

## A REVIEW OF THE STATUS OF THE WHITE-HEADED STILT *HIMANTOPUS LEUCOCEPHALUS* IN SUMATRA (INDONESIA)

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The White-headed Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus* is recognised as regular breeder in Sumatra. However, the status of this species as resident or only a breeding visitor is still open to question. In this paper, we summarize all records of White-headed Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus* in Sumatra and review the current status of the species in Sumatra.

### INTRODUCTION

The White-headed Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus* is one of the waders listed as occurring in Sumatra, Indonesia. The White-headed Stilt is sometimes treated as subspecies of the Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* but most authors (e.g. Sonobe & Usui 1993, Robson 2005) distinguish Whiteheaded Stilt as full species. Most of Indonesian references recognize Australian *Himantopus himantopus* as Whiteheaded Stilt *Himantopus leucocephalus* a full species (White & Bruce 1986, Andrew 1992, Mackinnon *et al.* 1998, Behleer *et al.* 2001, Sukmantoro *et al.* 2007). We followed this recedence and split the Black-winged Stilt and Australian White-headed Stilt. In addition, splitting the Black-winged Stilt and Australian White-headed Stilt is important for population estimates of global and local shorebird populations developed by Wetland International which has adopted two sub-species (Delany and Scott 2002, Wetland International 2006, Bamford *et al.* 2008). More information on the distribution of this species (or subspecies) is required before any firm conclusions can be made regarding its range (Lopez & Mundkur 1997).

In Indonesia, the bird is a rare breeding visitor to the coast of Java and Bali and an uncommon visitor to Southern Sumatra and Kalimantan (Mackinnon *et al.* 1998), an uncommon visitor in Wallacea (Coates & Bishop 2000) and very common non-breeding visitor for Papua (Beehler *et al.* 2001).

Marle & Voous (1988) considered White-headed Stilt as a non-breeding summer visitor in Sumatra that came from Australia or else was an accidental visitor from West Java where they breed. Based on the occurrence of this species in Way Kambas National Park and a breeding record reported by Verheugt *et al.* (1993), Parrot & Andrew (1996) considered the bird as resident with seasonal movements according to water conditions. In Sumatra, the bird inhabits coastal and freshwater swamps (Marle & Voous 1988). There are several records of White-headed Stilt in Sumatra, but most records are from South Sumatra and Lampung Province (Marle & Voous 1988; Parrot & Andrew 1998; Verheugt *et al.* 1993), and only one record from West Sumatran Island (Kemp 2000). In this paper, we summarized all information and review the current status on Whiteheaded Stilt in Sumatra.

### WHITE-HEADED STILT RECORDS

Information from historical and our recent records on Whiteheaded Stilt in Sumatra are shown in Table 1. The table summarizes all White-headed Stilt records in Sumatra since 18 January 1977 in the Lampung province, southern Sumatra. Table 1 shows that White-headed Stilt are recorded during periods of southward migration (August-October), winter (November-February), northward migration (March-April) and in summer (May-July). There are several records of White-headed Stilt in Sumatra, but most records are from South Sumatra and Lampung Province (southern Sumatra), and only one record from West Sumatran Island (Kemp 2000). The West Sumatran Island record is known as northernmost record for Sumatra.

Recent fieldwork during 2008 in the east coastal of South Sumatra province recorded single juvenile of White-headed Stilt at the Pasir River on 8 March 2008 and five juveniles at Sugihan Bay on 11 July 2008. Both locations are fishponds along the east coastal of South Sumatra province.

### DISCUSSION

White-headed Stilt recorded has been recorded throughout the year in Southern Sumatra. The bird was not recorded in northern Sumatra (Aceh, north Sumatra and Riau) and a single redord was found for West Sumatran Island and is the only known record for this species in central Sumatra.

Sugihan Bay was a new locality for White-headed Stilt on the east coast of southern Sumatra line. The previously known northernmost area of White-headed Stilt on the east coast of southern Sumatra line was the Pasir River. The recent record of White-headed Stilt in Sugihan Bay is now the northernmost for White-headed Stilt on the east coast of southern Sumatra line. A distribution map is provided in Figure 1. This record represents a possible expansion in range of White-headed Stilt in the northern area of the east coastal of southern Sumatra line.

