Choudhury, A., 2003. *A pocket guide to the birds of Nagaland*. Gibbon Pocket Guides. Gibbon Books & The Rhino Foundation for Nature in NE India. Pp. 1–48.
Edwards, D. P., Borah, J., & Tsuseki. Y. Y., 2016. Nagaland, North-East India: Three Himalayan species new to the Naga Hills. *BirdingAsia* 26: 88–90.
Grewal, B., Sen, S., Sreenivasan, R., 2012. *Birds of Nagaland*. The Directorate of Tourism, Nagaland. Pp. 1–200.
Hatchwell, B., & Christie, D. A., 2020. *Alpine Accentor (Prunella collaris)*, version 1.0. In Birds of the World (J. del Hoyo, A. Elliott, J. Sargatal, D. A. Christie, and E. de Juana, Editors). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.alpacc1.01.
Inskipp, C., Grimmett, R., & Inskipp, T., 2020. *Birds of Bhutan and the Eastern Himalayas*. Bloomsbury Publishing. Pp, 1–416.
Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2012. *Birds of South Asia: The Ripley guide*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C., and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. Vol. 1 of 2 vols. Pp. 1–378.

– Bhaskar Bora, Ninoto P. Aye & Jaydev Mandal
Bhaskar Jyoti Bora, Foundation for Ecological Security, B5 Rupali Paam, Nabin Nagar, Guwahati, Assam, 781024, India. Email: bhaskar.bora25@gmail.com [Corresponding Author]
Ninoto P. Aye, Satoi village, Zunheboto, Nagaland, 798620, India.
Jaydev Mandal, Assistant Professor, Department of Zoology, Madhab Choudhury College, Barpeta, Assam, 781301, India.

A Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* preying on a mugger *Crocodylus palustris* hatchling

The Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* is a widely distributed waterbird that prefers marshland, reed beds, and open fringes of water bodies (Cramp & Simmons 1977; Ali & Ripley 1987; Martínez-Vilalta et al. 2020). This species is well-known for its versatile and diverse dietary habits that span from fish to amphibians, mollusks, crustaceans to small mammals, and even insects, depending on the habitat and availability of resources (Kushlan & Hancock 2005; Prasad & Bhadola 2008). Here, we present a noteworthy feeding observation of a Grey Heron preying on a hatchling mugger crocodile *Crocodylus palustris*.

On 23 June 2023, PT was on a visit to Ranthambore National Park, Rajasthan, India. While on a wildlife safari, sudden movements by a Grey Heron caught PT's attention near a wetland in the Jogi Mahal area. PT observed as the heron caught a large prey item. Upon closer inspection, the prey appeared to be a hatchling mugger crocodile *Crocodylus palustris* **[270]** which it proceeded to consume. During our stay at Ranthambore, we noted two instances of mugger hatchlings being depredated by Grey Herons. These observations shed light on the diverse feeding habits of the Grey Heron in the complex ecosystem of Ranthambore National Park.

A literature review revealed that large waterbirds such as Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*, Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala*, and Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* are known predators of mugger hatchlings (Somaweera et al 2013; Vyas 2019). Large waders are known to consume the hatchlings of other crocodilians as well (Fitzsimons 2020) A study by Somaweera et al. (2013), shows that 23 species of waders are known to feed on 15 different species and subspecies of crocodilians.

The authors thank the staff and management of Ranthambore National Park for their support during the observation. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer who reviewed the manuscript and gave construction suggestions.

References

Ali, S., & Ripley S. D. 1987. *Compact Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan Together with Those of Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka*. Oxford University Press. Pp. i–xlii, 1 l., pp. 1–737, 56 ll.
Cramp, S., & Simmos, K. E. L., 1977. *The Birds of the Western Palearctic*. Oxford University Press. Pp. 1–732.

Pinkesh Tanna

270. Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* with a hatchling mugger crocodile *Crocodylus palustris* at Jogi Mahal, Ranthambore National Park, Rajasthan, India.

