

SANGIHE SHRIKE-THRUSH

Colluricincla sanghirensis

Critical ■ B1+2b,c,e; C2b

Endangered □ D1

Vulnerable □ D2

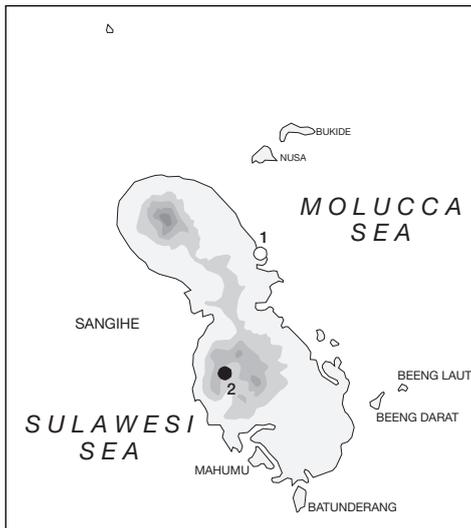


This species currently occurs at only one locality, where habitat is declining in extent and quality such that its tiny population must certainly be dwindling. Because of this alarming situation it is classified as Critical.

DISTRIBUTION The Sangihe Shrike-thrush (see Remarks 1) is endemic to the island of Sangihe, north of Sulawesi, Indonesia, where it is now known from a single small mountain, Gunung Sahendaruman (Riley *et al.* 1997, J. C. Wardill *in litt.* 1999). Records are from:

■ **INDONESIA** *Sangihe Petta* (Pejta, Petja) east of Gunung Awu, in or before 1878 (Oustalet 1881; see Remarks 2); **Gunung Sahendaruman**, north-west and north-east slopes, 600–750 m, May–June 1985 (Rozendaal and Lambert 1999), adjacent Gunung Sahengabalira, August 1996 (Rozendaal and Lambert 1999) and October–December 1996 (Riley 1997a) and at this latter site plus Batukakiraeng, Bongkongsio and above Malamenggu (all in the Sahendaruman ridge), 1998–1999 (J. Riley *in litt.* 1999).

POPULATION “Numerous individuals” were heard singing in the pre-dawn chorus on Gunung Sahendaruman, 1985 (Rozendaal and Lambert 1999). However, in 1998–1999 the overall status of the species on the mountain was uncommon, with no records elsewhere (J. Riley *in litt.* 1999), and the total population of the species is likely to be extremely low, given its extremely restricted range (Riley 1997a). The greatest number seen together was a group of c.15 in 1996 (Riley 1997a). Although the largest tract of habitat may be as given under Threats, mapping in 1998 suggested that some 800 ha of forest suitable for the species remains on Sangihe, on Gunung Sahendaruman (D. Hicks *per* J. C. Wardill *in litt.* 1999). Review of



The distribution of Sangihe Shrike-thrush
Colluricincla sanghirensis: (1) Petta; (2) Gunung Sahendaruman.

○ Historical (pre-1950) ● Recent (1980–present)

data generated in recent surveys tends to suggest that the population is 640 birds (range 270–1,500) at Gunung Sahendaruman, but further work is needed before these figures are finalised (J. Riley *in litt.* 2000).

ECOLOGY Habitat The Sangihe Shrike-thrush occurs singly and, perhaps more frequently, in small groups in all the strata of montane forest, being found in the middle and upper storeys and in dense rattan undergrowth (Rozendaal and Lambert 1999). Birds were observed in 1996 in forest on a boulder-strewn slope where the understorey was dominated by huge ginger-like plants (possibly Zingiberaceae), and in an area with a high density of large *Pandanus* trees (Rozendaal and Lambert 1999). The species requires primary forest (as for Sangihe White-eye *Zosterops nehrkorni*) or dense, well established secondary forest at least 35 years old (D. Hicks *in litt.* 1999).

Food Orthoptera are taken (Riley 1997a). The stomach of the single specimen collected in 1985 contained small black and dark brown chitinous insect remains (Rozendaal and Lambert 1999). Birds were seen feeding among epiphytic fern fronds and other canopy vegetation (Rozendaal and Lambert 1999), but also keeping close to the ground in slow-moving contour-following parties, with birds turning dead leaves amongst the leaf-litter, foraging on bark and vines, and often gleaning from leaves and mosses (Riley 1997a).

Breeding The 1985 bird, taken in June, seems to have been immature (Rozendaal and Lambert 1999). One bird was seen to pass an insect to another, presumably young bird (head pattern slightly different from other birds), November (J. C. Wardill *in litt.* 1999).

THREATS A century ago the species must have occurred on the slopes of Gunung Awu, given the type locality of Petta (see Distribution), but all the evidence points to the species being extinct in the north of the island as a consequence of forest loss. The main threat to the species continues to be habitat destruction: virtually the entire island of Sangihe has been cleared of original forest (Whitten *et al.* 1987a). The habitat of this species—primary forest—is extremely small, with the best tract being 225–340 ha in size (Rozendaal and Lambert 1999). There is, moreover, disturbance from footpaths and a constant clearance for garden areas (shifting cultivation) along the lower reaches (Rozendaal and Lambert 1999, D. Hicks *in litt.* 1999). The problem of agricultural encroachment is not being addressed by officials whose responsibility it is to maintain the area as a protection forest (J. C. Wardill *in litt.* 1999). Mineral prospecting has been reported to have occurred on Sahendaruman and inquiries are being made to establish the results of this work (J. C. Wardill *in litt.* 1999).

The Sangihe Shrike-thrush is one of (now) seven threatened members of the suite of (now) 10 bird species that are entirely restricted to the “Sangihe and Talaud Endemic Bird Area” (see Remarks 6 under Caerulean Paradise-flycatcher *Eutrichomyias rowleyi*), threats and conservation measures in which are profiled by Sujatnika *et al.* (1995) and Stattersfield *et al.* (1998).

MEASURES TAKEN As of January 1999 (Peraturan Pemerintah no.7/1999) the Sangihe Shrike-thrush is a protected species. The initiatives by Action Sampiri in respect of the Gunung Sahendaruman Protection Forest are outlined in the equivalent section under Caerulean Paradise-flycatcher. There is a prohibition on the felling of trees in the catchment of the hydroelectric dam under construction in the Kentuhang valley, and this seems to be effective and understood by local communities (Rozendaal and Lambert 1999).

MEASURES PROPOSED The conservation of remaining forest at Gunung Sahendaruman is critical for the survival of this species. Information is given in the equivalent section under Caerulean Paradise-flycatcher.

On Gunung Awu fieldwork is needed to check for the species (see Remarks 2).

REMARKS (1) The notion that this taxon merited specific status appears to find first recent expression in Riley (1997a), but the full justification is in Rozendaal and Lambert (1999). Confirmation of the presence of a *Colluricincla* shrike-thrush on a single island to the west of Weber's Line (which defines the biogeographic beginning of Australian elements in the fauna and flora), with evidence of the genus in the Moluccas confined to a single questionable skin from Bacan (Riley 1997a, Rozendaal and Lambert 1999), is a remarkable and baffling phenomenon, such that before the rediscovery of the taxon in 1996 the type-material had been regarded as probably mislabelled (Ford 1979, White and Bruce 1986). (2) It seems unlikely that the species persists on Gunung Awu, whose vegetation has been caught in a pincer between upward encroachment by cultivation and downward encroachment by volcanic activity (last major eruption 1966), but there are fragments of disturbed forest in very steep mid-mountain ravines that remain worth checking (J. C. Wardill *in litt.* 1999).