

The **Hood Mockingbird** (*Nesomimus macdonaldi*) or **Española Mockingbird** is a species of bird in the **Mimidae** family. It is endemic to Española Island in the Galápagos Islands, Ecuador.



Hood Mockingbird
(*Nesomimus macdonaldi*) or
Española Mockingbird

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Appearance

Similar to the other species of Galápagos Mockingbirds, this species has a mottled gray and brown plumage with a white underbelly. A long tail and legs give the bird its distinctive appearance.

The species has a long, thin beak, useful for tapping into the eggs

The species has a long, thin beak, useful for tapping into the eggs of seabirds. The species has the largest bill of any of the Galápagos mockingbirds. The species, along with the other Galápagos Mockingbirds, appears to be a descendant of the mainland *Mimus longicaudatus*, the Ecuadorian [Long-Tailed Mockingbird](#).

Habitat

Its natural habitats are subtropical or tropical dry forests and subtropical or tropical dry shrubland. Found only on Española Island, the bird can be found throughout the dry scrub of the island.

Diet

The species has an omnivorous diet, but is mainly a predator or scavenger. The species will eat the eggs of seabirds nesting on the island, as well as eat from dead animals and kills made by other predators such as the [Galápagos Hawk](#).

Behavior

The bird is extremely aggressive, curious, and has no fear of humans whatsoever. The bird will chase after tourists in search of food, drink, or any unusual object. In some cases, the species will attempt to steal water from tourists by pecking at their water bottles.

The birds have a strong social structure organized into family groups. Highly

territorial, these groups will cooperatively hunt within their area as well as defend it against other groups. Lower-ranking members of the group will assist in caring for the young.

Status

The bird is considered to be vulnerable in the wild by BirdLife International due mainly in part to its limited area. The fragile ecosystem and high risk of adverse weather conditions put the species at particular risk of population loss. It is estimated that there are less than 2,500 left in the wild.



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DESCRIPTION OF THE BIRD:

Biometrics:

Length: 26-28 cm

Weight: M: 76 g – F: 65 g

The adult has scalloped and streaked appearance on the upperparts, with grey to brownish-grey-edged feathers with blackish-brown centres, darker on the hindneck. The rump shows browner edges. The tail is dark brown.

On the upperwing, the wing-coverts are tipped white. The flight-feathers are blackish and white-tipped with tawny edges, like the greater coverts.

The underparts are whitish with diffuse brown markings on the breast, whereas the flanks are streaked.

On the head, we can see a thin whitish supercilium. There is a blackish ear patch and an indistinct malar stripe. The lores are black. The crown is greyish-brown and slightly streaked dark.

The very long decurved bill is blackish. The eyes are yellowish-brown. Legs and feet are black.

Both sexes are similar in plumage, but the female is smaller than male.

The juvenile has more streaked underparts than adults.



RANGE:

The Hood Mockingbird is found on Espanola and Gardner Islands, in SE Galapagos Islands.

HABITAT:

The Hood Mockingbird frequents arid littoral scrubland, scrubby woodland with scattered trees and cacti. It can be seen in seabird colonies too.

CALLS AND SONGS: [SOUNDS BY XENO-CANTO](#)

The Hood Mockingbird utters a raucous call and a faint rattle. The song is long and strident, but fairly melodious.

BEHAVIOUR IN THE WILD:

The Hood Mockingbird is omnivorous. The varied diet includes insects, fruits and berries, marine arthropods and small vertebrates. It also feeds on carrion at carcasses of seabirds, lizards and marine mammals. It consumes damaged seabird eggs, but it is also able to open others, thanks to its powerful bill.



The Hood Mockingbird has developed some peculiar feeding behaviour, especially in dry season: it drinks blood from wounds on living sea lions, from sea lion placentas, on marine iguanas and nestling boobies ([Sulidae](#)), by frequenting the hunting areas of the [Galapagos Hawk](#). It removes the ticks and some pieces of dead skin from iguanas, involving sometimes the creation of small wounds from which it drinks the blood.

The Hood Mockingbird has larger and more decurved bill than other [Mimidae](#) species, allowing the bird to perform this type of feeding behaviour.

The Hood Mockingbird lives in groups of 8-10 adults where there is usually one breeding pair. They are territorial and the group defends a territory.

There is an established hierarchy within the group. A typical behaviour, a begging display indicating submission, maintains this hierarchy.

Such groups are usually larger when the territory includes a shoreline area. The size averages 1, 5 hectare.

REPRODUCTION OF THIS SPECIES:

The breeding season takes place in February-April.

The cup-shaped nest is placed in cactus or sometimes in shrub. It is made with twigs, and lined with softer materials.

The female lays 2-4 eggs, sometimes only one. Several adults can feed the chicks. No more information available.

PROTECTION / THREATS / STATUS:

The Hood Mockingbird has very restricted range where it is common. The population is estimated at 600/1.700 mature individuals.

The species is threatened by introduction of pest species (rats), parasites and diseases, but currently, none of these pests are present.

However, due to the restricted range, this species is classified as Vulnerable.

