



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**COMPOSITION OF DIURNAL BIRDS IN THE BUFFER ZONE AROUND  
KUALA LUMPUR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, MALAYSIA**

**SYAIZWAN ZAHMIR BIN ZULKIFLI**

**FS 2006 40**



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**SYAIZWAN ZAHMIR BIN ZULKIFLI**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Science**

**April 2006**



## **DEDICATION**

*This thesis is dedicated to*

*My wife,*

*Ferdius @ Ferdaus bt. Mohamat Yusuff*

*My Daughters,*

*Syazwina Yasmeeen bt. Syaizwan Zahmir*

*Syazween Dahlia bt. Syaizwan Zahmir*

*Your motivations, sacrifices, and supports during the period of my academic mission  
are very much appreciated.*

*My parents, my brothers and sisters*

*Your prayers and encouragements  
that made me who I am today are very much acknowledged*



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

**COMPOSITION OF DIURNAL BIRDS IN THE BUFFER ZONE AROUND  
KUALA LUMPUR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, MALAYSIA**

By

**SYAIZWAN ZAHMIR BIN ZULKIFLI**

**April 2006**

**Chairman : Associate Professor Ahmad Ismail, PhD**

**Faculty : Science**

Malaysia is known as one of the countries in the world to have a megadiversity status of flora and fauna. Its' tropical forest has been formed for thousands of years until it reaches the current stability. The changes in the environment will alter the diversity of vertebrate populations including birds. Reports have highlighted that a combination of busy airports with large flocks and the proclivity of many birds to use airports for feeding, roosting and nesting activities has resulted in a risk of bird strike and creates an important safety issue for any airport (e.g., Cleary *et al.*, 1999, Linnell *et al.*, 1996). Therefore, a study of the bird composition in the buffer zone around KLIA was carried out. A total of 57 bird species from 28 families were identified. There were 38 species of birds that can be classified as resident species, 12 species of migratory birds and the remaining seven species were classified as resident and migrant. In general, bird population and diversity of birds was low compared to other type of forest around Malaysia. From the total bird species, 58% are fully protected and 12% are protected under Malaysian Wildlife Protection Act (1972). The remaining 30% are not under protection of the act. In terms of bird guilds, insectivores were dominant guild group with about 38% of the total 57 species observed, followed by piscivores



(21%), grainivores (14%), omnivores (14%), carnivores (9%), nectarivores (2%) and frugivores (2%). In terms of the feeding habitats, 40% bird species were found to utilize the ground, 26% of bird species were found to use the water courses, 18% capture foods in the air, 9% found below canopy and the remaining 7% utilized the top canopy area. ANOVA showed there was a significant difference in number of bird individuals with respect to transects, daytime intervals and month groups respectively ( $P < 0.05$ ). The studies of total number of bird individuals and species richness showed both properties were higher in the morning (peak: 0930 hours observation period) and evening (peak: 1730 hours observation period) sessions. Lowest bird individuals and species richness can be detected at 1430 hours of the afternoon session. In terms of seasonal factor, bird individual and species richness were observed more in Mar-Apr 03 month group and the least was in Jul-Aug 02 and Jul-Aug 03 month groups. Most bird species were abundant in transect T11, T12, T1 and T7, however they were less abundant in transect T9 and T6. The Shannon –Wiener diversity index,  $H'$ , indicated that the buffer zone has a moderate status of bird diversity. The evenness,  $J'$ , study indicated that birds were most evenly distributed in transect T1 of May-Jun 03 month group, where as in transect T9 of Sep-Oct 02 month group, the  $J'$  value was at the lowest point. The study also found 66 species of plants, which was expected to grow naturally in the wild, where as more than 25 species of plants were the man – planted. There were also 31 families and two suborders of insects had been sampled and identified. Coleoptera had the highest number of families. 19 species of insect were able to be identified up to the species level. There were two main groups existed in the buffer zone according to the number of bird individuals and species. Transect T11 and T12, T2 and T3, and T4 and T5 have the closest similarity distance between each pair. It can be concluded that at the moment, bird's population, behaviour, distribution

and habitat selection do not possess any serious threats to aircraft services at KLIA. Further and continuous studies are suggested in order to produce an effective guideline for tropical bird strike prevention strategies.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia  
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**KOMPOSISI BURUNG DIURNAL DALAM ZON PENAMPAN SEKITAR  
LAPANGAN TERBANG ANTARABANGSA KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA**

