

the forest department, communities that use the landscape and knowledge from more research are the current needs for species such as Rufous-vented Grass Babblers to thrive.

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- **Kaushik Sarkar, Pravarmourya & Anup Prakash Bokkasa**  
Kaushik Sarkar, The Habitats Trust, A9, Second Floor, B-Wing, Sector 3, Noida 201301, Uttar Pradesh, India Email: [kaushik.s@thehabitatstrust.org](mailto:kaushik.s@thehabitatstrust.org) [KS] [Corresponding author]  
Pravarmourya, Independent Researcher: 36, Satyam Colony, near Kushwaha ka bagicha, Pipliyapala, Indore 452001, Madhya Pradesh, India. Email: [pravarmourya@gmail.com](mailto:pravarmourya@gmail.com) [PM]  
Anup Prakash Bokkasa, The Habitats Trust, HCL Technologies, A9, Second Floor, B-Wing, Sector 3, Noida 201301, Uttar Pradesh, India Email: [anup.b@thehabitatstrust.org](mailto:anup.b@thehabitatstrust.org) [APB]

## Brown-breasted Flycatcher *Muscicapa muttui* from Punjab, India

The Brown-breasted Flycatcher *Muscicapa muttui* occurs in north-eastern India, central and southern China, north-western Thailand and northern Vietnam and probably also in northern and eastern Myanmar (Clement 2020). It is a summer visitor to the hills of north-eastern India south of the River Brahmaputra and winters primarily in south-western India in the Western Ghats south from Goa and in Sri Lanka (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). The migration routes and movements of the species are poorly-known and not fully understood (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012).

On 29 October 2023, at 1135 h, AM & VK were birding in the forested areas in the vicinity of Nara Dam (31.544°N, 76.028°E; 377 m asl) in Hoshiarpur District, Punjab. The area falls in the lower Sivalik hills and comprises primarily tropical dry deciduous forest with some areas of dry deciduous scrub forest (TERI 2015). AM revealed a small passerine bird moving in the lower reaches of the forest canopy at a height of c. 5 m. On observation through binoculars, AM recognised it as a Brown-breasted Flycatcher based on its large, pale eye-ring, long bill with pale yellowish lower mandible and pale fleshy legs. The bird was also

observed feeding on an unidentified insect. AM obtained some photographs for record purposes as the species was unlikely to be encountered in the region as per its known range [92–93].

There are no known published records of the species from Punjab, India (Grimmett et al. 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; Arlott 2015), and no records appear on eBird for the region (eBird 2023). There are also no known records of the species online on social media forums, such as Facebook, for the region. The nearest record of the species to our Nara Dam record is another autumn record dated 24 October 2016 from Sultanpur National Park in Haryana, which is c.350 km south-east from our record (Sharma 2016; Vyas 2019). Other nearest records from our record are from the Jessore Sloth Bear Sanctuary in Gujarat, from the Prayagraj area in Uttar Pradesh (eBird 2023), as well as a single record from Satna, Madhya Pradesh (Pathak 2015), and some records from central Nepal, all of which are in the radius of c.900 km south or south-east of the current sighting. Our record, therefore, appears to be the first record of the species documented from Punjab, India. Documentation of any future records during passage migration will help in better understanding the range and movements of the species in northern India.

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92. Brown-breasted Flycatcher at Nara Dam.



93. Brown-breasted Flycatcher feeding on an insect.

Both: Avadhesh Malik

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– Avadhesh Malik & Vikram Kumar

Avadhesh Malik, Jalandhar Cantonment, Jalandhar, Punjab, 144005, Punjab, India. Email: [avadheshmalik@gmail.com](mailto:avadheshmalik@gmail.com) [AM] [Corresponding author]

Vikram Kumar, Bhagat Singh Chowk, Dhan Mohalla, Jalandhar144001, Punjab, India. Email: [kumarvikram2828@yahoo.com](mailto:kumarvikram2828@yahoo.com) [VK]

### Recent nesting of Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* at two different sites in the Jhajjar District, Haryana, India

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* is considered a Least Concern species because of its extremely large range (Birdlife International 2024a). The species has a wide discontinuous breeding distribution from southern Europe, Africa and Madagascar (as well as Agalega in the western Indian Ocean) to central and southern Asia, the Philippines, Sulawesi and Java in Indonesia; southern New Guinea and Australia (except for the arid interior); and the Atlantic coast of North America and West Indies to north-central Venezuela also occurring more widely as a vagrant (Davis & Kricher 2020). In South Asia, it is known to breed very locally in the northern plains; however, wintering more widely when the population includes an influx of migrants (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; eBird 2024). While scattered breeding records have been documented from India, including a few older records from the northern plains of India, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu (Tiware & Rahmani 1998; Venkatraman 2009), there have been only rare instances of breeding that have been reported in recent years. Recently, breeding of the species was documented in Rajasthan in northern India and in Assam in north-eastern India (Sharma et al. 2020; Ranade et al. 2021). A recent study concluded that the species was resident throughout the year in the Anand and Kheda Districts in Gujarat and used the agricultural landscape extensively, suggesting indirect evidence of breeding in these areas (Sundar & Kittur 2019). We document another recent breeding record from the Jhajjar District, Haryana, where we recorded more than 110 Glossy Ibis pairs nested in two different heronries in August 2023; this district of Haryana, bordering Delhi, is included in the National Capital Region (NCR) of India. We ensured that all protocols and guidelines for collecting information and photos from the respective heronries were followed as recommended, including maintaining appropriate distances from the nests (Barve et al. 2020).

On 12–13 August 2023, we visited the wetlands in the Jhajjar District to observe migratory and resident bird species, where we found the Glossy Ibis nesting at two different heronries. These heronries were located near Chhara village (28.70°N, 76.71°E) and Jaundhi village (28.63°N, 76.66°E), which are situated at a

linear distance of 9 km from each other. Reaching both heronries was difficult because the areas were inundated with stagnant water. In the heronry at Chhara village, we observed 12 nests of Glossy Ibis, along with approximate estimates of nests (in parentheses) of other species, such as, Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* (20), Eastern Cattle Egret *Bubulcus coromandus* (60), Intermediate Egret *Ardea intermedia* (30), Great Egret *Ardea alba* (26), Indian Pond-Heron *Ardeola grayii* (3), and Little Cormorant *Microcarbo niger* (84), all nesting on kikar *Prosopis juliflora* and neem *Azadirachta indica* trees. In the heronry at Jaundhi village, we counted c.100 nests of Glossy Ibis. The nests were placed on kikar *Prosopis juliflora*. Approximate numbers of nests (in parenthesis) of other species that were observed were Black-crowned Night Heron (35), Eastern Cattle Egret (150), Intermediate Egret (40), Great Egret (40), Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* (40), Indian Pond-Heron (2), Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* (50), Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans* (15), and the majority of nests by Little Cormorant (200). We found that it was easier to count the nests of large wetland birds and species that prefer to nest in the upper canopy than to count the nests of species that prefer to nest in the lower canopy or lower vegetation, such as the Indian Pond Heron. All recorded nests of Glossy Ibis were placed at varying heights, approximately 0.5–5 m, from the surface of the water or the ground. On 22 August 2023, photographs of the nesting Glossy Ibis were obtained at the heronry at Jaundhi village using a DJI Mavic Mini drone operated in a single flight and maintaining its appropriate distance to minimize disturbance and noise [94–96].



94. Aerial view of the heronry at Jaundhi village showing nesting Glossy Ibis.



95. Glossy Ibis at a nest with young chicks.