

Additions to the birds of prey of Great Nicobar Island, the Andaman & Nicobar archipelago, India

From 09–19 April 2018, we were on a birding trip on Great Nicobar Island. During this period, we recorded three species, which had hitherto been unreported by earlier workers, though none of them was unexpected.

Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni*: While birding late in the morning on the East–West Road at Campbell Bay (6.98°N, 93.87°E) on 13 April, we saw a largish raptor heading towards us. Through binoculars, we identified it as a Jerdon's Baza. After it came close to the valley, it indulged in a display flight where the bird soared in to the air vertically and dived down at a steep angle. This display flight lasted for over a minute and then the bird dived far away from us and disappeared [123]. It has recently reported from Great Nicobar in February–March 2016 (Sivaperuman & Gokulakrishnan 2017), though no photographs accompanied their note.



123. Jerdon's Baza, Campbell Bay, Great Nicobar Island.

Black Baza *Aviceda leuphotes*: On 14 April, near Gandhi Nagar (06.93°N, 93.88°E), Campbell Bay, we saw a Black Baza taking short flights, circling above the canopy, before diving down and catching some prey. We could not identify the prey. Pied Imperial Pigeons *Ducula bicolor* and Asian Glossy Starlings *Aplonis panayensis* mobbed the baza, and after few minutes it disappeared into the thick forest [124]. Though the species has been reported from the Andaman Islands, there appears to be no report of this species from the Nicobar group of islands except that of Bhatia (2015), who reported one 'in flight.'



124. Black Baza, Campbell Bay, Great Nicobar Island.

Japanese Sparrowhawk *Accipiter gularis*: While birding at 0800hrs on the East–West Road, Campbell Bay, on 11 April, near Birdwatchers' Point (6.98°N, 93.87°E), we saw an *Accipiter* circling in the sky; It quickly gained height before disappearing. Possible species are Besra *A. virgatus*, Chinese Sparrowhawk *A. soloensis*, Eurasian Sparrowhawk *A. nisus*, and Japanese Sparrowhawk. From the image [125], we identified it as a Japanese Sparrowhawk based on a faint median stripe (bolder in Besra), longer and less round wings than Besra with uniform barring on underparts (Besra has wider barring with few streaks on upperparts), and shorter tail than all other *Accipiters*. The Eurasian Sparrowhawk has five splayed primaries (four in this case) while a Chinese Sparrowhawk will have all dark primaries, unlike this bird. Additionally, it is a female, based on yellow (vs dark red in male) eyes. Nirav Bhat and Pranay Rao Juwadi subsequently confirmed this. The Japanese Sparrowhawk has been reported from Kamorta Island, in the Nicobar group of islands (Mees 1981; Subramaniam & Subramaniam 2014); the first one being the only specimen from Nicobar Island, collected by Humayun Abdulali (Abdulali 1967), which must be the source for Rasmussen & Anderton's (2012) 'Nicobars'. Earlier breeding reports of this species from the Nicobars (Ali & Ripley 1987) are now believed to be those of the Besra *A. virgatus* (Mees 1981; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). This appears to be the first report for Great Nicobar Island.



125. Japanese Sparrowhawk, Campbell Bay, Great Nicobar Island.

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