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Flights of diversity: Tracing the evolution of avian representation on Indonesian postage stamps (1963-2020)

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Abstract

This paper explores the representation of avian diversity in Indonesian postage stamps from 1963 to 2020. It aims to understand how bird species have been depicted on stamps over time and assess the extent of avian diversity showcased. The research combines ornithology, history, and philately to examine the cultural, environmental, and socio-political contexts of avian representation. Findings reveal a dynamic portrayal of avian diversity, with a shift from emblematic species to a broader range including endangered and endemic species. This reflects a growing awareness of conservation and biodiversity, promoting national pride. The study also analyzes artistic techniques, design trends, and cultural symbolism, highlighting evolving aesthetics and narratives. Additionally, it explores the impact of stamps on public awareness, education, and conservation. This research contributes to understanding avian representation in Indonesian stamps and its implications for conservation and national identity. It informs efforts to promote biodiversity conservation through philatelic initiatives and inspire appreciation for Indonesia's avian heritage.

Keywords: Awareness, diversity, educational tool, birds, philatelic material, postal stamps and covers, public awareness

Introduction

Philately is the study and collection of postage stamps and related materials. It is a hobby that involves the acquisition, preservation, study, and exhibition of stamps, as well as the postal history and other related objects. Philatelists, or stamp collectors, find enjoyment in the beauty, historical significance, and cultural aspects of stamps from around the world. The importance of philately lies in several aspects. Firstly, stamps are miniature works of art, often featuring intricate designs, vibrant colors, and interesting themes. They provide a glimpse into the cultural, historical, and artistic heritage of a particular country or era.

Stamps can depict famous personalities, significant events, landmarks, flora and fauna, and various aspects of a nation's heritage.

Philately holds immense importance in spreading awareness about biodiversity, particularly when it comes to birds. Through the medium of stamps, collectors and enthusiasts have the opportunity to educate others about the incredible diversity of bird species, their unique habitats, and fascinating behaviors. Each stamp depicting a bird provides a visual representation of these avian wonders and serves as a gateway to understanding the importance of conserving their natural environments. One of the key roles that philately plays in promoting bird conservation is by advocating for endangered species. Stamps are often issued to raise awareness about the plight of threatened bird species, shedding light on the urgent need for conservation efforts. By collecting and sharing these stamps, philatelists actively contribute to the conservation cause, encouraging others to take an interest in protecting avian biodiversity.

Furthermore, bird stamps offer a glimpse into the cultural representation of birds in different societies. Birds often hold symbolic significance and are featured as national emblems or revered in local folklore. Through philately, collectors can explore the cultural diversity and the interconnectedness between birds and human societies. This fosters appreciation for the rich tapestry of cultural heritage and highlights the role birds play in shaping our collective identity. In addition to their educational and cultural value, bird stamps also serve as important historical records.

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Fig 1: Birds in Indonesian Postage stamps through time

Results and Discussion

Birds in Indonesian Postage Stamps through years

The bird stamps of Indonesia, issued between 1963 and 1983, showcase the country's rich avian diversity and commemorate significant events. One notable stamp is the "Greater Bird-of-paradise" stamp, issued in 1963 as part of the "Acquisition of West Irian" series. This stamp features the stunning *Paradisaea apoda*, a bird renowned for its elaborate courtship displays.

In 1965, a set of stamps was released to celebrate "Social Day" in Indonesia. Among the featured birds were the "Malaysian Pied Fantail," "Zebra Dove," "Black Drongo," "Blacknaped Oriole," and the "Java Sparrow." These stamps highlighted the diverse birdlife found in the region and served as a tribute to Indonesia's social fabric.

Moving forward to 1980, the "Parrots" series showcased the country's vibrant parrot species. The stamps featured the "Pesquet's Parrot," "Chattering Lory," and "Coconut Lorikeet." Additionally, a special sheet was released featuring the "Coconut Lorikeet" and "Pesquet's Parrot" together.

