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Malaysian Bird Report

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Contents:

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Malaysian Bird Report is the Malaysian content partner for Birds of the World | The Cornell Lab https://birdsoftheworld.org/bow/home

The Malaysian Bird Report has recently entered into a formal content collaboration with Birds of the World (BOW). Birds of the World is a participatory avian life history platform that empowers a global community of ornithologists to unlock transformative insights for research and conservation. BOW species accounts are under a constant state of revision and special efforts are being made to address data gaps and surface regional science. Please work with us so we can incorporate our mutual expertise on Malaysian birds into this important online resource. If you are interested in being involved, supporting or contributing to the work please contact the MBR committee.

Editorial

Editorial Team, Malaysian Bird Report

This issue of the Malaysian Bird Report (MBR) was exciting to put together. We have our first Bahasa Malaysia article featuring Bird Artist Charles Mawan, with an English summary translation. Lim Kim Chye shares with us how to differentiate the Pied Harrier and Eastern Marsh Harrier. While Jalila Abu put together an article on how to care for injured birds – vital reading for all of us.

Roselyn Chuah shares a perspective on connectivity and rewilding which is critical for our cities and Ashraf Anuar Zaini reports on an exciting pelagic birding trip, which is uncommon locally, and we look forward to more such opportunities. We have a special report on birds and 'back' mangroves, prepared together with the environmental journalism site *Macaranga*.

We have a first breeding record of the Slaty-Legged Crake. Brood-helpers reported for the first time for Dusky Broadbills and Oriental Honey-buzzards. And the rediscovery of the Rajah Scops-Owl.

We have started a new section specially for bird photographers or those daunted with writing a full article: "Photo-Shorts". The editorial team will assist you to write up brief, interesting observations based on images or videos.

MBR updates recent relevant publications/research and upcoming/recent bird activities. There is an ebird-book download available. And we remember Cheaw Hon Ming, who left us suddenly and will be a loss to the bird watching community.

MBR is now the Malaysian content partner for Birds of the World (BOW), The Cornell Lab. Link to Malaysian Bird Report partner page: https://birdsoftheworld.org/bow/content/malaysian-bird-report We welcome you to work with us to write up species accounts for Malaysian birds.

The Malaysian Bird Report website: https://malaysianbird.report/ has continued to be developed and now offers more searchable functions. We hope you will share this with colleagues and friends.

As always, we thank everyone who has kindly submitted articles, data, reports and images. Thanks Jason Bugay Reyes for the magnificent Bornean Ground-Cuckoos that adorn our front cover. We welcome contributions and encourage different language submissions.

Field Notes

First Breeding Record of the Slaty-Legged Crake *Rallina eurizinoides* in Malaysia and description of Breeding Behaviour

Noralip Hassanuddin*, Mohd Erwin Uzdek* & Dave Bakewell
*Labuan Avian Group

Slaty-legged Crake has a wide but disjunct breeding range, from west and north-east India and Nepal as far east and north as Taiwan and the southern Japanese islands, On continental Southeast Asia, breeding has been recorded as far south as Western Thailand and Central Vietnam, and it is also a breeding bird throughout the Philippines and Sulawesi, Indonesia. Seven races are recognized: *R. e. amauroptera* occurs in the Himalayan foothills and south-west India; *R. e. telmatophila* breeds in continental south-east Asia; *R. e. sepiaria* is resident on the Ryuku Islands; *R. e. formosana* occurs in Taiwan and Lanyu Island; the nominate race breeds in the Philippines (except Batan Island) and Palau Island; Batan Island has its own endemic form – *R. e. alvarezi*; and *R. e. minahasa* occurs in Sulawesi and the Sula Islands (Taylor 2020).

The species has been hitherto unknown as a breeding bird in Malaysia and the rest of Borneo, being recorded only as a scarce migrant (MNS BCC 2021). Indeed, the first record of the species for Borneo was only in 2018 (Borneo Bird Images 2024), and there have been a small handful of records since.

On Labuan Island itself, the only Rallids mentioned in archival records are Slaty-breasted Rail *Lewinia striata*, Red-legged Crake *Rallina fasciata* and White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* (Sharpe, 1879).

This report describes the breeding of a pair of Slaty- legged Crakes which occurred on Labuan Island in late 2023 to early 2024.

Disclosure on Chicks Observations

Observations were made from a bird hide, at a distance of 9m from the nesting area (see Plate 1). Almost daily visits to the area were made by NH or NH and MEU. Equipment used for observation, images and video recording included 60x60 binoculars, a Xiaomi Rangefinder and DSLR cameras with 150-600mm telephoto lens. The chicks and adults appeared comfortable with human presence nearby.

A man-made pond was erected (1.22m x 1.88m) for the birds and other animals nearby, since it was the dry season by the time the chicks had fledged. Almost every day it was used for bathing by the Slaty-legged Crakes, as well as by Rufous-backed Kingfishers *Ceyx rufidorsa*, Malaysian Pied Fantails *Rhipidura javanica*, Western Hooded Pittas *Pitta sordida*, Yellow-vented Bulbuls *Pycnonotus goiavier* and occasionally by a group of Long-tailed Macaques *Macaca fascicularis*, Asian Water Monitor *Varanus salvator* and Gold-ringed Cat Snake *Boiga dendrophila*.

Key Timelines of Nesting Activity Observations

22 October 2023	A pair of Slaty-Legged Crakes was spotted in what appeared to be courtship preparation.
28 October to end December 2023	The pair of adults Slaty-Legged Crakes were observed taking turns going in and out of the nesting area, for bathing and preening at a pond nearby. Once in a while, an alarm or territorial call was heard from the nest area.
9 November 2023	The exact nesting site was first identified as both adult crakes were observed going in and out of a patch of Japanese stilt grass *Microstegium vimineum*, 9m from the observation hide.
28 December 2023	One chick was spotted with an adult. Two more chicks were seen to fledge from the nest the same evening.
28 to 31 January 2024	Feeding was observed to take place twice a day (early morning and in the mid-morning).
Early February 2024	Only two young chicks were seen and their plumage changed from black to brown on the head and breast, with narrow white stripes below.
Observations until mid-March 2024	Observation ended in mid-March 2024 as the dry season began and the Slaty-legged Crake family was no longer seen.

Plate 1: Location of the hide in relation to the nesting site

Nesting Location and Environment

The nest area was situated at Sungai Pagar on the west coast of Labuan Island, Malaysia [5°16'18.5"N 115°10'06.7"E]. It was approximately 100m east of a crude oil terminal, 200m north of a golf course and 200m west of Sungai Pagar beach. This beach is approximately 58.3km across the sea from Muara Beach, Brunei Darussalam (see Plate 2). The nesting site was located in an area covered with Japanese Stilt grass *Microstegium vimineum*, approximately 3,000 m2. The area was difficult to access due to proximity to the border fence of the Labuan Crude Oil Terminal.

Incubation and Fledging Periods

The duration from hatchling to fledgling was estimated to be around 20-24 days. The incubation period was not possible to ascertain. Fledglings were observed to be still dependent on adults for food and safety. The fledglings continued to be attended by both parents for about 47 days after leaving the nest. Thereafter, they were observed without the parents.

Plates 2: Nesting location and surrounding environment

Adults/Parental Responsibilities

It was not possible to distinguish the male from female adults. Hence, it was not possible to differentiate parental responsibilities. However, both adults were always seen together with their chicks outside the nesting area. Both adults fed chicks (see Plate 3).

Food Items for Juveniles

From observations it appears that the diet for the young chicks was mainly invertebrates and insects. Some items appeared to be maggots and larvae.

Behaviour of Juveniles

Chicks often snatched food from their parents, even when they were able to forage for themselves. Chicks were not alarmed by the presence of human observers, even when seen outside the hide. However, juveniles were quick to respond and retreat to safety when parents showed alarm or distress, or if an alarm call was heard from other birds sharing the same pond and foraging area, such as Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis*, Mangrove Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis rufigastra*, Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* and Rufous-backed Dwarf-Kingfisher.

Plate 3: Adults accompanying chicks and feeding them

Description of Juveniles

Plate 5 shows a series of images of the chick's plumage transition over time, compared to an adult. Young chicks were covered in black down, and were very similar to chicks of the White-breasted Waterhen. The beak was dark grey with a green sheen. Legs were shiny dark grey. The pre-juvenile moult resulted in dark brown body plumage, with the head being the last area to grow feathers. In juvenile plumage, the birds had a brown head and breast with narrow white bars below.

Plate 5: Collage of chicks' plumage development over time, compared to an adult (last image). Videos can be viewed here: https://labuanislandbirds.wordpress.com/2024/03/15/labuan-island-north-borneo-1st-slaty-legged-crake-sintar-merah-rallina-eurizonoides-successful-breeding-record-and-documented/

Discussion

According to Taylor (2020), breeding has been recorded in Jun - Sep in India, Apr – Jul in the Ryukyu Islands and Nov in the Philippines. A nest was also observed in the Philippines in Sep (Kaufmann 2011). Timing of breeding may be influenced by local climatic conditions, with breeding in India occurring in the SW monsoon season. The breeding of the Labuan birds occurred in Nov, during the NE monsoon season.

The nest may be sited on the ground or up to a meter above ground on a tree stump (Taylor 2020), or even a flowerpot (Kaufmann 2011). In the case of the Labuan birds, the nest was on the ground. Nests in India and the Philippines were located surprisingly close to human habitation (Kurian 2015, Kaufmann 2011), as in the case of the Labuan observation. It is hard to draw any conclusions about nest site preference from this, other than that the species is unusually tolerant of proximity to humans during breeding. Taylor (2020) records a range of 4-6 eggs for this species, with one observation reporting 7 in a nest (Murukesh & Balakrishnan

2015), of which only 3 hatched. In this case, the nest and eggs were not observed directly, so no conclusions can be drawn regarding clutch size.

The authors were unable to find any information regarding care of chicks after leaving the nest in published literature, so the observation of extended post-fledging parental care for at least 47 days may be an addition to information on this species.

The subspecific identity of the Slaty-legged Crakes on Labuan was not determined with certainty. Geographically, the closest breeding populations are those in the Philippines (nominate race) and Sulawesi (race *minahasa*), The Labuan birds resemble the nominate race, more than *minahasa*, which is darker above and has narrower barring on the underparts than the nominate race (James Eaton, in litt.), but further observations are desirable to confirm this.

Acknowledgment

NH and MEU wish to thank Mr. Moib Ismail bin Zainal, (Pembantu Hidupan Liar) and the PERHILITAN enforcement team who made these observations possible by providing Labuan Avian Group with a temporary permit for doing studies and observation on the Crakes as required under Section 10(1)(d), Akta Pemuliharaan Hidupan Liar (Pindaan) 2022. They also acknowledge the assistance of Muqtadir Halim of BERNAMA, Kok Ko Onn of Tawau and the Unit Rondaan of Bebuloh Police Department.

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Connectivity and Rewilding: A Birder's Personal Perspective
Roselyn Chuah

Fragmented open green spaces whether natural or created by design cannot exist in isolation. Notwithstanding efforts to recreate enhanced habitats due to loss following ceaseless and widespread developments, a fragmented environment will inevitably affect the foraging grounds and natural activities of animals of the land, water and air such as mating and breeding.

Rantaian Urban Green Spaces (RUGS) is borne on a premise that existing fragmented green spaces could be reconnected and rehabilitated to create a network of physical and ecological pathways to restore these fractured portions of the natural habitats of animals. Named the Damansara-Pantai Arc this network comprises thirteen sites that include Bukit Lanjan, Bukit Sri Bintang, Bukit Kiara, Rimba Ilmu in Universiti Malaya, Bukit Gasing, Bukit Persekutuan, Taman Tugu and Kawasan Damansara. A floral and faunal survey was undertaken last year that endeavoured to assess the biodiversity and potential ecological linkages between these sites.

RUGS's first flora and fauna survey of this three-year project under the aegis of the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) was conducted over a period of approximately eight weeks in July to August last year, and included a birdlife diversity assessment. Forest reserves, secondary forests, community forests, recreational parks and gardens comprise the survey sites.

Whilst mindful of the geographical and terrain make-up, birds were identified by sight and diagnostic calls and songs, and of diurnal and nocturnal birds. As it was inopportune that the bird survey period could not be extended to fully include the local bird migratory season normally observed from late August to April, past observations were duly included in the findings to reflect a more comprehensive bird presence in those sites.

The aim of the bird survey was primarily bird diversity but inevitably bird population was observed too. The survey covered number of species and families, resident status and in view that the survey period just about managed to dip into the early stage of the bird migrant season, the potential presence of migrant birds was not discounted, and indeed there were sightings of early arrivals of Barn Swallows, a Blue-Winged Pitta, a Common Sandpiper, and an Oriental Honey Buzzard, possibly a migrant over-stayer of the year before.

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus*

Buffy Fish-Owl *Ketupa ketupu*

More than 110 bird species representing more than 45 families of local and migrant birds, of dry land bird species namely garden, park, open country, forest and forest edge, and water birds and wetland species were recorded. Nocturnal birds of six species representing two families were recorded, with owl numbers suggesting a healthy presence in sub-urban habitats. Records of past sightings and existing literature easily added another approximate 40 local and migrant species to the numbers recorded in this survey.

The composition of habitats was very similar for most sites namely secondary forest, overgrown rubber plantation (some flanked by orchards/dusuns), ferns, vines, palm undergrowth, interspersed open country of wild grass/lalang, sub-urban overgrown woodlands. Some of the sites were bordered by enhanced garden and park corridors of residential areas and villages/kampong. A combination of natural and man-made trails featured in some of the sites. An exception of a site was one that comprised comparatively more water bodies, marshy patches, and wet undergrowth.

Against the background of these habitats, common bird species were expected and indeed sighted. The presence and healthy numbers of Near Threatened birds like White-rumped Shamas was a pleasant observation although in view of the ecological proximity of these sites, these could be the same birds moving and foraging between sites. If so, then perhaps we can happily deduce that there already exists a connectivity between these sites, an optimistic outcome that RUGS is driving at.

Common bird species of urban areas like mynas, ioras, orioles, and open country and forest edge ones like Pin-striped Tit-Babblers, Orange-bellied Flowerpeckers, Olive-winged Bulbuls, woodpeckers, and munia species were observed across all sites, again suggesting existing connectivity by virtue of aerial proximity. However, there is always the sad possibility of depleting resources and the ability to continue to sustain these healthy populations with the current endless encroachment of concrete structures such as buildings and infrastructure into these existing open green spaces.

It was also observed that there was a healthy presence of frugivorous, granivorous, insectivorous, nectivorous, omnivorous and carnivorous birds. All seemed not lost then that these remaining green spaces and enhanced habitats, due to existing mindful initiatives to try to retain or improve what's taken by infrastructure, commercial and residential developers, have already slowly regenerated to be able to sustain the diverse avian population.

However, as the sites surveyed were mainly overgrown rubber estates and secondary forest, there was a noticeable lack of lowland forest birds like barbets and broadbills. Perhaps replanting of native trees and shrubs into mature secondary forest could in future increase further bird diversity to attract forest birds like broadbills, trogons, and frogmouths. Could these species be attracted to forage and mate in enhanced habitats that will always be adjacent to areas filled with noise, fumes and dust? Could conscious and persistent initiatives of connectivity and rewilding revive damaged habitats to create more diversity to birdlife?

Could there be tolerance of some 'disorder' in enhanced environments such as leaving fallen leaves and litter alone to foster worms and insects, allowing dead trees to stand so that birds like woodpeckers and barbets could nest easily, not demand for trees fallen that are not in any way an obstruction to remain where they are – could we allow nature to rewild naturally? Perhaps then parts of the forests and jungles that have been appropriated so unconscionably in the name of development could be returned to these rightful avian inhabitants.

Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator*

In addition, bird lovers could also be mindful of overzealousness when they destroy foliage in pursuing stunning bird images. Birds nest and roost in areas where they obviously feel safe and the proximity of foraging territories means that less energy and anxiety is expended especially when they leave their nests to hunt for their young. Thoughtlessness and over-zealousness could cause a bird to abandon a site within their original foraging or nesting

territory to move further away to one that would pose a threat to their nest and young as the bird could be seen as entering already claimed territory.

Bird lovers may tend to underestimate their role in rewilding and connectivity in the larger scheme of helping to foster and maintain foraging, roosting and nesting territories of birds. No doubt birds naturally face predatory threats from other animals, but as the most intelligent beings, bird lovers can mindfully play a significant role to nurture the right environment for any avian activity. It might be a birding hobby for one, but it could be a do or die habitat for another.

White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Icthyophaga leucogaster*

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Highland Mixed-Species Foraging Flocks (Bird Waves) Differences between Peninsular Malaysia and Bornean Malaysia

Amar-Singh HSS, Ron Pudin, Siew-Teck Yeo

Mixed-species foraging parties, mixed-species bird flocks, mixed-species feeding/foraging flock or often called 'bird waves' are flocks of bird of different species that come together to forage through the forest (Graves & Gotelli 1993). They are usually bird species that feed on insects or invertebrates. This is not to be confused with bird species that are found feeding at the same site of high food availability, example at a fruiting tree or foraging on emerging insects.

Mangini *et al* (2023) has defined a mixed-species foraging flock as "*a roving group of three or more individuals from at least two species, moving in concert and behaving cohesively while foraging over a non-aggregated food resource.... flocking individuals should remain within 25m of each other and move together in the same direction for at least 5 min...* ".

How mixed-species foraging flocks originate is uncertain but there often a 'nuclear' species that initiates and around which flocks tend to form (Moynihan 1962). For example, the lowland mixed-species bird flocks in Peninsular Malaysia are often initiated by a leafbird, often the Blue-winged Leafbird *Chloropsis cochinchinensis*, whose frequent calls help to sustain the activity.

This brief report began as a result of the three bird watchers comparing experiences on mixed-species foraging flocks in the highlands of Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah North Borneo. All three bird watchers have extensive bird watching experiences and two work as bird guides. The differences between the highland mixed-species foraging flocks are presented here. Lowland mixed-species foraging flocks are not included in the article.

Table 1 below compares the behaviour, composition and structure of highlands mixed-species foraging flocks between Peninsular Malaysia and Bornean Malaysia.

In Peninsular Malaysia the mixed-species foraging flocks have a variable composition of bird species with birds of different sizes (both small and large) involved, including migrants. They occur intermittently and appear to be opportunistic. They are initiated, grow rapidly in number and species diversity, rush through the montane forest feeding for a short while and then gradually dissipate.

New mixed-species foraging flocks are established intermittently throughout the day. There is no fixed 'nuclear' species, however the Silver-eared Mesia *Leiothrix argentauris* occasionally plays this role. As an example, a number of mixed-species foraging flock participants that were documented are shown in Table 2 and Plate 1. This small example shows how diverse the mixed-species foraging flocks are at the Peninsular Malaysia highlands.

In Sabah, Bornean Malaysia the mixed-species foraging flocks appear to have a relatively 'fixed' composition of bird species with two common groups noted. The 'small' bird wave which

involved predominantly Chestnut-crested Yuhina *Staphida everetti*, Black-capped White-eye *Zosterops atricapilla*, Yellow-breasted Warbler *Phylloscopus montis* and Mountain Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus trivirgatus* (see Plate 2). The second is the 'big' bird wave ('*mixed flocks of large-sized birds*', Mangini *et al* 2023) involved predominantly Laughingthrushes – the Chestnut-hooded Laughingthrush *Pterorhinus treachery* and Sunda Laughingthrush *Garrulax palliates* (see Plate 3).

