



# Alliance for Tompotika Conservation Aliansi Konservasi Tompotika

NEWSLETTER

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## A Field Guide to the Birds of Tompotika: *ALTo's guide will be a first for Tompotika and Sulawesi*

Believe it or not, if you are looking for a field guide to help identify the birds of Tompotika--or for that matter, for all of Sulawesi--you are out of luck. There is currently no Sulawesi bird guide in print and easy to obtain, in any language. And even of the few guides that have been produced in the past, they have either been huge volumes, hard to flip through and covering more than just Sulawesi, or they've been incomplete, leaving out some of the birds that occur there.

This will not do! If we want people to know and treasure their natural heritage, they have to be able to find out what's there. Especially given that in Sulawesi, about 27% of the birds are found nowhere else in the world! So, ALTo has just begun a new effort to produce a simple, user-friendly field guide to the birds of Tompotika, aimed at both local Tompotikans and visitors to the area. The guide will contain photos, descriptions, and identification tips for all species known *(continued on next page)*



*Ardea speciosa*, the Javan Pond Heron, or Blekok Sawa. The new field guide will use arrows to highlight key identification characteristics, as pioneered in the Peterson field guide series.

## Maleos and Turtles: Not for Sale! *Wildlife law enforcement program opens with free public performance events*

For six years, ALTo has been working with local Tompotikan citizens to help inspire a love of wild places and endangered wildlife. These efforts have borne fruit: the endangered maleo bird is now recovering in Tompotika, sea turtles are being protected for the first time (see articles on p. 3), and ALTo's Awareness Campaign has made Tompotikans aware of the plight of many other marvelous but threatened Sulawesi creatures. Now and forever, ALTo will always emphasize the positive benefits, both tangible and intangible, of a people's voluntary choice to protect and celebrate their natural heritage.

But for the few who don't choose to go along with voluntary conservation efforts, we are thankful that Indonesian law is very clear: the maleo, all sea turtles, and many other endangered wildlife species are fully protected under national law. The trouble is, most people--including law enforcement personnel themselves--are unaware of these laws, and they're hardly ever enforced.

That's why ALTo has just launched a new program which pairs intensive education and outreach for law enforcement personnel with a stepped-up public awareness campaign about the protected status of maleos and sea turtles, who serve as flagships for other endangered wildlife. The program, which will include a newly-created "pocket guide to wildlife law" and a series of workshops for police and other law enforcement personnel, kicked off with public events in two of the main Tompotika districts in which ALTo works. Designed and directed entirely by ALTo's local Tompotikan staff, the performances included a combination of music, theater, and speeches--all centered on the idea that protecting Sulawesi's endangered wildlife is a welcome--and serious--obligation for all *(continued on next page)*



A group of girls pose at the Taima event. This banner translates: Law Protects the Maleo; another banner reads in English: "Not for Sale"

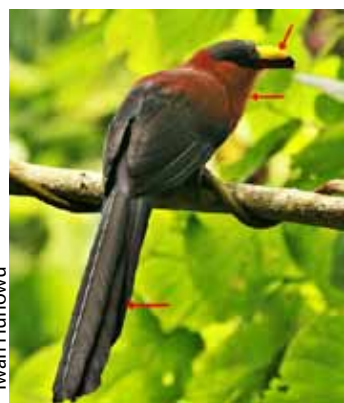


Schoolchildren perform a song and dance routine to support maleo and sea turtle conservation at the Balantak event.

**Field Guide to the Birds, (continued from p. 1)**

to occur in the Tompotika region. It will present the information in both Bahasa Indonesia and English, and is being authored by expert Sulawesi birder Iwan Hunowu.

Iwan himself has been birding since childhood, and in 2007 he joined with others to found the Sulawesi Bird Club (SBC).



Iwan Hunowu

*Phaenicophaeus calyorrhynchus*, the Yellow-billed Malkoha. Locals often call this bird Burung Monyet or "Monkey Bird," because it follows troupes of monkeys through the forest, gleaning the insects they stir up.

