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The Bali Starlings of Nusa Penida

Published by [admin](#) at 9:10 am under [Nusa Penida](#)

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Near the village of Ped on Bali's [Nusa Penida](#), the Friends of the National Parks Foundation (FNPF) runs a programme aimed at protecting and boosting the numbers of the endangered **Bali starling**, or Bali mynah. Numbers of the pretty bird, with white plumage, a long white crest and distinctive bright blue frame around its eyes, [plunged over the past half a century in Bali](#), as development exploded and the starling proved popular with poachers.



Nusa Penida, Ceningan and Lembongan — the three islands the Bali starlings call home.

In 2005, fewer than 10 birds were believed to be in the wild; a year later, [FNPE](#), working closely with the dozens of villages on the island, effectively established **Nusa Penida as a sanctuary for the birds**. Some 150 birds now survive in the wild on Penida, as well as nearby [Nusa Lembongan](#) and [Nusa Ceningan](#).

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Who's a pretty girl?

Stopping by the foundation's office is one of the few [things to do on Penida](#) and is well worth your time. Try to arrange a **bird-watching session** with one of the volunteers — sunrise or sunset are the best times to see them in action — and the volunteers will also point out the wooden boxes where, on our visit, several eggs were being protected.



Starling spotting.

The FNPF accepts paying short- and long-term **volunteers**, too — with plenty of work to be done, such as organic gardening, reforestation, GPS mapping — see the full list [here](#). From what we have seen, FNPF is a great grassroots organisation getting results — volunteering with them means your time is well spent, and you'll also be staying on a unique piece of Bali few tourists get to see.

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On our visit, we went for a half-hour walk through the coconut grove near the Foundation's office, hoping to spot one of the birds swooping overhead. Alas, it was a quiet dusk and we didn't have any luck, though we did get to see a "Singapore" fruit tree, with a sweet fig-apple type berry that the birds love.



There's one! Okay, an egg. In a box.

This isn't the thick of nature; seaweed farmer shacks line the beachfront nearby, children play, chickens scabble and pigs oink, which goes to show the birds don't need great swathes of forest to survive — they simply need **protection from poachers**. On mainland [Bali](#) they have a history of snaring them for sale on the blackmarket for around 20 million rupiah (around \$2,000) each, one of the volunteers told us.



The neaby working beach.

If you **volunteer**, you can stay in basic digs at the office, but a [newish rather flash hotel](#) is also now open right next door. [Nusa Penida's accommodation options are thin on the ground](#), but wherever you stay, do make the effort to stop by here to see the work being done for the birds — and do offer a small donation for the workers' time.

Friends of National Park Foundation

Ped, Nusa Penida

www.fnpf.org

Further reading

- » [Nusa Penida's cliffs](#)
- » [Where to stay on Nusa Penida](#)
- » [Which is the best boat service from Bali to Nusa Lembongan?](#)
- » [A good mid-range spot on Nusa Lembongan](#)
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