

Besten 2004; Grimmett et al. 2011; eBird 2024; Pittie 2024). Thus, my sightings of Bristled Grassbird appear to be the first records of the species from Himachal Pradesh. However, this record is not unexpected, as the species has been previously reported further west from Pakistan (Roberts 1992; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012), and has also been reported from the neighbouring states of Uttarakhand (Sharma 2009), Punjab, and Haryana in India (Grimmett et al. 2011). More recent records are also available on eBird for the aforementioned three states (eBird 2024). Recently, it has also been recorded in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir (Kapur 2022).

Bristled Grassbird is a globally threatened species with IUCN status as Vulnerable, owing to declining populations due to the loss and degradation of the tall and dense grassland, on which it is totally dependent (BirdLife International 2024b). Thus, information on new and potential breeding areas and breeding season records of this species is important. This sighting also highlights the need for stringent measures to protect these habitats from the human interference.

## References

- BirdLife International 2024a. Species factsheet: *Schoenicola striatus*. Website URL: <https://datazone.birdlife.org/species/factsheet/bristled-grassbird-schoenicola-striatus>. [Accessed on 01 September 2024].
- BirdLife International 2024b. Important Bird Area factsheet: Pong Dam Lake Wildlife Sanctuary (India). Website URL: <https://datazone.birdlife.org/site/factsheet/pong-dam-lake-wildlife-sanctuary-iba-india>. [Accessed on 01 September 2024].
- Das, R., 2019. Website URL: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10210485031911789&set=gm.1111277715618528> [Accessed on 01 September 2024].
- den Besten, J. W., 2004. *Birds of Kangra*. 1st ed. Dharamsala & New Delhi: Moonpeak Publishers & Mosaic Books. Pp. 1–176.
- Dhadwal, D. S., 2011. *Wild wings: Pong & its birds*. Kangra, India: Published by the author. Pp. I–VIII, 1–149.
- Dhadwal, D. S., & Kanwar, B., 2018. *Birds of Himachal Pradesh. (Non-Passerine - Volume I)*. Published by the author. Pp. 1–301.
- Dhadwal, D. S., 2019. *Birds of Himachal Pradesh (Passerine - Volume II)*. India: Published by the author. Vol. 2 of 2 vols. Pp. 1–340.
- eBird, 2024. Species Map: Bristled Grassbird. Website URL: <https://ebird.org/map/briga2>. [Accessed on 01 September 2024].
- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 1998. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 1st ed. London: Christopher Helm, A & C Black. Pp. 1–888.
- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 2011. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press & Christopher Helm. Pp. 1–528.
- Kapur, V., 2022. Website URL: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S118770101> [Accessed on 01 September 2024].
- Krishnan, A., 2021. Bristled Grassbird (*Schoenicola striatus*), version 2.1. In *Birds of the World* (Billerman, S. M., Bridwell, M. A., & Rodewald, P. G., Editors). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. Website URL: <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow-briga2.02.1>. [Accessed on 01 September 2024].
- Lakshminarasimha, R., 2017. *Himachal Pradesh bird checklist*. 1st ed. Shimla: Wildlife Wing, Himachal Pradesh Forest Department. Pp. 1–70.
- Pittie, A., 2004. Bibliography of South Asian Ornithology. Website URL: <http://www.southasiaornith.in> [Accessed on 01 September 2024].
- 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. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378, 1–683.
- Roberts, T. J., 1992. *The birds of Pakistan. Passeriformes: Pittas to Buntings*. Vol. 2. UK: Oxford University Press. Pp. i–xxxvii, 1–617.
- Sharma, M., 2009. Status and conservation of Bristled Grassbird *Chaetornis striata* in Corbett National Park. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 105 (3): 339–341.
- Sibley, D., 2011. The Proper Use of Playback in Birding. Website URL: <https://www.sibleyguides.com/2011/04/the-proper-use-of-playback-in-birding/> [Accessed on 01 September 2024].

