

Himalayan vulture at Toa Payoh

Subject: Himalayan vulture, *Gyps himalayensis* (Aves: Accipitridae).

Subject identified by: Fayyadh Muhammad bin Osman.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Toa Payoh; 5 January 2016; 1400 hrs.

Habitat: Urban. Housing estate with high rise concrete buildings.

Observers: Contributors.

Observation: The bird was first spotted on the roof of a high rise building (see accompanying photograph). It was unable to fly, and was observed eating unidentified food thrown to it by human residents. Diluted fecal secretions were also observed. Subsequently, the vulture fell to the ground where it seemed to be frightened of the surroundings and of people passing by. The observers managed to catch the bird, which was stumbling about and offered little resistance. The vulture was found to be weak and thin, the bones on its neck could be felt and it was covered with mites. The observers wrapped the vulture in a towel and transported it to the Avian Hospital at the Jurong Bird Park where it was given emergency treatment.

Remarks: The emaciated condition and diluted fecal secretions suggest that the subject was severely malnourished. The Himalayan vulture is one of the largest raptors in the world, reaching a length of 120 cm. It is resident in Central Asia and the Himalayas, but shows up in Southeast Asia as a non-breeding visitor. The featured individual is one of a number of young birds that had been picked up injured in urban areas in Singapore between December and February in recent years (Yong et al., 2013: 35).

Reference: Yong D. L., K. C. Lim & T. K. Lee, 2013. *A Naturalist's Guide to the Birds of Singapore*. John Beaufoy Publishing, United Kingdom. 176 pp.



Photograph by Muhammad Ridzwan Latif

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