appearance separated it from the similar Northern Wheatear in first-winter plumage. When the bird was flushed, it showed a narrow white rump with a less-pronounced shape of a black inverse 'T' on the tail, formed by black central tail feathers and a broader black terminal tail-bar. This terminal bar extended further up the tail compared to Northern Wheatear but was less than as compared to the Desert Wheatear which shows two-thirds of the tail as black.

17. Isabelline Wheatear showing characteristic tail pattern.

Both: Shahriar Kabir

18. Isabelline Wheatear showing uniform buff wing coverts.

The bird was present at the location until, at least, 27 October 2024; however, it was not found after this date despite two more visits to this location, and has not been reported from the area thereafter. The nearest sightings of Isabelline Wheatear to our Bangladesh record are from India, from Rajarghat wetlands, North 24 Parganas District in West Bengal dated 13 April 2019 (Roychoudhury 2019), which is ***c.***190 km north-west; and another from Deepor Beel, Kamroup Metropolitan District in Assam (Willoughby 2018), dated 12 March 2018, which is *c.*500 km north-east. There are no previous records of Isabelline Wheater for Bangladesh, and therefore, our record appears to be the first record of the species for the country (Siddiqui et al. 2008; Thompson & Chowdhury 2023).

Kuakata has recently emerged as a notable hotspot for local rarities in Bangladesh, and also producing three of the country's significant first bird records, namely, the Amur Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone incei*, the Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, and the Oriental Plover *Anarhynchus veredus* (Chowdhury 2016; Ahmed & Jannat 2020), which were first sighted at this location. Kuakata is a coastal beach with a small mangrove patch on the bank of the Galachipa River and the Bay of Bengal. This area may serve as a regular stopover for long-distance migrants or vagrants, as it is the last landmass, including natural mangrove habitat, before the open expanse of sea, and this potentially explains the occurrence of unusual or rare sightings.

We would like to thank Abdul M. Shah for helping with the identification of the species and Shahad A. Raju for accompanying us and helping with field observations.

References

Ahmed, S., & Jannat, K., 2020. First record of Oriental Plover *Charadrius veredus* for Bangladesh. *BirdingASIA* 33:138–139.

Chowdhury, S. U., 2016. Recent Rarities. *Banglar Pakhi - Bangladesh Bird Club Newsletter* 19–20.

Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 1998. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*, 1st ed. Christopher Helm, A & C Black, London. Pp. 1–888.

Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 2011. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*, 2nd ed. Oxford University Press & Christopher Helm, London. Pp. 1–528.

Kazmierczak, K., 2000. *A field guide to the birds of India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and the Maldives*, 1st ed. Om Book Service, New Delhi. Pp. 1–352.

Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2012a. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide: field guide*, 2nd ed. Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions., Washington, D.C. and Barcelona. Vol. 1 of 2 vols. Pp. 1–378.

Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2012b. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide: attributes and status*, 2nd ed. Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions., Washington, D.C. and Barcelona. Vol. 2 of 2 vols. Pp. 1–683.

Roychoudhury, S., 2019. Webpage URL: https://ebird.org/checklist/S54932297. [Accessed on 16 March 2025].

Siddiqui, K. U., Islam, M. A., Kabir, S. M. H., Ahmad, M., Ahmed, A. T. A., Rahman, A. K. A., Haque, E. U., Ahmed, Z. U., Begum, Z. N. T., Hassan, M. A., Khondker, M., & Rahman, M. M., 2008. *Encyclopedia of flora and fauna of Bangladesh: birds*, 1st ed. Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Vol. 26 of 28 vols. Pp. i–xl, 1–662.

Thompson, P. M., & Chowdhury, S. U., 2023. Webpage URL: https://www.facebook.com/groups/2403154788/permalink/10160984384199789. [Accessed on 16 March 2025].

Willoughby, P., 2018. Webpage URL: https://ebird.org/checklist/S44685482. [Accessed on 16 March 2025.]

– Shahriar Kabir & Riedoan I. Riyad

Shahriar Kabir, Lecturer, Chemistry, Govt. Brojomohun College, Barishal 8200, Bangladesh. E-mail: rush.manutd@gmail.com [SK]

Riedoan I. Riyad, MBBS (Intern), Sir Salimullah Medical College & Mitford Hospital, Mitford Road, Dhaka 1100, Bangladesh. E-mail: riedoan56@gmail.com [RR]

The Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis* feeding on *Caryota urens* fruits

The Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis* is widely distributed across the tropical regions of the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia (Biswas et al. 2014). Stork-billed Kingfishers are typically found in well-wooded areas near water bodies such as rivers, lakes, and coastal regions. The Stork-billed Kingfisher is primarily piscivorous, but has a diverse diet of frogs, crabs, and occasionally rodents and young birds. Its hunting strategy involves perching quietly and patiently above water or on a branch until it spots potential prey (Billerman et al. 2020).

On a recent bird watching trip to Poomala Dam (10.601°N, 76.242°E) reservoir in Kerala, India, I noticed a pair of Stork-billed Kingfishers feeding on the fruits of *Caryota urens*, commonly known as fishtail palm. The pair was perched on a dried palm leaf, flying to the cluster of fruits, pulling the fruit from the palm frond and returning to their perch to consume it. They returned to the cluster of fruits every two to three minutes for over an hour. This unusual sighting aroused my curiosity and I scheduled a field visit to the same place for a week starting from 04 July 2024 to 09 July 2024, to observe their feeding behaviour for a week, every day, from morning to evening **[19]**. I observed this unique feeding behaviour only in the mornings.

