

5 TERRESTRIAL ECOLOGY

Monitoring Requirements

5.1 Monitoring of the White-bellied Sea Eagles at Pa Tau Kwu was required to be conducted by an avian specialist as specified in the EM&A Manual. Appendix M shows the Event and Action Plan for the monitoring works.

Monitoring Equipment

5.2 Equipment used for the monitoring includes Fieldscope 20-60x and Binocular 10x.

Monitoring Parameters, Frequency and Duration

5.3 Field surveys for the White-bellied Sea Eagles were to be conducted twice per month during periods of breeding activity (October to April), and once per month at other times of the year. Information on the responses to any disturbances, behaviour, and breeding activity of the White-bellied Sea Eagles was recorded. The monitoring frequency for the month are described in the following sections. The monitoring schedule for the month is provided in Appendix C.

Monitoring Locations

5.4 In accordance with the EM&A Manual, monitoring of the White-bellied Sea Eagles was conducted at Pa Tau Kwu. The monitoring location is shown at Figure 5.1.

Monitoring Methodology

5.5 Each monitoring survey was undertaken at Pa Tau Kwu, about 100 m from the nest to avoid disturbance to the normal behaviour of the White-bellied Sea Eagles.

5.6 Activities of the White-bellied Sea Eagles, including feeding, perching/roosting, preening, soaring, flying, nesting, and territorial guarding and the time spent on each activity, were recorded. The responses and reactions to any disturbance to the White-bellied Sea Eagles were also recorded.

Results and Observations

Introduction

5.7 In the reporting month, field survey was conducted between 9:00am and 5:00pm on 9 July. The construction activities in the vicinity of Pa Tau Kwu on the monitoring days were sediment dredging by grab dredger, boulder placement activities associated with seawall construction and reclamation. The monitoring results are summarised and presented in Table 5.1.

5.8 Photographic records of the White-bellied Sea Eagle were presented in Figure 5.2.

Table 5.1 Time Allocation (%) for White-bellied Sea Eagle (female and male) activity at Pa Tau Kwu on 9 July

Weather Conditions	Cloudy	
	Individual A (female)	Individual B (male)
Feeding	0%	2.5%
Territorial guarding	0%	0%
Roosting/ Preening	0%	0.8%
Soaring nearby	0%	0%
Distant flight/ foraging	100%	96.7%
Incubating	0%	0%
Chick feeding	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%

Note: Distant flight/foraging includes out of sight time.

Breeding activity

5.9 The monitoring month of July is outside the breeding season for local White-bellied Sea Eagles. No breeding behaviour was observed.

General observations

5.10 Both the male and female adult White-bellied Sea Eagles were observed in the nesting territory during the monitoring month. During the monitoring visit, the birds spent all or nearly all of their time foraging/ in distant flight.

5.11 At the start of monitoring at 9:00am, both birds were observed foraging over waters next to the Pa Tau Kwu headland. After 15 minutes both the foraging birds departed this area to forage out of sight of the observer. The female bird remained foraging/in distant flight whilst out of view of the observer for the remainder of the monitoring day (i.e. engaged in foraging/distant flight 100% of its time). Conversely, the male bird returned in the nesting territory near the end of the monitoring day with a fish. The male perched in a tree and fed on the prey from 4:44pm to 4:54pm (i.e. 2.5% of the monitoring day time). After feeding the male remained perched in the tree until the close of monitoring at 5:00pm (i.e. 0.8% of the monitoring day time)

5.12 Observations on the monitoring days indicated that adult birds appeared to be in healthy condition.

Disturbance

5.13 No behaviours indicating disturbance to the WBSEs from construction works of Reclamation Stage 2 were observed during the monitoring visits.

Conclusion

5.14 White-Bellied Sea Eagle monitoring was undertaken on 9 July. Both the female and male were observed at the nesting territory during the reporting month. All or nearly all of their time during the monitoring visit was spent foraging / in distant flight. The male was observed to return to the nesting territory to feed on a fish.

5.15 The Project EIA Report predicted the White-bellied Seas Eagles to have a certain

degree of tolerance to disturbance. There was no evidence to indicate that the works of Reclamation Stage 2 have disturbed the White-bellied Sea Eagles in the reporting month.