The first breeding record of White-headed Stilt was during the summer-southward migration period when adults and two juveniles (less than four weeks of age) were observed on 8 September 1988 in Lebak Pampangan (Verheugt *et al.* 1993). All breeding records of White headed Stilt in the floodplain of Ogan Komerling Lebak were made

**Table 1.** Historical and recent records of White-headed Stilt in Sumatra.

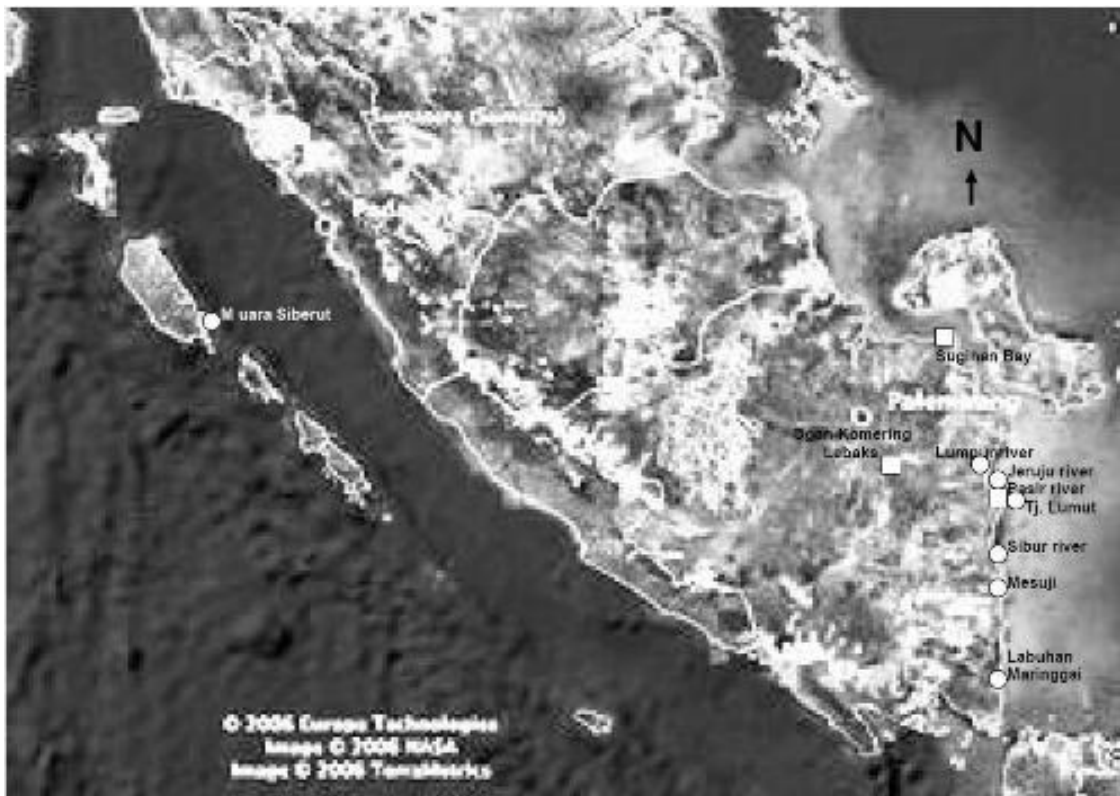
Localities	Date	Number	Remarks	Source
<b>1977</b>				
Labuhan Maringgai	18 Jan 1977	3	Coastal	Holmes 1977, Marle & Voous 1988
<b>1978</b>				
Way Kambas National Park	Oct 1978	?	?	Marle & Voous 1988
<b>1988</b>				
Lebak Pampangan	8 Sep 1988	1 + 2 juv	Swampy meadow	Verheugt <i>et al.</i> 1993
Way Kambas NP	Oct 1988	115	Mudflat	Parrot & Andrew 1996
<b>1989</b>				
Way Kambas NP	Feb 1989	115	Mudflat	Parrot & Andrew 1996
Way Kambas NP	April 1989	16	Mudflat	Parrot & Andrew 1996
Between Lumpur to Pasir river	March 1989	20	Mudflat	Verheugt <i>et al.</i> 1993
Between Pasir river to Tanjung Lumut	March 1989	27	Mudflat	Verheugt <i>et al.</i> 1993
Between Tanjung Lumut to Sibur river	March 1989	8	Mudflat	Verheugt <i>et al.</i> 1993
Between Sibur river to Mesuji river	March 1989	45	Mudflat	Verheugt <i>et al.</i> 1993
<b>1999</b>				
Muara Siberut	3 Oct 1999	1	Beach and fallow ricefield	Kemp 2000
<b>2000</b>				
Lebak Bayas-Beti	7 June 2000	8	Swampy meadow	Iqbal 2008
Lebak Pulau Layang	8 June 2000	4 + 5 juv	Swampy meadow	Iqbal 2008
Lebak Kuro	9 June 2000	2 + 1	Swampy meadow	Iqbal 2008
<b>2001</b>				
Lebak Deling	17 Aug 2001	30 + 5 juv	Swampy meadow	Iqbal 2008
Lebak Pulau Layang	18 Aug 2001	6 + 1 juv	Swampy meadow	Iqbal 2008
Lebak Pulau Layang	19 Aug 2001	2 + 2 juv	Swampy meadow	Iqbal 2008
<b>2002</b>				
Lebak Kuro	5 Feb 2002	2	Swampy meadow	Iqbal 2008
Lebak Pulau Layang	Sep 2005	30 + 8 juv	Swampy meadow	Iqbal 2008
<b>2005</b>				
Lebak Deling	Sep 2005	48 + 15 juv	Swampy meadow	Iqbal 2008
<b>2006</b>				
Lebak Pulau Layang	15 Aug 2006	50 + 10 juv	Swampy meadow	Iqbal 2008
<b>2008</b>				
Pasir river	8 March 2008	1 juv	Fishpond	Recent fieldwork
Between Pasir river to Jeruju river	9 March 2008	2	Mudflat	Recent fieldwork
Lebak Deling	7 June 2008	4	Swampy meadow	Recent fieldwork
Pasir river	6 July 2008	12	Mudflat	Recent fieldwork
Sugihan Bay	11 July 2008	5 + 5 juv	Fishpond	Recent fieldwork

