

Kangean Shama (*Copsychus nigricauda*)



PRIGEN CONSERVATION BREEDING ARK

Spring Update

March 2023

By Jochen Menner

Preface

PCBA is looking back on another very busy and often more than challenging three months.

Administrative difficulties had to be overcome which slowed down progress in some project parts. Nevertheless, we are satisfied with how things are going and are very optimistic that remaining hurdles can be overcome in a speedy manner, enabling us to get back to full strength operation as we are used to.

Disregarding the difficulties behind us, we have still been able to progress significantly in many parts of our conservation breeding efforts. New personnel has joined the team and additional facilities have been completed, making the past quarter an overall very successful one.

This has only been possible thanks to an outstanding team effort by our very own team, the team of TSI II Jatim and much support from within our amazing network.



PCBA team in March 2023

Fourth quartal 2022

In January we decided to part ways with our former head-keeper Lars Mundhenk. We thank him for more than a year of hard work and dedication to the conservation breeding efforts at PCBA.

The position as head-keeper has been filled by Febry Riyad Hendiyanto who was, thanks to his dedication, extensive knowledge and talent a more than obvious choice.

We are thrilled to welcome Jane Karindhu to the team. Jane has been vet-nurse at TSI II for many years and will now gradually take over more responsibilities at PCBA.

In February we welcomed our first volunteer after a long time. Hannah Frances Ahern will volunteer at PCBA for one year. Thanks to her extensive aviculture experience and many years of work experience in multiple international zoos, Hannah is an amazing addition to our team in Prigen.



Reintroduction of Javan Pied Starling

(all photos by Kukuh Hadi)

The Javan Pied Starlings (*Gracupica jalla*) that had been reintroduced to the grounds of Taman Safari have established very well and started exploring the entire area and first breeding success was achieved.

By the end of March 2023 the Starlings have colonized virtually the entire area of Taman Safari II. Many of the released birds have left the immediate vicinity of PCBA and settled in other parts of the park. A large group of birds have moved more than a kilometer away from the release site and ultimately made their home at Taman Safari's Baobab Hotel. Here the birds are utilizing the vast herbivour exhibits to forage for food. The birds being able to travel for more than one kilometer without even leaving Taman Safari's grounds shows how much usable space there is for the Starlings.

While many of our birds have left the area around PCBA, others have stayed around using the aviaries and the surrounding open landscape to forage for food and built nests.



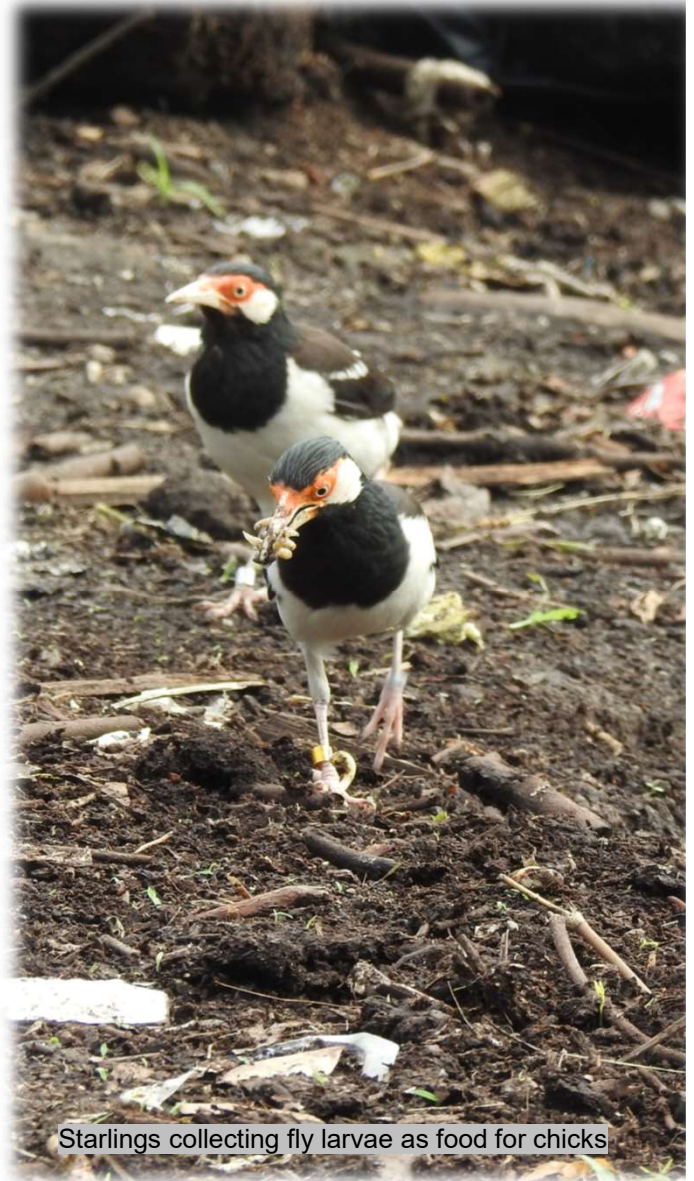
Pied Starling with *Theretra* moth

Initially, many nesting attempts were made by our Starlings but nests were often abandoned before eggs were laid and during incubation. The reasons for that are not completely clear but certainly predators, especially rats and ants might have played an important role.

