

Western Reef-Egret might have taken up the advantage of these factors and made the nests on the mangroves in the Salt pans at such a low height. This heronry is an addition to the known nesting sites of the Indian Western Reef-Egret (Naik and Parasharya 1988; Subramanya 1996).

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## A sight record of the Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* near Mysore, Karnataka, India

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On 20.i.2002 while on a visit to the Krishnarajasagar Reservoir (12°24'N, 76°26'E) to conduct waterfowl census, a Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* was observed at 11:00hrs near Basavapatna village close to the banks of the Lakshmanathirtha River. The Krishnarajasagar Reservoir covers an area of 125km<sup>2</sup> at full level and is situated 18km north of Mysore city. It is strategically located at the confluence of three rivers, the Kaveri, the Hemavathi and the Lakshmanathirtha and across the Mysore and Mandya districts of southern Karnataka.

The bird had a large wingspan, completely dark body and underwing when it was first observed in flight, and was quite distinct from the other common but smaller species of vultures that occur in the area. The White-backed Vulture *Gyps benghalensis* and the Long-billed Vulture *Gyps indicus* have contrasting flight feathers and coverts in the wing, more strikingly so in *G. benghalensis*. The King Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus* is much smaller and has a dark underwing but white on breast and on thighs along with white line on the underwing differentiates it from the larger *Aegypius monachus*.

After a while, the bird settled on a tall *Albizia lebbbeck* tree at a height of about six meters. I could then discern a completely dark brown body. Head appeared somewhat triangular, dark with pinkish naked areas on the forehead and behind the ear. A black 'ruff' was clearly visible as mentioned in the *Handbook* (Ali and Ripley 1987). The beak was slaty grey generously tipped black and feet were white in colour. The bird was thus a Cinereous Vulture, possibly a juvenile. Ali and Ripley (1987) do not give a description of the juvenile of the species but only of the immature phase whereas the description in Grimmett et al. (1998) suffices for confirming that the bird observed to be a juvenile Cinereous Vulture. The surrounding area was open, dry stony country with some dryland cultivation and a few scattered trees.

The Cinereous Vulture is recorded as a "Rare and sparse winter visitor to Sind, NW and northern India (including Nepal), Kutch,

N. Gujarat and central India, south to about the latitude of Dhulia in Khandesh (c.21°N)," (Ali and Ripley 1987). Recent reports of the birds in south India are from Andhra Pradesh (Choudhury 1990), Kerala (Kumar 1991) and Tamil Nadu (Perennou and Santharam 1990). Subramanya (2001) reports this bird from Karnataka for the first time from Harangi Dam in the Coorg district. This sighting is the second from Karnataka and the location is close to that reported for the bird by Subramanya (2001).

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[Editors' Note: Perennou & Santharam (1990) reported the bird from the Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary in southern Andhra Pradesh and not in Tamil Nadu.]