during the summer-southward migration period (Iqbal 2008). Unfortunately, there were no reports regarding breeding White-headed Stilt during the winter period.

An observations of a single juvenile of White-headed Stilt in Pasir River on 8 March 2008 show that White-headed stilt also breed during winter and northward migration periods. This juvenile bird is thought to have hatched between December-February in the fishpond along east coastal near Pasir River (Figure 2). After harvest, the owner of fishpond allows his pool to become dry for sustainable use. This condition is would provide suitable breeding habitat for White-headed Stilt. An observation of five adults and five juveniles in a fishpond at Sugihan Bay on 11 July 2008 show that White-headed Stilt also breed outside floodplain of Ogan Komering Lebak (Figure 3).

Marle and Voous (1988) considered White-headed Stilts “presumably non-breeding summer visitors”, from Australia or else “accidental visitors” from West Java where it breeds, but based on the occurrence of this species in Way Kambas National Park and a breeding record reported by Verheugt *et al.* (1993), Parrot and Andrew (1996) considered the bird as a resident with seasonal movement according to water conditions. Iqbal (2008) stated that White-headed Stilt is a regular breeding visitor to the floodplain of Ogan Komering Lebak but did not mention the status of this species in Sumatra.

Observations of a single juvenile on March 2008 prove that White-headed Stilt also breed in winter and northward migration in Sumatra. An observation of five adults and five juveniles of White-headed Stilt in fishpond at Sugihan Bay is record of breeding White-headed Stilt outside floodplain of



**Figure 1.** Distribution map of White-headed Stilt based on historical and recent records. Square represent juvenile sightings or breeding records and circles is adults records. All sites with *Lebak* in Table 1 are part of Ogan Komering Lebak.



**Figure 2.** Single juvenile White-headed Stilt at the Pasir River on 8 March 2008.

Ogan Komering Lebak. In addition, local people in Pasir River and Sugihan bay reported that White-headed Stilt usually breed all over the year depend on water level conditions around fishpond in the area. Sightings of Whiteheaded Stilt during 2008 outside floodplain of Ogan Komering Lebak support Parrot and Andrew (1996) hypothesis on resident status of White-headed Stilt in Sumatra based on seasonal

movements according to water level conditions.

#### CONCLUSION

There are no historical records for White-headed Stilt before Holmes (1977). For this reason, Marle and Voous (1988) considered White-headed Stilt as “presumably non-breeding



**Figure 3.** Adults and juveniles of White-headed stilt in Sugihan bay on 11 July 2008.

summer visitors”, from Australia or else “accidental visitors” from West Java where it breeds. On the basis available data, it is suspected that most White-headed Stilt move to the floodplain of Ogan Komering Lebak during dry season for feeding and breeding. When rainy season, they move along the east coastal of Southern Sumatra between Lampung and South Sumatra province. Productive pairs also used fishponds as breeding ground around the east coast when the pool drying. Based on these reasons, it is concluded that recent status of White-headed Stilt is resident in Sumatra. This resident population possible come from small visitor population from Australian or West Java where it previously breed.

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