



181. Steppe Grey Shrike showing the wing pattern

**Underparts [182]:** The vent was white. The rest of the underparts were white with a buff pink hue, more prominently so on the flanks. The pinkish wash on the underparts was prominent and noticeable in the field.



Both: C. Abhinav

182. Steppe Grey Shrike showing the prominent pinkish hue on the flanks and tail pattern

**Tail:** The tail was long and rounded at the tip. The central tail feathers were black, whereas outer two feathers looked completely white from below. T4 was predominantly white with black in central part and T3 only had a broad white tip. The two all-white outer rectrices are typical of Steppe Grey Shrikes.

**Bare parts:** Bill was horn coloured, lighter near the base, turning black towards the tip. The tarsi were black.

This individual, apart from being slightly darker greyish, had all features of a Steppe Grey Shrike; paler bill, paler lores, white supercilium, long primary projection, and a pinkish buff wash to the underparts (Svensson *et al.* 2009; Grimmett *et al.* 2011; Ganpule 2016). Hence, it could be identified as a Steppe Grey Shrike. However, in view of the difficulties in identifying the various races of the Great Grey Shrike, the pictures were circulated for more opinions to Harkirat Singh Sangha (*in litt.*, e-mail dated 26 October 2016), Prasad Ganpule (*in litt.*, e-mail dated 27 October 2016), and Saurabh Sawant (*in litt.*, e-mail dated 25 October 2016)—all confirmed it as a Steppe Grey Shrike.

Grimmett *et al.* (2011) mentioned only one record of the Steppe Grey Shrike for the country, from western Rajasthan, whereas Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) stated that it was seen more widely in north-west. Multiple sightings from the Little Rann of Kachchh, and the Great Rann of Kachchh, Gujarat, have been reported, and it is believed that it could be a regular winter

migrant to north-western India (Ganpule 2016).

The sighting of a Steppe Grey Shrike in Himachal Pradesh in October, for almost three weeks, is surprising. The species is known to leave its breeding grounds in September (Harris & Franklin 2000). The present bird might be migrating from its summer range to its wintering grounds in north-western India. The Great (Indian) Grey Shrike *L. e. lahtora* is a vagrant to the Pong region, with a single record by den Besten (2004), and a couple of records by Dhadwal (2011). But there has been no previous record of a Steppe Grey Shrike from Himachal Pradesh. Apart from the extreme reaches of north-western India (the desert areas of Gujarat and Rajasthan), there are no other sightings from India.

I thank Prasad Ganpule for his comments on the manuscript and for confirming the identity of the shrike, Manoj Sharma for helping in references and literature, and Harkirat Singh Sangha, and Saurabh Sawant for helping with identification.

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## A Malayan Night Heron *Gorsachius melanolophus* near Amboli, south-western Maharashtra, India

In a recent trip to Amboli (Sindhudurg District, Maharashtra, India), we decided to explore the area around Khadpade village (15.84°N, 74.00°E), which is c. 20 km from Amboli, on 02 June 2018. We started at noon, and selected a dirt road starting from the village for birding. At 1315 hrs, we noticed a trail, which was overgrown with dense foliage, leading to a dry stream. As we entered this trail, there was some movement on the ground, and standing in front of us was a heron-sized bird. Given its stout beak, short neck, rufous body, and prominent black crown, we were certain that it was the elusive Malayan Night Heron *Gorsachius melanolophus*. TD quickly took a few photos of the bird [183], which had started to walk away, with one eye on us. We saw it for a few moments before it disappeared into the foliage. We decided not to pursue it further, rather to come back to the same spot after an hour. To our surprise, it was there again, but this time it flew away immediately. We continued to walk down the trail and were surprised to see one more individual. It was most probably a pair that was foraging at some distance from each other. We could not photograph the second individual, as it was a few meters away and quickly escaped into the foliage. We didn't want to disturb the pair and hence decided to leave

and come back the next day. Unfortunately, we got caught up in a thunderstorm on the next day and had to cancel our plans midway.



Tushar Dixit

183. Malayan Night Heron in Amboli.

Within the Indian Subcontinent, the Malayan Night Heron has been reported from the southern Western Ghats, north-eastern India, the Nicobar Islands, and Sri Lanka. It breeds in the Western Ghats from May to August during the monsoons (Ali & Ripley 2001). We did not find any records of this species from Maharashtra based on the available resources / literature (eBird 2018; Pittie 2018) and this is perhaps the first record of a Malayan Night Heron for the state.

TD expresses his gratitude to Dharmaraj Patil for confirming the identification.

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## Changeable Hawk Eagle *Nisaetus cirrhatus* scavenging

The Changeable Hawk Eagle *Nisaetus cirrhatus* is a large bird of prey found in South and South-east Asia that primarily hunts down its prey (Ali & Ripley 1987; Naoroji 2006; Clark *et al.* 2018). Joshi & Kasambe (2013) reported the first instance of it scavenging in India, from Bor Wildlife Sanctuary, wherein they observed a Changeable Hawk Eagle of the nominate race feeding on the carcass of a nilgai *Boselaphus tragocamelus* fawn. Pierce *et al.* (2014) also recorded a Changeable Hawk Eagle *N. c. limnaeetus* scavenging on a carcass of a red muntjac *Muntiacus muntjak* in Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary. Here we report two incidents of scavenging by the nominate race of Changeable Hawk Eagle (a.k.a. Crested Hawk Eagle) in Nawegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve (*henceforth*, NNTR), Maharashtra.

On 24 January 2017, at 1530 hrs, while studying pack of dholes *Cuon alpinus* in NNTR, we saw a juvenile Changeable Hawk Eagle feeding on a langur *Semnopithecus entellus* carcass [184]. Although this species is known to hunt down relatively large mammals, in some cases, AB confirmed from the local tourists and guides that a female leopard *Panthera pardus* had actually killed this langur. This was further confirmed when the leopard reclaimed her kill and carried it off, away from the Hawk Eagle [185].



184. Changeable Hawk Eagle feeding on the langur carcass.



185. A female leopard carrying away the langur carcass.

On 16 February 2017 while following dhole packs in NNTR, we found the carcass of a spotted deer *Axis axis*; dholes had hunted it in earlier half of the day. As no dholes were feeding on the carcass at that time, AB moved on, searching for the pack of dholes. On the way back however, a single Changeable Hawk Eagle was seen feeding on the leftovers of the spotted deer carcass [186].



186. Changeable Hawk Eagle on the spotted deer carcass.

All: Aishwarya Bhandari