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Malaysia dikenali sebagai salah satu negara di dunia yang mempunyai status megakepelbagaian flora dan fauna. Hutan tropikanya telah terbentuk sejak ribuan tahun dahulu sehingga mencapai kestabilan sekarang. Sebarang perubahan dalam persekitaran akan mengubah kepelbagaian populasi vertebrata termasuk burung. Banyak laporan telah menunjukkan kombinasi sesebuah lapangan terbang dengan kumpulan besar burung-burung, yang menjadikan kawasan lapangan terbang sebagai tempat mencari makanan, bersarang dan berehat, akan menyebabkan risiko rempuhan burung dan menimbulkan satu isu keselamatan yang penting bagi mana-mana lapangan terbang (cth., Cleary *et al.*, 1999, Linnell *et al.*, 1996). Oleh itu, satu kajian mengenai komposisi burung diurnal di dalam zon penamparan sekitar KLIA telah dijalankan. Sebanyak 57 spesies burung daripada 28 keluarga telah dikenal pasti. 38 spesies burung telah dikelaskan sebagai tempatan, 12 spesies sebagai berhijrah and baki tujuh spesies dikelaskan sebagai tempatan dan berhijrah. Secara umumnya, populasi burung dan kepelbagaian burung adalah rendah berbanding dengan jenis-jenis hutan sekitar Malaysia. Dari keseluruhan spesies burung, 58% adalah dilindungi sepenuhnya dan 12% adalah dilindungi di bawah Akta Perlindungan Hidupan Liar



Malaysia (1972). Baki 30% tidak termasuk di bawah akta ini. Dari sudut pemakanan, pemakan serangga adalah jenis pemakanan paling dominan dengan 38% daripada sejumlah 57 spesies yang dijumpai, diikuti dengan pemakan ikan (21%), pemakan bijirin (14%), pemakan pelbagai (14%), pemakan daging (9%), pemakan madu (2%) dan pemakan buah (2%). Dari segi habitat pemakanan, 40% spesies burung didapati menggunakan permukaan tanah, 26% menggunakan kawasan air, 18% menangkap makanan di udara, 9% dijumpai di bawah kanopi dan baki 7% menggunakan atas kanopi. ANOVA menunjukkan bahawa terdapat perbezaan yang nyata dalam bilangan individu burung antara transek-transek, sela-sela masa dan kumpulan-kumpulan bulan. Kajian ke atas keseluruhan jumlah individu dan kekayaan spesies menunjukkan kedua-duanya adalah lebih tinggi pada waktu pagi (puncak: 0930 jam waktu pemerhatian) dan petang (puncak: 1730 jam waktu pemerhatian). Bilangan individu dan kekayaan spesies paling rendah dapat dikenal pasti pada 1430 jam waktu tengahari. Dari sudut faktor musim, bilangan individu dan kekayaan spesies lebih banyak dapat diperhatikan dalam kumpulan bulan Mar-Apr 03 dan paling kurang pada kumpulan bulan Jul-Aug 02 dan Jul-Aug 03. Kebanyakan burung begitu banyak di transek T11, T12, T1 dan T7, tetapi kurang di transek T9 dan T6. Indeks kepelbagaian Shannon – Wiener,  $H'$ , menunjukkan zon penampakan mempunyai status sederhana dari sudut kepelbagaian. Kajian kesamaan menunjukkan burung tersebar paling sekata pada transek T1 bagi kumpulan bulan May-Jun 03, tetapi transek T9 bagi kumpulan bulan Sep-Oct 02, nilai  $J'$  adalah pada tahap paling rendah. Kajian ini juga menjumpai 66 spesies tumbuhan, yang dipercayai tumbuh secara semulajadi, dan juga lebih dari 25 spesies tumbuhan adalah hasil tanaman manusia. Terdapat juga 31 keluarga dan dua suborder serangga telah berjaya disampel dan dikenal pasti. Coleoptera mempunyai jumlah keluarga yang paling banyak. 19 spesies serangga