Fitzsimons, T., 2020. Florida bird caught on video swallowing whole alligator. Website URL: https://www.nbcnews.com/news/animal-news/florida-bird-caught-video-swallowing-whole-alligator-n1250755 [Accessed on 29 November 2023].
Kushlan, J. A., & Hancock, J. A., 2005. *Herons*. 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. i–xvii, 1–433.
Martínez-Vilalta, A., Motis, A. & Kirwan, G. M. 2020. Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*), version 1.0. In Birds of the World (del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A., Sargatal, J., Christie, D.A. & E. de Juana, Editors). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. Website URL: https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.graher1.01 [Assessed on 28 October 2023].
Prasad, S. N., & Badola, R., 2008. Diurnal and nocturnal foraging behavior of the Grey Heron (Ardea cinerea) in Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur, India. *Tropical Ecology* 49 (2): 211–216.
Somaweera, R., Brien, M., & Shine, R., 2013. The role of predation in shaping crocodilian natural history. *Herpetological Monographs* 27: 23–51.
Vyas, R., 2019. Note on interactions between predators and prey: Indian Crocs and Birds. *Crocodile Specialist Group Newsletter,* 38 (2):4–7.

– Pinkesh Tanna, Raju Vyas, Devvratsinh Mori
Pinkesh Tanna, Madhav 7 - B, Harihar Society St. no-1, Opp. Swaminarayan Mandir, Kalawad Road, Rajkot [PT]
Raju Vyas, Sashwat Apartment, BPC-Haveli Road, Nr. Splatter Studio, Alkapuri, Vadodara–390007, Gujarat, India. Email: razoovyas@gmail.com [RV] [Corresponding author]
Devvratsinh Mori, Ecology, Environment and Climate Change cluster, Ahmedabad University, Ahmedabad–380009 [DM]

The predation strategies used by *House Crows Corvus splendens* for hunting Streak-throated Swallows *Petrochelidon fluvicola*

The House Crow *Corvus splendens* is a common, widespread bird throughout the Indian subcontinent (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005) and is known for its intelligence and adaptability (Nyari 2006). House Crows are known to use their intelligence for innovative foraging strategies (Ryall 1992). Streak-throated Swallows *Petrochelidon fluvicola* nest in colonies and build their nests attached under bridges, over canals and under gateway arches usually close to water (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005). The nest is made of mud and lined with feathers with a short tubular entrance. Although Streak-throated Swallows live in large colonies, the nests are vulnerable to predators, including the House Crow. In this note we report the predation strategies used by House Crows to depredate on Streak-throated Swallows in their colonies.

The predation events by House Crows on Streak-throated Swallows we describe here were documented at Matiyari Dam Canal Kharpariya, Rapta Old Bridge Mandla town, and Narmada Bridge at Khaddevari in Madhya Pradesh, India. Most observations were made between 0630 h and 0900 h, and a few between 1600 h and 1800 h, between 15 February 2023 and 13 March 2023. We followed all guidelines in Barve et al. (2020a, b) while

making our observations. We used binoculars to observe the swallow colony from a distance of 10–12 meters.

We observed House Crows hunting Streak-throated Swallows **[271]** by ambushing them as the swallows flew back and forth from their nests, rushing after them to catch them. Crows ambushed swallows by perching on pillars of the bridge, a power line, or sometimes on the ground near the colony. We also observed crows hunting swallows in groups as a "pack", particularly when the swallows were distracted by nest building or repairing. Additionally, House Crows also waited for the adult swallows to leave the nest to feed on the eggs or nestlings. Crows also "trapped" adults in the nest and then use their beaks to injure the swallow or force it to leave, exposing the nest to predation.

Manohar Pawar

271. A House Crow attacking a Streak-throated Swallow nest.

Streak-throated Swallows defend their nests largely by placing them in inaccessible places, along horizontal or vertical walls of bridges and canals. We also observed swallows mob predators by flying around them, making loud noises and dive-bombing them. Documenting these predation strategies and defense mechanisms helps us better appreciate the complex behaviors and survival strategies of birds.

We thank the Foundation for Ecological Security for providing the necessary facilities. We are thankful to Dr Satish Kumar Sharma and Dr B.L. Jhariya, Rani Durgawati Post Graduation College, Mandla for their continuous guidance and support. We also thank the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department, Mandla and Madhya State Biodiversity Board, Bhopal.

