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## COMMON MYNA ON UPOLU: FIRST RECORD FOR THE WESTERN SAMOA ISLANDS

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Several Common Mynas (*Acridotheres tristis*, Fig. 1) were observed on the island of Upolu, Western Samoa, from 22 June to 9 August 1988. The first two birds were sighted near the Samoa Spare Parts Center in Apia, sitting on the pole of a power line. Further checks in the town area of Apia revealed several other birds. Mynas were observed at the following 11 sites: Congregational Christian Church; Prime Ministers Department; Roman Catholic Cathedral; Gold Star Building, Convent Road; Parliament House, Mulinuu; National Hospital, Motootua; Vaialele Street/Falealili Street; Mau Memorial, Vaimoso; LDS-Church Compound, Lepea; Vaitele, opposite brewery; and at Fagalii Village.

Common Mynas have not previously been recorded from any of the Western Samoan Islands. Jungle Mynas (*Acridotheres fuscus*, Fig. 2) however, have been present since 1972 or 1973, according to Klaus Stuenzner (pers. comm.), a Samoan citizen who caught one of these birds inside a warehouse. Watling (1978), Child (1979), and Pratt, Bruner and Berrett (1987) already reported *Acridotheres fuscus* on the island of Upolu. Dhondt (1976) gave an account of the Common Myna on Upolu, an error corrected by Child (1979), who noted that the myna present in Western Samoa was the Jungle Myna and not the Common Myna. Continuous field studies by the author (1977-1984) confirmed that the Common Myna did not occur in Western Samoa at that time. Robert L. Pyle kindly informed me of the observation by Robert E. Potter (1981) of a single Common Myna in American Samoa (Tutuila Island).

The distinctive characteristics of the two species are the yellow, bare skin behind the eye of the Common Myna in contrast to the nasal tuft of feathers of the Jungle Myna. Common Mynas can be easily overlooked as the yellow patch behind the brown eye could be confused with the bright whitish-orange eye of the Jungle Myna. The body of the Common Myna is brownish, while that of the Jungle Myna is blackish gray.

In eight of the sites mentioned two birds were observed, probably pairs; in one site two pairs were present, in another three birds, and in another only one bird.

Common Mynas were observed collecting food from garbage bins, among rocks on the Beach Road, and on lawns, like that in front of Apia Hospital. Nest building was

observed under the roofs of the Congregational Church, the Cathedral and the Gold Star Building.

Mixed flocks of Common and Jungle Mynas were observed on lawns. After sunrise, considerable numbers of Jungle Mynas that roost in trees outside Apia invaded the town area.

A total of 24 Common Mynas was counted. Repeated checks proved that this is a minimum figure. The birds were counted along transects. Double countings are unlikely, as the birds did not fly great distances and several pairs were observed simultaneously.

One bird of the pair at the Prime Minister's Department was limping because of a nylon thread around one leg. Another bird belonging to the pair at the Mau Memorial was limping for no obvious reason.

The increase of the Common Myna will be interesting to follow. Its numbers will likely rise as drastically as did those of the Jungle Myna in recent years. *Acridotheres fuscus* was first observed in 1972 or 1973. During my studies (1977-1984) I found the Jungle Myna concentrated in the town area, roosting in dense trees on the Beach Road,



Figure 1. Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) in Apia.

Photo by U. R. Beichle



Figure 2. Jungle Myna (*Acridotheres fuscus*) in Apia.

Photo by U. R. Beichle

while a few occurred in urban areas and on plantations (especially in coconut plantations grazed by cattle). In 1988, large numbers of Jungle Mynas were seen all over Upolu. They did not occur on Savaii Island, except for one bird recorded on Salelologa (Reed 1980). Now flocks of 6 to 10 are present in the southeasterly part of Savaii.

The Common Myna will probably be "restricted to the proximity of human dwellings" (Watling 1982); in town areas or villages it might compete with the Jungle Myna. Apart from that, plantations with various food crops and lawns around houses might offer habitats where Common Mynas could compete with local Samoan bird species.