Both have other birds joining at times but a core set of species remain together. With these mixed-species foraging flocks, birds appear to stay together and have a 'partnership' for the day or perhaps longer. They are very common throughout the day and seem to be almost a continual activity. The 'nuclear' species for these types of bird waves appear to be the Chestnut-crested Yuhina ('small' bird wave) and the Chestnut-hooded Laughingthrush ('big' bird wave) with the rest being followers.

Table 1: Comparison of highlands mixed-species foraging flocks between Peninsular Malaysia and Bornean Malaysia

Location	**Peninsular Malaysia**	**Sabah, North Borneo**
Common Highland Sites	Camaeron Highlands, Fraser's Hill	Kinabalu National Park, Gunung Alab
Types of mixed-species foraging flocks	Variable composition of birds with birds of different sizes involved, including migrants	Two common groups noted. The 'small' bird wave which involves predominantly Yuhinas, White-eyes & Mountain Leaf Warblers. The 'big' bird wave which involves predominantly Laughingthrushes.
Common 'nuclear' species	No fixed bird but Silver-eared Mesias occasionally play this role.	Chestnut-crested Yuhina (for 'small' bird wave) Chestnut-hooded Laughingthrush (for the 'big' bird wave)
Occurrence	Intermittent, Opportunistic	Continual. Established Partnerships
Structure	Initiated, grows rapidly in species number and diversity and then gradually dies out. New mixed-species foraging flock established intermittently throughout the day.	Very common throughout the day and seem to be almost a continual activity. Birds appear to stay together and have a 'partnership' for the day or perhaps longer.

Plate 1: Common participants of highland mixed-species foraging flocks at Peninsular Malaysia

Table 2: Documented examples of mixed-species foraging flock participants at Peninsular Malaysia highlands (personal observation Amar-Singh HSS)

Date	**Location**	**Participants (number of birds)***
21 July 2009	1,800m ASL, Cameron Highlands, Malaysia	Blue Nuthatch *Sitta azurea* (5) Silver-eared Mesia *Leiothrix argentauris* (2) White-throated Fantail *Rhipidura albicollis* (1) Mountain Bulbul *Ixos mcclellandii* (2) Golden-throated Barbet *Megalaima franklinii* (1) Black-and-crimson Oriole *Oriolus cruentus* (1) Black-throated Sunbird *Aethopyga saturata* (2)
15 August 2010	1,600m ASL, Cameron Highlands, Malaysia	Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike *Hemipus picatus* (2) Blue Nuthatch *Sitta azurea* (3) Little Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula westermanni* (1) Grey-chinned Minivet *Pericrocotus solaris* (3)
14 June 2011	1,600m ASL, Cameron Highlands, Malaysia	Golden Babbler *Stachyris chrysaea* (2) Blue-winged Minla *Minla cyanouroptera* (5) Silver-eared Mesia *Leiothrix argentauris* (6) Mountain Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus trivirgatus* (1) Yellow-breasted Warbler *Seicercus montis* (2) White-throated Fantail *Rhipidura albicollis* (2)
01 October 2014	1,600m ASL, Cameron Highlands, Malaysia.	Mountain Fulvetta *Alcippe peracensis* (4) Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike *Hemipus picatus* (2) Yellow-rumped Flycatcher *Ficedula zanthopygia* (2) Hume's White-eye *Zosterops auriventer* (6) Blue-winged Minla *Minla cyanouroptera* (4) Black-throated Sunbird *Aethopyga saturate* (2) Black-crested Bulbul *Pycnonotus melanicterus* (2)

*All of these mixed-species foraging flocks had more species participants but not all were identified

Plate 2: 'Small' bird wave participants; clockwise from upper left, Chestnut-crested Yuhina, Black-capped White-eye, Yellow-breasted Warbler & Mountain Leaf Warbler; all birds imaged as part of mixed-species foraging flocks at Kinabalu National Park in March 2024

Plate 3: 'Big' bird wave participants; Chestnut-hooded Laughingthrush (left) & Sunda Laughingthrush

Discussion

In this simple comparison we have attempted to shed light on surprising differences in two montane regions. Those of us who watch birds in Peninsular Malaysia highlands take for granted that mixed-species foraging flocks are made of both large and small birds, are of diverse species composition and transient in nature. Colleagues in Bornean Malaysia however have the experience of fairly 'stable' mixed-species foraging flocks of two varieties – the big and small groups. Why these differences are unexplained and requires an evaluation.

The most recent, comprehensive discussion, with a proposed classification scheme for mixed-species bird flocks, is by Mangini *et al* (2023). This has been an attempt to offer observers a method to systematically document this activity. It would be useful if bird watchers could use this suggested classification scheme and terminology to document in detail mixed-species bird flocks to aid our understanding and appreciation of this activity.

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Cooperative Nesting Behaviour of the Dusky Broadbill – Brood Helpers

Li-Li Wong

Introduction

The January 2024 observation of cooperative nesting by the Dusky Broadbill in Hulu Langat, Selangor, Malaysia, has garnered significant interest among the bird-watching community of Selangor.

Cooperative nesting, also known as cooperative breeding, is a social system where more than two individuals of the same species care for a single nest and its young. This behaviour is uncommon, occurring in only about three percent of bird species (Arnold & Owens 1999). In cooperative nesting, the birds will be involved in building the nest, incubation, feeding the chicks, fending off predators and other nest related chores. There are many articles written about a pair of nesting parent birds dividing this labour, but not many reports of cooperative nesting involving more than the two parent birds. This article attempts to document birders' behavioural observations of the cooperative nesting behaviour of the Dusky Broadbill *Corydon sumatranus*.

While cooperative breeding in Dusky Broadbills has been recorded, it is unclear if helpers assist the breeding pair in the tasks of incubation, feeding and fledging (Wells 2007; Bruce 2020). Wells (2007) states that there have been many observations of helpers bringing nesting material but none yet of brood-helpers.

The Nesting and Environment

A messy, longish pear-shaped nest was built on the frond's end of an overhanging rattan around 9 m above the ground. It was in an open space with overgrown lower bushes and saplings, close to a hillside. The nest was made up of root pieces, dried leaves, small twigs and masses of an epiphytic creeping fern. It was approximately 40 m away from the nearest stream. Two chicks successfully fledged from this nest. A Crested Serpent-Eagle *Spilornis cheela* was always observed around the nesting area.

Observations

The first known record of this nest was in November 2023 when four Dusky Broadbills were sighted with nesting material in their mouths (Plate 1). The four birds were seen actively building the nest.

On a later date in January 2024 three Dusky Broadbills were sighted at the nest with prey. They were perched together on a nearby branch, ready to feed the chicks. No information was available as to whether the helpers were siblings, from a previous brood or unrelated. At this time, there were two chicks in the nest.

Plate 1: Dusky Broadbills with nesting material

Plate 2: Brood helpers with food for two chicks in the nest

On the day before the chicks fledged, the adults were seen perched on a nearby branch in front of the nest. They were continuously flapping their wings while looking in the direction of the nest, suggesting that the adults were prompting the chicks to fledge (see Plate 3).

Plate 3: Adults encouraging chicks to fledge (left) parent feeding chick (right)

Both chicks fledged on a rainy day on 22 January 2024 around 1pm. On that day Ristomoyo Suwondo recorded the chicks flying energetically out from the nest (video link: https://fb.watch/sjxOo_pGvd/); initially they flew downward but managed to fly higher immediately. After fledging, both chicks were seen perched on a tree branch. The parents were only seen an hour after the chicks fledged.

Plate 4: Fledged juvenile Dusky Broadbills

Discussion

While earlier reports have reported Dusky Broadbills with helpers involved in nest building (Wells 2007; Bruce 2020), this report confirms the presence of brood-helpers. As the adults look alike, it is difficult to determine the actual parents and tease out finer roles. There is uncertainty about the role of brood-helpers in incubation and post-fledging care.

This report also describes adult encouragement of nestlings to fledge; a behaviour not uncommon in a number of species.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank David Ong, Jamil Mat Isa, Tony Tan and Ristomoyo Suwondo for the kind use of their images and/or for information provided from their observations. I am grateful to the Malaysian Bird Report editorial team for assistance to document this observation.

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Search for the Rajah Scops-Owl *Otus brookii*
Ryan Peter

The Rajah Scops-Owl *Otus brookii* is a rare owl found in montane rainforest, primarily between 1200 - 2400 m ASl (Holt *et al* 2020) in Borneo and Sumatra. I started to search for the Rajah Scops-Owl in 2009 after reading about it, as I am interested in rare endemic species.

Phillipps (2014) notes that there are only four specimens for Borneo with two records from Kinabalu National Park, Sabah, North Borneo. "*One picked up dead on the Summit Trail at 1,900m (1986). A male bird found dead at 1,650m on 8 August 1998.*" Phillipps (2014) adds that data from Biun (1999) showed that "*despite intensive mist netting on Kinabalu at all levels which trapped 20 Mountain Scops Owl this bird was not found*". The other two Bornean records are from the top of Mt Dulit, Sarawak, Borneo at 2,000m and Mulu 915m. This suggested to me that this owl resides in the Kinabalu National Park and gave me hope to search for this rare species.

The first five years of my search, from 2009, did not reveal any clues of this owl's existence. The search was interrupted due to participation in the rescue mission in the 2015 Sabah earthquake which struck Ranau and caused fatalities on Mount Kinabalu. This event and participation in the rescue had a mental toll on many of us. My friend Jerry Sipiridin decided to join me to restart the search mission once we had recovered.

I first saw the Rajah Scops-Owl on 05 August 2015 at Kinabalu National Park Silau Silau trail, 1500 m ASL. I was alone on a night walk. However, I was not sure of the bird's identity. I had not brought my camera along as it was raining that night.

I returned to the same site with Jerry on 23 August 2015. Despite misty weather, we were able to see and image the bird. At first, we thought it was a sub-species of the Mountain Scops-Owl *Otus spilocephalus*, as these two owls can look alike. Fortunately, we posted an image online and James Eaton kindly helped to identify the bird.

Plate 1: Rajah Scops-Owl, seen 23 Aug 2015, Silau Silau trail, Kinabalu National Park, Sabah

Since that first sighting, I have observed the Rajah Scops-Owl on five different occasions during my daytime hiking and night walks. The owls were seen at an altitudinal range of 1500-1800 m ASL. I saw the owls twice at the Silau Silau trail and once at the Liwagu Trail during my night

walks; the weather was misty or rainy. I observed the owl once at the Pandanus Trail and another time at Kiau View Hiking location during my daytime hiking. The last time I saw the Rajah Scops Owl was in early 2020, before the Covid-19 pandemic started.

Plate 2: Rajah Scops-Owl, seen 23 Aug 2015, Silau Silau trail, Kinabalu National Park, Sabah

Acknowledgement

I would like to sincerely thank Sabah Park and Alim Biun who facilitated my entry into the Kinabalu National Park trails to search for the Rajah Scops-Owl. I appreciate the kind support from James Eaton to correctly identify the bird. I am grateful to the Malaysian Bird Report editorial team for assistance to document this observation.

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Variation in Iris Colouration of the Pin-striped Tit-Babbler *Mixornis gularis* in Peninsular Malaysia

Amar-Singh HSS

Introduction

The Pin-striped Tit-Babbler *Mixornis gularis* is common in Peninsular Malaysia and often observed at the forest fringe, at secondary growth and overgrown orchards. The subspecies for Peninsular Malaysia is *M. g. gularis* which extends from north Perak southwards (Wells 2007). Wells (2007) also notes that another subspecies, *M. g. connectens*, extends as far south as at least Perlis. Note however that Birds of the World (Collar & Robson 2020) state that the distribution of *M. g. chersonesophila* is south Thailand and north Peninsular Malaysia, while that of *M. g. gularis* is south Peninsular Malaysia to Sumatra. They give the distribution of *M. g. connectens* as "*extreme S Myanmar (S Tenasserim) and adjacent SW, SC and SE Thailand*".

On the iris colour in the region Wells (2007) states that "*adult iris colour varies with latitude: yellow south at least to Phang Nga, red brown south from Pattani and Perak, mixed in a sample of twelve birds from Trang*". This conflicts with Birds of the World (Collar & Robson 2020) that offer an illustration of *M. g. chersonesophila* with a red-brown iris and *M. g. gularis* with a grey-brown iris.

Adults of the subspecies *M. g. gularis* in Peninsular Malaysia generally are observed to have a darker, red-brown iris. This field report, supplemented with an image library assessment, explores the variation of the iris colouration of the Pin-striped Tit-Babbler in Peninsular Malaysia, in particular focusing on the birds with lighter coloured iris.

Field observations and literature search

Observations were made over numerous visits to forest and secondary growth locations in Perak, Peninsular Malaysia, over the past 15 years. Data for Peninsular Malaysia was obtained by an image examination of the Macaulay Library for the region. Only clear images and adult birds were accepted.

It is recognised that there will be some under reporting in this paper as data in the Macaulay Library is influenced by those who post images; not all bird watchers post images hence there will be some observer bias. It was also not always possible to determine if the same bird was imaged more than once (repeat postings). The focus was on identifying the geographical locations where birds with light coloured iris were seen as well as their frequency.

Results

Personal observations of Pin-striped Tit-Babblers in Perak over the past 15 years were reviewed. This included a personal image database of more than 2,000 images of the Pin-striped Tit-Babbler taken from October 2007 to August 2022. All adult birds seen had a dark, red-brown iris (Plate 1) except on five separate occasions where birds with light coloured iris were seen.

Plate 1. Pin-striped Tit-Babbler with a dark, red-brown iris, Ipoh, Perak, 12 Nov 2020

On 03 September 2017, at limestone outcroppings at the outskirts of Ipoh city, a single Pin-striped Tit Babbler with light iris was seen feeding on Australian Mulberry *Pipturus argenteus* fruit.

On 03 July 2018, at the outskirts of Ipoh city, a group of five Pin-striped Tit Babblers comprising 2 juveniles and 3 adults were observed foraging together with the juveniles being fed by the adults. One adult and one juvenile had a light coloured iris.

On 25 July 2019, at the fringes of the Kledang Saiong Forest Reserve (KSFR), Ipoh three Pin-striped Tit Babblers were seen foraging together; one had a light coloured iris (Plate 2).

On 04 October 2019, at a semi-urban part of the city, a pair of Pin-striped Tit Babbler were observed with one having a light coloured iris.

On 21 January 2021, at a fruit farm with secondary growth in Ipoh, a bird with a light coloured iris was seen as part of a social group of four Pin-striped Tit Babblers. They were seen performing a display together, followed by foraging as a group (Plate 3).

In all these observations, the aberrant iris colour was not due to albinism as the plumage was not affected.

Plate 2. Pin-striped Tit-Babbler with light coloured iris, KSFR, Ipoh, Perak 25 July 2019

Plate 3. Pin-striped Tit-Babbler displaying, one with light coloured iris, Ipoh, Perak, 21 Jan 2021

There were 275 images posted of Pin-striped Tit-Babblers in the Macaulay Library for Peninsular Malaysia as of 18th September 2022. Two were of a different species of bird, eight were of nests and one of a sonogram, five were of juveniles; these were excluded from analysis.

Of the remaining 259 images 70 were not usable; unclear due to posture or image quality. Of the 189 usable images, 192 birds were available for assessment. Of these, there were 46 (24.3%) birds with a light coloured iris.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the Pin-striped Tit-Babblers with light and dark coloured irises graphically. Data in table 1 is arranged geographically from north to south and it can be seen that birds with light coloured irises, though not common, have been seen throughout the peninsula.

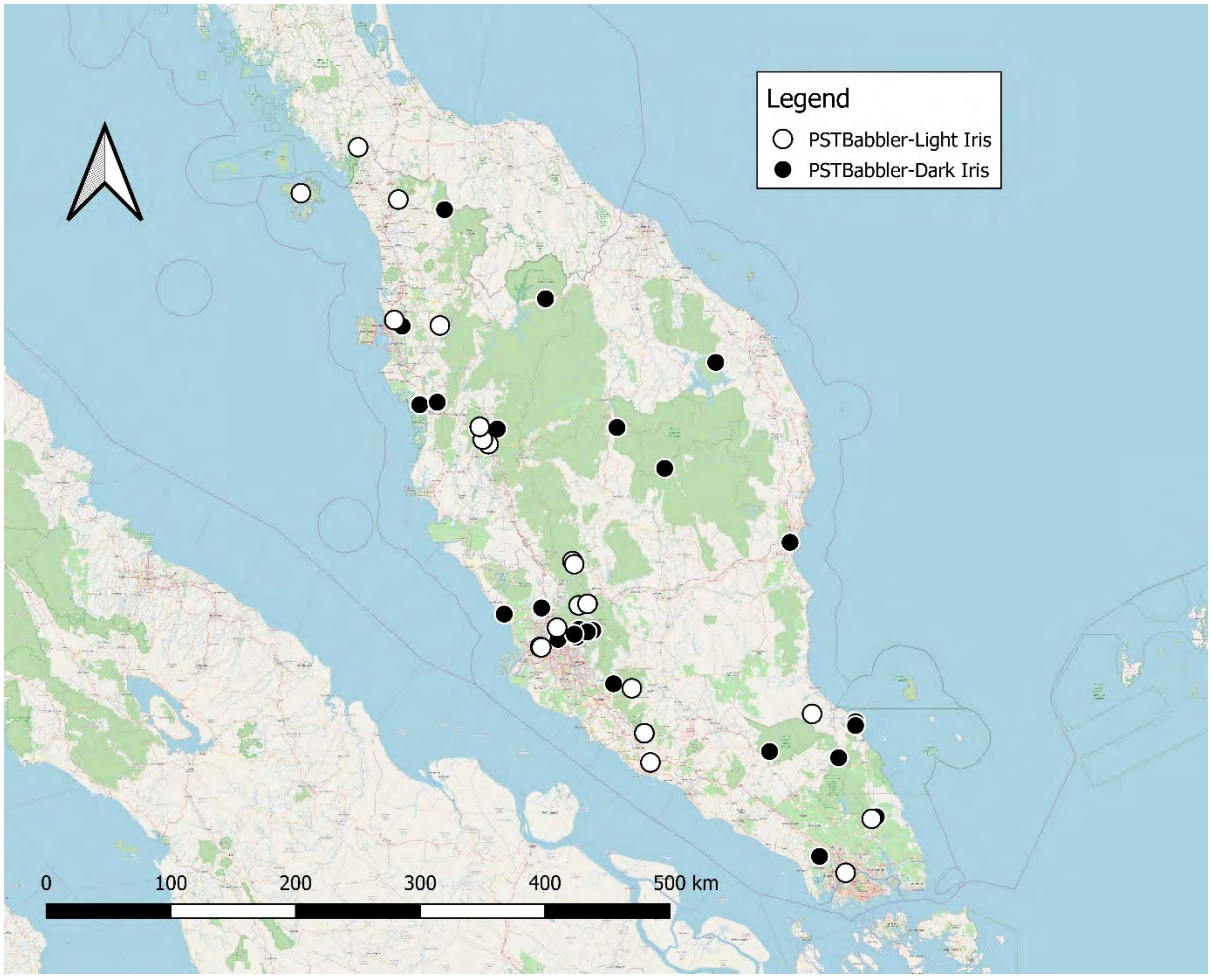

Figure 1: Distribution of Pin-striped Tit-Babblers with light and dark coloured iris in Peninsular Malaysia

Table 1: Images posted of Pin-striped Tit-Babblers in the Macaulay Library for Peninsular Malaysia (as of 18 September 2022)

State	Number of images in Macaulay Library	Number of usable images*	Images of birds with light iris	Images of birds with dark iris	Percentage of birds with light iris by state
Perlis	2	1	1	0	100.0
Kedah	12	10	3	7	30.0
Penang	32	26	4	22	15.4
Perak	50	45	9	38	20.0
Selangor	50	28	9	19	32.1
FT Kuala Lumpur	2	1	0	1	0.0
Negeri Sembilan	54	40	9	32	22.5
Malacca	3	3	1	2	33.3
Terengganu	1	1	0	1	0.0
Pahang	29	17	8	9	47.1
Johor	24	17	2	15	11.8
Total	**259**	**189**	**46**	**146**	**24.3**

*Note: Where more than one bird was in the image, both were assessed and counted separately; at times only one of the two birds in the image had a usable iris.

