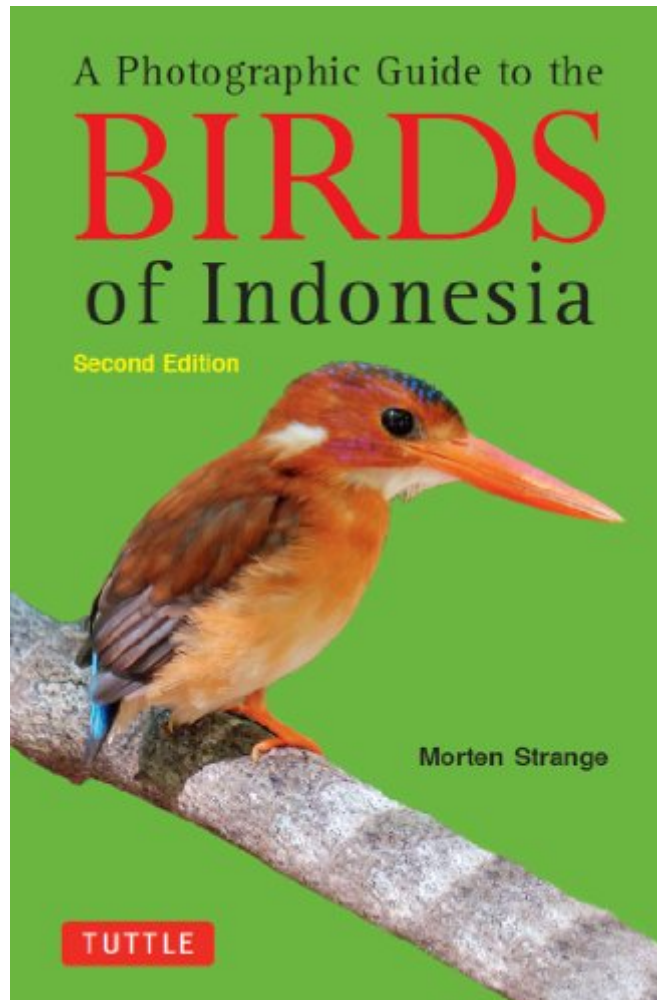




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Photographic Guide To The Birds Of Indonesia: Second Edition



Synopsis

A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Indonesia is the best, most comprehensive photographic guide to the birds of Indonesia. Because of its vast size and geographical location, Indonesia has the world's most diverse avifauna. It boasts of more than 1,600 species—of which 235 rare birds are only found in Indonesia—making it the world's number one travel destination for bird-watching. This bird field guide covers a total of 912 species, including most of the non-migratory and endemic species that are seen only in Indonesia and a number of threatened and endangered species. A photograph and distribution map is given for each bird. Many new photographs of Indonesian birds appear in this volume for the first time and have been carefully selected to show the important characteristics of each bird. The concise text provides vital information, and an index of common names is provided at the back of the book.

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Customer Reviews

Well, paraphrasing Ronald Reagan, here I go again. Take heart fans of Field Guide to the Birds of Colombia, your book is not the only one for which I've written a less than glowing review. Let me say

that this review is from the perspective of a somewhat serious birder. For the positive points, the text is generally quite good especially in highlighting habits of each species covered and the range maps are readable (but, as pointed out by another reviewer, strangely cut off at political borders especially in the cases of New Guinea and Borneo) and where the range is a small island it is noted below the map. The complete checklist at the end of the book is a nice feature which lists all species within the book's coverage and where the species may be encountered along with their endemic and threatened status. Unfortunately the negatives are glaring. Coverage of species and endemic species in particular share top billing. For example, my immediate concern is for Java where for around 58 total endemics listed by the book 21 are not depicted. Glancing at the list of species to be seen in New Guinea it appears that coverage is even worse, e.g. of the 38 species listed on page 525 for Papua, only 15 are depicted and on the next page none of the 6 pitohuis is depicted. For those contemplating using this as a field guide for New Guinea--fuggedaboutit!! As opposed to another reviewer's opinion that coverage of all the island endemics is excellent, my opinion is that it is quite poor. For example, looking at the first page of the Complete Checklist (pg. 501) of the 14 endemics listed 10 are NOT depicted. If one were to use this book alone, the observer using it might have no idea that there may be other species roughly resembling whatever might be shown in the photo and there would be no mention of it in the main text. This is particularly disturbing in that it's not necessarily vagrants or rarities that are omitted. The photos of the species shown vary in quality from excellent to well below any standard that might be expected for field guide purposes. What is wrong with the photos? Many are very grainy, are in deep shadow, are back lit, and in many cases fail to show the field marks necessary in the identification of the species. Sadly there are much better photos of some the species depicted and photos of those not depicted available. Perhaps if one is a very casual birder who wants a vague idea of what species is being observed then this book may be of value. As a serious birder one is stuck with getting the guides to the individual areas, a couple of which are extremely expensive and difficult to come by now (Birds of Wallacea, Birds of New Guinea). I will NOT be taking this book with me on my next trip to Indonesia.

