

# BirdingASIA

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## CONSERVATION ALERT

# Ongoing slaughter of Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus* in Sumatra: another species heading for oblivion?

MUHAMMAD IQBAL, INDRA YUSTIAN, ARUM SETIAWAN &amp; DONI SETIAWAN

Iqbal *et al.* (2014) reported the hunting of large numbers of Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus* by local villagers in South Sumatra province, Sumatra, Indonesia, in January 2013. It was estimated that about 50% of a large roosting flock estimated at about 1,000 birds was slaughtered by hunters with airguns in a single night. Subsequently, following up reports on Facebook, we investigated accounts of further hunting for food of Eyebrowed Thrushes during 2017 and 2018 by villagers in Riau province, Sumatra. Some postings on Facebook accounts explained that hunting of Eyebrowed Thrushes has been a local tradition for a long time; a testament to this is that an old trap of the type used to snare the species is displayed in a local museum in Riau province.

Our concern was aroused when a group of Indonesian birdwatchers discussed the significance of the hunting of Eyebrowed Thrushes on Facebook in late December 2018. Their discussion was a result of a posting by Husni Andreas Pertama, who lives in Bangkinang, Riau province. He posted an image of a large number of dead Eyebrowed Thrushes that he had shot using an airgun; we estimate that there are between 500 and 1,000 corpses in the image (Plate 1). Another image on Facebook showed that he also sold Eyebrowed Thrushes in the local market (Plate 2). The birds were identified as Eyebrowed Thrush by the following characters: medium size passerine, lower bill and legs yellow, prominent white eyebrow, plumage olive-brown above, orange breast and

**Plate 1.** A large number of Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus* slaughtered using an airgun, Bangkinang, Riau province, Sumatra, Indonesia, 25 December 2018.





**Plate 2.** Eyebrowed Thrush for sale in a traditional market, Bangkinang, 25 December 2018.

flanks. These features fit well with descriptions of Eyebrowed Thrush in Robson (2008), Eaton *et al.* (2016) and Collar (2019).

We investigated further postings on Facebook accounts during 2017 and 2018 which referred to Eyebrowed Thrush in Sumatra. Our findings are summarised here; the majority of these relate to Riau province, and we list these in date order:

#### **Facebook postings about Eyebrowed Thrush from Riau province**

- 1) Apri Sahwal posted that he had obtained a small number of dead Eyebrowed Thrushes as a result of his hunting expedition in Bangkinang, Kampar district, on 11 January 2012.
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sale in Rumbio, Kampar district (Plate 3), on 10 December 2018. He had birds for sale at least until 16 December, indicating that hunting was ongoing.

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**Plate 4.** At least 80 birds ready to cook at an unspecified location, Riau province, 21 December 2018.

**Plate 3.** Another seller who advertised Eyebrowed Thrush online with more than 100 birds for sale, Rumbio, Kampar district, 10 December 2018.





**Plate 5.** The hunters show birds captured in a mist-net, Siak, 25 December 2018.

- 31) Nopen Doank posted that hunters killed at least five (but probably more) Eyebrowed Thrushes in Bangkinang on 3 January 2019.
- 32) Yanie Ajja posted that a few dead birds were for sale in Inuman, Kuantan Singingi district, on 3 January 2019.

33) Rizal Rara (see also 12, above) made a series of postings advertising Eyebrowed Thrush for sale from 8 December 2018 to 7 January 2019 (Plate 6) in Bangkinang; one bird was offered for Rp 10,000 (US\$ 0.7). The numbers involved must have been large.

**Facebook posting from South Sumatra province**

Dovie Kardia Dila posted that he killed up to 80 birds when hunting in Prabumulih, South Sumatra province, on 27 December 2017.

**Facebook posting from North Sumatra province**

Siahaan Jin posted that Eyebrowed Thrushes were hunted around Sitapung (west of Lake Toba), Parlilitan, North Sumatra province, on 2 April 2018. He also recounted a legend known to local residents of this area which may explain its culinary popularity. This states that the Eyebrowed Thrush, which is regarded as a special delicacy, was sent by King Sibuyakbuyak, one of the sons of Lord King Hoda, to his sister Sionon Hudon—he had six younger sisters—and the birds were sent by Sionon Hudon to the other sisters as a token of her affection. Hundreds of thousands of *Pamal* (the local name for the Eyebrowed Thrush in Sitapung) fly in from the north to the Sitapung region in mid-

**Plate 6.** Images from a Facebook post advertising the availability of Eyebrowed Thrush for sale online between 8 December 2018 and 7 January 2019 in Bangkinang.