The Macaulay Library database was also accessed to evaluate images for neighbouring nations.

Of 339 images of Pin-striped Tit-Babblers posted for Singapore, 5 were of nest, 1 a juvenile and 123 were unclear (not usable). There were 216 birds assessed in 210 images, of which 39 (18.1%) birds had a light coloured iris.

For Thailand, of 367 images posted, 1 was a drawing, 8 were of a different babbler species, 2 were juveniles and 82 were not usable. There were 275 birds assessed in 274 images. The vast majority of birds, 253 (92.0%) had a light coloured iris. There were no images of birds with a dark coloured iris above the latitude 13.0 degrees. Phetchaburi, just above the Kra Isthmus, is the last Thai province with images of birds with a dark coloured iris. Note that some birds in Thailand have a brighter-yellow iris, occasionally with a reddish hue.

Discussion

There is a limitation in using an image database for evaluation in contrast to a survey. Image lighting and contrast can affect results. However, the light iris colour of these babblers is generally striking enough for certainty. The plumage differences are harder to be sure of and hence were not assessed in this paper. In addition, images of the same bird may be posted more than once; this would apply to both birds with a light or dark coloured iris. I was not able to control for the possibility that photographers singled out pale-eyed birds for special attention. Note that there were birds with iris colours that were not red-brown but more grey-brown; for the purposes of this evaluation, they were coded as dark coloured irises.

This analysis suggests that the iris colour description of Wells (2007) fits in better with the region than that provided by Birds of the World (Collar and Robson 2020).

The data presented here illustrates that for Malaysia and Singapore, and extreme south Thailand, the majority of Pin-striped Tit-Babblers have a dark, red-brown iris. However, a significant minority, around 18-24%, have a light coloured iris. The birds with different iris colouration appear to coexist together in social groups and possibly as breeding partners.

A recent extensive review of eye colour variation in birds by Corbett et al (2022) suggested that intraspecific eye colour variation can be attributed to a variety of reasons including maturity, sex and seasonal changes. They suggest that intraspecific geographic eye colour variation can occur on short evolutionary timescales.

What this difference means in this study is uncertain without suitable genetic studies. It may suggest some colour variation in the same subspecies or that there are birds with intermediate features between northern and southern subspecies (intergrades). This evaluation suggests that there could be a further southward spread of the integration zone in recent decades. The striking nature of the iris differences should make it possible for field observers to notice and report this to offer more data on the occurrence, geographical distribution of this feature and change over time.

Acknowledgements

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Observation of Brood-Helpers in Breeding Oriental Honey-buzzards

Sein-Chiong Chiu

Introduction

Cooperative breeding or nesting, where more than two individuals of the same species care for a single nest and its young, is an uncommon but recognised social behaviour (Arnold & Owens 1999). This short field report attempts to document observations of cooperative breeding, particularly brood-helpers, among Oriental Honey-buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus*.

While cooperative breeding is well recognised in small raptors like the Black-thighed Falconet *Microhierax fringillarius*, there are currently no reports in literature of such behaviour in large raptors like the Oriental Honey-buzzard (Wells 1999; Orta *et al* 2020).

Observations

Nest Observation 1

From 1999 to 2008 I had the opportunity to observe a pair of Oriental Honey-buzzards nesting annually in the golf course opposite my house in Ipoh, Perak, Malaysia. In certain years they would nest on the trees opposite my house and on two occasions the same Oriental Honey-buzzard pair nested twice in the same season.

Between the end of 2007 and early 2008 the Oriental Honey-buzzard pair nested for a 13th time and successfully raised one juvenile. Subsequently I watched them copulating again and later built a nest opposite my neighbour's house for nesting consecutively in the same season. The juvenile was no longer sighted thereafter when incubation for the 14th nesting started in April 2008. Sometime in May 2008 the egg(s) hatched. On 31 May 2008 evening just as I was about to go out, I saw more than 10 crows mob the nest tree. The adult female was protecting the chick(s) in the nest. A short while later the male flew to the nest to assist in protecting the chicks. After a while the male flew to another tree to distract some of the crows away.

I spent a few minutes clapping my hands to try to shoo away the crows but it was of no avail. When I next turned my attention back to the nest there was now another Oriental Honey-buzzard in the nest together with the adult female while the adult male was still on the other tree. I got out my spotting scope and realised that it was the juvenile from the 13th nesting earlier in the year. I got out my camera and took a few quick shots for the record. Plate 1 shows the adult female on the left and the previous year's juvenile on the right. The chick(s) were crouching low and were hidden between the female and juvenile. Later in the evening the juvenile appeared again and continued to return to the 14th nest area until the end of June.

On 08 June 2008 I saw the previous year's juvenile in the nest with a pair of chicks (Plate 2). The juvenile was observed feeding the chicks with some leftover prey that was already in the nest (video link of activity: https://youtu.be/4ErIPCfk6uo). After feeding both the chicks the juvenile also ate some of the leftover prey. The adults were not around at that time.

Plate 1: Adult female and juvenile with chicks crouching low down.

Plate 2: Previous year's juvenile in the nest with chicks

These observations show that the previous year's juvenile does come back to visit and is allowed to interact with the current chicks, confirming the presence of brood-helpers in breeding Oriental Honey-buzzards. It is also interesting that the same pair is capable of breeding twice in one season.

Nest Observation 2

On 02 May 2024, from 1045 hrs, I was with a few bird watchers observing a pair of Oriental Honey-buzzards nesting in a park in Ipoh. There were two chicks in the nest. At 1227 hrs the adult female flew into the nest and dropped off a piece of honeycomb. It immediately flew off and perched on a tree near a drain. It subsequently drank some water from a drain, as well as took a quick dip before flying to perch on a tree.

At 1328 hrs a juvenile Oriental Honey-buzzard appeared and also took a drink from the same drain before flying up to perch on a tree, and later on a lamp post. The adult female did not show any hostilities towards the juvenile. At 1353 hrs the adult female flew back to the nest to join the two chicks. At 1401 hrs the juvenile also flew up into the nest and joined the adult female and the two chicks (see Plate 3 and video: https://youtu.be/Exnt4pylfcY).

Plate 3: Adult female Oriental Honey-buzzard with juvenile and chicks in nest

The juvenile ate from the leftover honeycomb. At 1404 hrs the adult female flew out from the nest and perched on a nearby tree leaving the juvenile with the chicks (video: https://youtu.be/PTqSicHdOMk). After eating from the honeycomb, the juvenile attempted to adjust the branches in the nest. The juvenile then flew out of the nest at 1217 hrs and left.

It is assumed that this was the previous year's juvenile. The juvenile continued to return periodically to the nesting area for around a week and had been observed by a number of bird watchers. It was occasionally seen to help feed the chick.

Nest Observation 3

On 21 September 2023, at another location in Ipoh, where a different pair of Oriental Honey-buzzards were in initial stages of nest-building, the juvenile from the previous season returned for about a week. The juvenile did not help in nest building but stayed around for about a week observing the parents build the nest.

Discussion

Cooperative breeding in raptors may not be observed often but is not uncommon. Kimball *et al* (2003), in a review of the literature, documented 42 different diurnal raptor species where there were "*more than two individuals residing in a group during a nesting attempt*". Of these 34 had evidence of helpers ("*helping observed by extra individuals*"). This report adds Oriental Honey-buzzards to that list.

There is still uncertainty about cooperative breeding in Oriental Honey-buzzard in terms of nest building. In my prior observations (Sein-Chiong Chiu 2005), juveniles from the previous season had been observed trying to help in nest building but invariably they were rebuffed by the adults.

Whether cooperative breeding reported in many raptors, including the Oriental Honey-buzzard, are regular occurrences or occasional events, requires more field observations and reports.

Acknowledgement

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Pelagic Birding off Tanjung Dawai, Malaysia – Trip Report
Ashraf Anuar Zaini

Editorial Note: This article was first published on Bird Watching Asia on 15 May 2024 (link: https://birdwatching.asia/pelagic-birding-off-tanjung-dawai-malaysia-trip-report/). Ashraf Anuar Zaini has kindly allowed us to reproduce it here and we appreciate his kind support. Note that the article has been adapted for the Malaysian Bird Report.

In early May 2024, I had the chance to go pelagic birding off Tanjung Dawai, Malaysia. Organised by the Wild Bird Club of Malaysia (WBCM), I joined 17 other participants on an exciting trip looking for rare birds.

In Malaysia, pelagic birding is very niche. Trips are limited to chartered boats from a selected few locations. Moreover, the optimal season is very short, lasting only 3 to 4 weeks per year. Naturally, when WBCM announced a trip to do pelagic birding off Tanjung Dawai, I immediately signed up. A trip like this offers the best chance in Malaysia to see birds such as shearwaters, pelagic terns and jaegers. Many of these offshore birds are rare/vagrants; consequently, excitement was high!

Journey to the Site
Tanjung Dawai is located on the north-west coast of Peninsular Malaysia, within the state of Kedah. Therefore, the trip began with a long drive north from Kuala Lumpur to Alor Setar. The next morning, after an early morning visit to see the Brown Fish-Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis*, we then made our way to the starting point for the pelagic trip. This was at Sungai Udang Yan jetty. Several White-winged Terns inbreeding plumage welcomed us as we arrived at the jetty, a preview of things to come.

Cast Off!
After a quick safety briefing, we finally embarked on our voyage at 9 am. The weather was perfect: sunny skies and minimal winds. Our party was split into two boats, each carrying nine passengers. Fortunately, my boat was also carrying a tenth passenger - eminent Malaysian birdwatcher Hor-Kee Neoh. With vast experience in birding, Neoh provided invaluable information regarding the birds seen during the trip.

The plan was simple enough – follow the anchovy fishing boats, the hotspot for seabird activity (see Plate 1). As these boats rein in their purse seines, the hungry seabirds eagerly snap up any escaping fish.

First Finds
Our speedboats headed off into the blue, powering effortlessly through the waves (Plate 2). As we approached our first fishing vessel, we spotted our first birds. Various terns were thronging the vessel, looking for an opportunistic morsel. A Lesser Crested Tern *Thalasseus bengalensis* was the standout, gracefully cavorting and wheeling above us (Plate 3). I'm pretty sure it was mocking us, laughing at our ungainly metal vehicle while it effortlessly sailed the wind.

Plate 1: Anchovy fishing boat, the focus of the pelagic birding

Plate 2: One of the speedboats that we used for our pelagic trip

As our speedboat slowed and stopped, the effect of the waves intensified. This is when seasickness often raises its ugly head. I hoped the medication I took earlier would do its job. I

needn't have worried though, as the next sighting was a better seasickness cure than any pharmacological potion ….

Plate 3: The Lesser Crested Tern in flight is the epitome of elegance

Shearwater Sighting

Suddenly, a cry came out from our boatman – 'Itik laut!' This is the local name for shearwaters, and translates literally as sea duck. Looking around, I immediately spotted two Short-tailed Shearwaters *Ardenna tenuirostris*, floating on the water's surface (Plate 4). I could scarcely believe our luck as we were barely 40 minutes into our trip! We observed the black birds as they bobbed on the water looking for food. It wasn't difficult to see why the locals named them 'sea ducks'. Additionally, their tube noses gave them a very distinctive appearance. And their flight style is truly amazing. They effortlessly skim the surface with stiff wings, inches above the water. Occasionally, a wingtip slices through the waves without impeding its trajectory whatsoever. Shearing the water indeed!

These birds are very seasonal visitors to Malaysian waters, restricted to only a few weeks in May. According to Neoh, 'shorties' typically don't routinely pass through Malaysian waters during migration. Rather, these birds likely stray far off their regular migration routes.

Terrific Terns

Throughout our journey, we spotted large numbers of terns. They're among the most common seabirds in Malaysia; appropriately, they're numerous here as well. The flocks flew between the many fishing vessels, and we followed them in turn. Our total tern tally was 9 species, including a rare one.

Plate 4: Short-tailed Shearwater

White-Winged Wonders

White-winged Terns *Chlidonias leucopterus* are a common and familiar sight in Malaysia. They're usually seen inland in their smart but unspectacular non-breeding plumage. However, during our pelagic birding off Tanjung Dawai trip, they were mostly in their full breeding plumage (Plate 5). And what a sight they were, resplendent in striking black-and-white. Their jet-black body contrasts sharply with their silvery-white wings and tail. With their fluttering flight, they gave off the impression of flashing strobe lights alternating between black and white. Hundreds followed the fishing boats, providing us with a spectacular display of grace and elegance. It's hard to describe it in words, and even the best photos don't do them justice. Being there certainly gave me a newfound appreciation for these common migratory birds.

Plate 5: White-winged Terns in breeding plumage

Common Customers

Other terns were also present in numbers. Common Terns *Sterna hirundo* were indeed common, while Bridled Terns *Onychoprion anaethetus* stood out with their powerful, elegant flight (Plate 6). The birds periodically plunge dive into the water, subsequently flying off, invariably with a fish in their beak. The Little Terns *Sternula albifrons* were the most extreme example, plunge-diving from a spectacular height. In contrast, the White-winged Terns *Chlidonias leucopterus* and Whiskered Terns *Chlidonias hybrida* prefer to pick fish from the water's surface.

Plate 6: Bridled Tern, a pelagic species rarely seen close to shore. Unlike many terns, it has dark-coloured upperparts.

Rosy Rarity

Amongst these common species, a rarity lurked. And we wouldn't even have noticed it, if not for Neoh. While looking at a flock of Common Terns, Neoh excitedly pointed out the hidden treasure – a Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*!

The Roseate Tern is similar to the more numerous Common Tern; nevertheless, there are several subtle differences. The Roseate Tern is slimmer and more gracile. In breeding plumage, the Roseate Tern appears paler overall. It also has bright red legs and a forked tail with long streamers (Plate 7). A rosy tinge may occasionally be seen on its body, hence the name.

This bird was a major lifer for me and many participants. Despite being a wide-ranging bird, the Roseate Tern is quite rare in Malaysia. It breeds in Malaysia's waters, but only in very small numbers. Primarily seen along the peninsula's east coast, a sighting at the Malacca Straits is always exciting.

Plate 7: The less commonly seen Roseate Tern

Heading Home

All too soon, it was time to head back. As we returned to the mainland, we checked on the fishing vessels closer to shore. We added the Great Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii* and Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana* to our list, but no rarities. Unfortunately, we didn't encounter any jaegers, noddies or boobies. Nevertheless, the day's bird haul was still impressive. The Shearwaters and Roseate Tern was probably already worth the time and money spent on this trip! We disembarked at the jetty at around 2.35 pm. Everyone was happy and satisfied, seasickness long forgotten. The total time spent at sea was 5 hours 35 minutes; the distance covered: 37 nautical miles (68 km); the furthest distance from land: roughly 7.5 nautical miles (14 km).

Conclusion

Our pelagic birding off Tanjung Dawai excursion was possibly the most unique birding experience I've had in Malaysia. It was exciting and rewarding in equal measure. The Shearwaters were fantastic, and the Roseate Tern was the cherry on the cake. I look forward to joining more pelagic birding trips in Malaysia.

Interested in joining a similar trip in the future? Check out the Wild Bird Club of Malaysia, and consider joining as a member. They organise various birdwatching trips throughout the year. For more information on some of the birds seen on this trip, check out the articles below: Terns of Malaysia Part 1 & Terns of Malaysia Part 2.

Citation: Zaini. A. A. (2024). Pelagic Birding off Tanjung Dawai, Malaysia – Trip Report. *Malaysian Bird Report*. Volume 2/2024, June 2024: pg. 37-42.

Photo-Shorts

Animal Prey in the Diet of the Great Hornbill

Teik-Hoong Teoh

The diet of the Great Hornbill *Buceros bicornis* is poorly documented locally (Wells 1999).

Kemp and Boesman (2020) states that it mainly eats "*fruit, rarely flowers and buds; also many large insects and other arthropods, besides various small reptiles, birds and mammals*".

On May 5 2024, along the main road leading to Kenyir Dam, Terengganu, Malaysia, I observed a nesting pair of Great Hornbills. The adult male brought back three different chicks to the nest. Before offering its catch to the female, the male regurgitated the first chick on a nearby branch of another tree. It then flew towards the nest and offered the first 'protein snack'. While still hanging on to the trunk of the tree, it regurgitated another two chicks one after the other and offered it to the female in the nest (see Plate 1). We could not determine the species of the chicks the male hornbill had caught but we could safely assume that it was after raiding the nest of another bird. After delivering the third chick to the female, the male took off into the nearby forest.

Plate 1: Adult male Great Hornbill bringing chicks to the nest. The chicks were retained in its pouch and regurgitated as feeds.

It has been suggested that animal prey is taken by hornbills, especially during the breeding season. Poonswad *et al* (2004) documented that animal prey formed a considerable part of the diet of nesting Great Hornbills. They noted that the "*delivery rates for protein … rose to a peak during Weeks 2–4 of incubation, as might be expected to replace resources used in egg-laying and commencement of molt*".

Ouithavon *et al* (2005) found that 20.7% of the diet of nesting Great Hornbills was animal food. This comprised over 31 animal species including birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, molluscs, insects and arthropods.

Acknowledgement
The author wishes to thank Amar-Singh HSS for the kind assistance in writing this article.

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Citation: Teik-Hoong Teoh (2024). Photo-Shorts: Animal Prey in the Diet of the Great Hornbill. *Malaysian Bird Report*. Volume 2/2024, June 2024: pg. 43-44.

Nectar Sources in the Diet of the Whitehead's Spiderhunter

Amar-Singh HSS, Alim Biun, David Chin & Richard Chong

There is limited information on the diet of the Whitehead's Spiderhunter *Arachnothera juliae*. Smythies and Davidson (1999) note that it is a nectarivore, an insectivore and a frugivore; it regularly feeds on the nectar of rhododendron blossoms but is known to take insects and small berries. On its diet, Cheke, Mann and Allen (2001) say "*presumably includes berries, nectar and small arthropods. Known food-plants Rhododendron sp.*".

Wong (2013) identified one nectar source as *Wightia borneensis* (Paulowniaceae). This plant is found at the park headquarters in Kinabalu National Park, Sabah, North Borno and Whitehead's Spiderhunters can invariably be seen when the plant is flowering (see Plate 1 and 2).

Plate 1: Whitehead's Spiderhunter feeding on *Wightia borneensis* nectar, Kinabalu National Park, Sabah, June 2024

Plate 2: Whitehead's Spiderhunter feeding on *Wightia borneensis* nectar, Trusmadi, Sabah, October 2023

Phillipps and Phillipps (2014) offer some details on nectar sources. They state that the distribution of Whitehead's Spiderhunter parallels the growth of the montane epiphyte *Rhododendron praetervisum* (Julia's Rhododendron) and that it is the only known pollinator of this plant; this plant is endemic to Borneo.