Continuing the avian theme, the 1981 "Cockatoos" series

captured the beauty of these charismatic birds. The stamps featured the "Salmon-crested Cockatoo," "Sulphur-crested Cockatoo," and the "Palm Cockatoo." Similar to the previous series, a sheet was released, showcasing the "Sulphur-crested Cockatoo" and "Palm Cockatoo" together. The following year, in 1982, stamps were issued in conjunction with the "World National Parks Congress" held in Bali. The stamps highlighted the "Bali Myna" and the "King Bird-of-paradise," paying tribute to the conservation efforts in Indonesia. Additionally, the "MS Western Parotia" stamp from the "Birds of Paradise" series featured the spectacular *Parotia sefilata*.

Continuing with the "Birds of Paradise" theme, the 1982 stamps showcased the "Twelvewired Bird-of-paradise," "Red Bird-of-paradise," and the "Western Parotia." Similarly, a sheet was issued featuring the "Red Bird-of-paradise" and the "Western Parotia." Lastly, the 1983 stamp collection included the "Wilson's Bird-of-paradise" and the "Black Sicklebill," highlighting the captivating beauty of these unique birds.

The bird stamps of Indonesia, issued between 1983 and 1996, continue to showcase the country's diverse avian

species and commemorate various occasions. In 1983, the "Birds of Paradise" series featured the captivating "Black-billed Sicklebill" (*Drepanornis albertisi*). This species, known for its distinct sickle-shaped bill, was depicted in three stamps, showcasing its unique beauty.

The following year, in 1984, the "Birds" and "Philakorea 84" series featured several bird species. The stamps included the "MS Yellow-breasted Bowerbird" (*Chlamydera lauterbachi*), "Masked Bowerbird" (*Sericulus aureus*), "Arfak Astrapia" (*Astrapia nigra*), and the "Crescent-caped Lophorina" (*Lophorina niedda*). These stamps celebrated the colorful and diverse avifauna of Indonesia.

Moving on to 1992, the "Birds" series highlighted the "White-crested Laughing thrush" (*Garrulax leucolophus*), "Common Flameback" (*Dinopium javanense*), "Rhinoceros Hornbill" (*Buceros rhinoceros*), and the "Moluccan King Parrot" (*Alisterus amboinensis*).

These stamps showcased the beauty and variety of bird species found in Indonesia.

In 1993, the "Environmental Protection" series featured the "Javan Hawk-Eagle" (*Nisaetus bartelsi*), emphasizing the importance of preserving the country's natural heritage.

Additionally, the "Flora and Fauna Day" series presented the "Rufous-tailed Shama" (*Copsychus pyropygus*) and the "Nias Hill Myna" (*Gracula robusta*) on a four-stamp sheet, raising awareness about the country's unique flora and fauna.

Continuing with the "Flora and Fauna Day" series in 1994, a ten-stamp sheet featured the "Great Argus" (*Argusianus argus*), "Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot" (*Loriculus galgulus*), "Helmeted Friarbird" (*Philemon buceroides*), "Moluccan King Parrot" (*Alisterus amboinensis*), and the "Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise" (*Seleucidis melanoleucus*). These stamps celebrated the biodiversity of Indonesia's flora and fauna.

In 1995, the "Primera 95" series featured the "Helmeted Friarbird" (*Philemon buceroides*) on a miniature sheet, highlighting the uniqueness of this species. The "Flora and Fauna Day" series also showcased the "Maleo" (*Macrocephalon maleo*) and the "Bornean Peacock-Pheasant" (*Polyplectron schleiermacheri*) on a ten-stamp sheet, along with the "Knobbed Hornbill" (*Rhyticeros cassidix*), "Black-naped Oriole" (*Oriolus chinensis*), and the "Bali Myna" (*Leucopsar rothschildi*).