October each year, staying there until they return north in mid-April. The birds are of the same size and appearance and, because they do not lay eggs, it is impossible to say which are male and which female. They roost in the forest around Sitapung but fly off to feed in West Sumatra and the local population catch the birds by day.

MI has heard of a similar story told by local people in Riau province. They say that *Burung Kuaran* (the local name there for Eyebrowed Thrush) is a very special bird because male and female are indistinguishable, and no nest or egg has ever been found. The arrival of large numbers of this bird in their area is a delivery from their god as a gift for them to eat. Some hunters use special spells (magical incantations) to ask the god for help to hunt as many birds as possible.

### Discussion

The Eyebrowed Thrush is not one of the avian species on the updated Indonesian protected list issued on 1 August 2018 (Ministry of Forestry and Environment 2018). Indeed, the species is listed as Least Concern by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (BirdLife International 2016). Here, with the evidence of extensive hunting in Sumatra, we propose that this species should be urgently listed as a protected species in Indonesia. Until now there seemed to be no reason to regard the Eyebrowed Thrush as a threatened species, but increased annual harvesting levels of this magnitude, driven by social media, could quickly reduce regional populations to the point of local extinction. Protection of the species from massive hunting in Indonesia will help arrest a rapid decline of its populations at local and global scales. Airguns, both homemade and commercial, are readily available in Indonesia. Their use goes unremarked and is uncontrolled to the extent that

we believe that the scale of hunting and slaughter of Eyebrowed Thrush and other species using these weapons is largely unknown and goes uncounted.

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# Ongoing slaughter of Eyebrowed Thrush Turdus obscurus in Sumatra: another species heading for oblivion?

*By Arum Setiawan*

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**Plate 3.** Another seller who advertised Eyebrowed Thrush online with more than 100 birds for sale, Rumbio, Kampar district, 10 December 2018.







**Plate 5.** The hunters show birds captured in a mist-net, Siak, 25 December 2018.

- 31) Nopen Doank posted that hunters killed at least five (but probably more) Eyebrowed Thrushes in Bangkinang on 3 January 2019.
- 32) Yanie Ajja posted that a few dead birds were for sale in Inuman, Kuantan Singingi district, on 3 January 2019.

33) Rizal Rara (see also 12, above) made a series of postings advertising Eyebrowed Thrush for sale from 8 December 2018 to 7 January 2019 (Plate 6) in Bangkinang; one bird was offered for Rp 10,000 (US\$ 0.7). The numbers involved must have been large.

**Facebook posting from South Sumatra province**

Dovie Kardia Dila posted that he killed up to 80 birds when hunting in Prabumulih, South Sumatra province, on 27 December 2017.

**Facebook posting from North Sumatra province**

Siahaan Jin posted that Eyebrowed Thrushes were hunted around Sitapung (west of Lake Toba), Parlilitan, North Sumatra province, on 2 April 2018. He also recounted a legend known to local residents of this area which may explain its culinary popularity. This states that the Eyebrowed Thrush, which is regarded as a special delicacy, was sent by King Sibuyakbuyak, one of the sons of Lord King Hoda, to his sister Sionon Hudon—he had six younger sisters—and the birds were sent by Sionon Hudon to the other sisters as a token of her affection. Hundreds of thousands of *Pamal* (the local name for the Eyebrowed Thrush in Sitapung) fly in from the north to the Sitapung region in mid-

**Plate 6.** Images from a Facebook post advertising the availability of Eyebrowed Thrush for sale online between 8 December 2018 and 7 January 2019 in Bangkinang.





October each year, staying there until they return north in mid-April. The birds are of the same size and appearance and, because they do not lay eggs, it is impossible to say which are male and which female. They roost in the forest around Sitapung but fly off to feed in West Sumatra and the local population catch the birds by day.

MI has heard of a similar story told by local people in Riau province. They say that *Burung Kuaran* (the local name there for Eyebrowed Thrush) is a very special bird because male and female are indistinguishable, and no nest or egg has ever been found. The arrival of large numbers of this bird in their area is a delivery from their god as a gift for them to eat. Some hunters use special spells (magical incantations) to ask the god for help to hunt as many birds as possible.

### Discussion

The Eyebrowed Thrush is not one of the avian species on the updated Indonesian protected list issued on 1 August 2018 (Ministry of Forestry and Environment 2018). Indeed, the species is listed as Least Concern by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (BirdLife International 2016). Here, with the evidence of extensive hunting in Sumatra, we propose that this species should be urgently listed as a protected species in Indonesia. Until now there seemed to be no reason to regard the Eyebrowed Thrush as a threatened species, but increased annual harvesting levels of this magnitude, driven by social media, could quickly reduce regional populations to the point of local extinction. Protection of the species from massive hunting in Indonesia will help arrest a rapid decline of its populations at local and global scales. Airguns, both homemade and commercial, are readily available in Indonesia. Their use goes unremarked and is uncontrolled to the extent that

we believe that the scale of hunting and slaughter of Eyebrowed Thrush and other species using these weapons is largely unknown and goes uncounted.

