

flying away, the cuckoo was calling and begging for food from the bulbuls with open gape and fluttering wings! It eventually flew away when it was pecked at by the bulbuls.

The other observation was that I could see two shrikes at most times, one feeding and the other within the vicinity but I was surprised to see that the shrikes had an active nest. They were observed around three to four times carrying food to the nest but I was unable to hear any calls of the chicks neither could I see whether the nest was occupied since it was at a height of more than 15 ft. This raises an interesting question; was there a second brood of the shrike pair? It is possible that the eggs of the first brood were destroyed by the cuckoo. After the cuckoo had left the nest (fledged), the shrike pair could have started nesting again. This would probably be due to favorable conditions due to a heavy monsoon this year. However, the exact reasons for this are not known. But, it is interesting to note that the cuckoo was being fed while the host parents were probably feeding the chicks of the second brood. Unfortunately, since the nest could not be observed, I could not confirm these observations.

Dharmakumarsinghi (1955) had stated that he had no authentic records of the Common Cuckoo breeding in Saurashtra but the species was seen in fairly large numbers post the monsoon season. In Grimmett *et al.* (2011), the Common Cuckoo is shown to be an isolated summer visitor to Kachchh, North Gujarat and South Gujarat. However, Ganpule (2016) gave it as an autumn passage migrant and monsoon

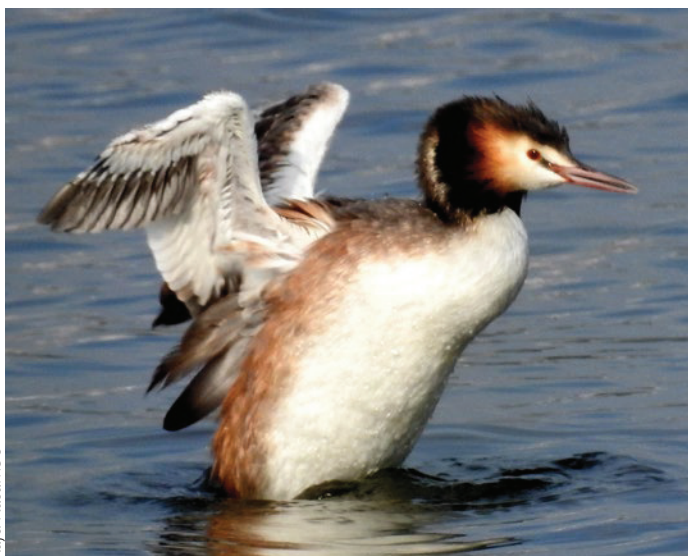
breeding migrant to Gujarat. In the latest checklist of the birds of Gujarat (Ganpule 2020), the Common Cuckoo is given as a monsoon breeding migrant. Hence, the Common Cuckoo does breed here and this observation is further evidence of its breeding in Saurashtra. Praveen & Lowther (2020) give a list of host species for Common Cuckoo and the Long-tailed Shrike is a well documented host species; the breeding of Common Cuckoo in the Indian Subcontinent, away from the Himalayas, is referred to, with confirmed breeding records from Rajasthan and Maharashtra. Gujarat is not listed in this work and this sighting further confirms that the Common Cuckoo breeds in Gujarat too. There are very few records of the Common Cuckoo breeding in Gujarat and this is probably the first record or the first direct observation for Bhavnagar area.

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Photographic record of simultaneous moult of flight feathers in Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus* from Jamnagar

Raju Kasambe: Bombay Natural History Society, Hornbill House, Dr. Sálím Ali Chowk, Opp. Lion Gate, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road, Mumbai, Maharashtra 400001 r.kasambe@bnhs.org



I visited Jamnagar, Gujarat, during 14–16 December 2017, for a field trip of the Basic Course in Ornithology which is conducted by the Bombay Natural History Society, Mumbai. As a part of this course, various bird habitats are visited.

I, along with the participants, stayed at Jamnagar and visited nearby areas including the famous Lakhota Lake in Jamnagar to understand the diversity of birds there. I visited Lakhota Lake on 14 and 15 December 2017. On 15 December I saw three Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) swimming and diving in the lake waters. I observed them for a few hours and noted that they swam across the lake but did not resort to flying, at which they are good. I tried to take videos and pictures of the bird in the hope to get an image showing them flapping their wings.

