

Recent Records of Racket-tailed Treepie *Crypsirina temia* (Passeriformes: Corvidae) in Kalimantan, Indonesia

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Abstract

The existence of the Racket-tailed Treepie *Crypsirina temia* on the island of Kalimantan, Indonesia, remains unconfirmed, despite several records and two specimens collected in South Kalimantan since the 20th century. During our birdwatching activities in several areas since 2017, we have encountered this bird and documented our sightings on the Burungnesia platform. We also recorded the habitat conditions where the bird was found to assess its habitat suitability in Kalimantan. Between 2017 and the present, we recorded 10 encounters with this bird from four provinces in Kalimantan, Indonesia. Notably, one record is from research conducted on Laut Island, South Kalimantan. The habitat records from the locations where this bird was found provide valuable information on suitable habitats and can serve as a reference for further research on this species in Kalimantan.

Keywords: *Crypsirina temia*, distribution, habitat, Kalimantan, Racket-tailed Treepie.

Introduction

The Racket-tailed Treepie *Crypsirina temia* is a medium size bird with a very long tail that ends in a rounded shape (MacKinnon & Phillipps 1993). This species can be found in southern Myanmar to northern Malaya, Indo-china, Java and Bali extirpated in extreme northwest peninsular Malaysia (Taufiqurrahman *et al.* 2022). An old specimen from Sumatra and two from Borneo are today regarded as erroneous because of uncommon in most of its distribution range (Birdforum 2024).

The existence of *C. temia* in Kalimantan still needs further investigation and observation. Some existing records and evidence are still too weak to state that this bird is in Kalimantan. Daudin (1800) mentioned that the species had been sent to Temminck from Batavia, Java. The specimen described and figured by Levaillant (1800), to which the descriptions of *Corvus temia* and *Corvus varians* refer, was part of the Temminck collection and is no longer present at the Leiden Museum (Dekker 2006). Mees (1966) indicated that two specimens of *C. temia* in the Leiden Museum were probably collected in the south-eastern corner of Kalimantan after Mess (1971) recorded this species in that area a few years before 1966. Holmes (1986) emphasized that a careful search in the southeastern region for *C. temia* is necessary given the presence of other Javanese elements. More readily explained are the large number

of species of presumed Javanese origin that must have become isolated in the region after the final Pleistocene lowering of sea level over the Sundanese continental shelf. Further evidence for this species is now required.

Thus, our records on the existence of *C. temia* in Kalimantan, along with the analysis of suitable habitats, can help fill the knowledge gap and clarify the status of this bird in the region.

Methods

We have compiled sighting records of *C. temia* encounters in Kalimantan from 2017 to 2024 (Fig. 1). We have encountered this bird and documented some of our sightings on the Burungnesia platform as part of our digital records in the field. These records are based on observations at several locations in Kalimantan, Indonesia.

We discuss the status and distribution of this bird in Kalimantan, following Mees' (1977) observations around southern Kalimantan. In addition, we also conducted observations and discussions regarding habitats, such as perching trees, dominant vegetation types, and the types of habitats used by the birds, as described by Yanti (2023).

