

having seen an isolated bird, I had the car stopped and scanning the assemblage, I was surprised to count eighty of this species. They were all resting along an earthen embankment beyond which there was a small jheel in which Large and Lesser Egrets were wading while a flock of Painted Storks stood hunched up and obviously replete a little to one side. A flock of about ten Demoiselle Crane were also resting a little further away. It was interesting to note that the storks were not in the least shy and took no notice of the men working nearby. This should not draw comment considering the fact that in its breeding areas, it is very tame and builds its bulky nests on chimneys and minarets, but I find it noted in the HANDBOOK that "... the bird is usually wary and difficult to approach in its Indian winter quarters."

There are several pairs of White Storks in the Ahmedabad Zoo and these have been rearing young there now for several seasons. I had the opportunity of seeing them producing the bill clattering sound. While the head and bill are brought down, the tail is often spread and slightly raised like a turkey and the wings droop to the sides.

All over Saurashtra the popular snack item is the "ganthia" fried gram paste. This is available either in flattened pieces, or as thin sticks a few centimetres long. Near my house in

Rajkot, a small ganthia shop is now a favourite assembling spot for about fifty Black Drongos prior to going to roost. They line the electricity wires and snap up pieces thrown to them by customers. A handful of pieces thrown up will be dextrously caught by as many fluttering birds. The sight is thrilling to watch. This is a distinctly new taste in food for the drongo since as the HANDBOOK says "Predominantly insects; on occasion lizards, small birds... and small bats.... Very partial to flower-nectar.... Moths and butterflies (occasional);.... Among stomach contents of specimens from an intensively cultivated tract in Bihar the following insects (mainly agricultural pests) classified..... Has been observed to capture the ferocious rock bee *Apis dorsata*." There have been no previous records of drongos coming to feed on scraps thrown out by the housewife, nor have these birds, common and confiding though they be, have ever visited breakfast tables for titbits as many others commonly do.

For several days three Starling have been visiting our area and probing for food along the gutters. Starling are not common though a few individuals are regularly seen in winter on wet pastures near jheels and rivers as well as in irrigated crops. This is the first time that I have seen them in an urban setting.

RAJKOT,
January 30, 1975.

LAVKUMAR J. KHACHER

6. OCCURRENCE OF THE BLACK STORK (*CICONIA NIGRA*) IN SAURASHTRA

On 30-i-1975 I took Mr. Koning who is studying the Wildfowl wintering populations of South West Asia to the lake near Jasdan and we saw 3 Black Storks. There are a couple

of very old records of its occurrence in Kutch and Deesa and Mr. Harinarayan Acharya has seen them near Ahmedabad but so far it has not been recorded in the Saurashtra peninsula.

Incidentally Mr. Koning recorded several Mallard, which are very uncommon on this side as well as 2 Common Shelduck (*Tadorna*

tadorna) on this visit on the lakes near Rajkot and Jasdan and the Bhadar Dam near Gondal.

THE PALACE,
JASDAN,
February 7, 1975.

SHIVRAJKUMAR KHACHER

7. COMMON TEAL *ANAS CRECCA* MIGRATING ACROSS THE HIMALAYAS

On 14th May 1975, while going up the Solang Valley from Manali, Himachal Pradesh, we were met by a group of trainees from the Western Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Manali, on their way down from high altitude training at the head of the valley. They showed me a live duck of the above species which had been picked up exhausted at about 11,000' below the snowfields. The bird showed its flight feathers badly abraded but apart

from this had no external signs of injuries. For a week before the weather had been bad with a wind blowing down the valley. Quite apparently, the bird was unable to cross the snow range which stands to the north at the head of the valley. This further shows that ducks do fly across the high ranges at considerable altitude and this particular bird must have been one of a flock on its way to Central Asia across the western parts of Tibet.

C/o. WWF-INDIA,
HORNBILL HOUSE,
S. BHAGAT SINGH ROAD,
BOMBAY 400 023,
June 21, 1975.

LAVKUMAR KHACHER

8. DEMOISELLE CRANES NEAR POONA

A flock of about 1000 Demoiselle Cranes was first sighted on 15th January 1975, on the banks of Veer Dam reservoir about 45 miles south-east of Poona City. There were reports in the press that flocks of large, stork-like birds were damaging the crops in that area. But when we reached the spot early morning we could not spot a single bird. However, black specks suddenly appeared in a clear, blue sky late in the morning, becoming ever larger as they began descending. Presently the whole flock slowly circled downwards,

lowered their legs and gently touched ground. More and more flocks soon appeared from all directions and touched ground one by one. Within half an hour more than a thousand birds had assembled on the southern bank and some scattered flocks could be seen on the distant northern bank. Each flock consisted of from 30 to 50 birds.

As we watched the birds from a distance of about 150 metres, some birds were seen just standing in toe-deep water, some trying to pick something up from the sand, some



Khachar, Shivraj Kumar. 1976. "Occurrence of the Black Stork (*Ciconia Nigra*) in Saurashtra." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 73, 390–391.

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