



Javan Pond Heron (*Ardeola speciosa*) feeds by hovering

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Abstract

The Javan Pond Heron is documented to use hovering feeding behavior in Sulawesi.

Key words: feeding; Javan Pond Heron; Sulawesi.

Results and Discussion

Pond herons (*Ardeola* spp.) consist of five species distributed in Eurasia and Africa (Clements 2000). These birds usually feed by standing and waiting or by walking slowly around the perimeter of a water body. Most have speckled brown body with white wings, which gives them a camouflaged appearance for both feeding and roosting.

I observed the foraging behavior of Javan Pond Herons (*Ardeola speciosa*) at Lake Tempe (4.06 S, 119.57 E) in Sulawesi. The lake is a large shallow floodplain lake with extensive floating and emergent vegetation including a few water lilies. Many Javan Pond Herons were present in the reeds and in open water on 2 July 1994, when the observations were made. Some were in breeding plumage.

Several birds flew out over open water and hovered briefly at a height of a few meters for under

two seconds. They then suddenly dived down to take something off the surface. This behavior in herons is called hovering (Kushlan 2011).

This was the first time I had observed this behavior in pond herons, including in ten years frequently watching Squacco Herons (*Ardeola ralloides*) in Zimbabwe. However two Asian species, Chinese Pond Heron (*Ardeola bacchus*) and Indian Pond Heron (*Ardeola grayi*), have been recorded feeding aerially (del Hoyo *et al.* 1992; Tyler 2005). Apparently, this is a newly recorded method of feeding in Javan Pond Herons.

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