The bird stamps of Indonesia, issued between 1996 and 1999, continue to showcase the country's rich avian diversity and commemorate various events and themes. In 1996, the "Flora and Fauna Day" series featured the "Bali Myna" (*Leucopsar rothschildi*) on a miniature sheet, highlighting the importance of protecting this endangered species. The "Aseanpex 96" series showcased the "Knobbed Hornbill" (*Rhyticeros cassidix*) on a miniature sheet, emphasizing the bird's distinctive appearance.

In 1997, the "Anniversary, stamp on stamp" series celebrated the "Helmeted Friarbird" (*Philemon buceroides*) on a miniature sheet, commemorating the history and significance of stamp collecting. The "Pacific '97" series featured the "Black-naped Oriole" (*Oriolus chinensis*) on a miniature sheet, representing the beauty of this colorful bird. The "Flora and Fauna Day" series released a ten-stamp sheet featuring the "Brahminy Kite" (*Haliastur indus*) and a ten-stamp sheet featuring the "Helmeted Hornbill" (*Rhinoplax vigil*), emphasizing the importance of conservation efforts.

Moving to 1998, the "Philaccept 98" series released a miniature sheet featuring the "Javan Kingfisher" (*Halcyon cyanoventris*) and the "Javan Lapwing" (*Vanellus macropterus*), highlighting the unique bird species found in Java. The "Indonesian ducks" series showcased various duck species on a sheet, including the "Magpie Goose" (*Anseranas semipalmata*), "Spotted Whistling Duck" (*Dendrocygna guttata*), "Salvadori's Teal" (*Salvadorina waigiensis*), "Radjah Shelduck" (*Radjah radjah*), "White-winged Duck" (*Asarcornis scutulata*), "Hardhead" (*Aythya australis*), "Pacific Black Duck" (*Anas superciliosa*), "Sunda Teal" (*Anas gibberifrons*), "Cotton Pygmy Goose" (*Nettapus coromandelianus*), "Green Pygmy Goose" (*Nettapus pulchellus*), "Lesser Whistling Duck" (*Dendrocygna javanica*), and "Wandering Whistling Duck" (*Dendrocygna arcuata*). These stamps celebrated the diverse waterfowl species found across Indonesia.

In 1999, the "Domestic Animals" series featured the "Rock Dove" (*Columba livia*) on a six-stamp set and a six-stamp sheet, highlighting the significance of this familiar bird as a domesticated animal.

The bird stamps of Indonesia from 2000 to 2009 continued to showcase the country's diverse avifauna and promote various themes and conservation efforts. In 2000, the "Environmental Care" series featured the "Red-footed Booby" (*Sula sula*) on a three stamp set, emphasizing the importance of environmental stewardship. The "Indonesian Ducks" series highlighted the "Lesser Whistling Duck" (*Dendrocygna javanica*) and the "Hardhead" (*Aythya australis*) as representatives of the country's waterfowl species.

In 2003, the "Greetings" series released a five-stamp set featuring the iconic "Bali Myna" (*Leucopsar rothschildi*), showcasing the bird's beauty and cultural significance. The "Environmental Care" series in 2004 showcased the "White Tern" (*Gygis alba*) on a two stamp strip and a two-stamp sheet, drawing attention to the importance of environmental conservation.

The "Save Mangrove Forests" series in 2005 featured the "Milky Stork" (*Mycteria cinerea*) on a two-stamp strip and a two-stamp sheet, highlighting the need to protect these unique coastal ecosystems.

The "New and Rediscovered" series in 2006 introduced the "Wattled Smoky Honeyeater" (*Melipotus carolae*) and the "Golden-fronted Bowerbird" (*Amblyornis flavifrons*) on a four-stamp set and a two-stamp sheet, celebrating newly discovered or rediscovered bird species.

In 2008, the "Taipei 2008" series showcased the "Southern Cassowary" (*Casuarius casuarius*) on a two-stamp sheet, representing the diverse avian fauna found in Indonesia.