– C. Abhinav

C. Abhinav, Village & P.O. Ghurkari, Tehsil & District Kangra 176001, Himachal Pradesh, India. E-mail: [drabhinav.c@gmail.com](mailto:drabhinav.c@gmail.com)

## A Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus* unsuccessfully capturing a Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*

The Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus* is an uncommon winter migrant to Assam, India (Choudhury 2000). I report an observation of a Booted Eagle's failed attempt to catch Fulvous Whistling Ducks *Dendrocygna bicolor*. On 18 February, 2023 while observing birds near Khanajan (26.128°N, 91.633°E), outside notified Deepor *beel* wildlife sanctuary, my attention was drawn towards some noise. It was a Booted Eagle, which tried to prey upon a Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*. The duck seems to have been drowned by the eagle, who appeared to lift off with the duck. Despite struggling for several minutes, the eagle was unsuccessful in taking the duck and abandoned its kill. Some Red-crested Pochards *Netta rufina* were not very far (within 10m) from the eagle but they remained indifferent to the attack while the entire flock of some 40 Fulvous Whistling Ducks panicked and took to wings.



205. Booted Eagle drowning a Fulvous Whistling Duck.

Anwaruddin Chaudhary

## References

- Choudhury, A., 2000. *The birds of Assam*, 1st ed. Gibbon Books & World Wide Fund for Nature-India, Guwahati. Pp. 1–240.

– Anwaruddin Choudhury

Anwaruddin Choudhury, House No 7, Islampur Road, Guwahati 781 007, Assam, INDIA. Email: [acbadru56@gmail.com](mailto:acbadru56@gmail.com)

## Attempted kleptoparasitism by a Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* from Tamil Nadu, India

Klepto-parasitism is a foraging tactic where an animal steals or robs food or prey from another animal (Rothschild & Clay 1957). It is a well-documented mode of foraging especially in species belonging to the families Accipitridae, Laridae and Corvidae (Brockmann & Barnard 1979; Iyengar 2008). Six species of harriers are found in India, including the Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* which is known to prey on small birds (especially land birds), rodents and reptiles (Simmons 2001; Verma and Sharma 2013). Here, I report a case of a Pallid Harrier attempting to kleptoparasitize a Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* in a grassland in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India.

On 20 December 2023, I was engaged in a routine harrier roost count in a grassland near Moolaikkadu in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu (8.379°N, 77.673°E). At 1754 h, I observed an adult male Pallid Harrier chase and mob a Common Kestrel. The kestrel

had a bird in its talons, which appeared to be a passerine. The harrier made a few attempts to snatch the bird from the kestrel but failed in its effort as the kestrel perched on a stone fence pole. The harrier also perched on a similar fence pole c.150 m away. The kestrel defeathered the bird and consumed it while constantly looking in the direction of the harrier. After about four minutes, at 1758 h, the harrier flew away while the kestrel fed on its quarry.

Medium-sized raptors such as harriers have been known to employ kleptoparasitism as a tactic to procure opportunistic prey. For example, Northern Harriers *C. hudsonius* have been observed stealing from smaller raptors (Temeles 1990). On the contrary, Northern Harriers, Marsh Harriers *Circus* spp., and Hen Harriers *C. cyaneus* have been victims of kleptoparasitism by other large raptors (Brockmann & Barnard 1979). More specifically in India, Brahminy Kites *Haliastur indus* and Black Kites *Milvus migrans* in Tirunelveli and Laggar Falcons *F. jugger* in Rajasthan have been observed to kleptoparasitize Montagu's Harriers *C. pygargus* (T. Ganesh, verbally, dated 27 December 2023).

My observation, to the best of my knowledge, is the first recorded instance of a Pallid Harrier trying to kleptoparasitize a smaller raptor. Further behavioural studies of Pallid Harriers could reveal more insights into whether kleptoparasitism is a rare occurrence or a strategically adapted foraging tactic to combat dwindling prey availability across their breeding and wintering ranges.

I thank Arjun Kannan and T. Ganesh who provided support to write this note. Agasthyamalai Community Conservation Centre (ACCC), Manimutharu provided logistic support. TVS Brakes India Ltd., and the Rufford Foundation supported this work.

