



Home · News · Bye, Bye Birdie



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Villas

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Packages

MICE Handling

Excursions

Culinary - Dining

Guided Tour

Pampering - Spa

Sports

Diving

Golf

Transportation

Car Rental

Private Jet Charter

News

• All News

• Bali Update

Services

Practicalities

Contact

Careers

Home



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News

## Bye, Bye Birdie Environmental Activists and Udayana University Cooperate to Undertake Annual Audits of Wild Bali Starling Populations at Nusa Penida and Nusa Lembongan

(6/2/2013) *Bali Post* reports that efforts to widen the habitat and wild population of the *Bali Starling* (*Leucopsar rothschildi*) on Nusa Penida Island still lacks needed support from the provincial and regional government.

In order to track developments in the population of the highly endangered *Bali Starlings* over the past year the *Yayasan Pencinta Taman Nasional* (*Friends of the National Parks*), and members of the medical and biology faculties at *Bali's Udayana University* are undertaking surveys at Nusa Penida June 26-29, 2013.

News of the planned surveys was advised by I Gede Nyoman Bayu Wirayuda, the founder of the *Yayasan Pencinta Taman Nasional* at a press conference held on Friday, May 31, 2013.

The project to establish a breeding population of *Bali Starlings* on Nusa Penida outside their normal territorial range was commenced in 2004. A count announced by the Foundation in May 2012 estimated a living population of 105 birds on the island located just off the coast of Bali

The population of *Bali Starlings* on Nusa Penida began to be disturbed in the beginning of 2013. Some loss of birds is blamed on natural predators, such as snakes and monitor lizards. At the same time, Bayu accuses certain individuals working in organized groups of capturing and selling *Bali Starlings*. The illegal capture of *Starlings* has also been witnessed first hand by. He said hard proof of poaching is hard to come by with some people posing as conservationists working instead to capture the birds for sale to rare bird collectors.

Bayu Wirayuda said the coming survey will include the participation of independent observers and cover 18 different observation points on Nusa Penida and nearby Nusa Lembongan.

Bayu said surveys would be carried out on an annual basis with the results handed to the regency and provincial governments. He said that



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Bali's First Toll Road  
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Fear of Extremist  
Protests to Miss World  
Contest Prompts  
International Travel  
Advisories for Bali  
(9/23/2013)

**Connected to  
Singapore**  
Garuda Indonesia to Fly  
Twice Daily Between  
Singapore and Bali  
Effective October 27,  
2013  
(9/23/2013)

**In a Holding Pattern  
Over North Bali**  
North Bali Airport Project  
Remains in Doubt  
(9/23/2013)

**Acquiring the Keys to  
Nirwana**  
MNC Group Looking to  
Finance 100% Stake in  
Pan Pacific Nirwana  
Resort at Tanah Lot  
(9/23/2013)

**Bittersweet Memories  
of Italy**  
As Costa Concordia  
Righted by Salvage  
Experts, a Balinese  
Former Crewmember  
Waits for His Life to Get  
Back on an Even Keel  
(9/23/2013)

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& I'll Take the Toll Way**  
Bali Toll Way Opens on  
Monday, September 23,  
2013. Free Use for the  
Public Until October 1st  
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Airport and P2B Averting  
Threat of Airport  
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**Bali Discovery Tours**  
Komplek Pertokoan  
Sanur Raya No. 27  
Jl. By Pass Ngurah Rai,  
Sanur, Bali, Indonesia

Tel:  
++62 361 286 283

Fax:  
++62 361 286 284

U.S.A. Fax: (toll free)  
1-800-506-8633

U.K. Fax:  
++44-20-7000-1235

Australian Fax:  
++61-2-94750419

24h:  
++62 812 3819724

[info@balidiscovery.com](mailto:info@balidiscovery.com)



to date there has been little official response to their survey findings, with little or no follow up to their findings by government agencies.

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