A review of the Macaulay Library image database showed a number of other nectar sources. Of the ones that could be identified include:

- *Neonauclea gigantea* (Rubiaceae) - Stephen Chang; Rafflesia Information Centre, Sabah; August 2017. This plant is endemic to Borneo.
- *Radermachera ramiflora* (Bignoniaceae) - Muangpai Suetrong; Sayap Substation, Kinabalu National Park, Sabah; 06 April 2023. This plant is endemic to Borneo.

- *Erythrina subumbrans* (Fabaceae) - Neil Osborne; Masakob Waterfall, Tambunan, Sabah; 27 February 2020.
- *Dendrophthoe longituba* (Lorantaceae) - Mike Tuer (20 August 2017) Timpohon Gate and Jinchi Han (07 August 2023); Bukit Ular Trail, Kinabalu National Park, Sabah. Native to Borneo and the Philippines.
- *Lepeostegeres centiflorus* (Lorantaceae) - Nigel Voadenm (01 July 2009) and Julian Teh (30 January 2016); Kinabalu National Park, Sabah. This plant is endemic to Borneo, especially North Borneo.

Two additional species of epiphytic plants that are commonly found growing around the Kinabalu Park Headquarters, at the middle of the forest canopy in low montane forests, that will attract the attention of Whitehead's Spiderhunter for nectar (personal observation Alim Biun) include *Aeschynanthus speciosus* (Gesneriaceae) and *Aeschynanthus magnificus* (Gesneriaceae).

It is interesting to note that four of the plants identified are endemic to Borneo, suggesting how important this Spiderhunter is to pollinating some endemic plant species.

But there are yet many unidentified sources of nectar for this species. We hope bird watchers and photographers will work with us to help identify more food sources for the species.

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Citation: Amar-Singh HSS, Biun, A, Chin. D. & Chong, R. (2024). Photo-Shorts: Nectar Sources in the Diet of the Whitehead's Spiderhunter. *Malaysian Bird Report*. Volume 2/2024, June 2024: pg. 45-46.

Special Report

The Impact of Back Mangrove Loss on Bird Diversity

Ashley Yeong, Amar-Singh HSS & Siew-Lyn Wong
A collaboration between Malaysian Bird Report and *Macaranga*

In the past few months, the Malaysian Bird Report has been working with *Macaranga* to produce an in-depth article on the value of back mangroves to birds. *Macaranga* is a journalism portal covering the environment and sustainability in Malaysia. The full report was produced by Ashley Yeong, Amar-Singh HSS and S.L. Wong and is available from this link: https://www.macaranga.org/listen-to-the-birds-to-save-mangroves/. BFM Radio Podcast on the article: https://www.bfm.my/podcast/bigger-picture/earth-matters/birds-for-mangroves
The write-up here is a condensation of that report.

'Listen to the Birds to Save Mangroves' emphasises the critical role of birds as indicators of mangrove forest health, particularly in Malaysia. The article highlights the interconnectedness of birdlife and mangrove conservation. It draws attention to the alarming loss of mangroves, specifically back mangroves, its implications for both avian diversity and the ecosystem as a whole and advocates for conservation strategies that prioritise both. Mangroves, often underestimated in their ecological importance, serve as vital coastal forests that protect shorelines and hinterlands, support diverse species, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

However, these ecosystems face significant threats, primarily due to human activities such as development, pollution, and deforestation. The threats are especially big to back mangroves which link mangroves to inland forest, and is home to at least half of Malaysia's resident birds that primarily depend on mangroves.

The Importance of Mangroves to Birds

Mangroves provide essential habitats for at least 144 bird species in Malaysia. These coastal forests offer nesting sites, shelter, and abundant food sources, including fish, crabs, insects, and mangrove-produced fruit and nectar. In turn, birds contribute to mangrove ecosystems through pollination, seed dispersal, pest control, and nutrient deposition. According to avian ecologist Richard Noske, in Peninsular Malaysia, sunbirds are a major pollinator of the *Bruguiera* mangrove species.

Coastal mangrove regions are 'important staging and wintering sites for waterbirds', says MNS. The north-central Selangor coast is recognised as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area and is located along the East-Asian-Australasian Flyway. This bird migratory route stretches from Russia all the way down to New Zealand.

The absence of bird species like the Velvet-fronted Nuthatch in Malaysian mangrove forests signals a decline in ecosystem health. Ornithologist Dr. David Wells identifies the loss of 'back mangroves', the transitional zone between mangroves and dryland forests, as a primary driver of this decline. Back mangroves support a disproportionately high number of bird species, making their conservation vital.

Mangrove Zones and Bird Diversity

Plate 1 shows the zonation of mangrove forests, from the seaward edge to the landward zone. Mangrove ecologist Dr Ahmad Aldrie Amir describes this change. Facing the ocean and awash in 100% salty seawater are hardy species like *Avicennia* and *Sonneratia*. These trees are distinguished by their 'pencil roots', sticking vertically out of the sand and mud to breathe oxygen. They are called pioneer species because they 'grow' land by colonising new deposits of sediment. Behind the seaward zone is the central zone, dominated by *Rhizophora* species. Inundated daily by seawater, their tangled web of aerial roots elevates the plants above the saltwater and allow them to 'breathe' even while their lower roots are submerged. Moving landward, *Brugueira* species with their buttresses and knee-shaped roots tend to dominate. This zone melds into the back mangroves or landward zone, which is influenced by freshwater and is inundated only by the highest tides. This is where the most diverse communities live, comprising mangrove and mangrove-associates plants. Among them are the *Acrostichum*, *Acanthus*, *Excoecaria*, and river-fringing *Nypa fruticans*. This zone is also richest in bird numbers and diversity, says ornithologist Wells.

Plate 1: Mangrove zones from the seaward edge to the land

Ideally, back mangroves would merge into dryland forest. However, in reality, their ecological succession is blocked by a slew of man-made impediments. These include roads and plantations, aquaculture farms and landfills, and factories and ports. These disrupt this ecological succession and fragment mangrove habitats. The consequences grow ever more severe as Malaysia's sea levels are set to rise with climate change.

Mangrove Loss and Conservation Efforts

Many of Malaysia's mangroves are actually legally protected: of its 586,548 ha, 93.74% are inside permanent reserved forests, and state and national parks. But Malaysia has been losing its mangroves steadily since 1990, according to the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia

(FRIM) in its upcoming 2024 report on the status of mangroves shared with *Macaranga* (see Plate 2). While loss can also result naturally, FRIM states that the most loss is caused by development outside protected areas, on state lands.

The biggest loss of mangroves is recent, in the last 6 years since 2017. Mangrove areas decreased by 46,853 ha, almost twice the size of Kuala Lumpur. Of this, a massive 73% (34,379 ha) happened in Sabah, and the rest in Sarawak (12,474 ha). Measured in terms of loss per year, Sabah lost about 19 times more mangroves than in the previous 27 years, and Sarawak, at least 8 times more. Both these regions are home to the most mangroves in the country – Sabah around 22% and Sarawak 59%.

Plate 2: Changes in mangrove area for Malaysia from 1990 to 2023

Interestingly, Peninsular Malaysia actually gained 4,364 ha of mangroves, more than making up for the mangroves it lost between 2000 - 2017. The losses and gains differed across states, but most states saw mangrove areas grow (see Plate 3). Still, the earlier mangrove loss is evident. Driving from Penang to Selangor, outside of the protected areas, *Macaranga* found

most mangrove forests little more than strips fenced by infrastructure and agriculture. When agriculture is developed behind mangroves, bunds are typically built to shield plots from tidal flooding. To protect the bunds from eroding, the Department of Irrigation and Drainage has a policy to maintain a strip of mangroves between the bunds and the sea. But the bunds cause the mangroves themselves to erode.

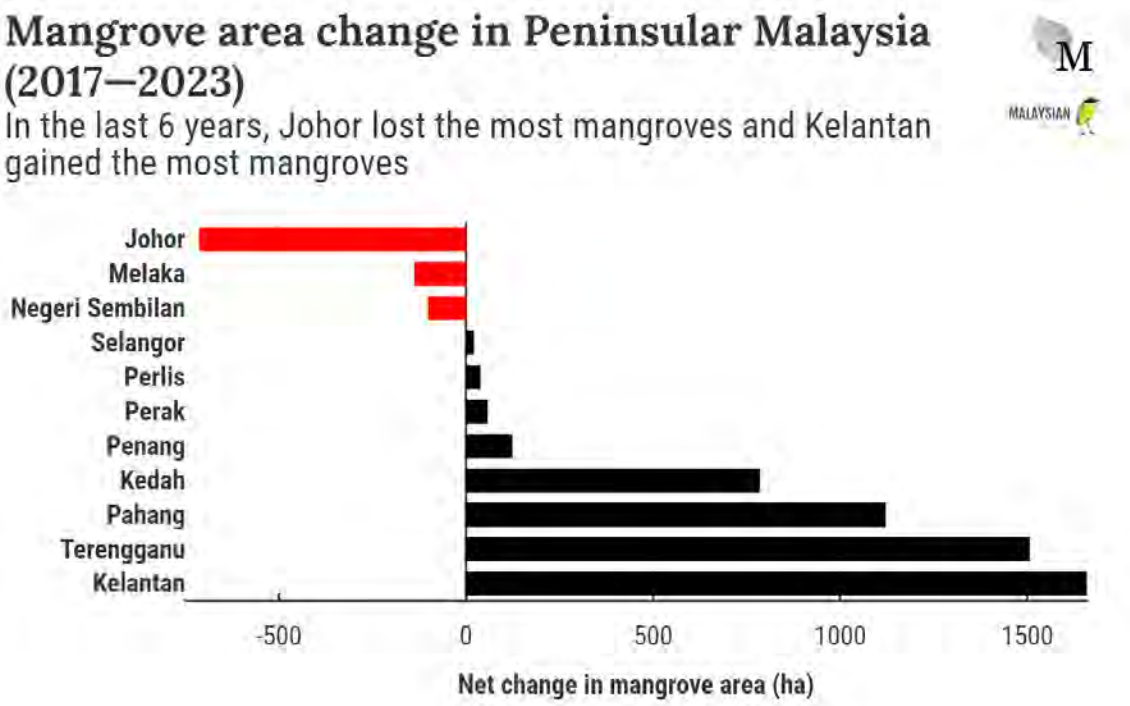

Plate 3: Mangrove change in Peninsular Malaysia from 2017 to 2023

Birds as Red Flags

Without space for back mangrove expansion and the forest's ability to host all its various zones, birds are at risk. *Macaranga* and Malaysian Bird Report compared bird diversity and numbers at two sites in Perak 100 km apart, using the citizen birdwatching global database, eBird at Cornell University (see Plate 4). The Matang Mangrove Forest with its healthy forest complete with back mangroves has considerably more different bird species than Bagan Datuk, which only has a sea-front mangrove fringe. In terms of resident bird species spotted, Matang has 96, more than double the 45 species in Bagan Datuk.

Table 1 provides a comparison of selected mangrove dependent resident land birds for the two regions. The data from eBird compares the mean frequency of the bird species seen and their range for 2022 to 2023. The majority of the resident mangrove bird species are more commonly seen and in larger numbers at the Matang Mangrove Forest Reserve which has good back mangrove. Unfortunately, in the thinner mangroves of Bagan Datuk, species such as the Mangrove Pitta, Mangrove Whistler have not been recorded in recent years; the birds were absent in both the 2024 eBird database and the 2018 MNS surveys. Avian ecologist Noske, in his study of mangrove forest birds in Peninsular Malaysia, noted that birds like the Mangrove Blue Flycatcher have a "*preference for dense forests with low light levels*". Hence its absence where the forest has 'gaps' or is sparse.

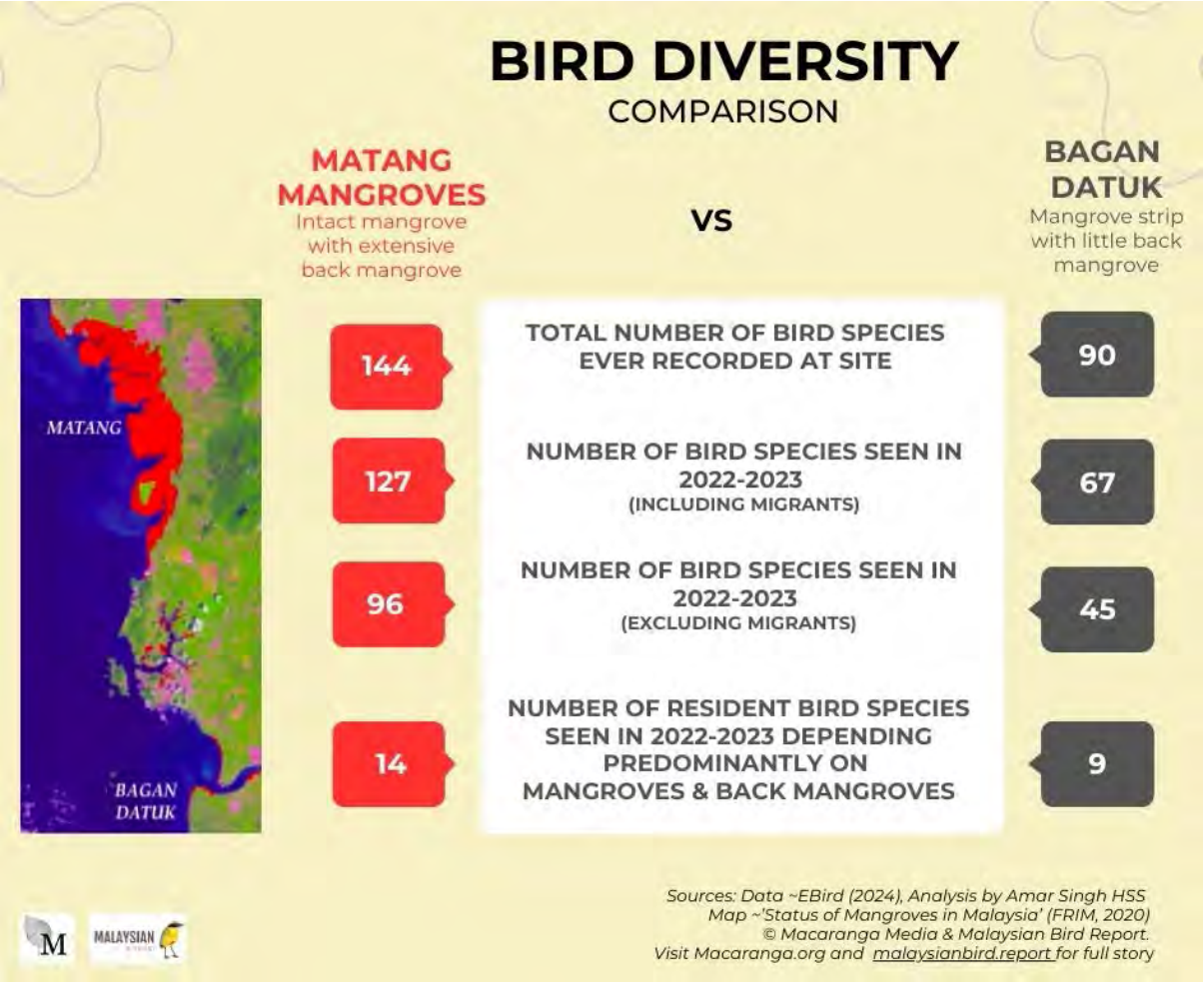

Plate 4: Comparison of bird diversity at Matang Mangrove Forest Reserve & Bagan Dato, Perak

Table 1: Average number of birds seen in 2022-2023 for key mangrove dependent resident land birds using eBird Data

Selected Resident Mangrove Dependent Land Bird Species	**Matang Mangrove Forest Reserve, Perak** (mean number seen & range)[@]	**Bagan Dato, Perak** (mean number seen & range) @
Mangrove Pitta *Pitta megarhyncha*	0.1 (0-1)	0[#]
Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris*	2.6 (0-10)	3.8 (0-6)
Greater Flameback *Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus*	1.2 (0-5)	0.4 (0-1)
Sunda Pygmy Woodpecker *Yungipicus moluccensis*	0.5 (0-5)	0.5 (0-1)
Laced Woodpecker *Picus vittatus*	0.6 (0-3)	0.8 (0-2)
Mangrove Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis rufigastra*	0.5 (0-4)	0*
Mangrove Whistler *Pachycephala cinerea*	0.8 (0-8)	0[#]
Velvet-fronted Nuthatch *Sitta frontalis*	0.9 (0-4)	0[#]
Ashy Tailorbird *Orthotomus ruficeps*	2.4 (0-10)	2.5 (2-4)
Cinereous Tit *Parus cinereus*	0.8 (0-4)	0*
Copper-throated Sunbird *Leptocoma calcostetha*	2.5 (0-6)	1.0 (0-6)

[@]The mean refers to the number of birds seen divided by the total number of visits (checklists); the range is the minimum and maximum number of birds seen during visits to the sites. [#]Was **not** observed at Bagan Dato during the MNS & FRIM survey in 2018; *Was observed at Bagan Dato during the MNS & FRIM survey in 2018

Conserving Mangroves and Birds

Mangroves need room to perform their ecological functions effectively, says Dr Chee Su Yin who researches coastal ecosystem conservation. "*If the sea level rises, they can move backwards. And if they have enough soil they can also move (forwards) towards the sea.*" By this logic, mangrove areas should be protected to allow them to grow both seaward and landward. This has big implications as Malaysia's sea levels are set to rise with climate change. "*But mangroves can only grow backwards if there is space*," points out Chee. How much space exactly? Ideally, as much space as possible. In reality though, she notes that the buffer zone is usually a mere 100 m. "*This area (back mangroves) is always a tussle between developers and profit-makers and conservationists. One hundred meters is actually not enough. For me, I would advocate for at least 200 m to half a kilometer.*"

Efforts to restore mangroves through replanting initiatives have seen mixed results. The article stresses the importance of engaging scientific and local communities in these efforts to ensure the selection of appropriate species and planting sites. Natural regeneration offers a promising approach to mangrove restoration.

The article also highlights the potential of bird watching and ecotourism to support mangrove conservation. Drawing birdwatchers and photographers to these areas can generate economic value and raise awareness about the importance of preserving these ecosystems.

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Rare Bird Reports

MNS-BCC Records Committee Report 2023

This report covers the activities and decisions of the Malaysian Nature Society Bird Conservation Committee Records Committee (RC) during the year of 2023. A report on previous years' events appeared in the *Malaysian Bird Report* Vol 1 (2023).

At the end of 2022, the RC consisted of the following members: Rafi Kudus (Chair), Amar-Singh HSS, Dave Bakewell, Chin Choong Liung, James Eaton, Allen Jeyarajasingam, Khoo Swee Seng, Dr David Wells and Wong Tsu Shi.

Although there has been no new checklist of Malaysian birds published since 2020, the annually updated Clements checklist (Clements *et al.* 2023), which is used by the MNS BCC RC, has added a total of 14 species to the Malaysian list (13 'splits' and 1 novel species – Spectacled Flowerpecker *Dicaeum dayakorum*) since 2020 (full details can be read in Jing-Yi Tou 2023, 2024).

NEW SPECIES RECORDS

2010

Lesser Kestrel: A long-overlooked record of a second-year male photographed on 16-20 Jan 2010 at Sungai Balang paddyfields, Johor, by Paul Wu. The record was discovered by Tan Gim Cheong looking through an old copy of *Suara Enggang (Vol. 18 No. 1, Jan-Feb 2010 p23)*! First record for Malaysia. Accepted on 6 Sep 2020.

2022

Black Tern: A first year bird seen at sea off Tanjung Dawai, Kedah on 28 Oct 2022 by Chris Gibbins *et al.* First record for Malaysia. Accepted on 15 May 2023.

