

with egrets *Egretta* spp. At night the spoonbills roosted on a large boulder near the shore. We visited this site in January 2002 after the birds had left, but confirmed their identity from video footage and photographs. Although the species was first noted in October 2001, it may be a regular visitor because the local people did not distinguish spoonbills from egrets until the distribution of posters.

BATANES

Batanes is the northernmost and smallest province of the Philippine archipelago, approximately 850 km north of Manila and about 200 km south of Taiwan, and bounded by the South China Sea in the west and by the Pacific Ocean in the east. It is made up of three major islands, Batan, Sabtang and Itbayat, and several islets. The Batanes Protected Landscape and Seascape covers the whole province, with a total area of 213,578 ha, constituting 20,323 ha of land and 193,255 ha of marine areas.

Batanes is an Important Bird Area (Mallari *et al.* 2001) supporting several threatened and restricted-range species such as Chinese Egret *Egretta eulophotes*, Elegant Scops Owl *Otus elegans calayensis*, Whistling Green Pigeon *Treron formosae filipina*, Short-crested Monarch *Hypothymis helenae*, and Japanese Yellow Bunting *Emberiza sulphurata*. Other important biodiversity found in Batanes includes: the newly described Jareck's flying lizard *Draco jareckii* and Batan smooth-scaled gecko *Lepidodactylus balioburius*; Batan narrow-disked gecko *Gekko porosus*; threatened marine turtles such as green turtle *Chelonia mydas*, hawksbill turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata*, olive ridley turtle *Lepidochelys olivacea*; the endangered Ryukyu flying fox *Pteropus dasymallu*; Indochinese shrew *Crocidura attenuata* (the only site for this species in the Philippines), and the coconut crab *Birgus latro* (Mallari 2001).

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A first nest record for the Fruithunter *Chlamydochaera jefferyi*

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The Fruithunter *Chlamydochaera jefferyi* is endemic to Borneo where it is a decidedly local montane species (700–3,200 m), occurring in Sabah and Sarawak (Malaysia) along the highland chain from Gunung Kinabalu to Gunung Mulu, and also Gunung Dulit (Smythies and Davison 1999). In Kalimantan (Indonesia) it has been recorded west to Gunung Nyiat (Prieme and Heegaard 1988) and south to Bukit Baka Nature Reserve (Rice 1989). It is an aberrant, strikingly marked, thrush-like bird occupying a monotypic genus

that was once linked with trillers *Lalage* or orioles *Oriolus* (MacKinnon and Phillipps 1993), but is now thought to be associated with thrushes *Turdinae* (Ames 1975, Ahlquist *et al.* 1984), or cochoas *Cochoa* (Olson 1987). Very little is known about its behaviour and its nest has never previously been described.

Sheldon *et al.* (2001) mention two specimens in or near reproductive condition on 21 and 28 March 1983. On Gunung Nyiat a pair was feeding full-grown young between 28 August and 6 September (Prieme and

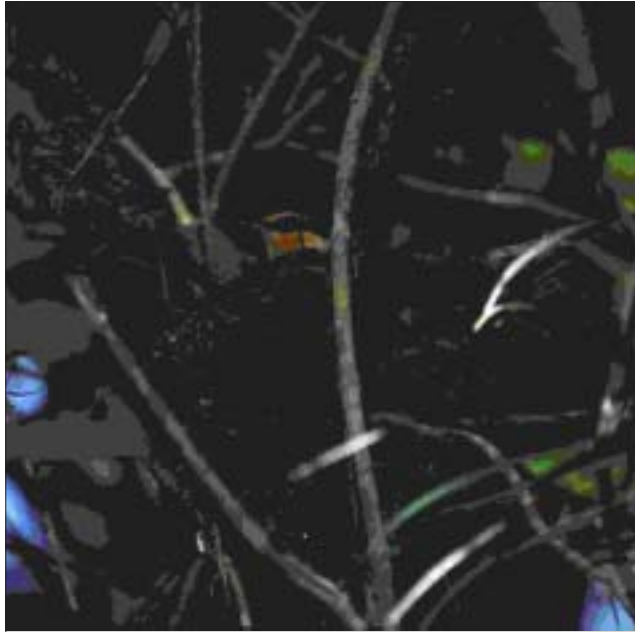


Figure 1. Female Fruithunter *Chlamydochaera jefferyi* on nest, Gunung Kinabalu, Borneo, 1 April 2001 (Joe Tobias)

Heegaard 1988). A fledgling recently out of the nest was seen at 1,700 m on Gunung Kinabalu on 1 August 1997 (C. F. Mann *in litt.*).

At 10h30 on 24 March 2001, JWKP located a male Fruithunter at c.1,650 m along the Silau-Silau trail in Kinabalu National Park, Sabah, Malaysia. It perched c.30 m from the trail, and c.10 m above steeply sloping ground. After drawing the attention of other members of the Malaysian Nature Society to the bird, JWKP noticed a female nearby and realised that she was sitting on a nest (Fig. 1).

The nest itself was a deep mossy cup, in the fork of narrow branches in a tall sapling, c.10 m above ground. It appeared to be composed of slender plant fibres with a thick outer layer of fresh moss. Although it was too high and precariously placed to allow an inspection, it was possible to estimate the dimensions of the bulky structure, which seemed c.12 cm in diameter at the broadest point (at the rim) and c.15 cm in depth. The design of the nest tends to confirm a thrush-like ancestor for the fruithunter, it being similar to that of thrushes and cochoas but different from the hammock-like nests of orioles and the small shallow cups of trillers (see Pizzey 1991, BirdLife International 2001). The contents of the nest were never discovered.

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JWKP alerted the other two authors to the presence of the nest and between them they were able to watch it on a number of occasions between 26 March and 2 April. On 26 March at 12h30 the female was observed nest building and the male arrived and fed the female a large *Ficus* fruit. On one occasion, the female also appeared to mould the nest cup strenuously with her body. Visits on 28–29 March revealed no sign of the birds, but the female was incubating almost constantly on 1–2 April. The male was never seen incubating. It seems likely that incubation commenced between 30 March and 1 April and that prior sightings occurred during the nest-completion and egg-laying stage.

After incubation began, the male visited the vicinity of the nest site on several occasions with food (small berries and sometimes large fruits) and called with a barely audible high whistle. At least once, this resulted in the female leaving the nest to be fed. These are the first descriptions of the nest and breeding behaviour of the Fruithunter.

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