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# Ongoing slaughter of Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus* in Sumatra: another species heading for oblivion?

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HASIL PENILAIAN SEJAWAT SEBIDANG ATAU *PEER REVIEW*  
KARYA ILMIAH : JURNAL ILMIAH**

Jurnal Artikel Ilmiah : Ongoing slaughter of Eye-browed Thrush *Turdus obscurus* in Sumatra: another species heading for oblivion?

Penulis Artikel Ilmiah : Arum Setiawan

Identitas Jurnal Artikel Ilmiah : a. Nama Jurnal : Birding Asia  
b. Nomor/Volume/Hal : 1/30/16-20  
c. Edisi (bulan/tahun) : Desember/2018  
d. Penerbit : Oriental Bird Club, UK  
e. Jumlah Halaman : 5

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)	
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Total = (100%)		20				18
Kontribusi Pengusul (Penulis Pertama /Anggota Utama)	Anggota Utama = $(0,4 \times 18)/3 = 2,4$					2,4

**KOMENTAR/ULASAN *PEER REVIEW***

• Kelengkapan dan Kesesuaian Unsur:	Paper terkait deskripsi catatan ringkas pembantaian <i>Turdus obscurus</i> . Isi paper sudah memenuhi kaidah-kaidah karya ilmiah dan, sudah menjelaskan metode yang digunakan, 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 Oriental Bird Club, UK berkualitas baik, tidak termasuk predatory publisher, dan jurnal tidak terindeks di scopus.



Surabaya, 15 Mei 2020  
Penilai 1



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Bidang Ilmu : Biologi  
Jabatan/Pangkat : Guru Besar/ Pembina Utama Madya

**FORMAT PENILAIAN (VALIDASI & PEER REVIEW)**

**LEMBAR**

**HASIL PENILAIAN SEJAWAT SEBIDANG ATAU PEER REVIEW**

**KARYA ILMIAH : JURNAL ILMIAH**

Jurnal Artikel Ilmiah : Ongoing slaughter of Eye-browed Thrush *Turdus obscurus* in Sumatra: another species heading for oblivion?

Penulis Artikel Ilmiah : Arum Setiawan

Identitas Jurnal Artikel Ilmiah : a. Nama Jurnal : Birding Asial  
 b. Nomor/Volume/Hal : 1/30/16-20  
 c. Edisi (bulan/tahun) : Desember/2018  
 d. Penerbit : Oriental Bird Club, UK  
 e. Jumlah Halaman : 5

Kategori Publikasi Jurnal Ilmiah (beri V pada kategori yang tepat) :  Jurnal Ilmiah Internasional Bereputasi  
 Jurnal Ilmiah Internasional  
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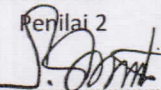
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1.	Indikasi Plagiasi	1 %
2.	Linearitas	V

**II. Hasil Penilaian Peer Review :**

Komponen Yang Dinilai	Nilai Maksimal Jurnal Ilmiah (isikan di kolom yang sesuai)					Nilai Akhir Yang Diperoleh
	Internasiona I Bereputasi (Maks 40)	Internasiona I (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%)		2				2
Ruang lingkup dan kedalaman pembahasan (30%)		6				6
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Kelengkapan unsur dan kualitas penerbit (30%)		6				6
Total = (100%)		20				20
Kontribusi Pengusul (Penulis Pertama /Anggota Utama)	Birding Asial Vol. 30(1): 16-20. Desember 2018 Penulis ke 3 dari 4 penulis. Nilai maksimal 100 %. Nilai pengusul: $(0,4 \times 1 \times 20/3) = 2,67$					2,6
<b>KOMENTAR/ULASAN PEER REVIEW</b>						
• Kelengkapan dan Kesesuaian Unsur:	Unsur lengkap dan sesuai.					
• Ruang Lingkup dan Kedalaman Pembahasan:	Ruang lingkup masih terkait bidang ilmu. Pembahasan singkat tetapi baik dan jelas.					
• Kecukupan & Kemutakhiran Data & Metodologi:	Data bisa diterima dan metode cukup baik.					
• Kelengkapan Unsur & Kualitas Penerbit:	Penerbit Oriental Bird Club, UK. Penerbit cukup berkualitas.					

Yogyakarta, 12 Juli 2020

Penilai 2

tanda tangan 

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