

In search of the Javan Blue-banded Kingfisher *Alcedo euryzona* and conservation of forest rivers as its habitat in Petungkriyono and Lebakbarang Districts, Pekalongan Regency, Central Java, Indonesia [P1447]

This project was co-funded with ASAP and supported by OBC's Bertram Smythies Fund.



Javan Blue-banded Kingfisher was only discovered in Petungkriyono district in 2018 on a single river in the Sengkarang watershed. This lies within a mountainous area with sizeable lowland forest remaining and there was an urgent need for further surveys to locate the species in other potentially suitable habitat further upstream.

Between November 2021 and November 2022, field surveys for Javan Blue-banded Kingfisher were conducted along five main rivers of the Sengkarang watershed of Pekalongan Regency, Central Java. The surveys covered 34.2 km of transects consisting of 10 km along the Welo river, 6 km along the Pakuluran river, 6.6 km along the Blimbing river, 5.6 km along the Sengkarang river (including Kumenyep river) and 6 km along the Wisnu river. Most of the surveys were conducted on foot, with 3.2 km conducted by boat.

Javan Blue-banded Kingfisher was found on two rivers: Welo and Wisnu. On the Welo, the species was encountered

11 times at eight locations: at least three individuals (one pair and a single male) were recorded along 7 km of the river. On the Wisnu, which is a new location for the species, Javan Blue-banded Kingfisher was encountered six times along approximately 2 km of river. One female and one male were observed, indicating a pair. The survey also recorded another 131 bird species, of which 16 are listed as globally threatened, further reinforcing the value of this area for biodiversity conservation.

Sixty-one people participated in the surveys, including 53 villagers from seven villages along the rivers, five volunteers and three staff of SwaraOwa. Three tourism-based organisations participated in the project, Welo Asri, Black Canyon and Lolong Adventure, with a view to promoting the area for birdwatching tourism. Given that the Javan Blue-banded Kingfisher's habitat crosses many different villages and districts, it is important to establish good collaboration with a diversity of stakeholders to protect this area.

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Engaging local conservation groups in the conservation of Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Calidris pygmaea* on the western side of the Gulf of Mottama (Bago Region) [P1441]

This project was funded by OBC's Migratory Shorebirds Fund. The Gulf of Mottama is the largest coastal wetland in Myanmar and one of the most important sites for shorebirds in South-East Asia, hosting up to 150,000 migratory waterbirds, including about 30% of the global population of the Critically Endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper during the non-breeding season. Since 2008, the Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association (BANCA) has been working in the gulf to address threats from shorebird hunting, which have been significantly reduced. From 2013, Local Conservation Groups were set up on a village-by-village basis to engage communities in shorebird conservation activities, mainly in Mon State on the eastern side of the gulf. In 2017, this area was designated a Ramsar Site, which was extended westwards in 2020 into Bago Region. Through funding from OBC, BANCA extended its work into Bago Region and the western side of the Gulf of Mottama. In November 2022, they established six more Local Conservation Groups comprising 47 members in total, including some village heads, in Thanapin and Kawa Townships. These groups were trained to conduct patrols and interviews using questionnaires on bird hunting. There was no record of hunting on mudflats, but five bird hunters were interviewed and were found to mainly target pigeons and waterbirds around paddyfields. For some individuals, bird hunting was evidently a significant source of income. Market surveys by the Local Conservation Group members did not record shorebirds being sold. BANCA also erected eight signboards describing the Ramsar Site and its importance for shorebird conservation in the villages neighbouring the coastal mudflats. The project is at an early stage, working on the western side of the Gulf of Mottama and, while data so far are limited, it does seem to show low direct threats to shorebirds from hunting. However, some bird hunting does



Plate 4. Male Javan Blue-banded Kingfisher *Alcedo euryzona*, Sengkarang watershed, Central Java, Indonesia, December 2018.

Plate 5. Female Javan Blue-banded Kingfisher, Sengkarang watershed, Central Java, Indonesia, April 2022.

