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Journal of Threatened Taxa

10.11609/jott.2025.17.3.26571-26762

www.threatenedtaxa.org

26 March 2025 (Online & Print)

17(3): 26571-26762

ISSN 0974-7907 (Online)

ISSN 0974-7893 (Print)



Open Access





ISSN 0974-7907 (Online); ISSN 0974-7893 (Print)

Publisher
Wildlife Information Liaison Development Society
www.wild.zooreach.org

Host
Zoo Outreach Organization
www.zooreach.org

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Cover: A bag worm with its beautiful heap of junk. Acrylics on 300 GSM paper by Dupati Poojitha based on a picture by Sanjay Molur.



NOTE

The occurrence of Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Linnaeus, 1766 (Pelecaniformes: Threskiornithidae) in southern Sumatra, Indonesia

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Ibises are medium-sized to large wading birds (ranging in length from just under 50 cm in the smallest species to 110 cm in the Giant Ibis) that have notable differences in bill morphology by having a narrow downcurved bill with a flattened tip (Hancock et al. 1992; Matheu & del Hoyo 1992). They are found in a variety of wetlands in all regions, except the Antarctic, with the greatest species diversity in the tropics (del Hoyo & Collar 2014). Currently, 24 species of ibises are recognized, and the Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* is the only cosmopolitan member of the family Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills) (Matheu & del Hoyo 1992). The *P. falcinellus* is distributed across Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia (Hancock et al. 1992; Birdlife International 2022).

Although the population trend appears to be decreasing, this species has a large range and population size (Birdlife International 2022). The *P. falcinellus*, a vagrant, is scarce in the Indonesian archipelago, except in Java, where they are locally common residents (MacKinnon & Phillipps 1993; Eaton et al. 2021). This study reports observations of *P. falcinellus* in South Sumatra Province, Indonesia, considered the first record for this species in southern Sumatra.

On 13 August 2022, a wetlands survey in Pasir River Village (03°35'42"S, 105°49'34"E), Cengal Subdistrict, Ogan Komering Ilir District, South Sumatra Province, Indonesia was conducted. The Pasir River Village, located in the east coastal zone of southern Sumatra, comprises

Editor: Jephthe Sompud, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Sabah, Malaysia.

Date of publication: 26 March 2025 (online & print)

Citation: Iqbal, M., A. Setiawan, P. Balqis, E.B. Simanullang, Pormansyah, S. Robinsa, W. Indriati & I. Yustian (2025). The occurrence of Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Linnaeus, 1766 (Pelecaniformes: Threskiornithidae) in southern Sumatra, Indonesia. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 17(3): 26757–26760. <https://doi.org/10.11609/jott.8156.17.3.26757-26760>

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Funding: (1) Sriwijaya University funded number: DIPA No. DIPA-023.17.2.677515 /2022; (2) Universitas Indo Global Mandiri; (3) Zoo Miami Foundation through Kushlan Wading Birds Grant.

Competing interests: The authors declare no competing interests.

Acknowledgements: The research/publication of this article was funded by DIPA of Public Service Agency of Universitas Sriwijaya 2022. SP DIPA-023.17.2.677515 /2022, on 13 December 2021; in accordance with the Rector's Decree 0107.115/UN9.3.1/SK.LP2M.PT/2022, on 15 June 2022. First author thanks Universitas Indo Global Mandiri, and Zoo Miami Foundation through Kushlan Wading Birds Grant for funding study on reassessment of Milky Stork status in Sumatra 2022.



a mix of mudflat, mangrove forest, and aquaculture pond habitats. *P. falcinellus* was observed on two occasions. First, at 1200 h, we saw a flock of 72 large dark waterbirds with decurved bill was seen flying from south to north directions (Image 1). This sighting took place at the mouth of Pasir River from a speedboat. Second, at 1600 h, we found a flock with similar characteristics and numbers in aquaculture ponds in Pasir River Village, presumed to be the same flock that we saw at noon (Image 1a). When the birds landed in an aquaculture pond, we observed them closely and documented them. They exhibited distinct morphological characteristics, relatively bigger for waterbirds but quite small for wading birds groups (Storks, ibises, and spoonbills), a decurved bill like Curlew *Numenius* sp., and all dark bodies. A few individuals displayed breeding plumage, characterized by the forecrown; glossed dark chestnut on the head, neck, chin, throat, lower back, and rump; and darkish green wing coverts (Image 1b). We referred field guides and confirmed the species to *P. falcinellus* (MacKinnon & Phillipps 1993; Sonobe & Usui 1993; Robson 2011; Eaton et al. 2021).

The presence of *Plegadis falcinellus* was previously considered doubtful in Sumatra (Marle & Voous 1988; MacKinnon & Phillipps 1993) until confirmed records emerged from northern Sumatra (Putra et al. 2013). The observations from Pasir River Village represent a significant number of individuals suggesting an expansion of the species' range into southern Sumatra. The historical records of *P. falcinellus* in Sumatra are summarized below:

1. On 22 March 1977, unconfirmed single *P. falcinellus* was reported in Tanjung Pura, North Sumatra Province (Marle & Voous 1988).
2. On 30 September 2010, four *P. falcinellus*

were observed in Tanjung Rejo Utara Village, Pantai-Labu Subdistrict, Deli Serdang District, North Sumatra Province (Putra et al. 2013).