Bluethroat: Up to 5 individuals were discovered wintering at Pasir Puteh, Kelantan, 23 Dec 2022 - 20 Jan 2023 by Azman Baharuddin. First record for Malaysia. Accepted on 30 Jun 2023.

Hen Harrier: A first year male photographed in Hilir Perak on 22 Sep 2022 by Yvonne Blake was the first adequately documented record for Peninsular Malaysia after a reassessment of all previous records in 2020 found none fully conclusive. First record for Peninsular Malaysia. Accepted 2 Mar 2023.

Asian Green Bee-eater: An adult at Alor Setar, Kedah on 12 Dec 2022 - 1 Jan 2023, found by Tan Tian Ching and enjoyed by many. First record for Malaysia. Accepted 2 Mar 2023.

Oriental Turtle Dove: A juvenile photographed on Pulau Mengalum, Sabah on 13 Dec 2022 by Muhammad Ali was the first accepted for Malaysia after two previous sightings had been either assumed to be escapes or were not submitted for assessment by the observers. First record for Malaysia. Accepted 2 Mar 2023.

Pacific Black Duck: A bird at Ulu Dedap, Perak on 17 Dec 2022 found by Zhongying Koay and Muhamad Qayyum. First record for Malaysia. Accepted 2 Mar 2023.

2023

Black-winged Cuckooshrike: Two birds seen near Kangar, Perlis on 2 Feb - 17 Mar 2023 by Huzairi Bin Abd Halim *et al.* First record for Malaysia. Accepted on 27 Nov 2023.

CATEGORY C AND D RECORDS (not considered wild)

Asian Golden Weaver: A record of at least 8 birds at Pasir Puteh, Kelantan on 26-27 Dec 2022 by Ong Kang Woei *et al.* was accepted to Category C (self-sustaining population of captive origin) on the basis of known introduced populations in Peninsular Thailand. Accepted on 15 May 2023.

UNACCEPTED RECORDS

The following records were assessed but found unacceptable:

Black-backed Swamphen: Numerous reports from the states of Melaka, Johor, Perak and Pahang. The shape of the 'pate' on the forehead of these birds suggests that they may be part of an intergrade population with mixed Grey-headed and Black-backed genes. Decision: KIV, 15 Sep 2020.

Common Swift: Photographs of a bird on 30 Oct 2020 at Hulu Perak, Perak were considered inconclusive. Decision: Unproven, 25 Jan 2021.

Mallard: A male photographed on Pulau Langkawi, Kedah and present from 11-27 Dec 2021 was considered to show plumage aspects suggesting domesticated stock genes. Decision: Unproven, 10 June 2022.

Taking into account the additions due to taxonomic changes and the accepted first records of new species since 2020, the total number of Category A & B species (wild birds) recorded in Malaysia now stands at 838 species.

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Reporting Rare Birds

MNS - Bird Conservation Council - Records Committee

All birdwatchers are encouraged to report new birds seen. See details at the Records Committee Website: https://sites.google.com/site/mnsbccrecordscommittee/

The species that are assessed by the Records Committee (species that you should submit) include:

1. All claims of potentially new species for Malaysia.
2. All claims of potentially new species for Bornean Malaysia.
3. All claims of potentially new species for Peninsular Malaysia.
4. All claims of wild species which are currently only in Category B, C or D (for either Bornean or Peninsular Malaysia)

B: Species recorded at least once in a wild state, but not since before 1963.
C: Species believed to occur only as a result of human introduction. The population is considered self-sustaining.
D: Species believed to occur (or to have occurred) only as a result of human introduction. Continued existence in the wild is considered dependent upon repeat introductions.

You can download the latest (2020) Malaysia Checklist of birds in pdf format at this link: https://malaysianbird.report/wp-content/uploads/Checklist_Birds-of-Msia-2020.pdf

1. Rare & New Records submission form
2. Rare & New Records submission form (shortened version for submissions with photos attached)

https://sites.google.com/site/mnsbccrecordscommittee/home/rare-and-new-record-submission-form?authuser=0

The Records Committee encourages observers to submit all observations of wild birds in Malaysia to eBird. Claims of rare and scarce species will be assessed by a team of eBird reviewers on that site.

Articles

Bird Identification Series:

Identification of Pied Harrier and Eastern Marsh Harrier in Malaysia

Kim-Chye Lim

Introduction

Harriers are diurnal raptors that utilise a characteristic method of hunting using slow flight in search of prey, consisting mainly rodents and small birds. They are slender and have long wings and tails, with long, bare legs and owl-like facial masks. Harriers in north-eastern Asia leave their breeding areas when autumn sets in and the weather gets colder. They migrate south to warmer areas in South-east Asia and beyond where they 'winter' and feed before making the return journey in spring.

Harriers in Malaysia

In Malaysia, harriers can be distinguished from other raptors by their characteristic flight, habitat use and temporal distribution. Harriers have a low hunting flight, alternating between slow wing beats and short glides with wings held in a shallow 'V', showing 5 'fingers'. They habitually circle back and forth, searching the ground for prey, and occasionally drop to the ground to capture one. Harriers are found mostly in rice fields, with its abundance of rodents, their main prey, and less often, in grasslands, wetlands and scrub. Harriers begin arriving in September and remain until April/May of the following year. They winter mainly in the lowlands of west Peninsular Malaysia although small numbers visit the east coast states, Sabah and Sarawak.

Identification of Harriers

Harrier identification need good views of diagnostic field marks. Harriers are sexually dimorphic with adult females browner compared to adult males which are usually a combination of grey, black and white. Immatures usually resemble adult females and juveniles are darker. Juvenile harriers take several years to obtain full adult plumage, making it challenging to identify birds in transitional plumage. Males are not difficult to identify but more care is needed for females and immatures.

Four species of harriers have been recorded in Malaysia and abundance is one of the clues to their identification. Eastern Marsh Harrier *Circus spilonotus* and Pied Harrier *C. melanoleucos* are common in Malaysia whilst the Western (Eurasian) Marsh Harrier *C. aeruginosus* and Hen Harrier *C. cyaneus* are very rare. When encountering harriers in Malaysia, the likelihood is one of the two commoner species. As such, this article will focus on the first two species.

The first step in harrier identification is to determine the age class of the bird and then use a combination of characteristics to identify the species. These characteristics include body structure, facial markings, body streaking and pattern of underwing and tail. Eastern Marsh Harrier has robust body, slightly protruding head and broad wings with rounded tips. In comparison, Pied Harrier is smaller, with less protruding head, and has narrower wings with pointed tips.

Pied Harrier

Pied Harrier appears light-bodied, with smallish head and bill. The perched male is distinctive with black head, neck, back, median wing coverts, primaries and upper breast contrasting with greyish-white lesser coverts, wings and tail, and white underparts and thighs (Plate 1). In flight, the black head, back, median coverts and outer primaries contrast strongly with the mainly white upper wing, rump and tail (Plate 1). This contrasting black and white plumage of male Pied Harrier helps with its identification even from a great distance.

Plate 1: Male Pied Harrier perched (left) and in flight

The perched female shows whitish head, neck and underparts, boldly streaked brown, grading to buffy-white on belly, thighs and undertail coverts. The face is brownish with a border of darker brown feathers ringed by whitish spots forming a distinctive facial disc. The upperpart has dark brown mantle and wings with whitish shoulder patches, grey edged coverts and secondaries, white rump, and grey tail with dark bands (Plate 2).

Plate 2: Female Pied Harrier perched

In flight, the female has pale underwing coverts, boldly streaked brown and pale greyish-brown flight feathers with thin, indistinct black barring on primaries, tipped dark, and more pronounced barring on secondaries, broadest on the trailing edge (Plate 3). Upperside shows prominent broad, pale patches on the forewings, white rump and grey upper tail with 4-5 thin, brown bands, darkest on the subterminal (Plate 3).

Plate 3: Female Pied Harrier in flight

The juvenile Pied Harrier is fairly easy to identify by its overall rich brown plumage, pale crescents over the eyes (Plate 4) and pale primaries contrasting with darker secondaries. The underwings show dark secondaries with indistinct barring and greyish primaries with blackish barring (Plate 4). The upperside shows a broad white rump and brownish tail with darker bands (Plate 4). Pied Harrier juvenile can be differentiated from juvenile Eastern Marsh Harrier by being darker brown overall with no cream patches on the head and breast.

Plate 4: Juvenile Pied Harrier perched (left) and in flight

Eastern Marsh Harrier

Eastern Marsh Harrier appears larger and bulkier than Pied Harrier, with a more protruding head and long, broad wings with more rounded tips. The perched male has dark face and variable dark grey to black streaks on whitish head, neck and upper breast, grading to white on lower breast to belly, thighs and undertail coverts. The mantle, back and median coverts are blackish, with white fringes, and greyish secondaries and tail (Plate 5).

Plate 5: Male Eastern Marsh Harrier perched

In flight, underside shows whitish upper breast, heavily streaked black, and white belly to vent; pale underwings with black outer primaries and mainly greyish secondaries, sometimes with black spots near the tips. Upperwings have narrow white leading edges, blackish coverts and mantle, boldly edged white; grey inner flight feathers, with indistinct blackish smudges, and black outer primaries (sometimes barred black); mainly plain, greyish uppertail, and small, white rump (Plate 6). Some males have completely black heads and mantle and appear like male Pied Harrier but the black parts of the body are never as clean-cut as in that species.

Plate 6: Male Eastern Marsh Harrier in flight

Immature male can appear similar to female Pied Harrier as both have white rump and shoulders, greyish primary coverts, flight feathers and tail. However, the immature male Eastern Marsh Harrier is larger, with broader wings and has thinner and less complete barring on flight feathers and tail. In addition, on immature male Eastern Marsh Harrier, there is less brown on grey parts and the streaking below is less rufous and not so extensive.

The female Eastern Marsh Harrier is mainly rufous-brown with buff streaked head, neck and breast; greyish-buff shoulder patch; brown underparts and thighs have broad, diffuse rufous streaking (Plate 7).

Plate 7: Female Eastern Marsh Harrier perched

In flight, shows buffy breast, belly and underwing coverts, heavily streaked and spotted brown; greyish flight feathers with blackish barring and broad trailing edge, with barring more distinct on secondaries and less so on primaries, latter with pale base and dark tips (Plate 8); upperparts show rufous brown back and greater coverts, with buff fringes and buffy shoulders, heavily streaked rufous; greyish flight feathers with dark brown barring and primary tips, and broad trailing edge; brownish-grey tail with thin bands, broadest on the sub-terminal, and whitish uppertail coverts with sparse rufous spots (Plate 8).

Plate 8: Female Eastern Marsh Harrier in flight

Juvenile Eastern Marsh Harriers are dark brown with cream breast band (sometimes extending to neck and mantle) and variable cream patches on the head and streaks on the mantle and lesser coverts (Plate 9).

Plate 9: Juvenile Eastern Marsh Harrier perched

In flight, dark brown underwing and coverts, variably streaked creamy-white; pale base to outer primaries and dark brown primary tips; upperparts dark brown with indistinct, whitish rump and brown tail with buff bands (Fig. 21 & 22). From juvenile Pied Harrier by larger size and bulkier shape, no white crescents around eye, less conspicuous white rump and less obvious barring on tail.

Plate 9: Juvenile Eastern Marsh Harrier in flight

Conclusion

The aim of this series is to highlight the crucial differences between similar pairs or groups of species so that we can improve our bird identification skills. Hopefully, the result will be greater confidence and accuracy in identifying what we see. If you have other species pairs or groups you would like to see featured, please contact the Editor.

Acknowledgement

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Birdwatching Hotspots Series:
Gunung Alab Substation & Tower Station - Sub-Montane and Montane Birds 'Worst Kept Secret'

Amar-Singh HSS & Ron Pudin

Nestled in the Crocker range, almost 2000m ASL, there is supposed to be a 'secret' birding location that was established 10 years ago by a few local birders for the two elusive mountain partridge species, the Red-breasted Partridge *Arborophila hyperythra* (aka Bornean Partridge) and the Crimson-headed Partridge *Haematortyx sanguiniceps* (aka Blood-headed Partridge).

Gunung Alab Substation is a one and half hour drive through the winding road of Penampang from Kota Kinabalu city (see Plate 1). This used to be the main road to the southern interior of Sabah. But with recent development, it is now a scenic route to Keningau and Tenom. Google Map or Waze will bring you to the location but hiring a local bird guide will definitely bring you a fuller, more fruitful birding day trip. Note that the road up to the Gunung Alab Tower Station has loose gravel in certain sections and a four-wheel drive is advisable.

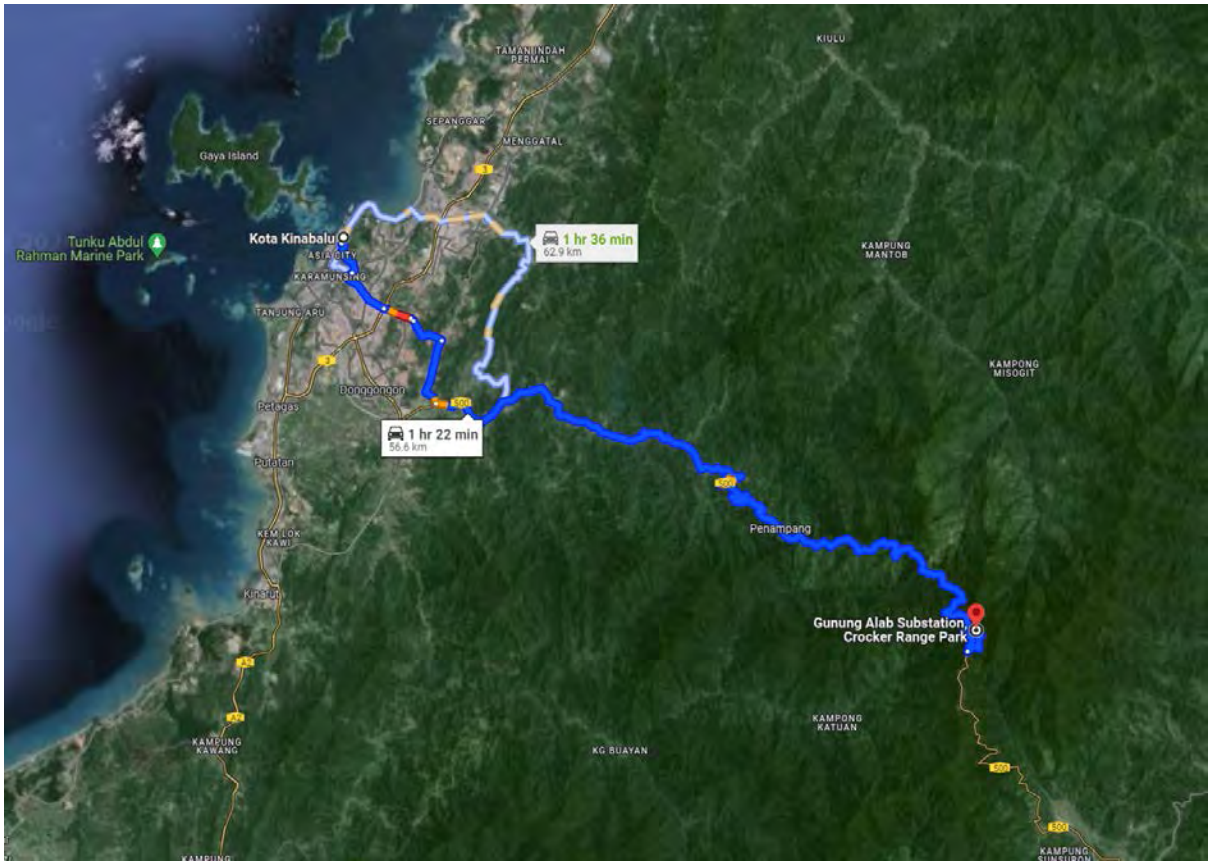

Plate 1: Location of the Gunung Alab Substation on Google Maps

Gunung Alab is managed by Sabah Parks and several accommodation options are available ranging from the basic rest house and hostel to comfortable chalet style accommodation that can cater for small groups. After dark, there are no food opportunities available at the substation and the nearest option is a 20 minutes' drive at the foothill of the road where

Gunung Alab Restaurant provides a good selection of hot foods on the menu. Accommodation at the restaurant is also an option as it doubles as a lodging facility. While having a meal at Gunung Alab Restaurant, check out the extensive swiftlet nesting occurring on the building (see Plate 2).

Plate 2: Plume-toed Swiftlet *Collocalia affinis* nesting at Gunung Alab Restaurant

The Gunung Alab Substation sits at around 1600m ASL while the Tower Station at 1900m ASl. This means that the nocturnal temperatures can be significantly lower compared to lowland forests. With the setting of the sun, one can notice the sharp decline in temperature.

This 'worst kept secret' is rich in avian sightings. According to eBird (2024) records, a total 616 checklists have been submitted and 179 species have been recorded at Gunung Alab.

As for birding experience, the place provides a basic pop-up hide and you need to bring your own stool. Be prepared to wait as the partridges will take their time to grace you with their presence. The hide is reached by a small trail down a slope where a screen has been erected. The Red-breasted and Crimson-headed Partridges (see Plate 3) are alert to bird watchers and photographers but may take time to come close. Often other birds will also show, including the Snowy-browed Flycatcher *Ficedula hyperythra*, Chestnut-hooded Laughingthrush *Pterorhinus treacheri* and Sunda Laughingthrush *Garrulax palliatus*.

Plate 3: Crimson-headed Partridge adult male with juvenile (left) and Red-breasted Partridge

The makeshift hut at the top of the location houses the guards manning the two communications towers; they are well aware of birders frequenting the locations. Here you can expect a variety of bird species, with the ever-present Indigo Flycatcher *Eumyias indigo* (Plate 4) and Little Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula westermanni* that keep you clicking your camera shutter and filling your SD card. But keep alert and scout out for the rarer and prized species like the Mountain Black-eye *Zosterops emiliae* (Plate 4) and Bare-headed Laughingthrush *Melanocichla calva*. Mixed-species foraging parties (bird waves) are common and frequent here, with the Chestnut-crested Yuhinas *Staphida everetti* playing a lead role. A Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* can often be seen on the communications towers.

Plate 4: Indigo Flycatcher (left) and Mountain Black-eye

A very notable bird to look out for is the 'Kinabalu' Friendly Bush Warbler *Locustella accentor* (Plate 5). Two sightings have been recorded at this location and we were fortunate to spot one. The Friendly Bush Warbler normally inhabits the altitude of 2135-2745m ASL and is commonly sighted on the summit trails to Gunung Kinabalu. eBird states that the Friendly Bush Warbler "*Though frequently derided for the reputed inaccuracy of its name, this mouse-like bird can prove quite confiding. It is, however, generally quite difficult to see in dense undergrowth; best detected by its song, …. Found on only a handful of forested mountaintops in Borneo's Crocker Range, where it skulks about in tangled mossy areas with extensive fallen debris.*"

Plate 5: 'Kinabalu' Friendly Bush Warbler

Birds of the World (Madge 2020) states that the Friendly Bush Warbler is found in North Borneo on Mount Kinabalu and adjoining peaks of Mount Trus Madi and Tam Boyukan. Sabah Birdwatchers Association has recognized this species as one of six bird species that are endemic to Northern Borneo in the state of Sabah. It has only ever been recorded at three locations on the Crocker Range and as of today it remains elusive or non-existent outside of the Crocker Range. Its presence at the Gunung Alab Tower Station is a boon for birders and ornithologists keen to observe and study this species.

