LITTLE EAGLE Hieraaetus morphnoides
ON HALMAHERA

by

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A single Little Eagle Hieraaetus morphnoides was seen on 27 and 28 July 1989 on Halmahera about one hour's drive east of Sidangoli (which lies on the west coast of Halmahera, opposite Ternate Island). The bird was perched high on a tall tree at the edge of the road near its highest point (several hundred meters elevation). It was seen perched only, as we were unable to flush it.

The following description is taken from field notes. The eagle was small with a large head. Its underparts were pale tawny with broad streaks on the breast becoming narrower on the belly; dark brown patch on each flank; head dark brown with faint darker streaks; cere dark grey; bill black; eyes dark dull yellow; tarsus heavily feathered to base of toes; feet large; tail-pale greyish underneath with one fairly broad dark subtermin band and three narrow dark bands; wing lining pale tawny (rusty buff); underside of outer primaries white with medium-width black bands.

The juvenile plumage of the Black Eagle Ictinaetus malayensis is somewhat similar to Little Eagle, but differs by; larger size; longer tail and wings; black underside of primaries and tail. the latter with narrow, irregular dark grey bands.

Apparently a vagrant from Australia or New Guinea (Beehler et al. 1986), this appears to be the first published record for the Little Eagle for any pan of Wallacea (White & Bruce, 1986).

References:


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