The "Jakarta 2008" series released a miniature sheet featuring the "Brahminy Kite" (*Haliastur indus*), highlighting the bird's significance in Indonesian culture. The "Flora and Fauna" series in 2008 featured an eleven-stamp sheet with various species including the "Bali Myna," "Black-naped Oriole," "Helmeted Hornbill," "Moluccan King Parrot," "Rufoustailed Shama," "Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise," "Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot," "Snoring Rail," "Great Argus," and more. This comprehensive sheet showcased the richness and diversity of Indonesia's birdlife.

In 2009, the "Indonesian Birds" series released a sheet featuring the "Wrinkled Hornbill" (*Rhabdotornis corrugatus*), "Red-naped Trogon" (*Harpactes kasumba*), "Rufouscollared Kingfisher" (*Actenoides concretus*), and

"White-winged Duck" (*Asarcornis scutulata*), highlighting the beauty and importance of these bird species.

The bird stamps of Indonesia from 2009 to 2014 continued to showcase the country's rich avian diversity and highlighted various conservation themes. In 2009, the "Indonesian Birds" series released a sheet featuring the "Great Argus" (*Argusianus argus*), "Storm's Stork" (*Ciconia stormi*), "Wrinkled Hornbill" (*Rhabdotorrhinus corrugatus*), "Rednaped Trogon" (*Harpactes kasumba*), "Rufous-collared Kingfisher" (*Actenoides concretus*), and "White-winged Duck" (*Asarcornis scutulata*). These stamps celebrated the beauty and uniqueness of these bird species.

The "Flora and Fauna" series in 2009 showcased an eleven-stamp sheet featuring the "Red Junglefowl" (*Gallus gallus*), "Bornean Peacock-Pheasant" (*Polyplectron schleiermacheri*), "Red Bird-of-paradise" (*Paradisaea rubra*), and "Maleo" (*Macrocephalon maleo*). This sheet highlighted the diversity of Indonesian flora and fauna, including these notable bird species.

In 2010, the "Environmental Care" series released a three-stamp set featuring the "Brahminy Kite" (*Haliastur indus*), emphasizing the importance of environmental conservation. The "Flora and Fauna" series in the same year included an eleven-stamp set consisting of four sheets, with each sheet featuring the "Brahminy Kite," "Zebra Dove" (*Geopelia striata*), "Nias Hill Myna" (*Gracula robusta*), and "Knobbed Hornbill" (*Rhyticeros cassidix*). These stamps showcased the diversity and beauty of Indonesian birdlife.

In 2011, Indonesia had a joint issue with Malaysia, featuring the "Red Junglefowl" and "Green Junglefowl" (*Gallus varius*) on eight-stamp sheets and four sets of four-stamp sheets. These stamps symbolized the close collaboration between the two countries in promoting avian conservation.

The "Threatened Bird Species" series in 2012 highlighted endangered birds, including the "Siau Scops Owl" (*Otus siaoensis*), "Flores Hawk-Eagle" (*Nisaetus floris*), "Elegant Sunbird" (*Aethopyga duyvenbodei*), and "Invisible Rail" (*Habroptila wallacii*). These stamps aimed to raise awareness about the importance of protecting these vulnerable species.

In 2013, the "West Irian" series released a three-stamp set featuring the "Lesser Bird-of-paradise" (*Paradisaea minor*), representing the unique birdlife found in West Irian (now known as West Papua). The "Thailand 2013" series included a miniature sheet featuring the "Raggiana Bird-of-paradise" (*Paradisaea raggiana*), showcasing the collaboration between Indonesia and Thailand in promoting bird conservation.

The "Environment Day" series in 2014 featured the "Lesser Adjutant" (*Leptoptilos javanicus*) on a two-stamp set and a two-stamp sheet, emphasizing the importance of environmental protection. The "Waterbirds" series showcased stamps featuring the "Milky Stork," "Javan Plover" (*Charadrius javanicus*), "Blue-faced Rail" (*Gymnocrex rosenbergii*), and "White-shouldered Ibis" (*Pseudibis davisoni*), highlighting the diversity and significance of these water bird species. These stamps aimed to raise awareness about the conservation of wetland habitats and the importance of protecting waterbirds.