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## Another Exotic Turtle Record for Hawaii

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Of the 22 established species of amphibians and reptiles reported from the Hawaiian Islands by McKeown (1978), 18 are known or suspected to have been introduced by man. The list of "exotic" species includes two Asian softshell turtles, *Trionyx sinensis* and *T. steindachneri* (McKeown and Webb 1982, Oliver and Shaw 1953, Webb 1980). I recently came across a specimen of the Chinese three-striped box turtle (*Cuora trifasciata*) in the National Museum of Natural History (USNM 80120) with locality data specifying "Hawaii: Oahu, Honolulu." The specimen was donated to the Smithsonian by the National Zoological Park and catalogued on 15 February 1930. The actual date of collection is not given but the animal was reportedly collected by "L.A. Whitney." The specimen appears to be a female and has a straight-line carapace length of 148 mm. The species is native to southern China, northern Vietnam, and Hainan Island (Iverson 1986). It should be noted that the genus *Cuora* has been confused with North American box turtles of the genus *Terrapene* (see McCoy and Richmond 1966). In fact, several specimens of *Terrapene* have recently been found near Hilo, Hawaii (Mull 1987). Although these two genera exhibit convergent morphologies, there are striking differences in pattern (Figs. 1 and 2).

When Chinese immigrants arrived in Hawaii in the 1850s they brought a number of exotic species with them (McKeown and Webb 1982). Established populations of two softshell turtles were noted by the early 1900s (Brock 1947, McKeown and Webb 1982, Webb 1980). Almost all importations occurred before World War II (Brock 1947, McKeown and Webb 1982) and most of these arrived in Honolulu (McKeown and Webb 1982). In view of the time and place of collection, and the sympatric distribution of *C. trifasciata*, *T. sinensis*, and *T. steindachneri* (Iverson 1986) it is very likely that the former species was also imported to



Figure 1. Photograph of an eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) from Pennsylvania.

Photo by Jeff Lovich.

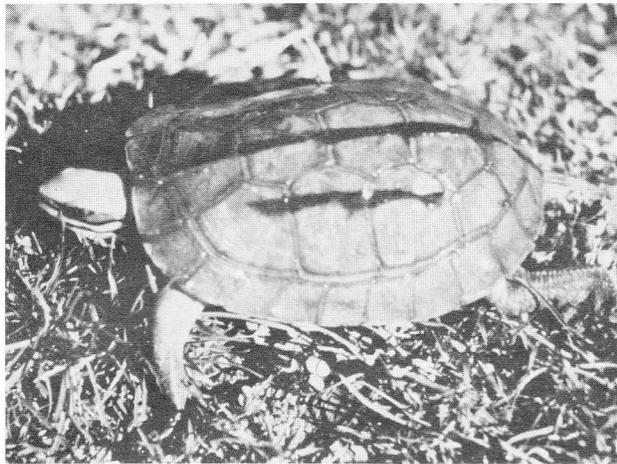


Figure 2. Photograph of a Chinese three-striped box turtle (*Cuora trifasciata*) of unknown provenance.

Photo by David Ross.

Hawaii at irregular intervals for food. In addition, the brightly colored flesh of *C. trifasciata* is prized by the Chinese as a putative aphrodisiac (Buskirk 1988). There is no evidence that a naturally reproducing population of *C. trifasciata* was ever established in Hawaii, but accidental or planned releases may have temporarily added this species to the state's herpetofauna.

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The endangered 'Alala or Hawaiian Crow.

Photo by E. Brown

ERRATA -- 50TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

On page 71 of the November 1989 issue there is a photograph of the 'Alala or Hawaiian Crow. That photograph was taken by E. Brown, not Fern Duvall. Our apologies to the photographer.

We neglected to mention that the photograph (page 73) of Charter member Charles Matthew Dunn at the 40th anniversary banquet also depicts his wife who attended the banquet with him.



Mr. and Mrs. Charles M. Dunn at the Hawaii Audubon Society 40th anniversary banquet.