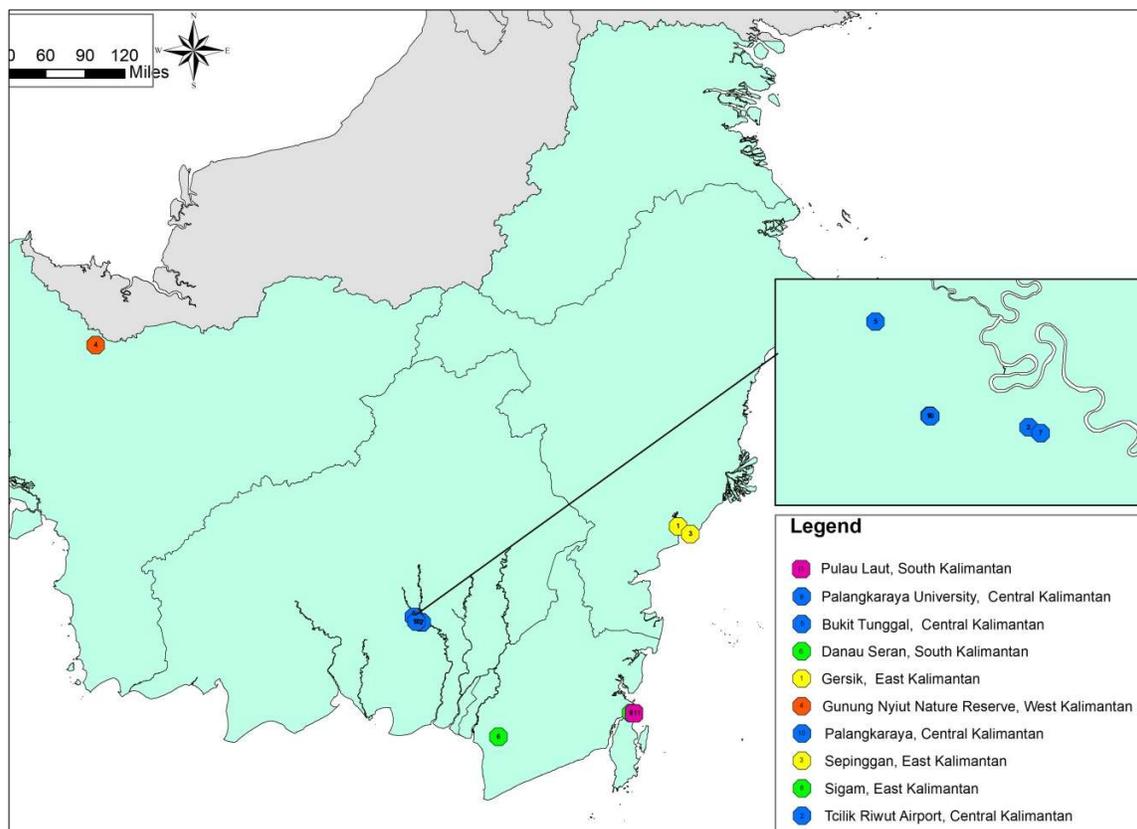


Figure 1. Map of Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) and location records of *Crypsirina temia*. The colors on the markers are based on the differences in location (red: West Kalimantan, blue: Central Kalimantan, green: South Kalimantan, yellow: East Kalimantan, and purple: a note from South Kalimantan).

Results and Discussion

There are 10 observations and one note regarding the presence of *C. temia* in Kalimantan, including a single observation from West Kalimantan, five observations from Central Kalimantan, two observations and one record from South Kalimantan, and two observations from East Kalimantan (Table 1).

Table 1. Documented observations of *Crypsirina temia* in Kalimantan, 2017-2024. Compilation of *Crypsirina temia* record on Kalimantan from 2017 to 2024. Note for observers: Teguh Willy Nugroho (TWN), Alexander Kurniawan Sariyanto Putera (AKSP), Muhammad Iqbal (MI), Happy Ferdiansyah (HF), Ari Noviyono (AN), Abdul Hakim Syah (AHS), Fikri El Zafran (FEZ), A.Hasyim (AH) & M. Rizkani (MR).

Date	Location	Habitat	Observers
30 Mar 2017	Gersik, Balikpapan, East Kalimantan	Mangrove	AKSP
11 Feb 2019	Tecilik Riwut, Central Kalimantan	Swamp	TWN
20 Des 2020	Sepinggan, East Kalimantan	Vegetable garden	MI
21 Aug 2022	Gunung Nyiut, West Kalimantan	Secondary forest	HF
13 Mar 2023	Bukit Tunggal, Central Kalimantan	Secondary forest	TWN
3 Sep 2023	Danau Seran, South Kalimantan	Small lake	AN
26 Okt 2023	Bukit Tunggal, Central Kalimantan	Secondary forest	TWN
25 Apr 2024	Sigam, South Kalimantan	Mangrove forest	AH & MR
14 Mei 2024	Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan	Secondary forest	AHS
26 Jun 2024	Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan	Secondary forest	FEZ

The presence of *C. temia* in Kalimantan is uncertain, but historical records suggest that two specimens were collected between 1850 and 1952 by J.H Croockewit, likely from either East or South Kalimantan (Mann 2008; Taufiqurrahman *et al.* 2022). The most recent record prior to our study was Mees' (1971) observation in a corner of South Kalimantan, sometime before 1966. A potential sighting was also reported during a survey of avifauna species dynamics in the area of PT Arutmin, North Pulau Laut Coal Terminal (Soendjoto *et al.* 2014), which could be the first recorded encounter of this species in Kalimantan after Mees' observation in 1966. Historical records of *C. temia* prior to 2017 are summarized in Table 2

Table 2. Historical records of *Crypsirina temia* in Kalimantan, Indonesia, pre-2017. Note: NA (Not Available).