In 2014, the "Waterbirds" series featured a sheet with stamps showcasing the "Blue-faced Rail" (*Gymnocrex rosenbergii*) and the "White-shouldered Ibis" (*Pseudibis davisoni*). These stamps highlighted the beauty and importance of these waterbird species and their habitats.

The "National Armed Force Anniversary" series in the same year released a three-stamp set featuring the "Bald Eagle" (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). These stamps commemorated the anniversary of Indonesia's national armed forces and symbolized strength and freedom.

In 2015, the "Flora and Fauna" series included a two-stamp set and a miniature sheet showcasing the "Nias Hill Myna" (*Gracula robusta*). These stamps celebrated the unique bird species found in Nias Island, Indonesia. The "Philatapei" series in 2016 featured a miniature sheet with the "Green Peafowl" (*Pavo muticus*). This stamp celebrated the beauty and cultural significance of this bird species in Indonesia.

In 2017, the "Year of the Rooster" series released stamps featuring the "Red Jungle fowl" (*Gallus gallus*). These stamps commemorated the Chinese zodiac Year of the Rooster and showcased the national bird of Indonesia. There were individual stamps as well as a sheet with two sets of stamps, emphasizing the significance of this bird in Indonesian culture.

The "Environment Day" series in 2018 included a two-stamp set featuring the "White breasted Waterhen" (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*). These stamps emphasized the importance of environmental conservation and the preservation of wetland habitats.

The "Flora and Fauna" series in 2018 and 2019 featured the "Knobbed Hornbill" (*Rhyticeros cassidix*). The 2018 set consisted of a six-stamp set and a miniature sheet, showcasing the unique beauty of this bird species.

In 2019, the "Philatelic Exhibition Makassar" series included a miniature sheet featuring the "Knobbed Hornbill," further promoting philately and bird conservation.

In 2019, the "Flora and Fauna" series also included a six-stamp set featuring the "Rote Myzomela" (*Myzomela irianawidodoae*). These stamps celebrated the endemic bird species found in Rote Island, Indonesia.

The "Diplomatic Relations with Colombia" series in 2020 released a four-stamp sheet featuring the "Lesser Bird-of-paradise" (*Paradisaea minor*) and the "Multicolored Tanager" (*Chlorochrysa nitidissima*). These stamps symbolized the friendship and diplomatic ties between Indonesia and Colombia, showcasing the biodiversity of both countries.

Overall, these stamps from various series and years highlight the rich avian diversity found in Indonesia and serve as reminders of the importance of bird conservation and the protection of their habitats. Figure 1.

Discussions and Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper examined the representation of avian diversity in the postage stamps of Indonesia from 1963 to 2020. The primary aim was to analyze how the depiction of birds on stamps has evolved over time, reflecting the country's rich avifauna and its changing cultural and environmental contexts.

The study revealed several significant findings. Firstly, there was a clear increase in the portrayal of avian species on Indonesian stamps over the decades, indicating a growing recognition of the importance of birds in the country's natural heritage. The stamps not only showcased the remarkable diversity of Indonesian birds but also highlighted their ecological significance and conservation value.

Furthermore, the analysis of stamp designs and themes

demonstrated a shift from generic bird illustrations to more context-specific depictions, such as endemic species of birds associated with cultural and historical symbolism. This suggests an increasing emphasis on capturing the unique avian biodiversity of Indonesia and fostering a sense of national pride and identity.

Overall, this research contributes to our understanding of how avian diversity has been represented in the postage stamps of Indonesia. It underscores the role of stamps as cultural artifacts and showcases the country's commitment to conserving its avifauna. The findings can serve as a valuable resource for future studies on the relationship between philately, biodiversity, and cultural heritage, emphasizing the importance of raising awareness and promoting conservation efforts through various mediums, including postage stamps.

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