

Nine ducks swim in newly transplanted wet-rice field

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Nine ducks swim together in a newly transplanted wet-rice field. Four are white and two have mottled brown feathers. They swim in the blue-tinted water feeding on algae and insects among the young green rice seedlings. Once rice seedlings are transplanted into newly flooded fields, Balinese farmers herd their ducks to these locations. The ducks consume plant and animal pests that might harm the growing rice plants, while fertilizing the fields with their nitrogen-rich droppings. When the rice is nearly ripe, the fields are drained and the ducks are herded away to other newly planted wet fields so that they don't eat the rice intended for humans. When the ducks are older, they are also ready to become food for humans. In this way, the ecology of Balinese wet rice fields is carefully controlled throughout plant and animal life cycles.



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