

**NOTES ON A BOOTED EAGLE SIGHTING ON BINTAN ISLAND,
RIAU ARCHIPELAGO**

by
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While conducting a bird survey of the northern coast of Bintan Island, Riau Archipelago, on 17 April 1993, Ho Hua Chew, Lim Kim Keang, Sutari Supari, Sunny Yeo and the author observed a pale morph Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* perched on a coconut tree at about 75 m distance. The site was a disused coconut plantation on sloping ground with dense scrub and lallang grass. An approach

was made on foot whereby viewing distance was shortened to 30 m before the bird flew off, circling for a few minutes before disappearing about 30 minutes after first discovery. The time was 17.30 hours, and the weather was partly cloudy, offering good viewing conditions. All observers had either 10x40 or 10x42 binoculars. The author has seen this species before in Singapore and Malaysia.

A description of the bird based on the author's notes is as follows: medium sized raptor, taken to be slightly smaller than Crested Serpent eagle *Spilornis cheela*; at rest, appears to have large, rounded head and moderate build with moderately long thighs and tail; head pale buff, streaked brown, with darkish eye mask; throat whitish; upperparts dark brown; wings mainly brown but heavily scaled buff and white; tail (from below) uniform grey; entire underparts, under tail coverts and thighs whitish; feet and cere yellow.

In flight, showed long broad wings and moderately long broad tail. From below, white under wing coverts contrast with blackish flight feathers; tail grey; from above, dark upper wings contrast with buffy brown back and wing coverts and buff head; forewings showed prominent white spots or 'headlights' at joint with body; prominent narrow white band on upper tail coverts; flies with wings at horizontal.

[The known records in Indonesia are as follows: single birds in Bali on 14, 21 and 25 Oct 1982 (Ash 1984), the present record, and one on Batam island, also in the Riau Archipelago, on 24 Oct 1993 (Rajathurai 1996). The present record equals the latest known spring date in the Malay Peninsula, which was 17 April, at Thaleban, Satui, Thailand (Round 1993), while all the October records predate the previously earliest known date for the region, a bird at its wintering site at Kuala Selangor, Malaysia, on 28 October (Wells 1986) *ed.*].

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References

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