

Great-tufted Myna *Acridotheres grandis*: new bird for West Bengal, India

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The Great-tufted Myna *Acridotheres grandis* is found from north-eastern India, Thailand, Indochina, to south-western China. It was only known in India from Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram until a couple of decades ago (Ali & Ripley 1983). Subsequently, Choudhury (2000) reported it from Barail Reserve Forest in North Cachar Hills District, Assam (Choudhury 2000), and Singh (1999), from the eastern part of Arunachal Pradesh. Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) state that it is resident in the plains of Assam, and the southern Assam hills. Robson (2000) recorded it for the first time in Bhutan at Samdrup Jongkhar in April 1999.

I recorded the species for the first time at Kokrajhar (26°27'N 90°15'E), in western Assam, on 1 July 1995, and afterwards up to Sesapani a few kilometres west of Kokrajhar. I also recorded it from Sarpang (26°52'N 90°16'E) in Bhutan on 8 February 2006. The former I considered the western-most record for India. On 30 May 2009, while visiting an eco park at Kholta in West Bengal, I observed a Great-tufted Myna flying with a twig, in the deer enclosure of the park, and disappearing into the canopy of a teak *Tectona grandis*, infested with a *Ficus* sp. Kholta is c. 6 km SW of Alipurduar (26°30'N 89°35'E), on the way to Cooch

Behar, in northern West Bengal. I knew that the species had not been recorded earlier in West Bengal, and so I searched the area thoroughly, and was able to spot several pairs, and small flocks.

Other Sturnidae in the area were Common- *Acridotheres tristis*, Bank- *A. ginginianus*, and Jungle *A. fuscus* mynas, and Grey-headed- *Sturnus malabaricus*, and Asian Pied *S. contra* starlings. Apart from the first two, most of the other species were busy with breeding activities.

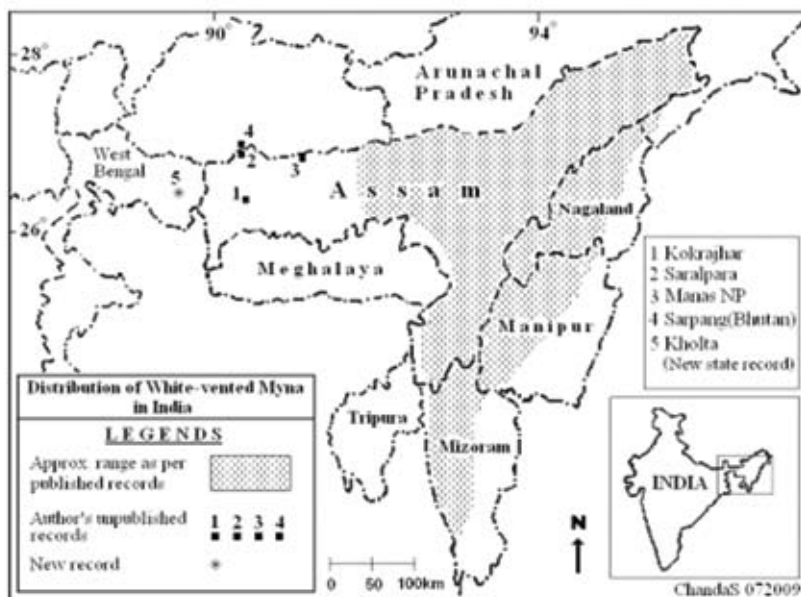
Acknowledgements

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Editor's note: *Acridotheres grandis* has been regularly reported from West Bengal since 2009. The western limit is now thought to be close to Sevoke (26°53'24"N 88°28'23"E) in the Siliguri region, where Garima Bhatia photographed one bird on 27 November 2009 (<http://groups.google.co.in/group/birdphotoindia/msg/42cb7b018bfa8a6f2hl=en>). Since then, there have been other sightings from West Bengal but none have been recorded unequivocally from West Bengal before the date (30 May 2009) mentioned by the author. [The editor thanks Sumit Sen for his inputs.]



Distribution of Great-tufted Myna *Acridotheres grandis*.