In the USA, migratory birds suffer considerable human-caused mortalities due to collisions with artificial structures like communication towers, power lines, and wind turbines built to provide services and amenities to the public (Manville 2005). Collisions against power lines, and the subsequent electrocution of birds have long represented a major conservation issue throughout the world (Loss et al. 2014). Such collisions may kill up to 175 million birds annually, and electrocute hundreds of thousands more, but these utilities are poorly monitored for these types of accidents (Manville 2005), though Lehman (2001), Van Rooyen & Diamond (2008), Shobrak (2012), and Demerdzhiev (2014), amongst others, have worked on the issue in different parts of the world.

On 14 July 2016 a Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* was found fallen in an agricultural field, owned by Bajirao Palaskar, at Palwe Budruk village (18.91ºN, 74.48ºE), on Parner Tehsil, in Ahmednagar District. It had fractured its left leg. The farmer informed the forest department and requested a veterinary surgeon from Supe village to inspect the bird, who in turn, requested the forest personnel to take the bird to Pune. Mandar Sabale, a photographer from Ahmednagar, who visited the spot, confirmed the identity of the bird [181]. Arrangements were made to take the bird to Pune, but by that time, the veterinary surgeon declared that the bird had died. On the next morning, three more flamingos were found dead in the same field. One of which had been partially eaten by a dog.

The forest personnel believed that the birds died due to electrocution, as the Parali–Mumbai high voltage power line passes over the field. Visapur Dam, a water reservoir nearby, attracts flamingos and other birds. The flamingos might have been flying from this reservoir at night, and as the distance from where this incident took place is not far from it, the birds might have been flying low and crashed into the high voltage power lines, which are invisible during twilight, and in the night.

A similar incident was reported earlier from the Khadir region of Kachchh (Gujarat), c. 50 km from the India–Pakistan border, where as many as 400 Greater Flamingos were electrocuted in November 2011 (URL: http://www.conservationindia.org/news/400-flamingos-electrocuted-in-kutch-gujarat-in-10-days). Tere & Parasharya (2011) reported 76 deaths of Flamingos due to electrocution, of which 46% were Lesser Flamingos *Phoeniconaias minor*, and 54% Greater Flamingos; Sundar & Choudhury (2005) studied the mortality of Sarus Cranes *Grus antigone*, caused due to electricity wires in Uttar Pradesh. Harness & Juwadi (2011) studied distribution of pole lines in the Thar Desert in western India to access the risks they posed to raptors, and detected 160 bird carcasses at the pole bases. As there are such few studies, or reports, on the death of birds due to electrocution in Maharashtra, it is difficult to estimate the number that actually suffer such deaths, in the state.

To prevent such accidents from occurring in the future, the Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Company Limited, and similar power transmission organisations nationwide, should consider ways to prevent the mortality of birds due to collisions and electrocution, especially near waterbodies. The Gujarat Forest Department, and the relevant power supply company covered the power lines, near Nalsarovar, with plastic sleeves, which have successfully protected Sarus Crane from electrocution (Gadhvi 2011). Other mitigation techniques like marking of power lines, bird flight diverters, bird flappers, fluorescent tubes, or even mapping the route of overhead lines so that they are compatible with the flight paths of birds should be incorporated by the power supply companies in their working plans (Van Rooyen & Diamond 2008).

References
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Letters to the Editor

A second Mugimaki Flycatcher *Ficedula mugimaki* from the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, India

I wish to report a sighting of the Mugimaki Flycatcher *Ficedula mugimaki* at Barefoot, Havelock Resort (12.00ºN, 92.95ºE), Radhanagar Beach, which situated at the western side of Havelock Island, Andaman & Nicobar Islands. It was seen twice on 28 December 2016 [182, 183], perched on low open branches in the late morning, and then again on 29 December [184] just 50 m away from the earlier spot, around the same time. The second time it was in the company of Red-whiskered Bulbuls *Pycnonotus jocosus* and minivets *Pericrocotus* sp. From the photographs, the bird appears to be either a female, or a first winter male.

I learnt later that it has been recorded from Neil Island, also part of the Andaman & Nicobars Islands (Das 2014). Islands on the eastern edge of the Andaman group are probably the first islands where these birds land during their migration from/to South-east Asia, and these are the areas where one should specifically look for this species.

More recently it has been reported from Kalatang, Shoal Bay, South Andman, in the first week of February 2017 (Bowden 2017).

References


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