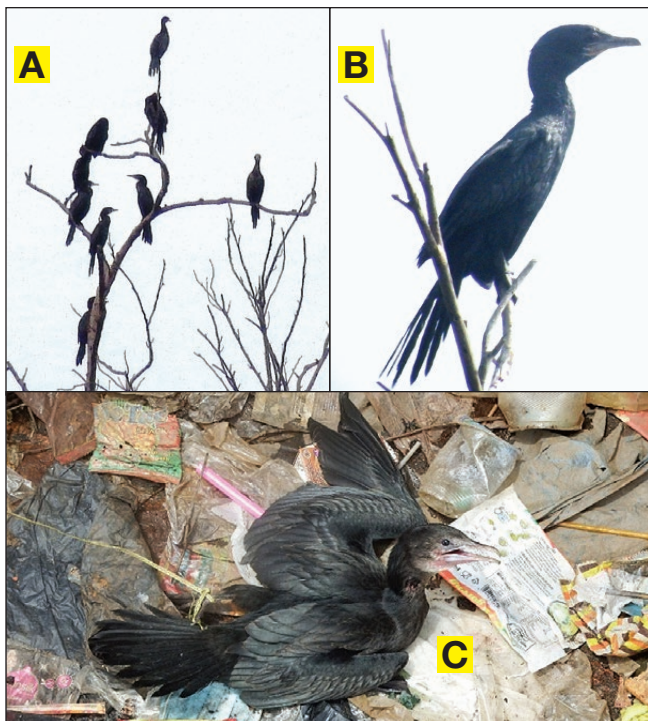


Fig. 2. Little Cormorants in South Sumatra, Indonesia. (A) 29 November 2016 in Batang village; (B) 11 August 2018 in Indrapura village; and (C) an individual caught on 02 September 2018 in Jeruju River. Photos by Muhammad Iqbal [A & B] and Arum Setiawan [C].



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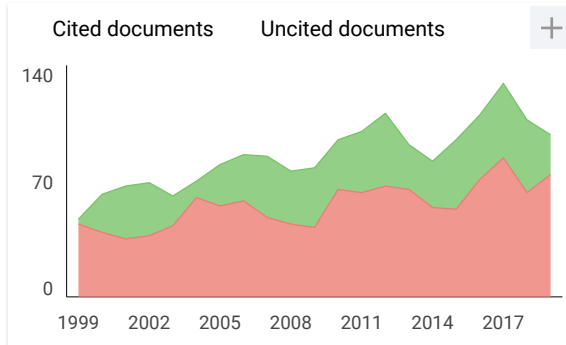
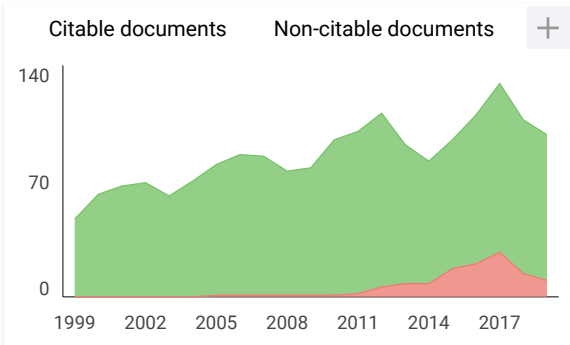
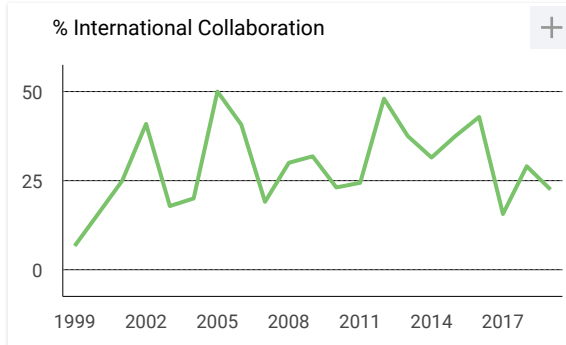
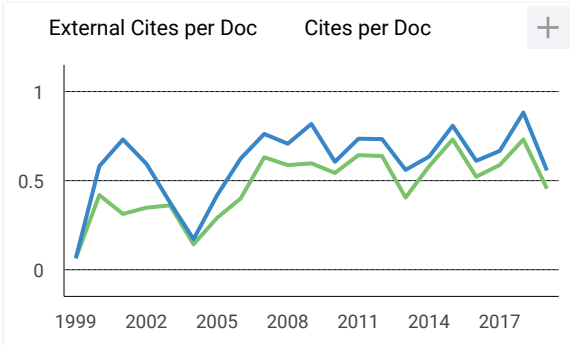
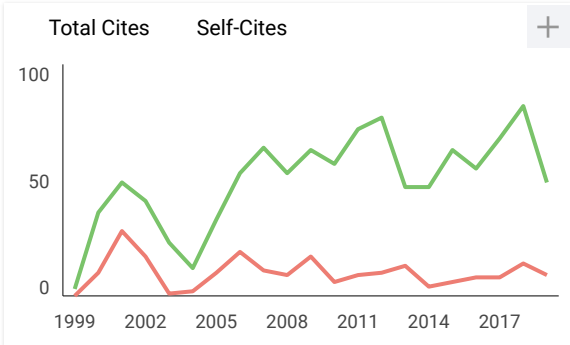
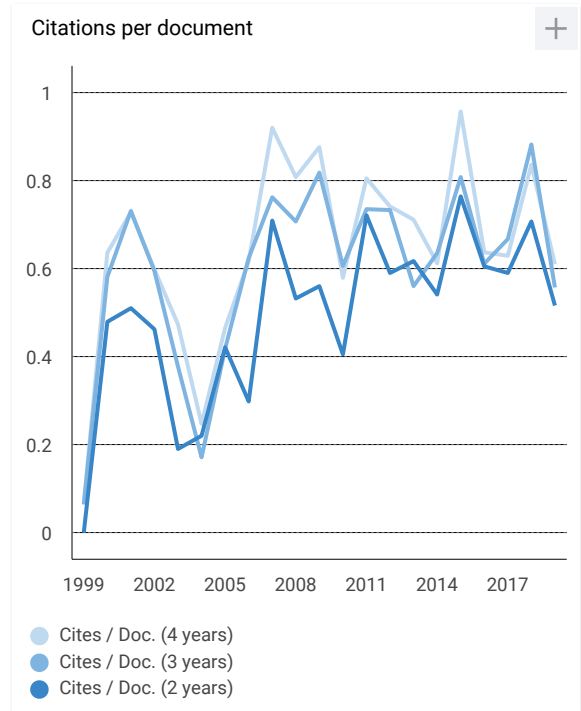
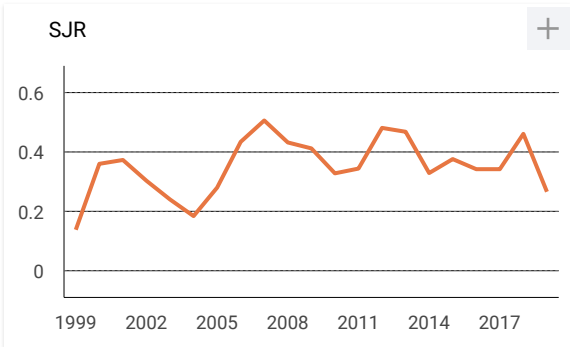
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¹ TAYLOR, B.N. & THOMPSON, A. (Eds.) 2008. *The International System of Units*. National Institute of Standards and Technology Special Publication 330. Gaithersburg, USA: National Institute of Standards and Technology, US Department of Commerce.