In addition to avian species, the adjacent trails provide an opportunity for nocturnal exploration in search of wildlife. The evenings are tranquil, punctuated only by the call of insects. On evenings graced with unobstructed skies, one can engage in astrophotography. Enthusiasts of macro photography will find the assortment of moths and insects particularly

captivating, as they congregate upon illuminated screens in a display reminiscent of bees swarming to nectar. Come dawn, this will serve as a feast for the birds.

The fact that Gunung Alab is located less than two hours from Kota Kinabalu International Airport with easy access all the way to the top, makes it a perfect location for a 'quick' day's bird watching, if time is limited. It also offers opportunities for extended birding with overnight stay and visits to nearby Tambunan and Trusmadi. Whether opting for a brief visit or an extended stay, visitors can enjoy a bird haven nestled in between two peaks of the highest mountains in Malaysia.

Acknowledgement
We would to thank Charles Mawan for the kind use of his excellent image of the 'Kinabalu' Friendly Bush Warbler.

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Birdwatching Hotspots Series:
Klias Peat Swamp Field Centre - An Oasis for Avian Enthusiasts
Ron Pudin & Amar-Singh HSS

Nestled in the heart of Sabah, Malaysia, lies the serene and biodiverse Klias Peat Swamp Field Centre, a hidden gem for nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts. Spread over 3,600 ha, this unique ecosystem is home to a rich variety of flora and fauna, with a particular emphasis on an array of bird species. For the birders seeking the elusive swamp and mangrove species, Klias Peat Swamp Field Centre offers an unparalleled experience of avian diversity and discovery.

Peat swamp forests are a type of wetland characterized by a thick layer of organic detritus, comprising dead foliage and plant matter, which can be between four to 20 meters in depth. The water-saturated soils inhibit the complete decomposition of plant material, resulting in the accumulation of acidic peat with a pH ranging from 2.9-4. It takes thousands of years for peatlands to form, with organic matter accumulating at 0.5-2 mm per year. This process imparts a dark brown to black hue to the water, leading to the term 'blackwater swamps' (Bell 2014; MySabah.com 2011). It is estimated that 1.54 million hectares of peat swamp forests still remain. More than 70% of these peat swamp forests are in Sarawak, less than 20% in Peninsular Malaysia and the remainder in Sabah, especially at Klias (UNDP 2014).

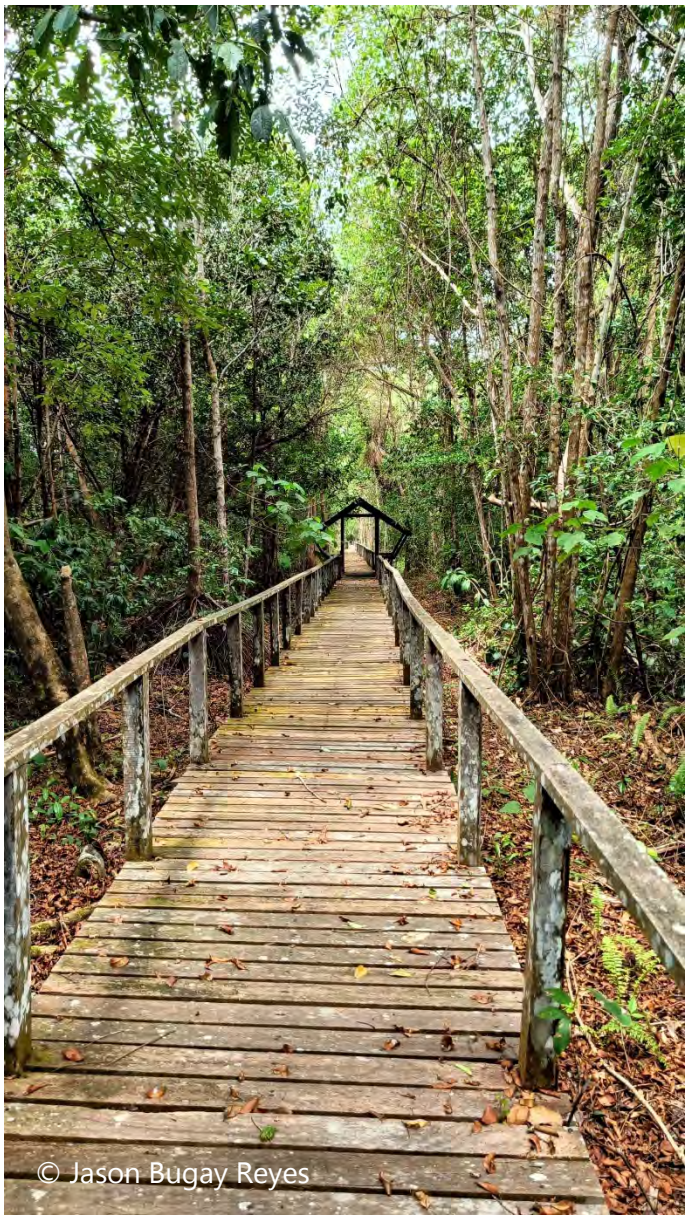

Plate 1: View of the Klias Peat Swamp and boardwalk

Reaching Klias Peat Swamp Field Centre (Hutan Paya Gambut Klias) is an adventure in itself, ideal for exploring bird watchers, eager to immerse themselves in nature's embrace. The field centre is located just over a 100 km from Kota Kinabalu, the capital of Sabah in North Borneo (Plate 2). Travelers can opt for a scenic drive through picturesque landscapes, passing by quaint villages and fertile farmlands on the way to Klias.

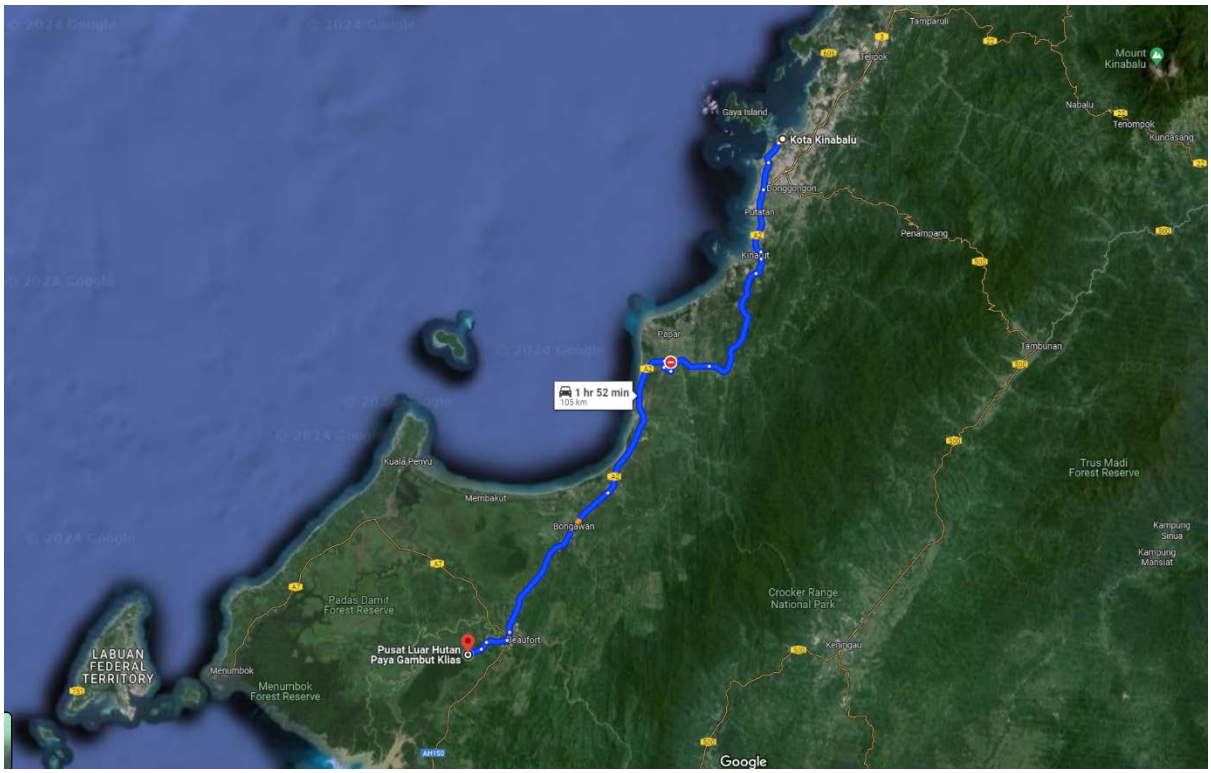

Plate 2: Location of and travel to Klias Peat Swamp Field Centre on Google Maps

Alternatively, for a more immersive experience, travellers can opt for train services. Trains run twice daily between Tanjung Aru and Beaufort. Experience nature along the way with no traffic disturbance. It takes about 2 hours or more as the train stops at every station such as Putatan, Kinarut and Papar before arriving at Beaufort.

Despite its secluded location, Klias Peat Swamp Field Centre offers a range of facilities designed to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable stay for birders. The accommodation options include a cosy hostel that can accommodate 16 to 30 people. The rooms are quite comfortable and equipped with air-conditioning (Plate 3). There are big male and female washrooms in the building. There is only a self-catering kitchen in the Field Centre and so bear in mind to shop for groceries at Beaufort town that's about 15 minutes' drive before reaching the centre.

At Klias Peat Swamp Field Centre, visitors are treated to a visual feast of lush greenery and vibrant wildlife. The peat swamp forest, with its unique ecosystem, is a haven for numerous plant species, including rare orchids, pitcher plants, and various ferns. The towering trees provide a natural canopy that shelters a diverse range of creatures, from tiny insects to majestic mammals.

Plate 3: Accommodation at Klias Peat Swamp Field Centre

However, it is the avian population that truly steals the spotlight at this Class 1 protected Klias Forest Reserve. The wetland environment of the peat swamp is a prime habitat for a wide variety of bird species, making it a paradise for birdwatchers. A total of 246 species of birds are recorded from 266 checklists submitted to date on the eBird (2024) website. Visitors can expect to encounter colourful kingfishers, majestic hornbills, elusive owls, and graceful egrets among many others. The highlights will be the sought after non-descript bird, Hook-billed Bulbul *Setornis criniger* (Plate 4).

According to eBird, Hook-billed Bulbul is a highly localized species, found almost exclusively in the kerangas (Sundaland heath forests) and peat swamp forests of Borneo and Sumatra's lowlands. Rarely it is found in adjacent wooded habitats. The Hook-billed Bulbul is fairly plain overall with brown upperparts, off-white chest, a pale-yellow belly, and an elegant white supercilium (eyebrow). The long and heavy hook-tipped, silver bill is diagnostic, if seen well. It forages singly, in pairs, and in small bands, typically in the middle and lower levels of forest. There are a variety of including a harsh scolding call, a nasal "jyaw, jyaw" and a quicker, drier rattle.

Plate 4: The less commonly seen Hook-billed Bulbul that inhabits peat swamps

Visitors are afforded the convenience of exploring the peat swamp forest without the necessity of traversing through mud and swamp, thanks to a 2.7 km wooden boardwalk (Plate 1). This boardwalk allows for an immersive experience in close proximity to the peat swamp ecosystem. The journey along this path is estimated to take approximately two hours, commencing just beyond the reception building.

Other notable birds along the boardwalk includes the scarce Scarlet-breasted Flowerpecker *Prionochilus thoracicus*, the Bornean or White-fronted Falconet *Microhierax latifrons* which is the smallest Raptors in the world, the secretive Grey-breasted Babbler *Malacopteron albogulare*, the brilliant Red-throated Barbet *Psilopogon mystacophanos* and the Scarlet-rumped Trogon *Harpactes duvaucelii* (Plate 6), to mention a few.

Plate 5: Male Scarlet-breasted Flowerpecker

Plate 6: Male Red-throated Barbet (left) and male Scarlet-rumped Trogon

Acknowledgement

We would to thank Jason Bugay Reyes for the kind use of his images of the Klias Peat Swamp Field Centre.

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Bird Tree Series:
***Muntingia calabura* – a Favourite Village Cherry**
Amar-Singh HSS

Muntingia calabura was introduced from tropical America to South-East Asia in the late 19th century. It is spread mainly by birds and bats (Yeow-Chin Wee 2003; Yih-Horng Cheah 2018). It has many local names including Buah Cheri, Ceri Kampung, Malayan Cherry, Cherry Tree and Bird's Cherry. Some of us will remember, as children, eating the 'cotton candy' tasting ripe fruit or using the fruit as a pellet to play with our wooden guns.

The tree can thrive on poor soils and is commonly seen growing in the city roadsides and secondary growth areas. When planted in a village adjacent to primary forest, many forest birds will come out to feed on the fruit. It was once a popular road-side tree but some found the presence of numerous birds with their dropping unsightly. Hence, it is sadly slowly becoming less common in our cities.

Muntingia calabura is a small tree of three to 12 m in height with spread out, fan-like branches (Plate 1). It has fragrant white flowers and simple, ovate-lanceolate, dark-green leaves (Flora Fauna Web 2024). Fruits are 1-1.5 cm in diameter; initially green and orange-red when ripe. The seeds are fine and number in their thousands in each fruit. It is a fast growing tree and will bear fruit within one or two years of planting.

Plate 1: A male Pink-necked Green-Pigeon taking a *Muntingia calabura* fruit

It fruits intermittently, throughout the year and a large variety of birds can be seen feeding on the fruit. Birds that have been observed feeding on the fruit of *Muntingia calabura* include: (Amar-Singh HSS 2011, 2012 and personal observation):

1. Pink-necked Green-Pigeon *Treron vernans*
2. Lineated Barbet *Megalaima lineata*
3. Gold-whiskered Barbet *Megalaima chrysopogon*
4. Yellow Vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus goiavier*
5. Asian Glossy Starling *Aplonis panayensis*
6. Greater Green Leafbird *Chloropsis sonnerati*
7. Yellow-vented Flowerpecker *Dicaeum chrysorrheum*
8. Crimson-breasted Flowerpecker *Prionochilus percussus*
9. Orange-bellied Flowerpecker *Dicaeum trigonostigma*
10. Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum cruentatum*

Other birds that feed on the fruit of *Muntingia calabura*, either reported in literature or identified in an online image search, include:

1. Christmas Island Imperial-Pigeon *Ducula whartoni* (Australia)
2. Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot *Loriculus galgulus* (Amar-Singh HSS 2024)
3. Sulawesi Hanging-Parrot *Loriculus stigmatus* (Indonesia)
4. Tanimbar Corella *Cacatua goffiniana* (feral bird in Singapore)
5. Yellow-chevroned Parakeet *Brotogeris chiriri* (Brazil)
6. Asian Koel *Eudynamys scolopaceus* (Singapore)
7. White-cheeked Barbet *Psilopogon viridis* (India)
8. Sooty-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus aurigaster* (Rohman *et al* 2020)
9. Straw-headed Bulbul Pycnonotus zeylanicus (Fishpool *et al* 2020)
10. Red-keeled Flowerpecker *Dicaeum austral* (Philippines)
11. Pygmy Flowerpecker *Dicaeum pygmaeum* (Philippines)
12. Pale-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos* (India)
13. Grey-sided Flowerpecker Dicaeum celebicum (Indonesia)
14. Blood-breasted Flowerpecker (Sumba) *Dicaeum sanguinolentum* (Indonesia)
15. Mistletoebird *Dicaeum hirundinaceum* (Australia)
16. Scarlet-headed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum trochileum* (Rohman *et al* 2020)
17. Blue-grey Tanager *Thraupis episcopus* (La Mariposa 2015)
18. Hoffmann's Woodpecker *Melanerpes hoffmannii* (La Mariposa 2015)
19. Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus* (La Mariposa 2015)
20. Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius* (La Mariposa 2015)
21. Spot-breasted Oriole *Icterus pectoralis* (La Mariposa 2015)
22. Saltator and Motmot species (La Mariposa 2015)

The above species list is not exhaustive and I suspect many other birds could be added to the list locally and internationally.

The technique of feeding on the *Muntingia calabura* is quite different for different species. For example, the Pink-necked Green-Pigeon will swallow the fruit whole. Parrots will hold the fruit in a claw and bite off pieces. Orange-bellied and Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker look for really

ripe fruit and then peck at it to get an opening and then piecemeal address the fruit. The Yellow-vented Flowerpecker is a 'master' feeder, despite its small size. It will choose very ripe soft fruit and the puck them with the beak. It then holds the fruit upwards and squeezes it until drained completely (plate 2). Even the much bigger Greater Green Leafbirds are not able to do this as well. Often birds will not wait for the fruit to ripen and will take it while it is still green.

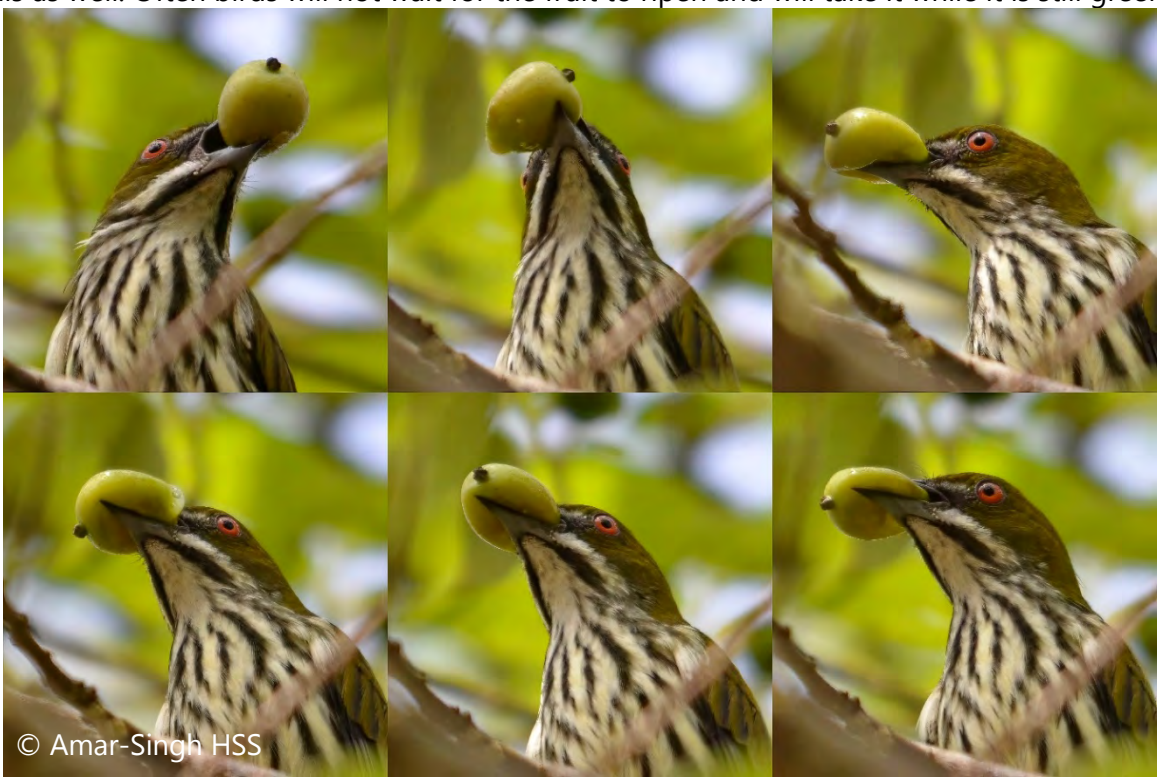

Plate 2: Composite image of a Yellow-vented Flowerpecker squeezing the juice out of a *Muntingia calabura* fruit

Plate 3: A male Greater Green Leafbird (left) and male Orange-bellied Flowerpecker feeding on *Muntingia calabura* fruit

If anyone wants a garden full of birds or has a home near the forest, the *Muntingia calabura* is the tree to plant. It will bring no end of delight to watch numerous different species come to feed on its fruit.

