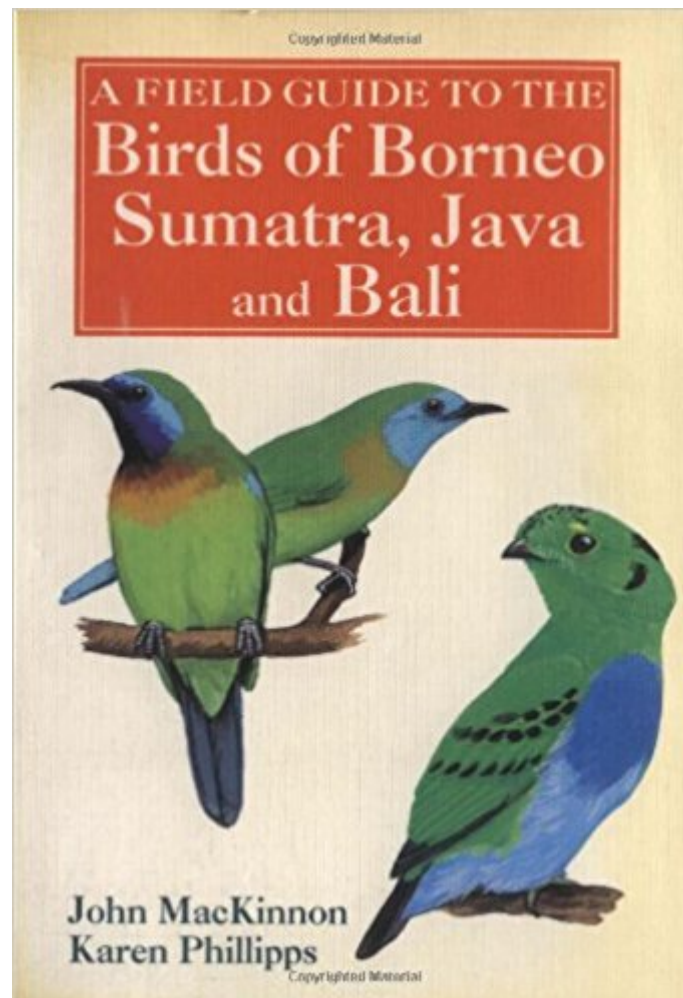




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# A Field Guide To The Birds Of Borneo, Sumatra, Java, And Bali: The Greater Sunda Islands



## Synopsis

The islands of Borneo, Sumatra, Java, and Bali are ecologically one of the richest, most biologically complex areas in the world, sought out by thousands of knowledgeable nature lovers every year for the spectacular variety of wildlife and beautiful vistas. This book provides the first complete identification guides to the birds of this teeming tropical paradise. It gives descriptions of 820 regional species, illustrated in 88 specially commissioned color plates accompanied by notes detailing distinctive features and habitats. Entries cover nomenclature, plumage, markings, voice, global range, distribution and regional status, habits, and diet. The main text gives practical information on where to find many exotic species, citing major birdwatching locations. Introductory chapters discuss habitats, climate, land-use, and conservation concerns. Professional ornithologists and amateur bird watchers alike will find this the indispensable bird guide for eastern Malaysia and western Indonesia for many years to come. It is also an unrivalled source of information for casual travellers and ecotourists.

## Book Information

Paperback: 692 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press (August 26, 1993)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0198540345

ISBN-13: 978-0198540342

Product Dimensions: 7.9 x 1.2 x 5.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #871,634 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 in [Books > Travel > Asia > Indonesia > Sumatra](#) #4 in [Books > Travel > Asia > Indonesia > Java](#) #6 in [Books > Travel > Asia > Indonesia > Borneo](#)

## Customer Reviews

"The 800+ illustrations by Karen Phillipps, presented in 99 color plates, are nicely done and an essential compliment to the text. . . . a major contribution to bird study . . . and an essential reference for ornithologists and birders visiting or residing in those islands. Most highly recommended." --Wildlife Activist

"The most complete and comprehensive field guide for the region of the Greater Sunda islands is more than just a field guide. The heart of the book is a section of 88 very good color plates. No doubt, this top field guide will be wanted by any birder going to the

Greater Sunda islands, as well as by many ornithologists as a general reference. I encourage everyone to have a copy." --Josef Kren, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, in Zpravy Mos"Will make birding the region a pleasure. The authors have made the extra effort to produce a guide book that has virtually every type of information that a visiting birder might desire. Each species account is compact but informative. The various regional maps are excellent. . . . the only field guide available for the region. This book, I believe, will supersede all that is in print, and will be a must for birders and naturalists visiting one or more of the islands." --Audubon Naturalist News"This landmark book deserves a place in the libraries of both birders and ornithologists. ...It adequately fills a previously unoccupied niche in avian literature. Even those who have no plans to visit the Greater Sundas will profit from perusing its pages for what they reveal about avian biogeography." -- The Auk"No doubt, this top field guide will be wanted by any birder going to the Greater Sunda islands as well as by many ornithologists as a general reference. I encourage everyone to have a copy."--Josef Kren

John MacKinnon, Director, Asian Bureau for Conservation.

Apparently the best comprehensive field guide available for the area, but unwieldy in its layout. The science of making guides that are actually effective and handy in the field has progressed considerably since this one was published 20+ years ago. Separate plates and main text, and absence of distribution maps, are my main complaints. Several drawings could also be better. But it is a lot better than having none!

