

Eagles at Changi Airport: Don't gun them down

Published on Oct 30th in [Straits Times Forum](#) in response to " Gun Club roped in to keep birds out of Changi airport" article.

I REFER to Monday's report, 'Gun Club roped in to keep birds out of airport'. Shooting the white-bellied sea eagles is not the answer to forestall bird strikes at Changi Airport. It is simply not justified. They are not migratory but are in fact a resident birds numbering fewer than 50 in the wild in Singapore, not thousands.

As the largest bird of prey here, the white-bellied sea eagle was chosen to front our \$10,000 Bird Series note to symbolise Singapore's strength, adaptability and independence. They are more often seen fishing in the Strait of Johor and soaring above Pulau Ubin. Changi Airport, with its open grasslands, does not offer food for them and there are no tall trees there for them to perch.

We have recorded smaller migratory kestrels hovering at the perimeter of the airport and the odd common buzzard during the migration period, but none of the resident raptor birds gathers in large numbers there. If this shooting is, as reported, the last resort and a case of need-to shooting, why has this become a regular assignment for the Singapore Gun Club? The Republic of Singapore Air Force has successfully used a remote toy truck to scare away birds in its airfields by broadcasting loud noises and calls of birds in distress.

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) should at least consult other stakeholders before giving clearance to the shooting of non-pest bird birds. The Nature Society (Singapore) and other organisations are more than ready to help discuss solutions, once the true nature of problems is identified, but we feel there is much that needs to be clarified to the public by the Singapore Gun Club, Changi Airport Group and AVA if the report was accurate.

Alan OwYong
Chairman, Bird Group
Nature Society (Singapore)