

Figure 1. Drawing after a field sketch made of Grey-streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa griseisticta*, Kayan Mentarang, 15 February 1992 (by Bas van Balen).

**SHORT COMMUNICATIONS**

**NOTE ON OBSERVATIONS OF ABBOTT'S BOOBY IN THE BANDA SEA**

By

**S. (Bas) van Balen**

(First draft received 18 October 1995)

On 2 May 1994, at 18.06 hrs, while travelling on a Buginese schooner in the Banda Sea, east Indonesia, a booby was seen perched on a floating log. The white plumage but with entirely black wings, black face, and pink bill with dark tip, were diagnostic for a female Abbott's Booby *Sula abbotti*. The location was northwest of the Tayandu Islands at 5°08'S, 132°17'E. The bird was passed at ca 25 m distance and observed with 7x35 binoculars. On 4 May, at 15.45 hrs, a probable juvenile Abbott's Booby was seen between Seram and Saparua at 3°33'S; 129°43'E. This bird was foraging in a group of more than twenty Red-footed Boobies *Sula sula*, and had a white back between the darkish wings. Both observations were made near or within the most food-rich areas in the Banda Sea in April as reported by Cadee (1987).

Abbott's Booby is presently known to breed only on Christmas Island (Hamson 1983). The species is considered vulnerable (Collar *et al.* 1994), mainly because of this limited distribution, long replacement period and declining population (ca 3000 pairs in 1991). Outside the breeding season, which is April-July (Hamson 1983), the dispersal at sea is poorly understood. Young and non-breeding birds are always absent from Christmas Island, rarely if ever being observed feeding within sight of the island (Carter 1994). Many are suspected to feed in the rich upwellings along the Java Trench off south Java (Becking 1976; Del Hoyo 1992). During the Snellius Expedition Cadee (1987) saw three birds on 19 February 1985 much further east, between the Aru and Kai islands (5°17'S, 133°59'E). Smeenk (1985) had seen the species just prior to the Snellius cruise at several locations in this area, where no Abbott's Boobies were seen in July-August 1984 (Cadee 1985).

Cadee (1987) speculates that there may exist another breeding site in the Banda Sea area. The above-mentioned sightings, which were made during the breeding season on Christmas Island, may support this possibility, although Abbott's Boobies, in common with other members of the family, may travel long distances from its breeding grounds.

**Acknowledgements**

Thanks are forwarded to the Seatrek touring company (Amsterdam/Denpasar) for the trip on the schooner and Ms Elly Wierenga for spotting the first boob

---

---

**References**

- Becking, J.H. 1976. Feeding range of Abbott's Booby *Sula abbotti* at the coast of Java. *Ibis* 118:589-590.
- Cadee, G.C 1985. Some data on seabird abundance in Indonesian waters. July/August 1984. *Ardea* 73:183-188.
- Cadee, G.C. 1987. Seabirds in the Banda Sea in February/March 1985. *Marine Research in Indonesia* 27:19-34.
- Carter, M. 1994. Birds of Australia's Christmas Island. *Wingspan* 13:18-21.
- Collar, N.J., M.J. Crosby & A.J. Stattersfield. 1994, *Birds to watch 2. The world list of threatened birds*. BirdLife Conservation Series 4.
- Harrison, P. 1983. *Seabirds. An identification guide*. Helm, London.
- del Hoyo, J., A. Elliott and J. Sargatal (eds). 1992. *Handbook of the birds of the World*. Lynx Editions, Barcelona.
- Smeenk, C. 1985. *Whales and sea birds*. In: *Progress Report Snellius Expedition. Theme II Ventilation of deep sea basins, cruise MV Tyro, January 4 - February 6 1985*. (H. Postma and J. Rommets eds) KNAW/LIPI; 6-10, 24-26.

**Address:** BirdLife International - Indonesia Programme, P.O Box 310/Boo, BOGOR 16003, Indonesia, and Department of Nature Conservation, Wageningen Agricultural University, P.O.Box 8080, 6700 DD WAGENINGEN, the Netherlands.

**ANTING BEHAVIOUR IN BALI STARLINGS**

by

**S. (Bas) van Balen**

(First draft received 18 October 1995)

The Bali Starling *Leucopsar rothschildi* (or Rothschild's Mynah; Sturnidae, Aves) is a critically endangered bird endemic to the island of Bali (Indonesia), with just 35-40 birds surviving in the wild, all in Bali Barat National Park (Collar *et al* 1994) Very little has been published about the behaviour and ecology of wild birds, but some data are available about its behaviour in captivity (e.g. Sieber 1983). The Bali Starling conservation programme (Indonesian Forestry Ministry, BirdLife International -Indonesia Programme, American Zoo and Aquarium Association) in which the author was involved during 1989-1994, provided opportunities to study the species further.

The Bali Starlings under observation comprised 15-25 wild birds, and a group of 13 (12 of which