Date	Location	Habitat	Sources
1850-1852	South Kalimantan	NA	Taufiqurrahman <i>et al.</i> (2022)
Before 1966	South Kalimantan	NA	Mees (1971)
2013	Pulau Laut Utara, South Kalimantan	Mangrove and secondary forest	Soendjoto, M.A., Riefani, M.K., Mahrudin, & Zen, Muhammad.

Most of our records come from around Palangkaraya, with a total of 10 individuals observed at four different locations. On August 21, 2022, in the afternoon, while observing in the secondary forest around the Gunung Nyiut Nature Reserve, Raut Muara Village, Sekayam, Sanggau, West Kalimantan, we observed two greenish-black birds with rounded tail tips flying among the trees, which we believe to be *C. temia*. The birds seemed alert, emitting alarm sounds along with Sooty-headed Bulbuls *Pycnonotus aurigaster* in response to an Asian Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhyncus*.

Crypsirina temia is a relatively active bird, but it can be quite striking. It's often overlooked because its call resembles that of the Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*, or it may be mistaken for the Square-tailed Drongo-cuckoo *Surniculus lugubris*, which shares similar habitats and body shape. This similarity likely contributes to it being overlooked. The growing interest in outdoor activities like birdwatching and wildlife photography, facilitated by advancing technology, has led to more *C. temia* records in Kalimantan, providing valuable contributions and important records (Iqbal & Albayquni 2016; Taufiqurrahman *et al.* 2019; Abdillah 2025), and has significantly increased knowledge of ornithology in Indonesia.

There are also documented young birds (Fig. 2), which proves that *C. temia* is breeding successfully in Kalimantan. We observed birds foraging for food in Api-api trees *Avicennia mariana* and Coconut trees *Cocos nucifera*. Two of the birds were juveniles still being cared for by their parents. We observed several instances of parent birds feeding their young with insects (a species of grasshopper).



Figure 2. Juvenile *Crypsirina temia*, Sigam, Pulau Laut Utara, Kotabaru, South Kalimantan, perching on Api-api tree *Avicennia mariana*, on 25 April 2024 (Photograph: Muhammad Rizkani).



Figure 3. Habitat conditions in Palangka Raya University, Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan, are dominated by *Acacia mangium* and have a dense fern understory (Photograph: Teguh Willy Nugroho).

One individual of *C. temia* was observed in the Lake Seran Ecotourism Area, Guntung Manggis, Landasan Ulin, Banjarbaru, during a birdwatching activity, where it was foraging in a Laban tree *Vitex pinnata*. Additionally, five birds (two of which were immature) were observed during birdwatching and wildlife photography around Ujung Stadium, Palangka Raya University, perching on *Acacia mangium* and Lamtoro trees *Leucaena leucocephala*.

Crypsirina temia in Kalimantan has a limited distribution, but it is relatively common in suitable

habitats. Based on observations, it predominantly inhabits secondary forests with dense vegetation, such as the area around Ujung Stadium in Palangkaraya, which is dominated by *A. mangium* (Fig. 3). They are often found near residential areas or public facilities with sparse vegetation. According to MacKinnon (1993), *C. temia* uses secondary forests and farming areas up to 1500 m. Further observations from 2017-2024 show that *C. temia* in Kalimantan has a diverse habitat distribution, including open areas like fields, bushes, mangrove forest edges, disturbed forests (e.g., ex-burning areas), and secondary forests near community settlements. This species is quite tolerant of secondary habitats and areas close to human settlements (Madge, 2020), often found near villages, garden edges, and mixed secondary forests, as observed in Lake Seran, Banjarbaru, South Kalimantan, which is dominated by a mixture of Laban *Vitex pinnata* and Gelam *Melaleuca leucadendron*, and mangrove edges, as observed in Sigam, Pulau Laut, South Kalimantan.

Our study sheds new light on the distribution and habitat preferences of the Racket-tailed Treepie in Kalimantan, Indonesia. The species' presence in diverse habitats, such as secondary forests, mangroves, and human-modified areas, indicates its ability to adapt to various environments. The observation of breeding pairs and juveniles confirms that the species is established in Kalimantan. These findings underscore the need for ongoing research and conservation initiatives to safeguard the species' habitats and populations. By contributing to the understanding of the Racket-tailed Treepie's ecology and conservation status, our study aims to inform future conservation efforts in the region.

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Recent Records of Racket-tailed Treepie

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