AlTo's plan is to use the new field guide in our school-based Awareness Campaign, in hopes that it will inspire many new young birders. Pak Iwan says helping to produce this field guide is "one of my dreams... there is very limited information available about Sulawesi flora and fauna... I wish many Sulawesi people, especially young people, will become ornithologists and conservationists... this important project will contribute significantly."

The Alliance for Tompotika Conservation/ Aliansi Konservasi Tompotika ("AlTo") is dedicated to conserving the unparalleled natural and cultural heritage of the lands and waters surrounding Mt. Tompotika, Sulawesi, Indonesia. Effective, innovative, and efficient, AlTo protects endangered species, tropical rainforests, and coral reefs while promoting the dignity and self-sufficiency of local communities in a changing world. In Tompotika and everywhere, AlTo believes that the quality of our human lives is bound up to the health of our natural environment and our relationships to it.

AlTo is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the United States and a registered Yayasan in Indonesia, made possible by your donations. Thank you for your support!

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Wista Lamato, 17

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**Law Enforcement Outreach, (continued from p. 1)**



Noval Suling

A poacher comes to repent after facing judgment in Salanggar Youth Theatre Troupe's original drama, performed here in Taima.

of its citizens. Hundreds listened as a district government official ca people to overcome their egoism and start looking after the other creatures with whom we share this world. A group of young actors presented two original dramas about sea turtle and maleo egg poachers.

An official from BKSDA, the government department in charge of wildlife management and with which AlTo is collaborating on the law enforcement program, spoke about his agency's priorities for wildlife management. Younger schoolchildren presented a song and dance routine. And AlTo presented awards to three boys who voluntarily released some captive sea turtles they had been keeping.

With these well-attended performances, AlTo's conservation message takes a step beyond our school-based Awareness Campaign to spread the news widely among adults of the Tompotika community: not only is conservation a good and joyful thing, but it is required by Indonesian law. And starting now, those who ignore the law will face consequences. A maleo and a sea turtle confront the poachers of their eggs in the Balantak show.



Noval Suling

**New Tompotika Notecards Available**

AlTo is delighted to announce that a new series of notecards is available featuring photographs of Tompotika's own very special landscapes and wildlife. The cards feature six different images in a package, are printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper, and are blank inside. Also still available are cards featuring the wildlife art of Tompotika youth artists. All cards are \$12 per pack, or are yours free for a donation of \$125 or more.



# Six Years of Maleo Recovery: a Progress Report



August 1, 2006: the newly-formed alliance places a new "protected" sign at the maleo nesting ground entrance.

guards than they had by selling eggs. Government officials were pleased to see the iconic maleo, which is protected under Indonesian law, receiving practical conservation attention. The students were delighted to be trained and hired as conservation professionals in AITo's new permanent staff. And all were deeply encouraged to see the maleo appearing to recover. Chicks began to hatch. Juvenile birds were spotted for the first time. Adult numbers increased.



2012: AITo Conservation Officer Ipan (center right) trains a new crop of villager guards in how to record maleo data.

Successful experiments invite duplication. In the months ahead, AITo hopes to locate other remnant maleo populations in Tompotika where new projects might be started, and we're working with other groups to try to catalyze new conservation efforts in other parts of Sulawesi. As Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world."

In August, 2006, a partnership that included Taima villagers, local government officials, conservation-minded students from a nearby university, a handful of conservation professionals from other parts of Indonesia, and a small group of international supporters launched what at the time was an experiment. If villagers and this alliance called Aliansi Konservasi Tompotika, "AI-To," teamed up to guard its nesting ground, could the decline of the endangered maleo be halted? Could its disappearance, which is proceeding so rapidly all over Sulawesi, be averted here? And would villagers be satisfied that their loss of income from selling its huge eggs for souvenirs was adequately compensated? The project began as a six-month experiment, but has never looked back.