Let me begin by saying that I am not a fan of photographic field guides, as opposed to those with hand painted plates. It is simply not possible to select a photograph of every bird that shows the important field marks. That said, I find this an excellent field guide overall. The photographs are, with very few exceptions, excellent, and in some cases outstanding. One of the problems with this kind of guide is finding a suitable photograph for each bird, and the author has done a good job of assembling this collection. I did note that the photo of Nicobar Pigeon, a bird that every Asian birder

wants but few have ticked, is represented by a captive photo. Also, the pelagic species seem under-represented to me. If you are flying to Sulawesi, this probably doesn't matter, but if you plan to cruise the islands, as I was, then you have to consider whether to pack an additional guide for sea birds. When it comes to guides for Indonesia, your selection is limited. Besides this book there is the venerable *Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia*, a superb guide, but one that will inevitably include many species not found in Indonesia and not deal with the numerous island endemics in the region. There are also several guides to Borneo, Bali, etc. There is also a guide to Wallacea, *A Guide to the Birds of Wallacea: Sulawesi, the Moluccas and Lesser Sunda Islands, Indonesia*, which would have been perfect for me except for two things: Its taxonomy is a bit out of date (1993) and it is way out of my price range. This is the only book I am familiar with that covers all of Indonesia specifically, and it has excellent coverage of all the island endemics, carefully listing the islands on which they can be found. I found myself wishing for a way to find the birds on a specific island, say Waigeo, but could not find a relevant index entry. One complaint: the range maps included cover the range only within Indonesia, rather than the full range. I found this annoying. If you are planning a birding trip to Indonesia, particularly an island cruise, I recommend this as the book to take along. If you are going to Borneo, consider *Birds of Borneo: Brunei, Sabah, Sarawak, and Kalimantan* (Princeton Field Guides), and for Bali, you might prefer *Birds of Bali*, even though it was published in 1993.

This review covers the kindle edition. Serious birders will find this guide disappointing. Here are the problems: 1. Not comprehensive, not even close. So you will never be certain whether or not there might be another species that you are overlooking. 2. The photos are spotty. The norm is low-resolution, bad angle photos of immature birds, or subspecies restricted to a single island... Without multiple clear photos of each species including different angles and different sexes identification is unreliable. 3. Range maps are low resolution, so distribution of small island species cannot be determined. 4. Descriptions are terse to the point of being useless. 5. There are glaring mistakes - check the photo of golden-rumped flowerpecker for instance. The book has minor utility as a supplementary reference, and I applaud publication as an e-book. I also applaud the author for taking-on the very complex avifauna of Indonesia. But this is a careless and superficial work with a pretty cover designed to make money off the tourist trade.

I confess I was a bit unwilling to purchase this book because it is a photo guide. Upon receiving it I did find (to my relief), that most of the photos are pretty good. Unfortunately, there are many birds

found in Indonesia that are NOT depicted in this guide. That was a big disappointment and the reason I give it only three stars.

I got this for my first trip to Bali and Java, and had no familiarity with birds in the area. Because there is only one picture of each bird, it is sometimes hard to use in the field. Also if you are traveling there, try to get a guide that is specific to the islands you will be visiting. There is a lot to thumb through that may be useless to where you are.

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