

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

No. I Melanism in the Golden Cat (*Felis temmincki*).

Whilst walking recently through a belt of heavy evergreen jungle my dog put up and treed a large wild cat which after considerable trouble I was able eventually to bring to ground. The cat which weighed 11 lbs. was dark black all over and on first sight I took it to be a young black panther until I observed that it was a female in milk. As was quite unable to find any description of a cat corresponding to my specimen I sent the skin and skull to the Bombay Natural History Society and the following is their reply to my letter which perhaps may be of interest to your readers:—

“The cat is a melanistic example of the Golden Cat (*Felis temmincki*) which is found in the Assam hills, Burma, Siam and the Malay Peninsula. The normal colouring of this animal is a beautiful golden red but as in the panther there is often a tendency towards melanism, hence occasionally dark chocolate brown or almost black animals are met with.”

The Golden Cat known to the natives as “sua fai” and which is reputed by them to be very savage certainly did not live up to its reputation on this, the only occasion on which I have met with it.

H. W. JOYNSON.

Lampang, April 1924.

No. II. Heavy egg-laying of the Common Myna.

The Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) was, I am told, absent from Bangkok, or at any rate very rare, only a few years ago. It is, however, now getting more and more common year by year, and this is not surprising if all of them show the same perseverance and patience in breeding as a pair with which I had an interesting experience during the breeding season of 1923. Not less than 40 eggs, divided into 9 clutches, were laid by the same bird in the period from 25th March to 28th August; and the same nest was used on all 9 occasions. All the clutches were taken by me except No. 4, which was allowed to be hatched; but as the young birds were removed by my coolie, the parent birds started afresh. The eggs were taken on the following dates:—

Clutch	No. 1	...	4 eggs	...	25 March.
”	No. 2	...	4 ”	...	14 April.
”	No. 3	...	4 ”	...	2 May.
”	No. 4	...	4 ”	...	Not taken.
”	No. 5	...	5 ”	...	2 July.
”	No. 6	...	5 ”	...	16 July.
”	No. 7	...	5 ”	...	1 August.
”	No. 8	...	5 ”	...	18 August.
”	No. 9	...	4 ”	...	28 August.

After each removal of the eggs the birds disappeared for a day or two, and then repaired the nest with fresh materials for another two or three days. When laying commenced, one egg was laid daily. The laying and taking of the first four or five clutches went very smoothly. After that the old birds got rather worried and tried to play a trick on me, in which I must admit they were successful the first time. They pretended to build a new nest in another corner of the same roof under which the old one was situated. This they did quite openly, whilst at the same time they secretly repaired the old nest and laid five new eggs there. I found this out too late and the eggs then taken were too much incubated.

Next time they again tried the same trick, but I was now on my guard, and had much pleasure in watching their efforts to mislead me. They looked very pleased when I saw them working on the false nest; but if I happened to be near by when one of them brought a straw intended for the real nest, they quietly dropped it and started an innocent whistling from where they sat. The male actually went on with the false nest after the female had commenced brooding.

After I had taken the 9th clutch on the 28th August, the birds disappeared suddenly. I presume they went to another place for a better trick and found it, for about five weeks later, when one day I went home for tiffin and crossed one of the lawns in the compound, two old Mynas came down in front of me and introduced to me five—for the time of the year—very young offspring. I felt sure I had my old friends before me, as it seemed to me that they were proud and smiling. If the presumption about this last brood is correct, this female laid 45 eggs in the season, but of 40 eggs I am certain.

The specific name of the Common Myna is *tristis*, which is, it seems to me, rather inappropriate, as there is nothing sad or depressing about this bird either in dress or character.

C. J. AAGAARD.

Bangkok, 29th November 1923.

No. III. Occurrence of the Rat Snake (*Zaocys carinatus*) in North Siam

I recently secured a specimen of this rare snake in the Me Pow forest, 20 miles east of Muang Ngow. Previously it has not been recorded north of Nakon Sritamarat. The snake which at first sight I took to be a Hamadryad measured 9ft 2in in length, and in life cer-