3. On 01 January 2011, four *P. falcinellus* were observed again in Tanjung Rejo Utara Village, Pantai-Labu Sudistrict, Deli Serdang District, North Sumatra Province (Putra et al. 2013). It was presumed that the birds are similar to birds observed in 2010.

4. On 13 February 2011, four *P. falcinellus* were observed again in Tanjung Rejo Utara Village, Pantai-Labu Subdistrict, Deli Serdang District, North Sumatra Province (Putra et al. 2013). It was presumed that the birds were similar to birds previously found in 2010 and 2011 based on the number of individuals in the flock and their observed physical.

5. On 21 April 2021, three *P. falcinellus* were documented at an aquaculture pond in Margasari Village, Labuhan Maringgai Subdistrict, Lampung Timur District, Lampung Province (iNaturalist 2022).

6. On 13 August 2022, a flock of 72 *P. falcinellus* was observed twice in Pasir River Village, South Sumatra Province (this survey).

7. On 29 January 2025, three *P. falcinellus* were documented in Braja Slebah Subdistrict, Lampung Timur District, Lampung Province (eBird 2025). This area is in the same district as the location mentioned in observation six.

Our recent observation, supported by two observations from Lampung Province, represents an extended range for *P. falcinellus* in southern Sumatra (Figure 1).

The wetlands in the east coastal zone of southern Sumatra are documented as important habitats for waterbirds (Verheugt et al. 1993; Iqbal et al. 2019; Setiawan et al. 2019, 2020). It is likely these wetlands

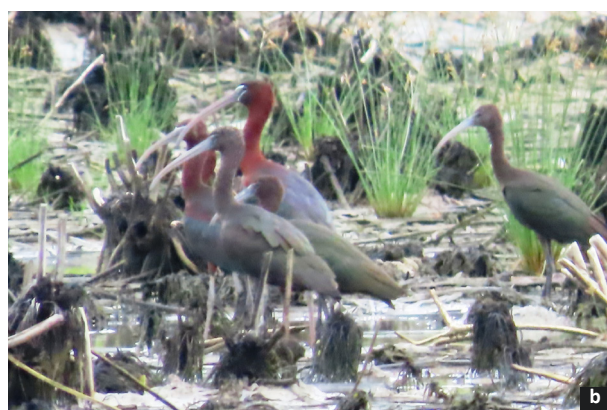


Image 1. A flock of 72 *Plegadis falcinellus* in Pasir River Village, South Sumatra Province, Indonesia, 13 August 2022: a—A flock in flight | b—Breeding and non-breeding birds roosting at aquaculture ponds. © Muhammad Iqbal.



Figure 1. Historical records of *Plegadis falcinellus* in Sumatra. Yellow triangles represent previous records from northern Sumatra, and black triangles indicate recent records from southern Sumatra. Numbers in the map denote localities: 1—Tanjung Pura (North Sumatra Province) | 2–4—Tanjung Rejo Utara (North Sumatra Province) | 5—Pasir River (South Sumatra Province) | 6—Margasari (Lampung Province) | 7—Braja Slebah (Lampung Province).

provide good habitats for other waterbirds from bordering regions. Since first being seen in 2010, the Black-winged Stilts *Himantopus leucocephalus* have been recorded at aquaculture ponds in the Banyuasin Peninsula, South Sumatra Province, and have successfully colonized the area recently (Iqbal et al. 2019, 2022). Putra et al. (2013) presumed that *P. falcinellus* found in northern Sumatra could be originally from the southeastern Asian population, rather than from the Javan population.

This assumption is based on the distances: localities of *P. falcinellus* in northern Sumatra are approximately 500 km from the southeastern Asian population, compared to about 3,000 km from the nearest location in Java. Following this assumption, *P. falcinellus* recently observed in southern Sumatra could have originated

from Java, where the nearest breeding sites (Pulau Dua and Pulau Rambut, West Java; Marle & Voous 1988) are located approximately 100–250 km from Margasari and Pasir River Village, compared to about 600 km from mainland Southeastern Asia. In the Atlantic, Santoro (2014) reported about *P. falcinellus* distance range in Trinidad (one in the summer of 2008) and Bermudas (one in autumn 2013) indicating that this species can disperse across the Atlantic, flying almost 6,000 km away from natal sites. Further surveys are needed to monitor the status of *P. falcinellus* population in Sumatra in the future, to learn whether the species is a visitor or able to breed and colonize on the eastern coast of southern Sumatra.

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Print copies of the Journal are available at cost. Write to:
The Managing Editor, JoTT,
c/o Wildlife Information Liaison Development Society,
3A2 Varadarajulu Nagar, FCI Road, Ganapathy, Coimbatore,
Tamil Nadu 641006, India
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Journal of Threatened Taxa is indexed/abstracted in Bibliography of Systematic Mycology, Biological Abstracts, BIOSIS Previews, CAB Abstracts, EBSCO, Google Scholar, Index Copernicus, Index Fungorum, JournalSeek, National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, NewJour, OCLC WorldCat, SCOPUS, Stanford University Libraries, Virtual Library of Biology, Zoological Records.

NAAS rating (India) 5.64



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ISSN 0974-7907 (Online) | ISSN 0974-7893 (Print)

www.threatenedtaxa.org

March 2025 | Vol. 17 | No. 3 | Pages: 26571–26762

Date of Publication: 26 March 2025 (Online & Print)

DOI: 10.11609/jott.2025.17.3.26571-26762

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