The village's former egg-diggers quickly realized that they earned more money as



Kevin Schaffer

Now six years later, the project still functions as a close partnership between villagers and AITo. Nowadays, the young Conservation Officers AITo has trained are themselves the trainers for new villager guards, and villagers benefit not only with jobs as guards, but via the "conservation community benefits"--such as clean water, community building repairs, and more--that AITo provides as a kind of "thank you" from the conservation world for their work to preserve the maleo. Best of all, the number of adult maleos coming to the nesting ground to lay eggs has *tripled* since we began! And whereas before, only one or at most two pairs of maleos would be seen at once, now dozens may be present, interacting in all kinds of complex ways. With so few maleos left, these interactions had simply ceased to exist before the recovery. But happily, now maleos are not only recovering their numbers--they're recovering their *culture*.

Bully, bicker, and bluff: with many maleos nesting at once, a whole range of fascinating social interactions can be observed.



Kevin Schaffer

## Giving Baby Sea Turtles a Chance

In Tompotika, the sea turtle nesting season has just ended, and the news is mixed. Overall, the number of female sea turtles coming ashore to nest appears to be declining in the Tompotika region, as it is in most of Indonesia. But in AITo's conservation partner villages Taima and Teku the total number of sea turtle hatchlings who successfully reached the sea was up this year. In Teku village, for example, at least 1210 hatchlings reached the sea this year--more than double last year's 510--due largely to increased villager participation.

In the AITo program, AITo staff team with villagers to patrol beaches during the nesting season, and when a nest is located, it is villagers themselves who watch over it until hatching (usually by carefully moving it to a location where they can safeguard it). It will take years, but experience in other parts of the world has shown that when their nests are protected, sea turtle populations can and do recover.



Pak Isman, a key conservation partner in Teku village, is waiting until nightfall, when he will release a nest of hatchlings which he has protected from eggs to emergence.



A newly-hatched Olive Ridley heads out towards the open ocean. If it can escape predators, this tiny hatchling will live for years among rafts of floating *Sargassum* seaweed. Upon reaching adulthood, females will return to the same Tompotika beaches where they were hatched.

Pandji Kresno



## The Faces of ALTO: Tompotika's Conservation Professionals

In Tompotika's gateway city of Luwuk, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, ALTO's office serves as the base where eight remarkable people make up ALTO's full-time permanent staff. These eight, along with a few other part-time folks, do the work that keeps ALTO's four field programs--Maleo, Sea Turtle, Forest, and Bat--and various outreach programs--including Conservation Awareness, Art for Conservation, Law Enforcement Outreach and Eco-Service Tours--making strides for conservation in Tompotika.

Here's who they are:

**Noval Suling, Conservation Programs Coordinator**

**Anim Alyoihana, Operations Manager**

**Agustian Laya, Field Programs Manager**

**Ipan Djano, Conservation Officer and Maintenance Manager**

**Pandji Kresno, Conservation Officer**

**Aspin Lameri, Conservation Officer**

**Vivi Tan Oga, Conservation Officer**


**Atu Durant, Conservation Education and Outreach Specialist.**

Not pictured is Andi Faisal Alwi, whose excellent skills and experience we've been fortunate to contract to run our Law Enforcement Outreach program.

ALTO's staff are a terrific group--all very smart, able, and dedicated as individuals, but perhaps more importantly, cohesive and mutually supportive as a team. Noval coordinates all our programs with a keen calmness, and is highly respected by his peers. Anim, with us since the beginning, is the knowledgeable and trusted overseer who can make anything happen. Also with us since the beginning, Agus keeps our field programs humming and our hearts light, getting along with everyone. Ipan looks after our physical facilities, and radiates a warm kindness in everything he does. Extremely smart and able, yet humble, Pandji cheerfully figures out--and carries out--any task assigned. Aspin, one of our newer staff members, is strong and willing, especially when there is hiking to be done! Vivi, our newest Conservation Officer, brings great skills and a welcome female presence in the field. And Atu runs our Awareness Campaign with great ideas, energy and passion. With this "dream team," ALTO is getting the job done today--and Tompotika's conservation challenges of tomorrow will be in good hands.



Back row, L to R: Atu, Pandji, Vivi, Anim, Noval, Agus.  
Front row, L to R: Aspin, Ipan

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