S. S. Suresh

19. Stork-billed Kingfisher feeding on *Caryota urens* fruit.

The fruits of the fishtail palm are small, red, containing a single seed, and the fruits hang down from the top of the tree in a cluster. The fruits contain sharp crystals that can cause irritation and chemical burns; *urens* mean burning. The fruit has a human skin-irritating nature due to the presence of oxalic acid, and it also contains anti-nutritional substances such as phytate, tannin and saponin. It is reported that these seeds are rich in starch and basic sugars, including glucose, fructose, and sucrose (Perumpuli et al. 2022).

A number of frugivorous avian species that have been documented to feed on palm fruits. For example, Green Imperial Pigeon *Ducula aenea* (Santharam 1996), Malabar Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros coronatus* (Iyer 2023), and Narcondom Hornbill *Rhyticeros narcondami* (Naniwadekar et al. 2022) in India, and Lineated Barbet *Psilopogon lineata* and 20 other species in Malaysia (Wee 2010; 2017). More than half of the diet of Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis* are palm fruits (Kemp & Kirwan 2020). Though there are a variety of birds species that feed on palm fruits, there are no published reports of Stork-billed Kingfishers, or in fact any Kingfisher *spp.*, feeding on *Caryota urens* or other palm fruits. It will be interesting to know whether this behaviour is seen in other parts of this species' extensive range.

References

Iyer, B., 2023, Malabar Pied Hornbill: From Forest to Fragments, RoundGlass Sustain. Website URL: https://roundglasssustain.com/photo-stories/malabar-pied-hornbill-habitat [Accessed on 27 July 27 2024].

Biswas, J. K., Sarker, N. J., Ahsan, M. F., & Rahman, M. M., 2014. Activity patterns of Pied Kingfisher (*Ceryle rudis*) and Stork-billed Kingfisher (*Pelargopsis capensis*) at the Chittagong university campus, Bangladesh. *Bangladesh Journal of Zoology* 42 (2): 191–203.

Kemp, A. C. & Kirwan, G. M. 2020. Palm-nut Vulture (*Gypohierax angolensis*), 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.

Naniwadekar, R., Ghuman, S., Gopal, A., & Page, N., 2022, Fruit exocarp removal: a unique foraging behaviour in Narcondam Hornbills. *Hornbill Natural History and Conservation* 38 (3): 38–40.

Perumpuli, P., Singharathne, S., & Wanninayaka, I. P., 2022. *Caryota urens*: Value Addition, Nutritional and Medicinal Values. *Food Research* 6 (2): 489–500.

Santharam, V., 1996. Birds of Periyar Tiger Reserve and random notes. Sago Palm fruits in the diet of Jerdon's Imperial Pigeon. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 36 (3): 54.

Wee, Y. C., 2010. Lineated Barbet feeding on fishtail palm fruits. Website: https://besgroup.org/2010/03/30/lineated-barbet-feeding-on-fishtail-palm-fruits/ [Accessed on 27 July 2024].

Wee, Y. C., 2017. Palms and the birds they attract. Website URL: https://besgroup.org/2017/07/18/palms-and-the-birds-they-attract [Accessed on 27 July 2024].

– S. S. Suresh

11 F, Capital green, SKVC road, Trichur 680011. Kerala, India. E-mail: dr.s.s.suresh@gmail.com

The Ashy Bulbul *Hemixos flavala* in Sirmaur, Himachal Pradesh, India

The Ashy Bulbul *Hemixos flavala* is a distinctive, crested bulbul that is a common resident of broadleaved forests, adjacent plantation and forest edges in the Himalayan foothills from 300–1,600 m asl (Grimmett et. al. 1998; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012).

On 28 March 2016, AV was hiking down a dense broadleaved forest that eventually descended into a stream on the eastern slope of the Nahan Ridge (30.563°N, 77.319°E; *c.*750 m asl) in Sirmaur District, Himachal Pradesh. This stream was flanked by thickly forested mountain slopes on both sides. The dense forest understory was dotted with many natural springs that form large pools of water. Around 1230 h, some unfamiliar bird calls were heard while walking along the river bank. The source of the sound was traced to two bulbuls that were perched high in the tree canopy. The birds had a black bill and black face mask that strongly contrasted against the white throat. The underparts looked pale. These features helped identify the species as Ashy Bulbul.

On 21 December 2022, at 0900 h, IAK sighted a single Ashy Bulbul near Nahan, Sirmaur District, Himachal Pradesh. This observation unfolded in the course of a journey from Dehradun to Chandigarh, during a brief tea break at a road check-post near Nahan (30.550°N, 77.284°E; ***c***.932 m asl). At this time, the resonating call of a Blue Whistling-Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus* perched on a nearby tree beside a small water stream was heard. Intrigued by the melodious call, attention was drawn towards a tree where the Ashy Bulbul was eventually spotted and photographed **[20]**. It showed prominent olive-yellow wing-patch, a black head and white throat, and was unmistakable. Later on, IAK and CA discussed the significance of the record and decided to document it.

Iqbal Ali Khan

20. Ashy Bulbul near Nahan, Sirmaur District on 21 December 2022.

Grimmett et al. (1998) mentioned the range of the species from Uttarakhand east to Arunachal Pradesh, and north-eastern India. Ali & Ripley (1987) mentioned that its range starts from the region between Shimla and Mussoorie, while Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) mentioned that it is local in Himachal Pradesh. Grimmett et al. (2011) depicted a single record from southern half of Himachal Pradesh in the illustrated map of the species. Koelz (1936a, b) collected two specimens during breeding season from Kukti [=Kugti], Chamba District on 05 July 1936