

A Mountain Hawk Eagle

Spizaetus nipalensis kellarti

at Bomuru-ella Forest Reserve

Amila Salgado



How often do you get to see a Mountain Hawk Eagle in full view for over 15 minutes in mist-free perfect light conditions? I would say not very often. That is exactly how lucky two dozen or so FOGSL members including myself were during our annual highland birding trip between 6-8 October 2006. Also with us was Ian Barber - International Officer - Asia of RSPB. It happened on the 6th October at 5.30 p.m. on our very first walk and the location was Bomuru-ella forest reserve - close to the official garbage dumping grounds of the Municipal Council of Nuwara Eliya. Needless to say it was the highlight of the trip for me and most other participants. It was arguably the best view that I have had of this enigmatic forest dweller. Most of my previous encounters have been of birds passing over head majestically and disappearing into a veil of mist.

The reason that we were afforded this prolonged view was that it was feeding on a rat and seemingly was more occupied with its meal than in vigilance. I was alerted to its presence and turned my scope on it. In the next few minutes I was able to digiscope it and a few others too joined in and tried their hand at 'digi-mobile phone-scoping' taking advantage of its obliging nature. This was one of the best birding walks that I have done on a FOGSL trip and I am sure many of us will 'talk' about this sighting for a long time especially to some of the regulars who were not around!

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