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Citation: Amar-Singh HSS (2024). Bird Tree Series: *Muntingia calabura* – a Favourite Village Cherry. *Malaysian Bird Report*. Volume 2/2024, June 2024: pg. 74-77.

Tips & Tools to Aid Birdwatching & Bird Photography Series:
Caring for Injured Birds

Jalila Abu

Introduction

There are various species of wild birds and pet birds in Malaysia. Pet birds are species commonly kept as part of the family, including psittacines of small, medium, and large sizes. 'African' Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus*, various macaw species, and smaller birds such as Sun Conures *Aratinga solstitialis* and lovebirds are very attractive due to their colours and talents. Wild birds are birds that don't have owners, and when they are sick, it is our duty to treat, rehabilitate, and release them back into the wild whenever possible. In some conditions or situations, they may end up being kept in captivity. Wild birds can belong to either protected or non-protected species. The public must be aware and educated on this matter to ensure proper actions are taken before releasing birds back into the wild. From my experience, raptors are one of the important species that the public often finds and brings in for further checks or surrender. Other common domestic wild birds such as pigeons and mynas are also frequently encountered, regardless of their status as protected or non-protected species.

As an avian veterinarian, it is my duty to evaluate the health status of these birds. Treatment can vary depending on the disease or injuries. The public sometimes finds injured birds around their housing areas, during nature walks, or through shared posts on common media platforms. This demonstrates a good attitude and care for our natural wildlife.

Rescue, Handling and Transport

Wild birds have special anatomical characteristics. The most important areas are the head and the legs, especially the feet or talons. These areas are crucial when rescuing them, as proper capture and restraining techniques are necessary. Don't panic, birds will show defensive signs to protect themselves. Catch the bird using specific techniques – either a body grab or a leg grab (Plate 1). For birds of prey or raptors, it is advisable to use protective gloves. It is also helpful to have a towel to cover the head, which can help calm the bird while handling it before placing it in a carrier or cardboard box (plate 2) for transportation to a veterinarian or a safe place.

Plate 1: Capture and restraining of raptors

Plate 2: Examples of carriers that can be used to cage wild birds for transportation depending on size. Cover the cage with towel or cloth to keep them calm.

Injured birds may suffer from soft tissue injuries, fractured bones, head trauma, or non-injury-related issues such as being young birds at various stages like nestlings or fledglings. A careful and quick physical check is beneficial to alert a nearby veterinarian or rehabilitation centre for temporary housing. Check the wing, look for any injuries or abnormalities. Are the eyes closed or injured? Any bleeding? Rescued birds should be provided with minimal food and water by the public if they look alert, before being taken to the vet clinic for further examination and rehabilitation.

Plate 3: The rescue and rehabilitation of adult and juvenile birds differ significantly

Examination

Similar to small and large animals, an avian veterinarian will conduct a thorough physical examination on any injured birds. Smaller birds need extra care due to their susceptibility to trauma, so minimal handling is advisable. Some cases may require emergency attention. Treatment and rehabilitation can be done at home if you are dealing with non-protected species such as pigeons, crows and others, and provided you are aware of their diet for their health.

Clinical signs or symptoms of injured wild birds include weakness, partial or complete paralysis, swollen legs or poor grasp function, wounds (Plate 4), lethargy and not being alert.

Rehabilitation and Releasing into the Wild

After necessary diagnostic evaluation, some severe injuries may require hospitalization to treat them and monitor their healing progress. In cases of bone injury, the birds need to be kept in cage rest for 4 to 6 weeks, depending on the severity of the fracture (Plate 5).

Plate 4: Physical examination of an injured raptor with open fracture, near to the joint, indicative of the prognosis.

Plate 5: Raptor with fractured right wing with 'figure of eight' and tape wing to body bandage on the wing. This will prevent movement and at the end heal the bones (left). Robert Jones bandage for a leg (tibiotarsal) fracture (right).

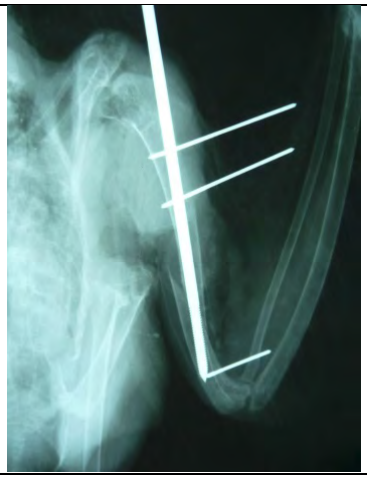
During hospitalization, if the bird is unable to eat due to injury or the stress of captivity, coax feeding or force-feeding may be necessary. Ensuring proper nutrition is crucial because poor appetite can prolong the rehabilitation process.

Plate 6: Feeding wild bird during the rehabilitation process (left). Tube feeding (right).

Induction of anaesthesia with mask, Isoflurane 5% & oxygen 1 L/min

Radiograph procedure

Intra venous injection for fluid therapy



Intra-operative Radiograph

Plate 7: Various treatment process in different bird species

The major objective of rehabilitation is to return to the wild with expectation of survivorship. During the rehabilitation process, it is important to assess the basic functions of the birds to ensure they can survive once released. We need to restore back to health with good physical and mental condition. Prior to release we need to do a flight test, especially for raptors (Plate 8). Releasing to the wild is done at a suitable time and place. Releasing wild birds is best done in the area where they were found, ideally at a specific natural site. If this is not possible, the nearest jungle or forest where the same species have been observed is the best alternative.

Plate 8: Flight test technique (left). Releasing an owl to the wild after a successful treatment and rehabilitation process (right).

Take Home Message

Caring for injured wild and pet birds requires passion, knowledge, and skills from both the public and veterinarians. Treating and rehabilitating smaller birds is more challenging compared to medium and larger species. Treatment and rehabilitation process depend on the severity of the injuries. Physical examination prior to release is very important for success of the release and survival rates. For raptors, preparation before release is crucial, including checking flight feathers and conducting flight tests. For fractures, physiotherapy is advisable to ensure the mechanical functions are restored, enabling the bird to hunt and feed effectively. In some situations, wild birds are released into captivity, such as zoos or animal facilities, with proper documentation, especially for protected species. Veterinarians can gain more in-depth knowledge on caring for injured birds by joining associations and attending master classes for skill development.

Contact Details

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Citation: Jalila Abu (2024). Tips & Tools to Aid Birdwatching & Bird Photography Series: Caring for Injured Birds. *Malaysian Bird Report*. Volume 2/2024, June 2024: pg. 78-82.

Birds in Art and Culture Series:
Featuring Bird Artist Charles Mawan

How and why did you become interested in birds?
Saya meminati alam semulajadi, haiwan, alam flora dan fauna serta kehindahan di dalam laut. Burung sangat menarik bukan sahaja kerana lagunya tetapi terdapat pelbagai jenis burung yang ada dari tanah rendah hinggalah di kawasan pergunungan di negeri saya Sabah, Borneo.

How has bird watching changed you and your outlook on life?
Memerhati burung, atau birdwatching, adalah hobi yang dapat memberikan pelbagai manfaat dan boleh mengubah pandangan hidup seseorang. Ia boleh mengurangkan stres, meningkatkan kesedaran alam sekitar, mengembangkan kesabaran dan kepekaan, meningkatkan pengetahuan dan kemahiran. Ia juga memberikan peluang untuk membuat kawan baru dan sebagainya.

A selection of Kingfishers (water colour)
© Charles Mawan

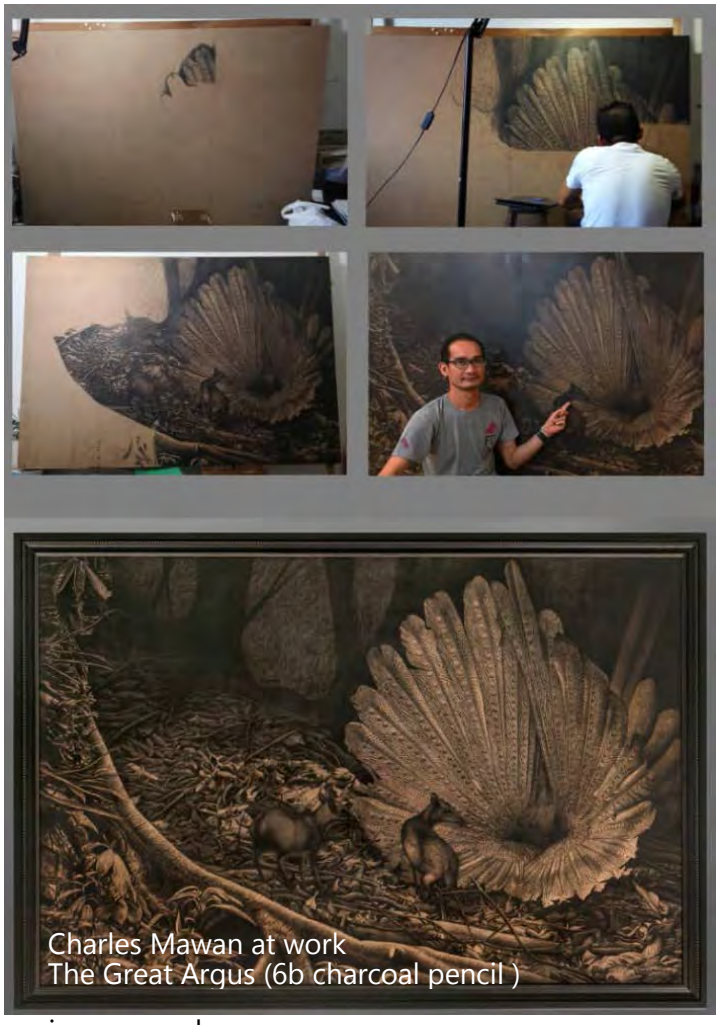
Tell us how you became involved in and developed as a bird artist.
Semasa saya sekolah rendah lagi sudah suka melukis. Saya melukis apa saja tapi lebih kepada alam semula jadi, flora dan fauna, muka orang, dan sebagainya. Selepas saya mula memerhati burung, baru lah saya lebih kerap melukis burung dan memberi tumpuan kepada burung yang saya telah lihat. Saya memang bercadang hendak melukis semua burung yang terdapat Borneo atau spesies burung endemik Sabah.

Did you receive any formal training in drawing and art? What art mediums do you use?
Saya belajar dari kelas seni di sekolah, mengikut bengkel dan belajar sendri. Saya melukis dalam cat air, cat akrilik, lukisan pensil warna, lukisan pensil, pen artline dan ball pen.

What makes you choose a particular bird or species group to draw? Where do you find your inspiration?
Saya melukis burung dari semua spesis tanpa memberi tumpuan kepada kumpulan tertentu, tetapi lebih tumpuan kepada burung yang terdapat Borneo atau spesies burung endemik Sabah. Alam semulajadi adalah sumber inspirasi utama saya serta memerhati burung di habitat

semulajadi mereka, dan merakam foto. Hampir semua lukisan burung yang di lukis melalui photo yang saya sendiri dan sedikit dari sumber lain.

How long does it typically take you on one art work of a bird species? How long did it take to complete illustrations for a full bird book?



Charles Mawan at work
The Great Argus (6b charcoal pencil)

Ia bergantung pada kerumitan subjek dan saiz lukisan, saya boleh mengambil masa dari satu jam hingga berbulan untuk menyiapkan lukisan itu. Ada juga karya seni size kecil dan ringkas 10 hingga 30 minit. Masa berkarya juga bergantung pada mood hari itu.

How have you used your artistic output?

Saya mempamerkan hasil di galeri seni dan pameran untuk memberikan kesempatan kepada peminat seni untuk melihat karya-karya saya secara langsung supaya dapat menghargai keindahannya. Selain koleksi peribadi, karya seni saya digunakan dalam dekorasi komersial seperti di ruang hotel, hospital dan pejabat. Saya juga menggunakan hasil karya dalam konteks edukasi, seperti mengadakan workshop seni, mengajarkan teknik-teknik melukis burung kepada para siswa dan seniman pemula.

Where has your bird art been featured or used?

Seni burung saya telah dipaparkan dan digunakan melalui pameran seni di beberapa galeri seni dalam negeri maupun di luar negeri. Dalam produk komersial juga beberapa karya seni juga digunakan dalam produk komersial seperti kalender dan alat tulis. Di media sosial juga membantu memperluas jangkauan karyanya kepada audiens global.

Banded (Black-faced) Kingfisher (pencil)
© Charles Mawan

Bengkel "Sketch with Charles Mawan"
semasa Borneo Bird Festival di Rainforest Discovery Centre Sandakan

Is there any money to be made as a bird artist in Malaysia? Any tips for budding artists?
Menjadi seorang artis burung di Malaysia sebenarnya boleh juga menguntungkan, tetapi ia memerlukan strategi yang baik dan dedikasi. Berikut adalah beberapa cara dan petua untuk menjana pendapatan sebagai artis burung di Malaysia. Menjual lukisan asal atau cetakan dan merchandise, komisen peribadi, pameran, pasar seni, bengkel dan kelas seni serta kerjasama dengan syarikat atau organisasi. Petua untuk artis baru harus mengasah kemahiran melukis, bangunkan gaya unik, gunakan media sosial, pamerkan karya anda dan mendapatkan maklum balas.

Bengkel "Sketch with Charles Mawan" semasa Borneo Bird Festival di Rainforest Discovery Centre Sandakan

We notice that you also do art work in other areas. Could you tell us more about this and other aspects of your work?

Saya berkerja sebagai architechural illustrator/graphic designer di firma arkitek di Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. Saya akan melakukan kerja seni saya semasa waktu rehat, selepas pulang dari kerja dan waktu tidak berkerja sahaja. Saya mula berkarya dengan serius pada tahun 1992 selepas tamat persekolahan hinggalah hari ini dan telah berpameran lebih dari 100 pameran kecil dan besar. Pada tahun 2009 dan 2022 buat bengkel, Sketch with Charles Mawan, Borneo Bird Festival RDC Sandakan.

Birds of Mount Kinabalu (blue ballpen) © Charles Mawan

English Language Summary of the Article

This article features an interview with Charles Mawan, a bird artist from Sabah, Borneo. Charles has been interested in nature and wildlife, especially birds, since childhood. He finds birds fascinating due to their diverse species and beautiful songs. Birdwatching has enriched his life by reducing stress, increasing environmental awareness, and fostering patience and sensitivity.

Charles started drawing at a young age, focusing on nature, flora, fauna, and portraits. After he began birdwatching, he shifted his focus to drawing birds, aiming to illustrate all bird species found in Borneo or endemic to Sabah. He is self-taught, learning through art classes in school, workshops, and independent practice. He uses various mediums, including watercolour, acrylic paint, coloured pencils, and pen.

Charles draws inspiration from nature, observing birds in their natural habitats, and capturing photographs. He doesn't focus on a specific bird group but prefers Bornean or endemic Sabah species. His artwork can take from an hour to months to complete, depending on the complexity and size.

Charles Mawan's bird art has been featured in art exhibitions, commercial products like calendars and stationery, and social media. He has used his art for personal collections, commercial decorations in hotels, hospitals, and offices, and educational workshops.

While making a living as a bird artist in Malaysia can be challenging, Charles believes it's possible with the right strategies and dedication. He suggests selling original paintings or prints, merchandise, commissions, and offering workshops and classes. Aspiring bird artists should hone their drawing skills, develop a unique style, utilize social media, showcase their work, and seek feedback.

Besides being a bird artist, Charles Mawan works as an architectural illustrator and graphic designer. He pursues his art during his free time and has participated in over 100 exhibitions. He has also conducted workshops to teach bird drawing techniques.

Citation: Birds in Art and Culture Series: Featuring Bird Artist Charles Mawan (2024). *Malaysian Bird Report*. Volume 2/2024, June 2024: pg. 83-87.

Recent Publications & Research

Research/Review Articles Relevant to Malaysia
Kim-Chye Lim

Green space and water body supports bird species diversity across urban parks in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Fudzla Zulfa Khiruddin & Mohammad Saiful Mansor (September 2023). National University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur.

Summary: This study was carried out to identify what landscape factors influence the birdlife in urban parks. The authors conducted bird surveys in three urban parks in Kuala Lumpur using point counts. Count data were analysed against five selected landscape attributes in these sites, namely park size, green spaces, built-up area, percentage of green spaces and water bodies. Results indicated that of the five landscape attributes, only green space area and water bodies positively influenced bird diversity and abundance. This preliminary report suggests that landscape attributes, rather than size, are more important considerations when developing parks for urban conservation.
Available at: https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-3312310/v1

Disentangling the biotic and abiotic drivers of bird-building collisions in a tropical Asian city using ecological niche modelling
David J. X. Tan, Nicholas A. Freymueller, Kah Ming Teo, William S. Symes, Shawn K.Y. Lum, Frank E. Rheindt (June 2023).

Summary: Citizen science reports of bird-building collision casualties in Singapore from 2013-2020 were used to investigate the factors influencing this significant cause of bird fatalities. Data of species and location co-ordinates were correlated with island-wide data on building size and density, vegetation and night-time light pollution. Results indicated that collision risks vary among species, with migrants being linked to areas with high building density and LED blue light pollution, and non-migrants to areas close to forests. Blue light pollution posed relatively higher collision risk for pittas, which numbered highest among migrant casualties, followed by flycatchers, bitterns and dwarf-kingfishers. The authors predict that future plans in Singapore, with increased encroachment of buildings into forested areas and blue light pollution (due to transition from sodium vapor to LED street lighting), may lead to corresponding increases in bird-building collisions. The transition to LED blue light to reduce energy consumption is underway in many cities along the migration routes, potentially impacting negatively on nocturnal migrants. The authors call for solutions to mitigate the negative impacts of blue light pollution on nocturnal migrants and offer several suggestions.
Preprint version available at: https://doi.org/10.1101/2023.06.27.546782

Utilising passive acoustic monitoring to investigate occupancy patterns of babblers in native and planted forest in Sarawak, Malaysia
Kayleigh Kueffner (December 2023). Evergreen State College, Washington, United States.

Summary: AThis research used automated recordings of babbler calls to detect their presence or absence. The study area was in Sarawak Planted Forest Zone, a matrix landscape of plantation and regenerating forests, conservation areas and native land in Bintulu Division, Sarawak. Acoustic units

were deployed at 11 sites each in planted forest and secondary forest for 10 days and programmed to record bird calls daily for 2 hrs at dawn and dusk. Data were processed for the presence/absence of 13 targeted babbler species in each site and the results analysed for correlation with the forest structure of the sites. Canopy height, shrub layer height and number of forest layers were found to be significant factors influencing babbler occurrence, with most species recorded more often in secondary forests except for Bold-striped and Fluffy-backed Tit Babblers which were more common in planted forests. The findings of this investigation highlight the importance of forest complexity for babblers and the potential for regenerated forest fragments within plantations to support avian conservation.
Available at:
https://collections.evergreen.edu/files/original/78f7140485eaab01ce31187efc9c6ba239431a01.pdf

Reproductive biology of the Whitehead's Broadbill *Calyptomena whiteheadi*
Necmiye Şahin Arslan, Daniel Muñoz & Thomas E. Martin (May 2023) Emu - Austral Ornithology, 123:2, 152-160.