telah berjaya hingga ke peringkat spesies. Terdapat dua kumpulan utama wujud di zon penampakan berdasarkan bilangan individu burung dan spesies. Transek T11 dan T12, T2 dan T3, serta T4 dan T5 mempunyai jarak kesamaan paling rapat antara pasangan masing-masing. Dapat disimpulkan bahawa pada ketika ini, populasi burung, sifat, sebaran dan pemilihan habitat tidak memberikan ancaman yang serius terhadap perkhidmatan kapal terbang di KLIA. Kajian lanjut dan berterusan dicadangkan supaya dilaksanakan bagi menghasilkan garis panduan yang efektif untuk strategi menghalang rempuhan burung kawasan tropika.

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I certify that an Examination Committee has met on 13 April 2006 to conduct the final examination of Syaizwan Zahmir bin Zulkifli on his Master of Science thesis entitled “Composition of Diurnal Birds in the Buffer Zone around Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or currently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

---

**SYAIZWAN ZAHMIR BIN ZULKIFLI**

Date:



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

%	Percentage
$\Sigma$	Summation
mm	Milimeter
cm	Centimeter
m	Meter
°	Degree
°C	Degree Centigrade
e.g.	For example
$H'$	Shannon-Wiener Diversity Index
$J'$	Pielou's Evenness Index
ha	Hectare
km <sup>2</sup>	Kilometer Square
KLIA	Kuala Lumpur International Airport
sp.	Species
ind.	Individuals
U.S.	United States
U.K.	United Kingdom



# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### General Introduction

Development of the country has been the main focus among the developing countries. Malaysian people have been working hard in order to attain a developed country status since they obtained their independence in 1957. Their works showed a promising result when Malaysia had attained levels of per capita national income comparable with those of Eastern Europe. More significantly, the growth rates of their gross domestic product (GDP) over the period 1973-84 put these countries among the eight most rapidly growing economies in the developing world (World Bank, 1988). In early 1990's, the Malaysian government has make a major paradigm shift by launching the Vision 2020 plan by which aiming Malaysia to become a developed country by the year 2020, where the industries and technologies will be the main activities in the country. A strategic plan has been implemented and still in progress to achieve the vision. To date, developments on all fronts are proceeding at a rapid pace in order to achieve the nation's socio-economic goals. This has inevitably led to adverse changes in the natural environment although there have been regulations enforced in order to prevent serious negative effects to human and environment. Humankind has profoundly influenced global biodiversity by the dramatic redistribution of species outside their native geographic ranges (Kolar and Lodge, 2001). The result is that naturally occurring changes in species' distributions have been superceded, and the Earth's biotas are becoming characterized by collections of



species that are globally widespread and often intimately associated with human (Lockwood *et al.*, 2000).

The world's biodiversity is being destroyed rapidly (Balmford *et al.* 2003; Jenkins *et al.* 2003). Transformation of natural vegetations to other land-use, such as crop cultivation and urban development, presents the most important threat to biodiversity because organisms do not simply fine-tune their functional efficiency in a static set of environmental condition. Human-dominated landscapes occupy a large and increasing proportion of the Earth's land area (Vitousek *et al.*, 1997), and use a substantial portion of global biological diversity (Pimentel *et al.*, 1992). For instance, the proportion of all humans living in urban areas will soon surpass 50% worldwide (80% in more developed regions), and is expected to continue rising for several decades (United Nations Population Division, 2001). Accordingly, the areas in which we live, work, and play, if managed appropriately, can play an increasingly vital role in sustaining the world's species. Environmental changes may be due to natural, man-made, or a combination of the two may have direct impacts on a species or may have indirect consequences.