Great Crested Grebe....

Finally, I succeeded in getting an image in which the moulting of flight feathers can be clearly seen. This image clearly shows the flight feathers (remiges, viz., primaries and secondaries) are in moult and almost all of the primaries have grown but are yet to gain full length. This clearly explained why the grebe was flightless or reluctant to fly. Unfortunately, the image does not show the tail feathers and it is difficult to comment on the moult of the rectrices or tail feathers (which also should be in moult).

In the Netherlands, where this species breeds, these grebes undergo simultaneous moult of flight feathers in the months of August to first half of October (Piersma 1988). It was observed that the growth of secondaries perfectly parallels that of the primaries. Thus, the two tracts are completed (regrown) at the same time. It was also observed that the upper wing coverts are moulted slightly earlier than the underwing coverts.

The Great Crested Grebe is known to breed sporadically in Gujarat (Bulkley 1891); at Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary (Mundkur & Pravez 1986; Himmatsinhji *et. al.* 1992) and at Diu (Chaoji 2010). Recently it has been reported breeding in Srikakulam District, Andhra Pradesh (Sraavan Kumar *et. al.* 2014.) and at Ranjeet Sagar and Menar wetlands (Tripathi & Koli 2020) in Rajasthan. However, now it is known that it breeds fairly commonly around Jamnagar and Kachchh in Gujarat and there are a large number of photographs of adults on nests/

with juveniles on the 'Oriental Bird Images' website (<http://orientalbirdimages.org/>).

Thus, the Great Crested Grebe is a breeding resident species for these parts in India and hence, must be going through a complete moult as many other grebes and geese do in their respective breeding areas. This could be the first photographic record of the Great Crested Grebe going through simultaneous moult of flight feathers in India.

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Distribution of Indian Grey Hornbill *Ocyrceros birostris* in Mehsana District

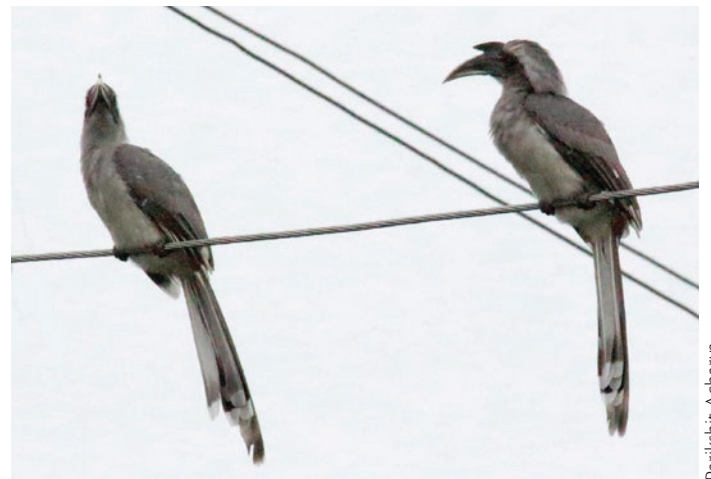
Parikshit Acharya: 8, Pratigna Bunglow, Ramosana Road, Mehsana 384002. pgacharya@gmail.com

Introduction

The Indian Grey Hornbill (*Ocyrceros birostris*) is my bird of interest since the beginning of my bird watching days due to its unique looks and nesting style. The Indian Grey Hornbill is a very common hornbill found throughout the Indian Subcontinent and is widely distributed (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). It is mostly arboreal and seldom descends to the ground, except to pick up fallen fruits, dust bathe or to collect mud pellets during the nesting period to seal its nest. It is one the very few hornbill species found in urban area in many cities. Mostly, they use large, tall and old trees to make their nest.

Observations

During my regular field work and based on my past records, it was observed that Indian Grey Hornbill was regularly seen in Polo forest area of Sabarkantha District. First time, it was



Parikshit Acharya

sighted and photographed by Kailash Jani and myself at Jessore Sloth Bear Sanctuary, Banaskantha District, in June 2012. After that, a number of sightings have been reported by many bird