The first wild Common Mynas *Acridotheres tristis* in Java: colonists or aviary escapees?

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Ringkasan: Kerak Ungu *Acridotheres tristis* merupakan jenis introduksi yang umum terdapat di kawasan Asia Tenggara. Burung ini telah tercatat secara luas di Semenanjung Malaysia, Singapura, Sumaetra dan Borneo (Kalimantan). Burung ini setidaknya sebelum tahun 2007 tidak tercatat di Jawa, tetapi dalam kurun waktu 2010-2013, setidaknya ada tujuh kali catatan pengamatan burung ini di Jawa. Catatan ini menunjukkan bahwa burung ini telah tersebar di Jawa, mulai dari Banten, Jakarta, Yogyakarta dan Solo.

Introduction

Although the original distribution of the Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* probably extended only from Uzbekistan and Iran in the west through the Indian sub-continent to southwest China in the east, since the early 1900s the species has spread throughout southeast Asia (see Wells 2007). It was not recorded on the Thai-Malay Peninsula until the 1920s, and in Singapore until 1936 (Hails & Jarvis 1987), but it is uncertain whether these populations were derived from natural range expansion or escaped aviary stocks (Wells 2007; Craig & Feare 2009; Seng 2009). The species was first recorded in Sumatra in 1975 in Jambi province, and although it was recorded from North Sumatra to South Sumatra over the following decade, no breeding was recorded, and all birds were considered to be the offspring of captive birds (Marle & Voous 1988; Holmes 1996).

In Borneo the species was also first reported in 1975, in Brunei, but is now known to occur in cities in Sabah and Sarawak, as well as in plantations in East Kalimantan (Mann 2008; Phillipps & Phillips 2009; Iqbal *et al.* 2013). These populations are often presumed to be derived from captive stock, but could have originated from natural or ship-assisted colonisation (Mann 2008). This note describes the first records of the Common Myna on the island of Java.

Observations

Since 2010 we have recorded Common Mynas at five localities in Java (with province in brackets): Ragunan and Monas (Jakarta), Yogyakarta and Solo (Central Java), and Cilegon (Banten) near the western tip of Java. On 10 August 2010, DI observed three Common Mynas on park lawns at Taman Ragunan, South Jakarta (6°19'9"S, 106°49'23"E; Plate 1). In 2012, MA observed at least six birds in the same area. On 14 May 2012, DI sighted one bird in a city park in Monas, Central Jakarta (6°10'33"S, 106°49'39"E), c.12 km from Ragunan. About 90 km west of

Central Jakarta and c. 30 km from the coast of Sumatra, Tr observed and photographed a Common Myna (Plate 3) on suburban lawns in Cilegon, Banten (6°7'12"S, 106°9'1"E) on 7 May 2012. Subsequently BH observed three birds around an open fish pond near a patch of mangroves on the outskirts of Cilegon (5°59'6"S, 105°59'0"E).

DEDY ISTANTO

Plate 1. Common Myna at Ragunan, August 2010, possibly the first reported from Java.

BUDI HERMAWAN

Plate 2. A Common Myna carrying potential nest material in Yogyakarta in December 2011.

On 26 December 2011, BH saw two birds, one of which was collecting nest material, in the city of Yogyakarta, Central Java (7°48'5"S, 110°21'52"E; Plate 2). Finally, on 29 June 2013, two Common Mynas, possible a pair, were observed by MI near a parking area of Adi Sumarmo airport, Solo, Central Java (7°30'92"S, 110°45'81"E).

TRIONO

Plate 3. A Common Myna in Cilegon in May 2012.

Discussion

Although wild Common Mynas had not previously been reported from Java (MacKinnon & Phillipps 1993; Sukmantoro *et al.* 2007), we observed small groups at five localities on the island, spanning c. 560 km, between August 2010 and June 2013. While it is possible that the populations in western Java (Banten-Jakarta) originated by natural colonisation from Sumatra, those in Central Java seem unlikely to have been established by birds spreading from the west, within less than two years. It is also possible that some populations were transported accidentally on ships, but observations suggest that a more likely origin is zoos or local bird markets. Although Basuni & Setiyani (1989) did not find captive Common Mynas in the Jl. Pramuka bird markets in Jakarta in December 1987, by 1990 the species was reported from bird markets in both Jakarta and Surabaya (Bell & Seibels 1990). In Jakarta, Nash (1993) observed captive birds in the Jl. Pramuka and/or Barito markets in both December 1991 and May 1992. Indeed the birds we observed in Taman Ragunan in 2010 and 2012 may well have emanated from Ragunan Zoo, which is known to hold captive Common Mynas, only 2 km away. In Medan, North Sumatra, Common Mynas were less numerous than introduced Javan Mynas *A. javanicus* in markets, but numbers of the former increased from 23 birds in to 415 between 1997

and 2001, while numbers of the latter decreased from 5,000 birds in 1997 to 1,115 in 2001 (Shepherd *et al.* 2004). Significantly, dealers in Medan claimed to send c. 500 to 1,000 Javan Mynas to Jakarta each week, and it seems probable that some Common Mynas were also exported.

The Common Myna has been identified as one of only three birds in the top 100 most invasive species in the world (Lowe *et al.* 2000). Common Mynas have been introduced to many parts of the world, especially tropical islands, where they are thought to have contributed to the decline, and possibly even the extinction, of several island endemic species through competition for nest-sites or the introduction of alien parasites (Craig & Feare 2009). In Australia, where the species was introduced as early as 1862, there is empirical evidence that the species displaces some large native cavity-nesting bird species, and aggressively forces many small bird species out of its territories, though the degree of impact depends on habitat (Lowe *et al.* 2011; Grarock *et al.* 2012). In Singapore, mynas are hypothesized to be one of the factors leading to the decline of native hole-nesting Oriental Magpie Robin *Copsychus saularis* (Huong & Sodhi 1997 in Lim *et al*. 2003).

In Singapore, the Common Myna is strongly associated with agricultural areas, while in urban areas its role has largely been replaced by the Javan Myna, a Javan-endemic species that was introduced to Singapore around 1924 (Yap *et al.* 2002), probably because the latter is more capable of exploiting ephemeral food sources, such as carrion and human refuse (Lim *et al.* 2003). In 2001 the population size of the Javan Myna was at least five times higher than that of the Common Myna, estimated to be over 122,000 and 200,000, respectively, although both species have declined since the early 1980s (Lim *et al.* 2003). The abundance of Common Mynas in Peninsular Malaysia is also said to have been severely reduced by competition from Javan Mynas (Davison & Aik 2010; Lum *et al.* 2010). During our observations of Common Mynas in Java, we did not notice Javan Mynas in Jakarta or Yogyakarta. In Cilegon on the other hand, at least 20 Javan Mynas were present, but no aggressive interactions between the two species were witnessed.

In conclusion the Common Myna appears to have established independent populations across the western half of Java. The observation of a bird collecting potential nest material in Yogyakarta suggests that there is a breeding population in that city. We urge local and visiting birdwatchers and ornithologists in Java to be vigilant for, and to report, new populations of Common Mynas. In addition, we believe regular monitoring of known populations would be useful in determining if these populations are growing in size, and whether they are having an impact on other species, particularly the endemic Javan Myna.

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