### **Statement of Problem and Justification**

It is well known that airports create or modify certain habitat types, which attract various species of birds, some of which prove hazardous to aircraft using the airports. The issue at hand is essentially an ecological one, namely the relation between birds and habitat which are available to them on or near the airfield or airport. Needless to



say, and as with most ecological matters, the issue is a complex one. In addition, the impact of airports on bird populations may be quite significant. For example, recent research on grassland birds at some airports in the USA has indicated that airports may be acting as population “sink” for grassland birds by serving as ecological traps for some species, thereby possibly contributing to regional declines in some species (Kershner and Bollinger, 1996).

The bird strike cases are not a newly occur events. The events have given serious consequences to both humans and animals almost from the beginning of aviation. Such incidents at or near airports are not new, and have been evident since the inception of airports (Faulkner, 1963; Solman, 1973; Blokpoel, 1976). Several literatures confirms that, despite all the attention, the threat that birds pose to aircraft still persists world-wide although several measures have been taken to eradicate such incidence (Milsom, 1990; Skira and Wapstra, 1990; Thorpe, 1996a). When birds collide with aircraft, there is usually considerable damage to the aircraft as well as the occasionally loss of human lives (Burger, 1983). Bird strikes exact a heavy toll on the aircraft industry. This includes aircraft repair costs, and untold losses in terms of delays to passengers and lost revenue while planes are being repaired. It is estimated that birds cost the world wide aviation fleet US\$ 1 billion per year (Short and Seamans, 1998). Therefore, the aviation industry throughout the world increasingly recognizes that bird strikes have become a seriously safety risk.

At best, some reduction in bird strike rates has been achieved in places, but the problem has certainly not been eradicated. In fact, it has increased in places. Problem species vary according to location and to prevailing conditions, and it is well known



that a management action for one problem species may be successful but may create a problem with another species. There is clearly no magic bullet to deal with the hazards posed to aircraft and passengers by birds.

Birds are attracted to airport grounds for a number of reasons including the presence of roosting and feeding areas, and a paucity of predators (Blokpoel, 1976). Furthermore, they often also fly over the area from feeding or roosting sites. They are also becoming habituated to the noise and traffic. Birds will frequent airport grounds unless the basic attractants are removed from the area. There have been many attempts to control bird presence at airport with varying success. These approaches include reduction by elimination and dispersal involving the harassment or frightening of birds so that they leave, and do not fly around the airport. These methods include auditory, visual and chemical scaring devices and animals (Burger, 1983). In addition, habitat manipulation and management to reduce the carrying capacity of the environment and decrease the number of birds present have been implemented (Brough and Bridgman, 1980; Buckley and McCarthy, 1994).

As for Malaysia's state of affairs, bird strikes have been recorded in almost all airports. Numbers of collisions are varied among the airports. This is due to biological and non-biological factors that contribute to the presence of birds around (in and outside) the airport grounds. Now that the air traffic in Malaysia is becoming busier than the past years with more local and international aircrafts to use our airports, it is essential to ensure that international air safety standards are maintained. Little actions have been done in the past to co-ordinate the management of bird related safety risks at Malaysian airports. Although the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report





(Anon, 1993a) has been presented to the government, the continuous efforts have to be done in order to prevent bird strikes. Prolong studies in the specific area around the airport ground can be useful to give some ideas and prediction of how to deal with the problem. Therefore, studies on birds and related fields must be conducted to achieve the following objectives.

### **Objectives**

To address the above issue, this study has the following objectives: -

- i) To prepare a list of diurnal bird species existing within the buffer zone around KLIA, and estimate the density, relative abundance and distribution of birds in different time scales and habitats within the buffer zone around KLIA
- ii) To determine bird assemblage in different daytime intervals, habitats and month groups, and
- iii) To prepare a preliminary list of vegetations and insects existed within the buffer zone around the airport.