Still the best book for all serious birdwatchers of the region

The book, which I intend to use when visiting Bali, arrived in excellent condition and without damage or marks of any kind. As field guides go, it seems "okay" - the illustrations are paintings (which I prefer over photos) and appear to be expertly done. Considering that the area covered is all of Indonesia - I can't complain that only a relatively small proportion of the book will apply to Bali. The illustrations, however, are separate from the detailed text on each species, which is a feature of some field guides but which is not favored by me for use in the field. The promotional material on the website does not allow the buyer to know whether or not this is the case. I believe this is an important incompleteness in the way presents their field guides. In this instance, I ordered two different field guides at the same time from the same seller. The seller - DailyDeal USA - represented both as being "in stock" and to be "shipped from WA." I was not informed, until after the

order was placed, that one of the books would require around two to three weeks for delivery which did not seem as though it was "in stock" and being "shipped from Washington". I received no response to my first inquiry as to where the books were being shipped from. A second inquiry - made about a week later - told me that the books were being shipped from warehouses in Canada and England. The book "from Canada" arrived in three days, the Bali book "from England" came about two weeks later. Fortunately, both arrived before my planned departure but the second one might not have. I feel that the seller's representations were misleading.

Best book on birds of Indonesia I could find.

This was the book that everyone who seemed to be serious used in Borneo, but if you are going to be out in the bush for more than a few days and make frequent use of field guides, consider having it re-bound before you leave -- many people I passed along the way were finding that the plate pages were starting to fall out.

Basics: 1993, 491 pages, softcover; 88 good color plates of all 820 species in the region, multiple poses for most birds, short line of ID text next to the plate; 1/3 of text for each bird covers description, voice, distribution, habits; 20 birding sites discussed, no range maps There are 88 color plates that show most of the birds with multiple poses or plumages, which display gender, age, or seasonal variations when relevant. The shorebirds, gulls/jaegers, and raptors have the greatest number of illustrations, focusing on non-breeding versus breeding, juvenile versus adult, or subspecies. Most of the plates are done with good artistry that will be very helpful with identification. The jungle-flycatchers, wren-babblers, and some of the warblers will still pose an ID challenge with these plates due to the fewer illustrations. Interestingly - but accurate - the "Red-throated" (now split and named "Taiga") Flycatcher is illustrated with only the gray plumage of the female/immature male. Supposedly, the adult male does not occur here. It should be noted a large percentage of these plates and illustrations are re-used in a later book published in 2010 by the same illustrator, Karen Phillipps, titled "Phillipps' Field Guide to the Birds of Borneo". Across from each plate is the bird's name and the briefest amount of identification material. These may be as general as "streaked orange and black upperparts" or "red eyes, rufous wings and tail". The last 2/3 of the book holds the bulk of the text. It is here that a longer description of the bird is provided with 4-7 lines of more extensive detail. This does a good job of describing the bird and helping to differentiate it from a similar species. The remainder of the paragraph provides a good description of the voice along

with a quick overview of the bird's complete range as well as the distribution within the four islands. I like the last 2-4 lines dedicated to "Habits". These habitat and behavioral notes provide additional nuances to the bird that may aid with identification - or at least with narrowing down the possibilities. The book concludes with seven appendices consisting of a variety of lists. They list the endemic birds by nature reserve and by island; the mountain species; or birds found on offshore island groups. A unique addition is Appendix 6 which shows vocal diagrams for 133 species. These are labeled as "sonosketches" which are basically hand drawn diagrams of the bird's vocal pattern, very reminiscent of an electronic sonogram. A section is also provided that gives an overview of 20 birding locations in the region. A paragraph for each describes the eco-region, its relative location, and a short list of target birds to be found. Actual directions to reach the place are not given. Although there are now (as of 2010) two books dedicated to just Borneo, this book is still the only one to illustrate all the birds of Sumatra, Java, and Bali which makes this book a "must" for any serious birding done on these islands. I should point out MacKinnon's book "Birds of Java and Bali of 1988" does illustrate all the birds of just those two islands. However, the artwork in that 1988 book is definitely inferior. Note: Since the publication of this book (1993), there has been taxonomic change with the birds. As an example, instead of the 37 birds defined as endemic to Borneo, as of 2010 about 50 or 51 species considered endemic. These updates are shown in the Borneo guides by Myers and by Phillipps. - (written by Jack at Avian Review / Avian Books, January 2010) I've listed several related books below...

- 1) *Field Guide to Birds of Borneo* by Myers
- 2) *Phillipps' Field Guide to the Birds of Borneo* by Phillipps
- 3) *Field Guide to the Birds of Java and Bali* by MacKinnon
- 4) *The birds of Borneo* by Smythies
- 5) *Photographic Guide to the Birds of Borneo* by Davison/Fook
- 6) *A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Mount Kinabalu, Borneo* by Nakayasu
- 7) *Birds of Mount Kinabalu, Borneo* by Davison et al.
- 8) *A Photographic Guide to the Birds of Southeast Asia* by Strange
- 9) *Photographic Guide to Birds of Java, Sumatra and Bali* by Tilford

Any serious birder to the listed regions of this book would buy this book. It is the best guide of the region so far with excellent plates and useful details. What I find especially useful, particularly for the raptors, is that they show illustrations of the birds in flight. The drawings appear consistent and the bird's information at the back of the book is easy to access. The birds are categorised according to their family which definitely makes for faster checks and identification, which I find important when in the field. The spine of the book though is a little weak and you might want to have it rebound before it falls apart - especially with all the browsing that is to be.

Many newer guides have been published about birds of this region, but this book still deserves its place on the bookshelf of anyone interested in birds of South-east Asia. Illustrations are good, and descriptions are detailed and mostly accurate. A bit bulky to carry in the field, but not a problem if you bring it in a backpack. The situation with forest fires in South-east Asia (especially Indonesia) is growing worse each year, so get out there and see some of these extraordinary birds while you still can!

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