References

Barve, S., Raman, T. R. S., Datta, A., & Jathar, G., 2020a. When and how to study the nesting biology of Indian birds: Research needs, ethical considerations, and best practices. *Indian BIRDS* 16 (1): 1–9.

Barve, S., Raman, T. R. S., Datta, A., & Jathar, G., 2020b. Guidelines for conducting research on the nesting biology of Indian birds. *Indian BIRDS* 16 (1): 10–11.

Kumar, A., Sati, J.P., Tak, P.C., & Alfred, J.R.B., 2005. *Hand book on Indian wetland birds and their conservation*. Zoological Survey India (26): 1–40.

Nyari, A., Ryall, C., & Peterson A. T., 2006. Global invasive potential of the House crow *Corvus splendens* based on ecological niche modeling. *Journal of Avian Biology* 37 (4): 306–311.

Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2005. *Birds of South Asia*: the Ripley guide. Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Editions (2): 1–598.

Ryall, C., 1992. Predation and harassment of native bird species by the Indian house crow *Corvus splendens*, in Mombasa, Kenya. *Scopus* (16): 1–8.

– Manohar Pawar & Anil Sarsawan

Manohar Pawar, Foundation for Ecological Security, Anand.
Email: pawarmanohar1988@gmail.com [Corresponding Author]
Anil Sarsawan, Foundation for Ecological Security, Anand

Scaly-breasted Munias *Lonchura punctulata* extracting material from feral dog scat

On 14 September 2023, while birding at Silsako *Beel* wetland (26.14ºN, 91.81ºE) in Assam, India, we observed a pair of Scaly-breasted Munias *Lonchura punctulata* foraging on the ground. Upon closer examination, we discovered that they were engaged in an unusual behaviour—extracting and nibbling on feral dog scat. We documented our observations using a Nikon D7200 with a 200-500mm telephoto lens and a Canon Powershot SX 540. Initially, both birds were observed delicately nibbling on different pieces of dog scat. The subsequent events were captured on video and can be found in Abraham (2023). One of the birds was observed pulling out a string-like material from the scat **[272]** after which the pair flew away.

Leons Mathew Abraham

272. Scaly-breasted Munia (left) pulls out a stringy material from the dog scat.

The Scaly-breasted Munia is a granivore with a varied diet such as grass seeds, weeds, algae *Spirogyra, Lantana* berries, insects, and even household scraps (Payne 2020). The species uses grassy material as lining of its ball-shaped nest made from grass heads, strips of leaves, and twigs (Payne 2020). Schutez (2005) describes Common Waxbills *Estrilda astrild*, an African Estrildid finch, using carnivore scats as non-structural nesting material, possibly serving as an olfactory deterrent against rodents and other predators. In that study, an in-situ experiment demonstrated an increased success rate of hatchlings in nests where scats were used. It was clear from our observation that the munias were not feeding on the scat but were trying to extract materials from it. We cannot confirm it, but it is our conjecture that the stringy material from the dog scat may have been used as nest material.

References

Abraham, L. M., 2023. Webpage URL: https://ebird.org/checklist/S149836031 [Accessed on 14 September 2023.]

Ali, S., & Ripley, S. D., 1999. *Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan* Volume 10. Oxford University Press pp. 119–121.

Payne, R. B., 2020. Scaly-breasted Munia (*Lonchura punctulata*), version 1.0. In *Birds of the World (J. del Hoyo, A. Elliott, J. Sargatal, D. A. Christie, and E. de Juana, Editors)*. Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA.

Schuetz, J.G., 2005. Common waxbills use carnivore scat to reduce the risk of nest predation, *Behavioral Ecology* 16 (1): 133–137.

– Leons Mathew Abraham & Taniya Talwar

Leons Mathew Abraham: Pygmy Hog Research and Breeding Centre, Indira Nagar, Basistha, Guwahati, Assam 781029. Email: leonsreptar@gmail.com [Corresponding author]
Taniya Talwar: 7weaves Research Foundation, House 7, Bylane 4, Bhetapara-Beltola Road, Beltola, Guwahati, Assam 781028