



Dear Nias Hill Myna Supporters,

We are very grateful for your help and support in this joint effort to protect and conserve the Nias Hill Myna. We are very happy to update you with our first official bilingual newsletter to inform you about the developments and want to do this on a regular basis from now on. Best regards and thank you for your help - The Hill Nias Myna Team of Heidelberg Zoo. Nicole Braun, communications and Simon Bruslund, coordination



Nias Hill Myna activities 2016 and 2017:

- The research of Tereza Svejcarova have been ongoing and finally reached it's completion in June 2017 a printed booklet of her results was distributed during the EAZA meeting in Vienna in May 2017.
- As you know during a research visit to Nias in Dec. 2015 it was decided to pursue the ongoing trade in what seemed like wild-caught Nias Hill Mynas back to its origin. As a direct result of this, a significant population was discovered on one of the Banyak islands. The precise location is not mentioned in publications to keep this relatively secret until adequate protection is secured on site.
- In June 2016 a trip was made to this island by Tereza Svejcarova, Tomas Ouhel, Frantisek Pribrsky and Simon Bruslund during which a focus was made on the massive and ongoing poaching especially of turtles eggs but also birds namely Nias Hill Mynas and White-rumped Shamas. During this visit 3 poachers was discovered, documented and eventually captured by this group of essentially tourists together with one Ranger and one armed marine officer. The three persons was flowingly arrested and jailed. It was our hope that this first example of poachers captured and sentenced would serve as a deterrent for others reducing the poaching pressure but recent evidence indicates that there is still active trapping ongoing on the island.
- During the trip in June 2016 Simon Bruslund also discovered and photographed a Silvery Pigeon (Columba argentina) which is also Critically Endangered (CR) just like the Nias Hill Myna.





- With Support of the ZGAP a boat for the rangers could be purchased and given to the Indonesian partner NGO HAKA for the rangers in the Banyak islands to be able to patrol more effectively.
- At the end of 2016 BirdLife International confirmed the species status of the Nias Hill Myna (*Gracula robusta*) and allocated the red-list status Critically Endangered.
- In the beginning of 2017 Zoo Heidelberg initiated contacts with the Nias Heritage Museum. This is the main organization in Nias working on the natural heritage and they maintain a small zoo with native animals (see <http://www.museum-nias.org/en/mini-zoo/>). We communicated mainly on Silvery Pigeons for which Simon Bruslund helped with advice on husbandry and aviary design. Heidelberg Zoo contributed money for the construction of a new aviary for the two Silvery Pigeons they had received. The Museum is a foundation / charity and the director is an engaged and visionary native Nias'en Nata'alui Duha. The museum was initially founded by much-respected Pastor Johannes Hämmerle who arrived in Nias in 1971 and have stayed ever since.
- Out of this the idea of developing a parallel effort to breed with privately owned or confiscated Nias Hill Mynas in Nias for future re-introduction purposes started and quickly developed into the first ideas and plans for an environmental awareness and natural heritage pride campaign with the purpose for the local Nias people to appreciate and protect their own species. One of the first steps have been to re activate the name of the Nias Hill Myna in the Nias language, which is "Magiao".
- In March 2017 a first visit was made to the Nias Heritage Museum by Simon Bruslund and Bernd Marcordes (Cologne Zoo). Here concrete plans for a cooperation between the Heidelberg Zoo and the Nias Heritage Museum on the conservation of Nias Hill Mynas could be formulated on improving the knowledge and expertise of the Zoo Keepers from Nias as well as initiate a conservation breeding program on for the Nias Hill Myna.
- Further Nias Hill Mynas of uncertain origin have been secured by the Taman Safari Indonesia zoo in Java and by a private breeding in Java who both are willing to contribute towards a coordinated conservation breeding effort. Measurements and genetic samples have been collected of those birds by Simon Bruslund. Taman Safari will support the project through its conservation organ, which is the KASI Foundation.
- Since June 2017 the construction of a first off-exhibit breeding and holding facility unit for Nias Hill Mynas started and was completed by the second week of August 2017 (request the project proposal for the Silent Forest per-selected project SAVE MAGIAO).