## References

- Brockmann, J., & Barnard, C. J., 1979. Kleptoparasitism in birds. *Animal Behaviour*. 27: 487–514.
- lyengar, E. V., 2008. Kleptoparasitic Interactions throughout the animal kingdom and a re-evaluation, based on participant mobility, of the conditions promoting the evolution of kleptoparasitism. *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society*. 93(4): 745–62. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1095-8312.2008.00954.x>.
- Rothschild, M., & Clay, T., 1957. *Fleas, Flukes & Cuckoos: A Study of Bird Parasites*. New York: Collins.
- Simmons, R. E., 2001. *Harriers of the World: Their Behaviour and Ecology*. 11th ed. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Temeles, E. J., 1990. Interspecific territoriality of Northern Harriers: The role of kleptoparasitism. *Animal Behaviour*. 40(2): 361–66.
- Verma, A., & Deepali S., 2013. Some observations of the Pallid Harrier *Circus macrorurus* from Keoladeo National Park, Rajasthan, India. *Indian BIRDS* 8(2): 33–36.

– R. Sankaranarayanan

R. Sankaranarayanan, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Royal Enclave, Srirampura, Jakkur Post, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India.  
Email: [sankaranarayanan.r@atree.org](mailto:sankaranarayanan.r@atree.org)

## Plastic in the nest of a Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus*

The Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus* is a widespread resident throughout the Indian Subcontinent, occupying freshwater wetlands with floating vegetation (Grimmett et al. 2011). On 10 July 2024, I was birding at Pichola Lake (24.563°N, 73.684°E), in Udaipur District, Rajasthan, India. The lake has Lotus *Nelumbo nucifera* and Water Lily *Nymphaeaceae* sp. growing in a small patch. On the edge of this patch, I saw a Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus* foraging among the vegetation. I observed it gathering leaves and vegetation and begin constructing a nest. After constructing a base, it took a big piece of plastic floating in the lake and carried it to its

nest, placing it on top of the nest base [206]. Guidelines for nesting biology (Barve et al. 2020) were carefully followed during my documentation. I visited the nest in late afternoon to avoid disturbance to the birds and made sure my activities had minimum impact on the vegetation and surroundings.



206. Bronze-winged Jacana placing plastic on its nest base. Photo: Rajat Chordia

Urbanization can affect several aspects of nest design (Reynolds et al. 2019). Studies have highlighted a change in nesting materials with the main changes in nest composition being an increased use of anthropogenic nesting materials and reduction in use of natural materials (Wang et al. 2009; Radhamany et al. 2016; Reynolds et al. 2016). Bronze-winged Jacanas are known to construct floating nests (Butchart 2000) and the floating quality of plastic may be conducive to nest construction in this group.

Several hypotheses have been suggested as to why birds use anthropogenic nesting materials in their nests (Jagiello et al. 2023). The 'availability hypothesis' proposes that the most commonly available materials in the nesting environment are used by birds to construct their nests (Wang et al. 2009; Antczak et al. 2010). The proximity of the nest site to the city along with a lot of plastic waste dumped in the lake make such nesting materials more readily available.

## References

- Antczak, M., Hromada, M., Czechowski, P., Tabor, J., Zabłocki, P., Grzybek, J., & Tryjanowski, P., 2010. A new material for old solutions—the case of plastic string used in Great Grey Shrike nests. *Acta Ethologica* 13 (2): 87–91. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10211-010-0077-2>.
- Barve, S., Raman, T. R. S., Datta, A., & Jathar, G., 2020. Guidelines for conducting research on the nesting biology of Indian birds. *Indian Birds* 16 (1): 10–11.
- Butchart, S. H. M., 2000. Population structure and breeding system of the sex-role reversed, polyandrous Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus*. *Ibis* 142 (1): 93–102.
- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., Inskipp, T., & Allen, R., 2011. *Birds of the Indian subcontinent*. Christopher Helm.
- Jagiello, Z., Reynolds, S. J., Nagy, J., Mainwaring, M. C., & Ibáñez-Álamo, J. D., 2023. Why do some bird species incorporate more anthropogenic materials into their nests than others? *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 378 (1884): 20220156. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2022.0156>.
- Radhamany, D., Das, K. S. A., & Azeez, P. A., 2016. Usage of nest materials by House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* along an urban to rural gradient in Coimbatore, India. *Tropical Life Sciences Research* 27 (2): 127–134.
- Reynolds, S. J., Davies, C. S., Elwell, E., Tasker, P. J., Williams, A., Sadler, J. P., & Hunt, D., 2016. Does the urban gradient influence the composition and ectoparasite load of nests of an urban bird species? *Avian Biology Research* 9 (4): 224–234. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3184/175815516X14725499175665>.