² BOND, A.L. & HOBSON, K.A. 2012. Reporting stable-isotope ratios in ecology: Recommended terminology, guidelines and best practices. *Waterbirds* 35: 324–331. doi:10.1675/063.035.0213

³ BOND, A.L. & HOBSON, K.A. 2012. Authors' Erratum. *Waterbirds* 35(3). doi:10.1675/063.035.0318

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RECENT RECORDS OF LITTLE CORMORANT MICROCARBO NIGER IN SUMATRA, INDONESIA

By Arum Setiawan

RECENT RECORDS OF LITTLE CORMORANT *MICROCARBO NIGER* IN SUMATRA, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

SETIAWAN, A., IQBAL, M., PORMANSYAH, YUSTIAN, I. & ZULKIFLI, H. 2020. Recent records of Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger* in Sumatra, Indonesia. *Marine Ornithology* 48: 161–162.

We summarize observations of the Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger* in Sumatra from 2016 to 2019. Based on these observations, we suggest that Little Cormorant has become widespread in Sumatra.

Keywords: status update, Little Cormorant, Sumatra

INTRODUCTION

Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger* is one of four cormorant species that occurs in the Indonesian archipelago (Greater Sundas and Wallacea; Eaton *et al.* 2016). This species is widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent, China, and Southeast Asia (Orta 1992, Johnsgard 1993); within the Indonesian archipelago,

it has been recorded in Sumatra, Java, and Borneo (Iqbal *et al.* 2013, Eaton *et al.* 2016). Three black-coloured cormorants (Little Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*, and Great Cormorant *P. carbo*) have been recorded within the Indonesian archipelago. A fourth species, Little Pied Cormorant *M. melanoleucos*, is not considered here due to its striking black-and-white plumage (see Harrison 1983, Johnsgard 1993, Sonobe & Usui 1993, Robson 2011, Eaton *et al.* 2016).

