

## Records of Red-winged Crested Cuckoo *Clamator coromandus* from Bhitarkanika National Park, Orissa

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The Red-winged Crested Cuckoo *Clamator coromandus* is found in north India, Nepal, east China, Indo-China and, Myanmar (Hoyo et al. 1997). Previous records have shown it to be a resident in north India, a passage migrant through central India, wintering in south India, Sri Lanka, Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java and Borneo (Hoyo et al. 1992). However, Grimmett et al. (1999) have referred to it as being a passage migrant in India that breeds in Himalaya, north-east India and Bangladesh.

Other records of the bird from different countries have mentioned it as a local breeding summer visitor in Bangladesh breeding there in March-August (Harvey 1990) and as a very local summer visitor at lower reaches (Grimmett 2000) in Nepal, a regular but scarce winter visitor to Sri Lanka arriving about October and departing in April (Henry 1971) and in Myanmar (former Burma) it is found in light forest, scrub and open country frequently visiting gardens and probably breeding in April-June (Smythies 1940).

In peninsular India it has been recorded as a passage migrant, or a rare straggler along the eastern coastal areas, or scarce but regular rainy season or winter visitor, in Kerala, Karnataka, Tamilnadu and Maharashtra states (Ali and Ripley 1969).

Spread over an area of 164km<sup>2</sup> on the east coast of India, Bhitarkanika mangroves (20°30'-20°48'N, 86°45'-86°03'E) are famous for being the largest known nesting beach of Olive Ridley Turtles *Lepidochelys olivacea* in the world. Pandav (1996) has recorded at least 173 species of resident and migratory birds from the area.

However, sightings of Red-winged Crested Cuckoo are quite rare from Bhitarkanika National Park. Pandav (1996) saw one bird in March 1993. Chadha and Kar (1999) did not record it. In fact it appears to be a rare, scarce or uncommon species everywhere except for few areas of Nepal (Jerdon 1862; Henry 1971; Hoyo et al. 1997). Though not globally threatened the population levels are inadequately known (Hoyo et al. 1997). I first spotted the bird on 30.ix.2001 at about 11:00hrs, in Dangmal forest block from 5-6m without binoculars. It was perched on higher branches of an approximately 2.5m tall *Tamarix dioca* tree, in a comparatively open area with a water body nearby.

The present record of the cuckoo is of a dead bird, found at about 18:00hrs on 9.iv.2002. I found a dead bird that was badly entangled in the fishing nets used for fencing a nursery (about 0.02ha) in the Dangmal forest block. The thin filaments were all entwined around the bird's head and both its feet. There were no signs of extreme decay apart from ant eaten eyes and it was inferred that it might have got entrapped during a gale-storm two days back.

This record confirms the earlier records of the bird being a shy forest loving species, most often seen in flight across a jungle road and preferring the lower levels of forest growth for its hunting grounds (Henry 1971). It is substantiated by the fact that this particular bird was found entrapped quite low at a height of only 1m. Also, the bird is not strong on the wing (Smythies 1940). This character makes it quite vulnerable to

strong winds. Driven by strong winds it apparently did not see the 2.25m high fishing net fence. The forest department has subsequently replaced the nylon nets with thick plastic covered wire nettings of fixed mesh size.

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## Report of an injured Ceylon Bay Owl *Phodilus assimilis* from Karnataka, India

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Bay Owls (*Phodilus* sp., Family Strigidae, Order Strigiformes) are among the rarely sighted owls of India (Ali and Ripley, 1987). The bird is a rare resident of semi-evergreen and evergreen forests; and perhaps owing to its nocturnal habit and restriction to the dense forests, the records of its sightings are very few. In India, it has been reported from two distant geographic regions namely, north-east India (Oriental

Bay Owl *Phodilus badius*), and Western Ghats of Kerala / Tamilnadu (Ceylon Bay Owl *Phodilus assimilis*) (Baker 1897; Robinson 1927; Inglis 1945; Ali and Ripley 1987; Kannan 1992, 1993, 1998; Sugathan and Jacob 1995; Muddappa 1998; Uthaman 1999; Johnsingh 2001; Raman 2001). Rasmussen and Anderton (2005) treat the races of this genus as distinct species, as shown above. This species has been

sighted only once before in Karnataka at Bandipur National Park (Ahmed and Yekanthappa 1998). Here we report a rare sighting of this species and share our experience in the initial rehabilitation of the bird.

On 6.i.2005, a helpless, strangelooking owl was sighted in the nursery area of the College of Forestry, Sirsi, Uttar Kanara, Karnataka (14°36.33'N, 74°50.98'E; 619m