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## Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa*

The Hill Myna is the common talking myna of the pet trade. It is frequently called Indian Hill Myna, an unfortunate name because the Common Myna is also called the Indian Myna; this species should be called simply Hill Myna to avoid confusion. At least some birds in Miami are attributable to the Greater Hill Myna, race *intermedia* (B. Neville, pers. obs.), which is the most common form in the pet trade (Bates and Busenbark 197

The Hill Myna is native to southeastern Asia, from India to southern China, Indochina, and western Indonesia. Bates and Busenbark (1970) state that the bird occurs in dense jungles in its native range. Vriends (1984) state that they are always found near water. In Florida they are found in suburban areas, where they frequent ornamental plantings and are frequently observed sitting on wires.

The Hill Myna was observed nesting in southeastern Florida by 1973. Its range at that time extended from Dade County to Palm Beach County (Owre 1973). Long (1981) considered the species successfully established in southern Florida, but the AOU (1983) stated that it was persisting "without definite evidence of establishment." Breeding was confirmed in 3 quadrangles in Dade County during the Atlas project and was suspected in Collier, Nassau, and Palm Beach counties. The species is apparently tenuously established at this time only in Dade County.

The noisy birds are not difficult to detect, and their nests are located near human habitations. Therefore, nesting should not be difficult to confirm if it occurs. Their diet consists of fruits and berries, seeds, insects, and lizards (Long 1981). Long (1981) reports no known damage to agriculture where the species has been introduced. Like the other mynas, the Hill Myna is omnivorous. The Hill Myna builds a loose nest of twigs, leaves, paper, and trash in a cavity or crevice (Long 1981). In Florida they often use old woodpecker cavities in dead palm trees (B. Neville, pers. obs.). The breeding season in Florida is not well documented, but they breed nearly year-round in southeastern Asia and may be double-brooded (Long 1981). A clutch consists of 2 or 3 eggs (Vriends 1984). For some reason, the color of the eggs does not appear to be recorded, but it is probably similar to the blue or green eggs of other mynas. Incubation is shared by both parents and lasts about 15 days. The young fledge at approximately 1 month and are independent at 2 months (Vriends 1984).

Bruce Neville

# Hill Myna