Summary: The authors investigated if reproduction is a factor limiting population growth of the endemic Whitehead's Broadbill, given its declining overall population. From 2009-2020, they collected breeding biology data from 52 nests in Kinabalu Park, Sabah. Nesting season was from early February to mid May. Nests were located on trees averaging 12 m tall and 8 m above ground. Clutch size was 2 and only females incubated and brooded. Both parents fed the nestlings, bringing mainly fruits and, occasionally, snails. Whitehead's Broadbill was found to have relatively longer incubation and nestling periods compared to most co-existing Bornean songbirds, averaging 19 days and 26 days, respectively. The authors concluded that Whitehead's Broadbill had a relatively high nesting success of 52% in the study site, indicating that other factors such as habitat loss may influence the general population decline.
Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01584197.2023.2193900

Identifying Important Hornbill Landscapes in Sarawak, Malaysia
Shelby Q.W. Wee, Jason J.H. Teo, Batrisyia Teepol, Hilda N.I. Jelembai, Nyat Jun Au, Chin Aik Yeap & Anuj Jain (Feb 2024). Global Ecology and Conservation.

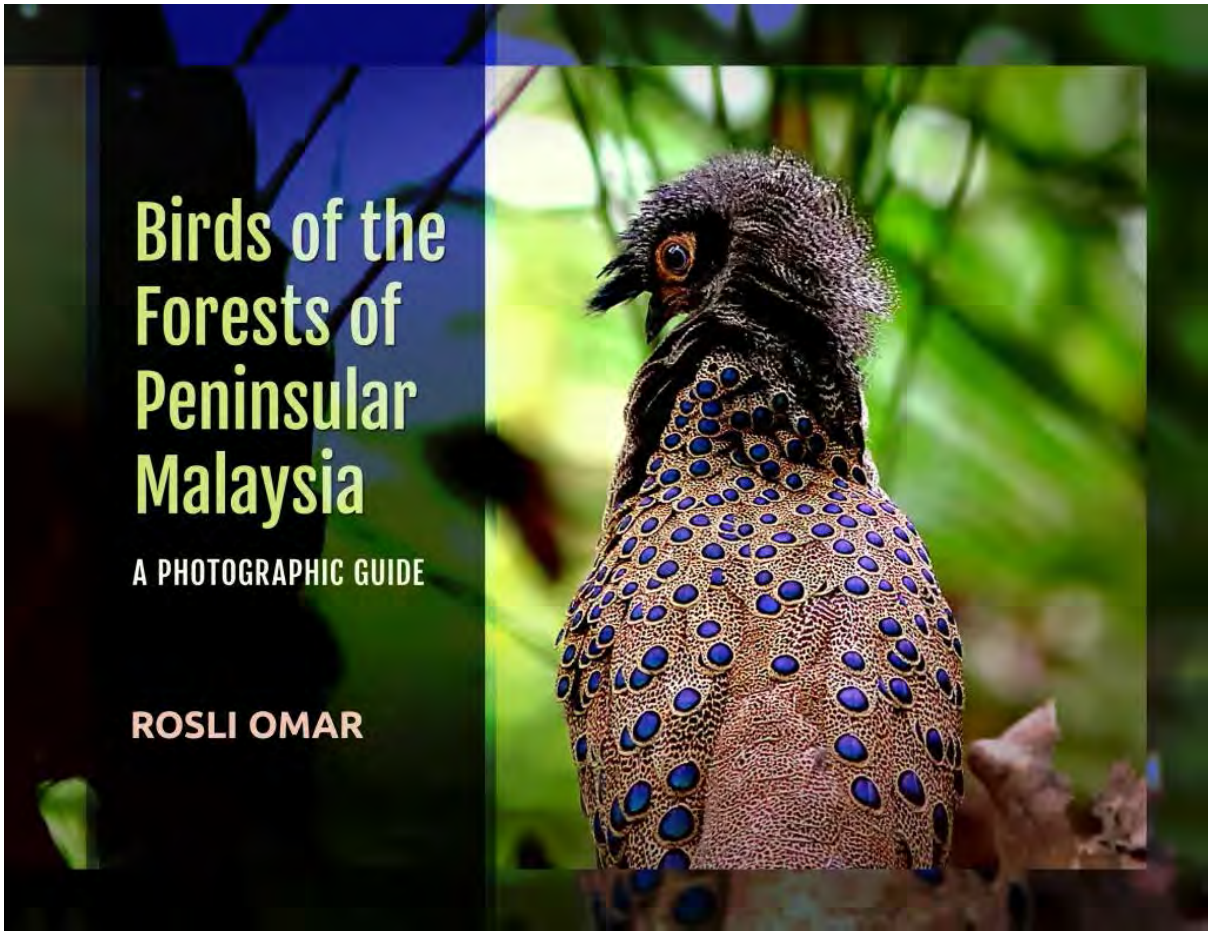
Summary: This study aimed to identify hornbill conservation priority sites in Sarawak for its five most common species - Black, Bushy-crested, Oriental Pied, Rhinoceros and Wreathed Hornbill. Two approaches were adopted (1) using Important Hornbill Landscape (IHL) concept developed by Malaysian Nature Society, with its four criteria – number of species, site size, breeding records and site protection status and (2) using MaxEnt analytical tool to predict hornbill species distribution. Data used included hornbill records to 2021 obtained from literature review, online sources and interviews. Assessment against IHL criteria resulted in 8 IHL sites identified while MaxEnt modelling predicted 6 more potential IHL sites, most of which were in eastern Sarawak. MaxEnt output confirmed the IHL criteria results were compatible with current hornbill and forest cover knowledge. The authors suggest the methodology in this study can be replicated for identifying hornbill conservation sites in other similar regions in Asia.
Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gecco.2024.e02828

Book Review

Swee-Yian Lim

Birds of the Forests of Peninsular Malaysia: A Photographic Guide
Gerakbudaya/Strategic Information and Research Development Centre
by Rosli Omar:

In this captivating guide, Rosli Omar takes readers on a visual journey through the lush forests of Peninsular Malaysia. Filled with stunning colour photographs of some 300 species, the book showcases the avian wonders that inhabit this biodiverse region. Rosli Omar, a former academic, is first and foremost, a birdwatcher then a photographer. His vast experience and years of birdwatching made him realise that bird numbers are on the decline in Peninsular Malaysia. With extinction threatening many species, he saw the need to record these birds and use the photographs to raise awareness about the fragility of ecosystems and the need for conservation. His photographs became powerful tools to advocate for the protection of bird habitats.



Instead of detailed descriptions of the birds, he lets the excellent photos speak for themselves. Other aspects of each species are well-covered, with information on its taxonomy and nomenclature, global range, regional distribution (including examples of known sites) and

conservation status. There are also brief notes on the ecology of the bird with information on habitat, behaviour, food and breeding. The guide not only introduces individual species but also sheds light on the ecosystems they call home. Whether it's the dense rainforests or coastal mangroves, the book highlights the interconnectedness of flora and fauna.

In many instances, he describes the circumstances of the occasion when the photos were shot and the bird's behaviour, thus giving helpful pointers to other bird photographers. His description of the Argus Pheasant during his six days of photographing and observing the male made me feel like I am there in the forest with him. Such is the vividness and power of his storytelling and images.

The book's strength lies in its breath-taking images. Each bird species is beautifully captured, allowing readers to appreciate their intricate plumage, unique behaviour, and natural habitats. Rosli's passion for birds shine through every page, making this guide a delightful addition to any naturalist's library.

Note: Rosli Omar's book first came out in 2018. Hard copies of the book are currently sold out but Rosli has kindly made an ebook version available for download.
Link: https://rosliomarphotography.com/3906-2/

Upcoming & Recent Bird Activities

Swee-Yian Lim

10th Global Big Day 2024 Highlights

Global Big Day is a 24-hour celebration of birds organized by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. May 11, 2024, marked the tenth annual event and it was a resounding success with several records broken in terms of checklists, countries, participants and bird species. The number of photos and audio recordings submitted to the Macaulay Library was at an all-time high.

Birders from 203 countries participated, more than ever before in a single day. Over 1 million people have now shared their bird observations on eBird, emphasizing the platform's impact on birding and scientific research.

Global Big Day in summary:

- 1.2 million people identified birds with Merlin Bird ID—the most ever in one day, doubling last year's Global Big Day participation through Merlin!
- 156,000 eBird checklists submitted.
- 63,220 birders from 203 countries—more countries participating than ever before.
- 7,725 species reported.
- 82,550 photos shared with the Macaulay Library
- 4,820 audio recordings shared with the Macaulay Library

Colombia led the species count with an astounding 1,526 species recorded, followed by Peru (1,428 species) and Brazil (1,201 species).

Table: Summary by State, Malaysia

Region	Species	Rank	Checklists	Rank
Sabah	293	1	44	1
Selangor	108	4	29	2
Johor	147	2	18	3
Pahang	127	3	16	4
Kuala Lumpur	51	7	14	5
Kedah	102	5	10	6
Penang	55	6	6	7
Sarawak	15	11	2	8
Perak	35	8	1	9
Putrajaya	29	9	1	10
Negeri Sembilan	20	10	1	11

Malaysia was ranked 3rd among Asian countries in terms of species with 441 species. 144 checklists were submitted making us number 9 on the leader board for checklists. Javan Myna, 480 individuals recorded, was the most numerous species. Asian Glossy Starling was number 2 with 400 individuals recorded.

The event fosters community and encourages a shared passion for birding. Participants of all ages, from seasoned birders to beginners, can participate.

Mark on your calendar for the next **Global Big Day is on 12 October 2024**.

35th Fraser Hill's International Bird Race, 08-09 June 2024
Venue: Fraser's Hill, Pahang, Malaysia

The 35th Fraser Hill's International Bird Race took place from 8-9 June 2024 at Bukit Fraser in Pahang, Malaysia. This event is Malaysia's oldest bird race and has been around for 35 years. According to one report, this event attracted birders from 16 countries. With 109 teams, of which 51 are international teams, it's the largest number of participating teams in the history of the race so far. The race had three categories: Student, Advanced, and Novice. In addition to the main bird race, there were several other contests, including a Bird Photography Contest. The event also featured a bazaar showcasing camera and optic equipment by several brands, as well as booths from various organizations such as the Malaysian Nature Society and Tourism Pahang, Forestry as well as Wildlife Departments.

Results of the Competitions

Category	First Place	Second Place	Third Place
Bird race student	PSIS Pecker 5 Politeknik Sultan Idris Shah, Selangor	SMK Kepala Batas	SMK Convent Taiping
Bird Race Novice	The Oriole, Malaysia	WBCP Birdlets, Philippines	Repton Red Kites, United Kingdom
Bird Race Advance	NEST Lifer Hunters, Malaysia	Cupwings, Malaysia	Taman Negara Flycatchers, Malaysia
Bird Photography	Mohd Nur Hafiz Ikhlas, Malaysia	Ng Choy Loi, Malaysia	Alain Pascua, Philippines

Images from the Fraser's Hill International Bird Race Facebook page
https://www.facebook.com/fhintbirdrace/

13th Asian Bird Fair
Date : 22-23 November 2024
Venue : The Tent, Las Pinas City, Metro Manila, Philippines
Web : https://asianbirdfair.org/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/www.asianbirdfair.org?mibextid=ZbWKwL

Young Birders Program by Jejak Liar, 25 May to 25 August 2024
Aidil Iman

The Young Birders Program is a citizen science and bird watching program by Jejak Liar for young Malaysians between the ages of 18 and 25 years old. The main objective of this program is to develop bird identification skills amongst young Malaysians. A total of 25 youth participants have joined the program. The Program is divided into three phases: the Bird Workshop, Bird Data Collection and Remote Bird-Monitoring Mini Research.

The Bird Workshop was organised at local bookstore, Sunda Shelves on 25 May 2024 where the participants were exposed to a series of talks on Bird Science, Bird Conservation and Birdwatching Ethics with naturalist, Mike H.N. Chong and Bird Photography with Rosli Omar. Jejak Liar members also introduced the participants to bird identification tools such as Merlin Bird ID, BirdNET and eBird.

The bird data collection is currently ongoing with its first launch on 26 May 2024 and will continue biweekly until August at the Perdana Botanical Garden. So far, a total of 15 bird species have been recorded by our participants. Some of these include Baya Weaver, Black-naped Oriole, White-throated Kingfisher, Common Flameback and many more. As the activity continues, we hope to observe more bird species.

Jejak Liar plans to invite the public to join for our bird data collection activity in June and July. To stay updated with the registration process, please follow Jejak Liar on https://www.instagram.com/jejakliar.my/.

Note: "*We will be opening slots for the Bird Data Collection activities in June and July for members of the public above 25 years old to join. A different registration post will be uploaded soon.*"

Obituary

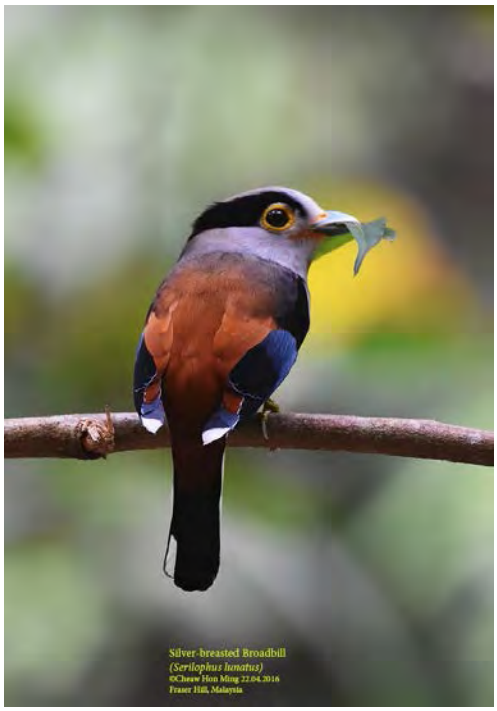
Remembering Cheaw Hon Ming

Swee-Yian Lim, Kon-Fah Leow, Yen-Loong Lean, Amar-Singh HSS

Cheaw Hon Ming left us peacefully but suddenly on 23 March 2024. His death was unexpected to his bird watching colleagues and this is a brief attempt to remember his life.

Hon Ming's father passed away when he was around 4 years of age, leaving his poor mother to raise 3 sons single-handedly. Living through a deprived childhood left him with strong values of resilience, fortitude, hard work, thriftiness and importance of family ties.

After completing Sixth Form in Anderson Secondary School, he trained as a teacher in Malayan Teachers College in KL. He started his teaching career in Jan 1969 in Methodist Secondary School in Sungei Siput. Taking a break from teaching, he furthered his education in University of Malaya where he graduated with the Bachelor of Economics (Business Administration). After another four years teaching in Teluk Intan, he joined Politeknik Ungku Omar, Ipoh. There he taught courses in Commerce, Management and Banking until his retirement.



Cheaw Hon Ming joined the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) in 1991. He was elected as chairperson of the Perak MNS Branch in 2006, and held the post for four years. He was an active birder and participated in most of the birding outings. He also served on the Board of Trustees for the Perak MNS from 2014 to 2024.

All his life he had an intense love for mother nature and the conservation of the earth's natural heritage. This has led him to develop a lifelong interest in flora and fauna since his teenage years. He pursued photography as a hobby to record the beauty of nature he saw around him. During the years he served as Chairman of MNS Perak branch he found much fulfilment in contributing to the appreciation and conservation of nature. Although he made much sacrifice in terms of his time and energy, he never complained because he wanted to do his bit for

nature. Being a teacher at heart, he was always ready to share whatever he knew of the plants and animals around him. His congenial easy-going and helpful personality has made him many friends especially among those who are also nature lovers like him.

Hon Ming was a keen birder and a generous individual, sharing bird locations and knowledge freely. Swee Yian says "*I remember him with great fondness. The branch trips with him were always a learning experience as he shared his wide knowledge on plants, especially his favourite group, the Gesneriad family.*"

As MNS branch chairman he left behind a legacy. The funds we now have in the Tan Kean Cheong fund (TKCF) was a result of his advocacy at MNS HQ that the money from the late Tan Kean Cheong should be managed by the branch. Over the years, the TKCF has assisted several individuals and organizations in carrying out various bird conservation projects and publication, including the Malaysian Garden Birds Survey, the Birds of Perak book, the Directory of Important Bird Areas in Malaysia and financed many field studies on birds.

His other great contribution was Ulu Geroh where he managed to persuade MNS HQ to carry out a survey of the area where *Rafflesia* and the Rajah Brooke's Birdwing *Trogonoptera brookiana* were constants. The Orang Asli community in the area benefited as MNS HQ sent a full-time officer there to work with them and made them aware that they can benefit from ecotourism.

He has also published in the Malaysian Bird Report and one of his recent contributions was on "Shared Nesting Tree Site for Gold-whiskered and Red-throated Barbets" (link).

During his retirement years he enjoyed a lifestyle of travel all over the world enjoying nature and widening his outlook into the culture of foreign lands. He also spent much time watching birds and photographing them.

November 2013 at Doi Inthanon, Chiangmai, Thailand. L to R: Deang, Cheaw Hon Ming, Poon Kuan Yaow, Mrs Deang, Wong Koon Yoke

Along the way, he built a loving family, raising two sons who are now hard working and useful members of society. As a doting grandpa, he promised his two-year old granddaughter that she can go birding with her grandparents when she gets older.

No discussion on Hon Ming is complete without mentioning Poon Kuan Yaow, his wife and stalwart companion on bird watching trips. Kuan Yaow is also an astute bird watcher and we send much love and peace in this time of bereavement. As Kuan Yaow spoke at the time of his passing "*He has had a happy life with no regrets and was blessed with a good death*".

Although Hon Ming went through a poor childhood, he has led a simple happy life and died a peaceful death surrounded by his family. A filial son, loving husband, father, and grandfather, he lived a life without regrets. He leaves behind a loving family who misses him deeply.
A blessing indeed.

A recent image of Cheaw Hon Ming (right) and Poon Kuan Yaow

Contributions to the Malaysian Bird Report

Editorial Team, Malaysian Bird Report

The Malaysian Bird Report is intended to be an inclusive publication, one that offers a vehicle for established and young birdwatchers, and bird photographers, to share their field observations and expertise.

We welcome articles that help the birdwatching community to grow its understanding of bird behaviour, social interactions, identification, nesting, etc.

We hope to encourage all of us to go beyond capturing images and try to document and write-up our observations, especially of uncommon and unusual bird ecology, nesting behaviour, etc. The editor is committed to helping birdwatchers to write up their observations.

We welcome you to share the publication freely with all interested birdwatchers and bird photographers, as well as with the general public.

Guidelines for Submission of Articles:

1. All written contributions should be sent to the editor at: malaysianbirdreport@gmail.com using a Microsoft Word or Google Docs file. Articles submitted can be in English, Malay and Chinese. Malay and Chinese articles should contain an abstract in English.
2. Images submitted should be in JPEG (.jpg) format. As this is an electronic publication, we recommend images either 1000 pixels wide or 1000 pixels high. There should be no borders to the image. We will ensure that images submitted contain a watermark/copyright to identify the photographer; this will not obstruct the image in any way.
3. Images chosen for the cover page, back page, or other pages, to illustrate the publication, should be of higher resolution (2500 x 3500 pixels, 300dpi or higher) and not contain any watermark/copyright.
4. Copyright of images submitted will remain that of the photographer.
5. Any maps or other illustrative images should be sent as high-resolution JPEG or TIFF files.
6. Please use this reference for all bird names: MNS Bird Conservation Council. 2021. A Checklist of the Birds of Malaysia. 2020 Edition. Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Nature Society. (MNS Conservation Publication No. 22).

We encourage collaborative work and hope that birdwatchers and bird photographers will combine observations to produce reports of interest to all of us.

We would like to thank all individuals who have contributed to the Malaysian Bird Report with articles, data, reports and images.