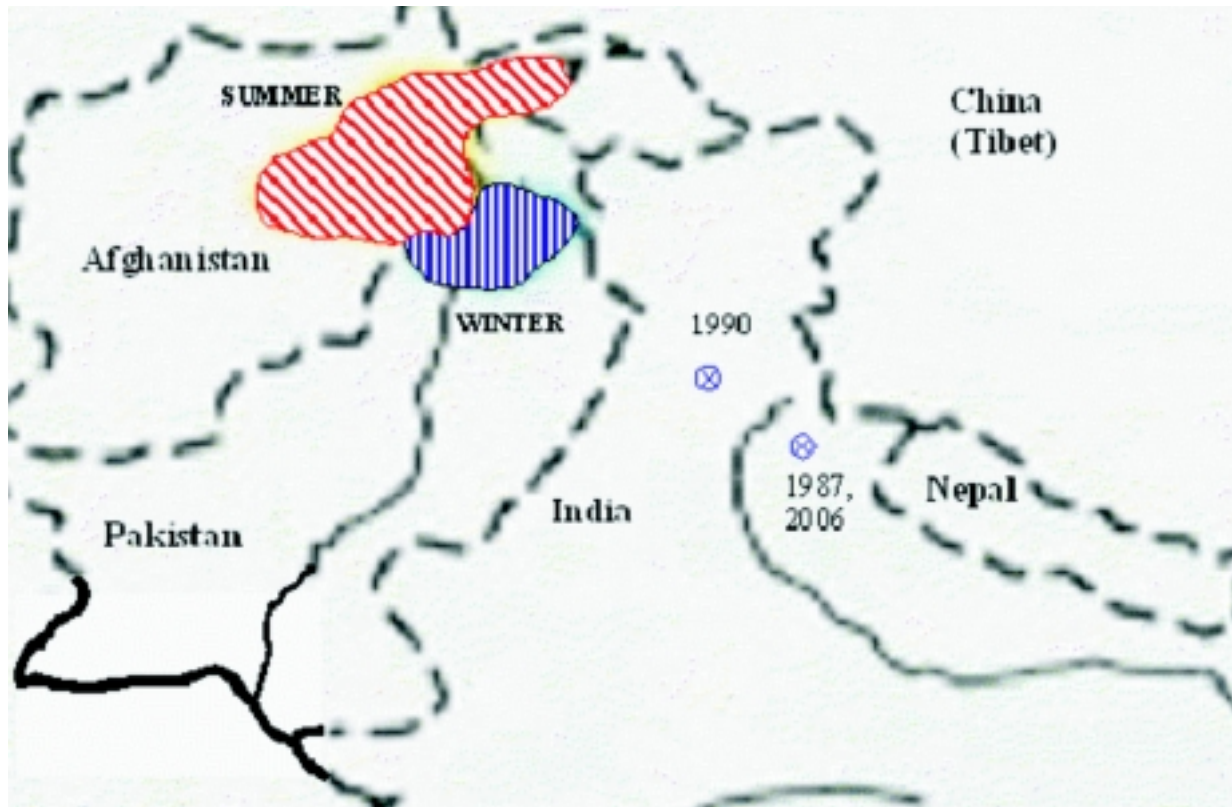


The call 'check-check', was heard at times. Here it's habitat was shared with Brown Rock-Chat, *Cercomela fusca*.

These observations suggest that during peak winter, the range of *O. p. opistholeuca* extends to the lower west Himalayan foothills of India.

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Map depicting the distribution range of *Denanthia picata opistholeuca* (source: Rasmussen & Anderton, 2005) in the Indian Sub-continent along with sites where it has also been recorded in India during winter.

Addition of Grey-headed Starling *Sturnus malabaricus* to the avifauna of Keoladeo National Park, India

Taej Mundkur, Laxmikant Mudgal & Alan Martin

(Photo by Taej Mundkur)

Mundkur, T., Mudgal, L. & Martin, A. 2006. Addition of Grey-headed Starling *Sturnus malabaricus* to the avifauna of Keoladeo National Park, India. *Indian Birds* 2 (5): 175–176.