After an initial phase of trial and error, more and more pairs have been able to actually succeed in building safe nests and commence incubation.

So far, two released pairs have successfully raised chicks, one pair within PCBA's grounds and another just east of PCBA. These chicks might very well represent the first Javan Pied Starlings to hatch in the wild for decades!

While the first two successful attempts were undertaken in free-standing nests, built by the birds themselves, a third pair is currently raising chicks in one of the installed nest boxes within PCBA.



Starlings collecting fly larvae as food for chicks



Starling feeding the first wild fledgling

While the successful reproduction of the Javan Pied Starling in the wild alone is already reason to celebrate, we are also keen on gathering as much information on their behavior as possible. Truly outstanding seems the ability of the birds to build their own, very complex nests, a behavior the species has not been able to show for many generations in captivity. The nest constructed by our Starlings now even function as shelter and nest base for Javan Munia (*Lonchura leucogastroides*), a species that shares the same habitat with the Starlings.

All the knowledge we are gaining, alongside remarkable photo and video documentations, is thanks to Kukuh Hadi's tireless efforts to keep track of every Starling and document their wild behaviour as much as possible.



Extensive Starling nest in a Durian tree

Small Carnivores facility

Thanks to the very generous and continued support by Augsburg Zoo and ZGAP we have been able to complete yet another very important breeding facility.

The new enclosure complex for small Carnivores consists of 16 aviaries which are not only interconnected but also linked to the existing facility for the Civets. This enables us to work more flexibly and efficiently when pairing or moving animals.

PCBA is now home to 17 Javan Small-toothed Palm Civets, representing the only ex-situ population of this highly threatened Javan endemic. Therefore, we are excited to be able to add more holding capacities in order to continue our very successful breeding project, as an endeavor to establish a stable population in human care to provide a safety net against the looming extinction of this highly distinct taxon.

Apart from the Civets, the Indonesian Mountain Weasels (*Mustela lutreolina*) will also move into the new facility, hopefully leading to future breeding success.



The new small carnivore complex

Semi-wild enclosure

In order to increase ex-situ capacities for the endangered Javan Warty Pig (*Sus verrucosus*), we are currently setting up a semi-wild enclosure on the grounds of Taman Safari II Jatim.

This new facility will cover about 100 hectares of tree savannah and secondary forest and will enable us to keep larger groups of Pigs in a near natural setting.

To prevent Pigs from escaping, the existing mesh fence, circumfering the grounds of TSI, is being reinforced with an electric fence. This will not only keep the Pigs within our grounds, but it also will prevent any contact with potential wild pigs and will therefore function as biosecurity measure against the African Swine Fever.

In order to be able to monitor and control the Pigs within the large area, a habituation and feeding paddock is being set up. This will enable us to catch and transfer Pigs if needed.

This project is enabled by Zootier des Jahres Campaign.



Electric fence under construction

Shama breeding

In the past three months we have been able to successfully raise, 17 Maratua Shamas (*Copsychus barbouri*) and 8 Kangean Shamas (*Copsychus nigricauda*). No Larwo Shamas (*Copsychus omissus*) have hatched due to all adults molting during the past three months.

With the addition of these recent offspring, we now care for more than 60 individual Maratua Shamas. With no other population known to exist, these birds represent the only hope for the continued survival of the largest of all Shamas.

While in the recent past we mostly resorted to hand-rearing the chicks to increase the number of successfully raised birds, we are now slowing the measure down and once again we have our chicks parent-reared.



Male Maratua Shama



Female Larwo Shama

Other remarkable breeding successes



Javan Civet with two offspring

Javan Small-toothed Palm Civet:

Yet another two Civet babies were born to one of our experienced breeding females. These two offspring are a male and a female and they bring the total population at PCBA to 8 males and 9 females.

Sula Hanging Parrot (*Loriculus sclateri*)

Two Hanging Parrots fledged, unfortunately we were only successful to raise one, the other fledgling succumbed to injuries sustained after fledging.

Orange-headed Thrush (*Geokichla citrina rubecula*)

One healthy offspring was successfully raised by its parents

Javan Pied Starling

Two Starling chicks grew up under the care of their parents. Overall breeding of our Starlings has slowed down over the last few months. This might be due to the fact that many of our breeder birds had been molting, but also surely was influenced by the released Starlings that were and still are regularly visiting the aviaries. In the future we will have to assess this situation and eventually come up with solutions.

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Ruby-throated Bulbul (*Rubigula dispar*):
After a few months of break we have had another two offspring of Ruby-throated Bulbul fledge. Hopefully these are the first of many in the upcoming dry season.

Rufous-fronted Laughingthrush (*Garrulax r.rufifrons*)

A newly formed pair of Rufous-fronted Laughingthrushes successfully raised one chick upon first attempt. This species still remains a mystery to us, with breeding success occurring only very irregularly and unpredictably.



Rufous-fronted Laughingthrush fledgling



Orange-headed Thrush fledgling