Finn’s Weaver has been reported to breed on silk cotton Bombax ceiba and shisham Dalbergia Sissoo, apart from banyan Ficus bengalensis, Indian coral Tree Erythrina, mango Mangifera indica, flame of the forest Butea monosperma, and udal [elephant rope tree] Sterculia villosa (Ambedkar 1969; Bhargava 2017). Ali & Crook (1960) reported nests from reeds but alluded at the possibility that those were practice nests made by first year males. Saha (1967) reported them breeding in reeds standing in one meter of water at Kolkata. Finn’s Weavers have been reported to breed in Typha reeds, specifically during the second breeding season in Kumaon (Ambedkar 1969), though this has not been reported since then (Bhargava 2017). Though it has been reported to be resting and roosting on Ipomoea (Bhargava 2017), ours is probably the first report of its breeding on Ipomoea reeds. Residents of the area are cultivating water chestnut in these waters, and fishing is also a common activity in the area. Human disturbance could be a possible threat for the birds to leave the colony as we noticed some fishermen fishing very close to the colony during the course of our observations. Our reports from 2014, till date, confirm that a breeding population of c.25 birds occur at this site and it appears to be one of the last few remaining sites for the nominate subspecies in India. We are thankful to Dibyendu Ash, who made us aware of the presence of this bird at Baur Reservoir, and to Kaajal Dasgupta and Saravana Janakarajan for joining us on our surveys. We thank an anonymous referee for improving the manuscript.

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Oriental Pied Hornbill Anthracoceros albirostris in Visakhapatnam city, Andhra Pradesh
At 0730 h on 29 February 2020, UJ spotted two female Oriental Pied Hornbills in the Kailasagiri Hills, Visakhapatnam (= Vizag), Andhra Pradesh, being mobbed by a flock of crows (Corvus sp.). They were perched on top a Banyan tree Ficus bengalensis in the Kailasagiri Hill Top Park (17.74°N, 83.34°E), which is a famous tourist destination. The pair was first found perched on a huge banyan tree, from where they moved on to the nearby trees.
in a frenzy. To every tree the crows followed, and constantly mobbed them. The birds were not in a hurry, but kept moving from one tree to another within the park premises because of the crows. They were in what seemed like a beak ‘fight’ most of the time, in almost what looked like playful jousting. After a span of 15 to 20 minutes, both took off from a tree on the periphery of the hill and flew away.

The range of the Oriental Pied Hornbill is known to overlap (Grimmett et al. 2011) with that of the Malabar Pied Hornbill A. coronatus in Jharkhand and the hill forests of Odisha, and north-eastern Andhra Pradesh (Kemp & Boesman 2020). Similar to the record now in Vizag, reports of Oriental Pied Hornbill sightings in highly urbanised cities such as Chandigarh, and Delhi, were observed in the past few years (Datta et al. 2018).

In addition to this observation, there have been two other previous records of Oriental Pied Hornbill from Andhra Pradesh. One of us (VVLSD) had spotted a pair during her initial days of posting at Sileru in Narsipatnam Division, Visakhapatnam, during 2008–2009. These hills are known for their extensive lush green vegetation and diversity of flora and fauna. The other record is from Papikonda National Park (Pochavaram, Donkarayi, and Tummimleru) in 2015–2016, where Vikram Aditya, research scholar from ATREE, had spotted these birds during his study tenure. A nest was observed in Pochavaram, inside Papikonda National Park, and at every site, a minimum of two to four birds were observed (Vikram Aditya, pers. comm., e-mail dated 03 July 2020). All these observations indicate that the Oriental Pied Hornbill occurs sparingly in the northern Eastern Ghats along with the Malabar Pied Hornbill.

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A report of the Northern Long-eared Owl Asio otus from Seri, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, and its status in India

The Northern Long-eared Owl Asio otus is found in North America, Europe, Asia, and some parts of Africa (Heynen 1999). It is found in semi-desert, groves, plantations, thickets, wetlands (inland), forest (coniferous, mixed, and deciduous), shrubland, artificial/terrestrial, and grassland, habitats, and edges and clearings (Heynen 1999; König & Weick 2008; Marks et al. 2020). It has isolated records from Pakistan, western India, north-eastern India, Gujarat, Nepal, and Bhutan (Ali & Ripley 1981; Grimmett et al. 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012).

This species is a winter visitor to most parts of India, but has erratic records over the country. It has most frequently been recorded in winter but also, occasionally, in May, June, and July (Table 1). We also report a record of this species for the western Himalayan state of Himachal Pradesh.

At 13:24 h, on 04 February 2020, SK, Satish Kumar Thakur (SKT), and Vikas Thakur (VT) incidentally recorded the presence of a Northern Long-eared Owl at Seri (31.02°N, 77.29°E; 2,047 m asl). A single Northern Long-eared Owl was spotted perched on a chir pine Pinus roxburghii tree. It flushed to a nearby patch (15 m away) of chir pine Pinus roxburghii and deodar Cedrus deodara where it was photographed [157]. Eventually, three additional individuals were seen within 20 m from the first individual.