

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

POMARINE SKIJAS IN TM STRAITS OF MALACCA

by
Andrew Crossland

On 22 April 1997, a northward passage of Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus* was observed at ca. 50 km SW of Pulau Penaag, Malaysia, from the Penang Belawan (Medan, Indonesia) ferry. The skuas were readily identified by their well developed blunt ended tail feathers. Individuals and small groups were noted, all flying north toward the Malaysian/Thailand coasts. Some birds occasionally followed the ferry briefly or harassed terns, but generally they ignored most distractions and flew low and steadily over the water on what appeared to be a determined migratory movement. Birds were seen in both Indonesian and Malaysian territorial waters.

This skua is described as a sparse passage migrant off the west coast of the Thai Malay Peninsula between 23 March and 7 June (Wells 1999), but there we only three records from Sumatra (October to December) (van Mark & Voous 1988).

References

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- Wells, D.R. 1999. *The birds of the Thai Malay Peninsula. Volume One: Non passerines*. Academic Press.

A COMMUNAL ROOST OF HILL MYNAS IN NORTH SUMATRA

by
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During a bird survey between the 18th and 21st of February 1999 in the Sei Besitang region of the Leuser Ecosystem, a communal roosting site of Hill Mynas *Gracula religiosa* was observed.

The Sei Besitang River is situated on the east side of the province of North Sumatra, very near the Aceh border. This large river flows in a north east direction and eventually empties into the Straits of Malacca. The area surveyed consisted of tall and medium height secondary forest, as well as open grassland near the river. There is currently a research/park ranger station being constructed in this area. The roosting site was at the edge of this open area.

The communal roost of Hill Mynas was located within 500 meters of the camp (the research/forestry station was used as camp) in a stand of a few medium height trees at the edge of the river and at the edge of the open grassy area. Each morning flocks of these birds were seen flying out of

the stand of trees and returning again in the late afternoon. The flocks consisted of up to 20 birds. Each morning approx. 35-50 birds were seen leaving this roosting area. During the day a few pairs and individuals were seen in the open forest in the surrounding area.

Hill Mynas are trapped extensively throughout much of their range for the cage bird industry. While locals in the area were observed hunting Yellow-vented Bulbuls *Pycnonotus goiavier*, as well as a few mammal species for food, there didn't seem to be any evidence of trapping cage birds.

Hopefully, with the presence of park staff as well as researchers in the future at the research station, the existence of this roosting site will continue. The area is quite rich in birds and than 60 species were observed during this short survey. Monitoring of the region should continue as there are likely to be many more interesting observations to be made.

Acknowledgements

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