

Khulong *chu* (*chu*=river). Khulong *chu* is an important tributary of the Manas river. Initially we thought it to be a large fish-owl, but on observing it through a powerful spotting scope, we identified it as an eagle; the bird flew away before we could get a closer look. After some time it perched again on a tree. This time we identified the bird, to our utter surprise, as the magnificent adult White-tailed Eagle. We observed it for about 20 minutes and also took some still and video photographs, through the spotting scope. The photos, though taken from a distance of at least 250 m, were of good quality. The location was at 27° 38' 20" N and 91° 28' 40" E, and the elevation was 1,900 m above msl.

This is the first record of the White-tailed Eagle from

Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary, and from eastern Bhutan. Interestingly, this bird is known to move up larger rivers, such as the Brahmaputra and Lohit, but Khulong *chu* is a relatively small river compared to other rivers where the species was recorded earlier. Moreover, it has moved up far north.

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### 10. SIGHTING OF LARGE NUMBER OF SHORT-TOED EAGLE *CIRCAETUS GALLICUS* AND GREATER ADJUTANT *LEPTOPTILOS DUBIUS* IN KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK<sup>1</sup>

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The Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* was recorded for the first time in Assam in Dhakuakhana area in 1991 (Choudhury 1991). Prior to that there was no report from north-east India (Ali and Ripley 1987). Subsequently, it was sighted in some more areas like the Nameri National Park (NP), Chakrashila Sanctuary, Kaziranga NP, near Abhoyapuri. Most of the sightings were of single birds. On November 20, 2005, while driving along the patrol roads in Arimora area of Kaziranga NP, accompanied by Dharanidhar Boro, Ranger, I saw a Short-toed Eagle perched on a medium-sized Silk Cotton *Bombax ceiba* tree. Before I could attempt to take a photograph, one more was seen soaring overhead, followed by another three, all singly. We moved towards the road to Borbeel where two were seen perched on a single Silk Cotton tree. We were surprised to see a few more, soaring or flying off from one Silk Cotton to another. The total tally, in the same area, was 11 birds. Most of the birds had typical plumage with grey head and breast, barred underbody and broad sub-terminal tail-band.

On the same day, near the junction of the road to Methonmari on Arimora-Hulalpat road, 50 Greater Adjutants *Leptoptilos dubius* were seen flying from east to west. They were seen flying from west of Arimora and when above the Arimora-Methonmari road, they soared for a while before flying off towards the east and south-east. Up to the point where they took to soar they came like a group, but afterwards split into smaller groups and individuals, and flew downwards (could be observed till tree line blocked view). For Dharanidhar Boro also sighting of such large number of Greater Adjutants in Kaziranga was a first time. The maximum number of Greater Adjutants seen together was 87 resting during the daytime on the banks of the Brahmaputra river off Guwahati city on March 14, 1994 (Choudhury 2000). However, just after the breeding season, more than 80 birds roost at Islampur *kabrstan* (26°10' N, 91°45' E) in the heart of Guwahati city. The Greater Adjutant is listed as endangered because of its very small, declining population (BirdLife International 2004).

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