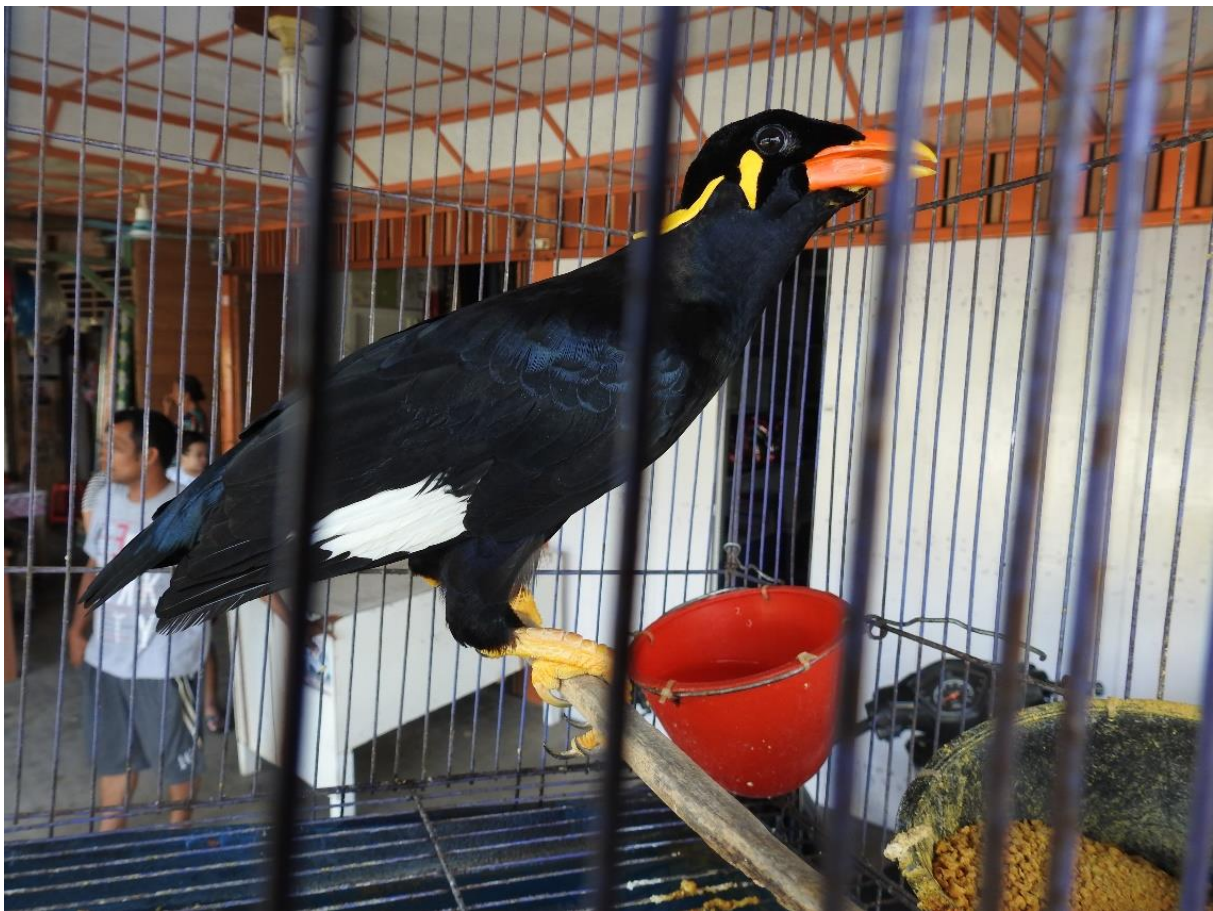




- At the end of June 2017 Nicole and Simon Bruslund visited the Nias Heritage Museum again at their own expenses and the first Nias Hill Mynas (Magiao's) were given to the Museum by private owners. These were measured and sampled by Simon during the visit.
- The vision of Father Johannes and Nata'alui is to see the Magiao returned to the wild in Nias and they believe this is possible through the influence of the Museum, the Church and above all the pride of the Nias people in their nature heritage.
- Practical training of two keepers for two month at the Taman Safari Zoo in Bogor was started in July with support by St. Laurant, here they receive practical training and work experience together with TSI manager Keni Sultan.

Team of the Nias Heritage Museum





A Nias Hill Myna with a private owner in Nias 27.06.17

Examination of a Nias Hill Myna at the Nias Heritage Museum (right)



Kind regards

Nicole Braun (communications) and Simon Bruslund (coordination)