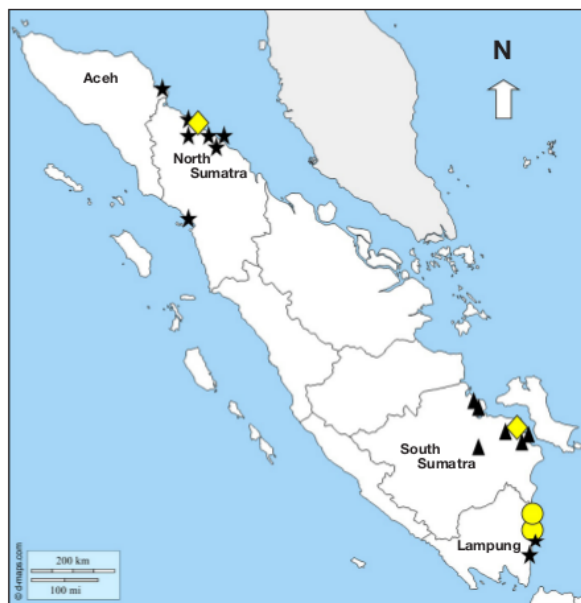


Fig. 1. Locations of Little Cormorant observations. Previous Sumatran records are in yellow, as summarized in Iqbal *et al.* (2013); circles are observation records, diamonds are breeding records. Recent records are in black (triangles are observations reported here, stars are from eBird (2020)).

Little Cormorant was previously considered to be a non-breeding species in Sumatra (MacKinnon & Phillipps 1993, Eaton *et al.* 2016), but breeding has been observed recently (Iqbal *et al.* 2013). In addition to Iqbal's observations, we provide six more sighting records, which indicates the spread of the species in recent years (Fig. 1). First, on 28–29 November 2016, 10 birds were observed by the first (AS) and second authors (MI) in Sungai Batang village, Air Sugihan subdistrict, Ogan Komering Ilir district; at one point, eight birds roosted in a dead tree (Fig. 2A). Second, on 11 August 2018, three of us (AS, MI, P) saw a single bird roosting in a dead tree in Indrapura village, Muara Sugihan subdistrict, Banyuasin district (Fig. 2B). Third, on 02 September 2018, AS visited Jeruju River, Tulung Selapan subdistrict, Ogan Komering Ilir district, and encountered a Little Cormorant caught in the fishing gear of a local fisherman (Fig. 2C). Fourth, on 24–26 August 2018, a Little Cormorant was regularly observed by P and MI in Bungin River, Banyuasin Dua subdistrict, Musi Banyuasin district. Fifth, on 26 August 2018, a group of 10 Little Cormorants was observed by P in Barong River, Banyuasin Dua subdistrict, Musi Banyuasin district. Sixth, on 29 October 2019, up to 50 Little Cormorants were reported in Kuro Bangsal floodplain, Pampangan subdistrict. All six locations where we sighted Little Cormorants were on the east coast of South Sumatra province (Fig. 1). Our observations add to the seven sightings recorded in northern Sumatra between 2017 and 2020 and two in Lampung province (eBird 2020).

Due to the similarity of Little and Black cormorants by size and morphological characteristics, we were cautious in citing reports of

Little Cormorant pending confirmations (van Marle & Voous 1988, Holmes 1996). Little Cormorant is a basically sedentary species but may move as a result of monsoon rainfall patterns and changing water levels (Johnsgard 1993). This species probably occupies freshwater lowlands, including ponds, rivers, lakes, swamps, and rice fields (Orta 1992). However, most confirmed records in Sumatra have been in estuarine habitats, except a very recent record from the Kuro Bangsal flood plain in October 2019.

Little Cormorant may have been overlooked in the past or it may have expanded its range to Sumatra, particularly from Java or maybe from the Thai-Malay Peninsula, where there are many observations and breeding records. Recent records from Java are listed in eBird (2020). In Malay Peninsula, Little Cormorant is a very rare non-breeding visitor to a few locations at low elevation, from Thailand south to Malaka. For instance, sightings were made in 2007 and 2009 at Sungai Cenang and Pantai Cenang, Pulau Langkawi, Kedah, and a single bird was seen at Bidor (Perak) on 25 January 2007 (Jeyarajasingam & Pearson 2012). However, a rise in Little Cormorant sightings between 2016 and 2020 suggests the possibility of a recent expansion south from Thailand to the Malay Peninsula (eBird 2020). The species has been observed breeding in Tanjung Tualang, Kinta district, Perak, in late 2016 and early 2017 (Yeap Chin Aik, Chan Kai Soon, and Sein Chiong Chiu pers. comm.).