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On the morning of 21.x.2005, we briefly visited Keoladeo National Park at Bharatpur in Rajasthan state, and were observing and photographing birds along the stretch of the main road where there are a large number of trees that form a canopy. In an *Acacia nilotica* tree while observing a flock of Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* and Bank Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus* feeding noisily, we

noticed a single Grey-headed Starling *Sturnus malabaricus* with the group.

The bird was observed clearly for a short while and it was photographed. The photographs confirm that the bird had a distinctive grey head and upperparts, lighter forehead, rufous under parts and a chestnut and grey tail. From this it is clear that it is the northern race of the Grey-headed Starling *S. m. malabaricus*.

The species has not been listed from Bharatpur (Grewal & Sahgal 2006) but has been recorded within a radius of a few hundred kilometres in other parts of Rajasthan including: Sariska Tiger Reserve (Sankar et al. 1993) where they record it as abundant, July to October and otherwise rare, Ranthambore (Wildlywise 2006). Further south in the state of Rajasthan, it is recorded from Dungarpur (Saxena 2003) and nearby in the southern part of Mount Abu in the late 1800s by Butler (1875, 1876), though Sangha & Devarshi (2006) did not find it there more recently. It is recorded to the north in the Delhi area, with few observations during March, April and September recently summarised by Harvey et al. (2006). (It is also recorded in neighbouring Madhya Pradesh (Dhar, Hoshangabad and Mandla) by Hobcroft (2006) and Indian Holidays (2006).

Grimmett et al. (1998), record the Grey-headed Starling as a resident in the NE subcontinent and a winter visitor to central and west India, with scattered records elsewhere, while Harvey et al (2006) consider it an irregular passage migrant between wintering quarters in the peninsula and breeding grounds in the Himalayan foothills.

Our observation of the bird in Keoladeo, foraging with other mynas in lightly wooded country, fits in well with the general habits and habitats reported by Grimmett et al. (1998) of the bird feeding in flocks with other starlings and myna, taking nectar, berries, figs and fruit in lightly wooded country, groves, young forest plantations and sometimes around villages and towns.

If the Grey-headed Starling is a regular migrant to this region of the peninsula, it is surprising that it has not been recorded in a site as well watched as Keoladeo National Park.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Dharendra Devarshi, G Gopakumar, Bill Harvey and Aasheesh Pittie for tracking down information on the distribution of the species in the region.

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Grey-headed Starling *Sturnus malabaricus*

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My bound volume of the *Newsletter's* eighth volume is surprisingly thin. The only issues I have are of February, March, April and August. The ones I have are without the usual printed cover page, with only the cyclostyled shield with sketches of birds, owls, swallows, little ringed plover, and an especially attractive one of a pair of Bar-headed Geese by T. J. Roberts. However, there are so many worthwhile articles in this limited number that I will deal with them instead of going on a hunt for the rest.

The father and son team of the Flemings, long time residents in Nepal, are well known for the work they have done on the ornithology of that mountain country. Robert L. Fleming Jr., in

a scholarly article on the birds of Pulchowk writes, “Pulchowk, a heavily forested hill on the SE edge of the Kathmandu Valley is a favourite place for bird enthusiasts. Last week my father, Dr R. L. Fleming Sr., and I spent several hours observing bird life between 6,500 ft. and 7,500 ft. elevation. The forest at this height is mainly broad-leaved evergreen with three species of oak (*Quercus* spp.) predominant. The understorey includes daphne and rhingal bamboo. The air rings with the calls of Black Bulbuls and Black-capped Sibilas [see Louis Werner in *Newsletter* Vol. 7 (11)].”

He writes about the sprightly Black-faced Flycatcher-Warbler *Abroscopus schisticeps*, referring to their remarkable