

LITTLE EAGLE *Hieraaetus morphnoides*
ON HALMAHERA

by

Ben King

(Received 4 January 1990)

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.¹

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 subterminal 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 part of Wallacea (White & Bruce, 1986).

¹. [The other observers were: Melinda Berger, Brian Kautesh, Joan Destaebler, William Rapp, George Winter, Dr. Lynn Hamilton, Gen Graves, Ruth Steller and Niels Paul Dreyer]

References:

- Beehler, B.M., T.K. Pratt and D.A. Zimmerman. 1986. *Birds of New Guinea*. Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton.
- White, C.M.N., and M.D. Bruce, 1986. *The Birds of Wallacea (Sulawesi, the Moluccas & Lesser Sunda Islands, Indonesia)*. Brit. Orn. Un. Checklist No. 7, London.

Address:

Ornithology Dept. American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th St., New York, NY