A growing population of birdwatchers and researchers in Sumatra, as well as easier access to birdwatching equipment and field guides, has led to increased communication related to rare and vagrant birds in this region during the last decade (Iqbal *et al.* 2009, Iqbal *et al.* 2010, Imansyah & Iqbal 2015, Putra *et al.* 2018). Our report, at least in part, is a testament to this change. Additional sightings are needed to better

establish the status of this species and other waterbirds in Sumatra, to detect population trends and the condition of wetland habitats, and to establish conservation efforts for these species.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are very grateful to the editors of *Marine Ornithology* and an anonymous reviewer for comments on an earlier draft. The first author (AS) thanks Sriwijaya University for granting Hibah Kompetisi (competitive grant) to explore wildlife in the Sugihan wetlands in 2018–2019. We thank our friends from Malaysian Nature Society, especially Yeap Chin Aik, Chan Kai Soon, and Sein Chiong Chiu, for sharing their records of Little Cormorant in the Malay Peninsula.

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Fig. 2. Little Cormorants in South Sumatra, Indonesia. (A) 29 November 2016 in Batang village; (B) 11 August 2018 in Indrapura village; and (C) an individual caught on 02 September 2018 in Jeruju River. Photos by Muhammad Iqbal [A & B] and Arum Setiawan [C].

RECENT RECORDS OF LITTLE CORMORANT MICROCARBO NIGER IN SUMATRA, INDONESIA

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**FORMAT PENILAIAN (VALIDASI & PEER REVIEW)
LEMBAR
HASIL PENILAIAN SEJAWAT SEBIDANG ATAU *PEER REVIEW*
KARYA ILMIAH : JURNAL ILMIAH**

Jurnal Artikel Ilmiah : Recent Records of Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger* in Sumatra, Indonesia
 Penulis Artikel Ilmiah : Arum Setiawan
 Identitas Jurnal Artikel Ilmiah : a. Nama Jurnal : Marine Ornithology
 b. Nomor/Volume/Hal : 2/48/161-162
 c. Edisi (bulan/tahun) : Oktober/2020
 d. Penerbit : Pasific Seabird Group
 e. Jumlah Halaman : 2

Kategori Publikasi Jurnal Ilmiah : Jurnal Ilmiah Internasional Bereputasi
 (beri \surd pada kategori yang tepat) Jurnal Ilmiah Internasional
 Jurnal Ilmiah Nasional Terakreditasi S1, S2
 Jurnal Ilmiah Nasional Terakreditasi S3, S4
 Jurnal Ilmiah Nasional Tidak Terakreditasi

I. Hasil Penilaian Validasi :

No.	ASPEK	URAIAN/KOMENTAR PENILAIAN
1.	Indikasi Plagiasi	1 %
2.	Linearitas	Sudah linier dengan bidang biologi konservasi

II. Hasil Penilaian *Peer Review* :

Komponen Yang Dinilai	Nilai Maksimal Jurnal Ilmiah (isikan di kolom yang sesuai)					Nilai Akhir Yang Diperoleh
	Internasional Bereputasi (Maks 40)	Internasional (Maks 20)	Nasional Terakreditasi S1, S2 Maks 25	Nasional Terakreditasi S3, S4 Maks 20	Nasional tidak Terakreditasi (maks 10)	
Kelengkapan dan Kesesuaian unsur isi jurnal (10%)	4					3
Ruang lingkup dan kedalaman pembahasan (30%)	12					12
Kecukupan dan Kemutakhiran data/informasi dan metodologi (30%)	12					10
Kelengkapan unsur dan kualitas penerbit (30%)	12					12
Total = (100%)	40					37
Kontribusi Pengusul (Penulis Pertama/Anggota Utama)	Penulis Utama (0,6 x 37) = 22,2					22,2

KOMENTAR/ULASAN *PEER REVIEW*

• Kelengkapan dan Kesesuaian Unsur:	Paper terkait deskripsi burung <i>Microcarbo niger</i> di Sumatera. Isi paper sudah memenuhi kaidah-kaidah karya ilmiah tipe short communication, tidak menuliskan metode secara jelas dan sudah sesuai dengan bidang biologi konservasi.
• Ruang Lingkup dan Kedalaman Pembahasan:	Hasil penelitian dibahas secara komprehensif dengan penyampaian perbandingan dari temuan-temuan penelitian lainnya dan teori terkait. Referensi yang diacu dalam pembahasan sudah cukup update untuk bidang kajian ini.
• Kecukupan & Kemutakhiran Data & Metodologi:	Data-data hasil penelitian cukup baik dan didukung peta lokasi sampling dan gambar yang ditampilkan menarik. Data didapatkan dengan menggunakan metode yang standard tidak terlalu mutakhir.
• Kelengkapan Unsur & Kualitas Penerbit:	Penerbit Pasific Seabird Group berkualitas baik, tidak termasuk predatory publisher, dan jurnal masuk di Q3.

Surabaya, 15 Mei 2020
Penilai 1

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Hery Purnobasuki', written in a cursive style.

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