

Nesting of Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea*

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A pair of Black-naped Monarchs *Hypothymis azurea* were observed nesting at the Hutan Lipur Bukit Ayer, Perlis, Malaysia in May 2023. The location was a neighbourhood orchard. The nest was built on a *Lansium domesticum* Corr. (Dokong tree). The Dokong is a hybrid of Duku and Langsat and is believed to have originated from Narathiwat, Thailand (Department of Agriculture State, Penang Island 2023). The Dokong tree is usually between 6 m to 9 m in height and has an ovate to lanceolate canopy.

Description of the Nest

The nest was approximately 3.5 metres above the ground and placed in the fork of a branch, as described in Wells (2007) "*most commonly in a multi-pronged stem fork of a slender sapling*". The nest was a compact cup lined with plant fibres with some untidy material dangling below. It incorporated some moss and had extensive use of spiderweb and cotton (see Plate 1).



Plate 1: Adult male at nest, incubating

Nesting Observations

The nest was discovered on 10 May 2023 and observed daily until the nestlings fledged. Feeding of nestlings was first observed on 19 May 2023 and fledging occurred on 26 May 2023. Three nestlings were observed to fledge. Wells (2007) states that the incubation and fledging periods are unreported locally. Moeliker *et al.* (2020) quote an incubation period of 14 days and a nestling



period of approximately 10 days. This observation suggests that incubation is longer than nine days and that fledging occurred eight days after hatching.



Plate 2: Adult female at nest with very young nestlings

Both adults were observed to be involved in the incubation and the feeding of nestlings (see Plate 2). Observations suggest that the female brought more food to nestlings than the male. Peak feeding periods were 0830 to 1100 and 1500 to 1700. Peak feeding frequency was 6 to 10 times per hour. Food items brought to the three nestlings included ant eggs, flying termites ('swarmers'), small butterflies (fed with the wings on) and other insects (see Plate 3). Adults

sometimes fed nestlings in rapid succession. Faecal sac removals were observed, with nestlings presenting the rear end for collection.



Plate 3: Adult female feeding a fledgling with butterfly prey

Nestlings fledged while still only partially feathered (see Plate 4). The throat and upper breast of fledglings were grey-black and the lower breast white; upperparts were dark brown. Feet were flesh-grey and the beak dark grey on the upper mandible and lighter below. Although the iris of fledglings is described as grey (Wells 2007), these fledglings had dark irides.



Plate 4: Recently fledged nestlings

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