

nest, though I caught them hunting in tandem for many days. No young have been seen either.

Dashing out from a perch, twisting and turning in midair to pluck insects out of thin air, the female Paradise Flycatcher is a striking combination of pointed black head gear, and rich rufous body. She kept dive bombing the Tickell's, but to no avail. She preferred to perch on the mango or the kamini offering a commanding view of the entire area. On many occasions I looked up to find her sitting a few feet above my head. Once she came within six feet of me and performed maneuvers 'for my eyes only'. I was bewitched, but she had other ideas. The last I saw of her was around the sixth of April. Hope to see her again this winter.

The bravest are the Ashy Prinias. Crows and Blyth's Reed Warblers give them a tough time. The dump provides for easy, satiating meals compared to the lurking dangers. Here were two individuals that pranced around in the plants, and before you knew it they were on the dump, long tails swishing left to right as they peeped below the grating for a hiding morsel.

The Blyth's Reed Warbler inhabiting the area was extremely shy and would not let me within ten meters. I saw very little of it, but its hard 'chuck, chuck' calls were easy to follow through the shrubs till mid-April.

In shining black, wearing a necklace of white pearls on a black collar band on their whitish abdomen—their tails a Japanese fan in the hands of royalty—their shrill, complex call of 'Ti-tede-tede-ti-de' piercing the silence: I watched the Fan-tailed flycatchers (see photo on back cover); they were nesting in a bamboo thicket. Carrying twigs and cobwebs initially, later hurriedly carrying grubs, insects, throwing caution to the wind. Aggressively riding on the backs of crows or spinning circles around coucals and cats, harassing them into retreat. Now since mid-May they are frequenting the dump. The area they chose is quite disturbed, being the entrance of housing societies, where people and macaques wreck havoc regularly.

The fantails are now letting me in very close as parental duties no longer make them wary. They take chances of coming to the dump despite the scolding Tickell's, being very quick and even-tempered, with no time for petty squabbles. Hunting is a hoppity, skippity, jump, and dive after their prey that is plucked in mid-air. Tail flared in varying degree balancing the maneuvers. For all the energy this bird exudes, it's strike rate must be high in order to replenish all those calories. When the Tickell's Flycatcher's aggression became unbearable, they resorted to skimming around the mango's trunk, chasing their prey in a manner where they are unchallenged.

Cats, monkeys, squirrels, and also a mongoose have all come looking for goodies.

Squirrels pass by checking for a worthwhile snack, hustling along the limbs of the mango, ever watchful for suspicious characters, like myself, that the world at large must be warned about in a high-pitched, repetitive, 'chit chit' that resonates until the danger passes. They jump playfully from the building to the mango and circling the area in an aerial acrobatic feat.

A mongoose has been spotted many a time over the years. We surprised each other at the dump, till he sauntered away nonchalantly. Thus began a ritual bringing us face to face time and again, sometimes just three meters apart. One day I hope to get him in my frame.

— Badruddin Ali

Letter to the Editor

Is the Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* moving higher up in the mountains? Withdrawal of two elevation records from Nepal

Thapa et al. (2020) reviewed the records for Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* from Nepal and India to assess the evidence of the upward altitudinal movement of peafowl in the mountains. They used secondary data from eBird lists from Nepal, where 2,275 m in the Berekot area in Karnali (Bhusal 2016), and 3,532 m in Lantang National Park, Nepal (Gurung 2013), were mentioned as the range of elevation. The authors used the elevation of the location for which checklists were entered in eBird (www.eBird.org).

For further confirmation, we contacted the observers in Nepal to discuss their sightings and elevation details. These observers confirmed that the altitudinal elevations of peafowl greatly differed from the elevations mentioned in Thapa et al. (2020). Bhusal (2016) recorded peafowl in the Berekot area where the actual elevation is c.1,000 m asl (contra 2,275 m asl), and Gurung (2013) confirmed that his record was from Chitwan National Park (c.100–815 m asl), but had incorrectly marked it as Langtang National Park as they were birding from Chitwan to Langtang during that trip. So far, the confirmed highest elevation record of peafowl in Nepal is 3,196 m from Pyuthan, western mid hill (Khanal et al., in press).

We also contacted the corresponding author of Thapa et al. (2020) who accepted that the elevations they had taken were obtained from the eBird dataset (Lalit Kumar Sharma, *in litt.*, e-mail dated 30 June 2020). We here request that the altitudinal elevation records mentioned in Thapa et al. (2020), from Nepal, be withdrawn. However, this does not impact the results and conclusions of that letter, as Peafowl has been recorded above 3,000 m in Nepal.

In general, the location accuracy of checklists/observations on citizen science platforms varies and we recommend caution while using them directly without assessing for potential errors. Effort and distance in the checklist is a good indicator of the accuracy, particularly while dealing with records in mountainous, non-uniform terrain and habitat. Other species in the same checklist are other useful indicators. Finally, it is always recommended to contact the original observer to verify the accuracy of these observations and make required adjustments, or entirely drop them, before analysis.

References

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