

Mahanadi River, Odisha, India. *Indian Birds* 13 (1): 1–7.

Shaikh, P. A., Mendis, A., Luis, J., Das, D. K., & Surve, S., 2018. Status and distribution of Indian Skimmer *Rynchops albigollis* in the National Chambal Sanctuary, India. Final Report submitted to BirdLife International. Pp. 1–46.

– Ritvik Singh

House Number 9, Sector-40, Gurgaon, Haryana, India. E-mail: singhritvik111@gmail.com

A Brown Boobook *Ninox scutulata* from Nangal, Punjab, India

We report the sighting of a Brown Boobook *Ninox scutulata* from Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary (31.397°N, 76.361°E), Naya Nangal, Rupnagar District, Punjab, India, that occurred on 26 November 2024 at 0845 h. It was perched on a branch of a tree with a thick canopy, in an area with dense undergrowth of *Lantana camara*. Finding an approach for taking good photographs was impossible. However, the best shot that could be managed [163] proved sufficient to identify the species. The tail had broad dark bands and was tipped white. There was a small white patch between the eyes, the upper parts were uniform brown, and the scapulars were white tipped. These identifying features are confirmed in König & Weick (2008) and Taylor (2016).



Paramnoor Singh Antaal

163. Brown Boobook at Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary, Punjab showing broad dark bands on its tail.

In India, the Brown Boobook is distributed widely, throughout the Himalayan foothills, all eastern India, central India, and most of southern India (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). Until recently, the western extent of its distribution was believed to be the Himalayan foothills of Uttarakhand. However, now the presence of this species has been documented further to the west of Uttarakhand (Abhinav et al. 2023) – from north Haryana, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu. Abhinav et al. (2023) also show one old record from Jalalpur, Hoshiarpur District, Punjab, based on a skin in the collection of Frank S. Wright. The date is given as 16 January 1892, and this skin is presently in the collection of Cornell University Museum of Vertebrates (CUMV). We checked the specimen details in GBIF (2025), but the name of the district is not mentioned. We checked with C. Abhinav,

who informed us (in litt., email dated 11 December 2024) that he had chosen the most probable location to depict on the map. We also checked with Vanya Gregor Rohwer, the curator of birds and mammals of CUMV, who informed us (in litt., email dated 08 January 2025) that the specimen is of a female and no district name is indicated in their records. Upon searching for Jalalpur in Punjab on Google Maps, the broader location was suggested as Hoshiarpur district. We also know that there are multiple places by the name Jalalpur in Punjab. We could not find any record of Brown Boobook from other sources, such as journals, social media, and citizen science platforms. Hence, this 1892 record from 'Jalalpur' is the only known record from Punjab until the record presented here. The three closest locations where this species has been recorded are Amb Doli, Pathiar, Kangra district, Himachal Pradesh (Thakur 2023) at a straight-line distance of c.53 km in the northwest direction, Mandi in Himachal Pradesh (Abhinav et al. 2023) at a straight-line distance of c.65 km in the northeast direction, and Chandigarh (Singh 2021; eBird 2025) at a straight-line distance of c.80 km in the southeast direction. Therefore, this new record, coming 132 years after the previous one from Punjab, is significant as it complements other records from neighbouring states that extend the commonly accepted western limit of the species' distribution. It is also likely the first photographic evidence for the state.

References

- Abhinav, C., Guleria, V., Dogra, P., & Kumar, P., 2023. The range of the Brown Hawk Owl *Ninox scutulata* in northern India—an update. *Indian BIRDS* 19 (1): 13–17.
- eBird, 2025. Species map, Brown Hawk-Owl *Ninox scutulata*. Webpage URL: <https://ebird.org/map/brnhao1>. [Accessed on 26 January 2025].
- GBIF, 2025. CUMV Bird 4343 *Ninox scutulata*. Webpage URL: <https://www.gbif.org/occurrence/1852380621>. [Accessed on 17 August 2025].
- König, C., & Weick, F., 2008. *Owls of the World*. 2nd ed. London, United Kingdom: Christopher Helm Publishers. pp. 1–528.
- Singh, V. J., 2021. Rare boobook's noon hoot reveals owl's perch at MCM DAV College. *The Times of India*, Chandigarh, 24 July 2021.
- Taylor, M., 2016. *Owls: A Guide to Every Species in the World*. New York City, United States: Harper Collins. pp. 1–256.
- Thakur, A., 2023. Brown Hawk-Owl, Amb Doli, Pathiar, Kangra district, Himachal Pradesh. Website URL: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S131280607>. [Accessed on 26 January 2025].

– Gurpartap Singh & Paramnoor Singh Antaal

Gurpartap Singh, 1969, Sector 64, Mohali 160062, District Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar, Punjab, India. E-mail: prof.gurpartap.singh@gmail.com [GPS] [Corresponding author]
Paramnoor Singh Antaal, House No. 26, Urban Estate Phase-I, Patiala 147002, Punjab, India. [PSA]

Two new breeding colonies of the White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* in Bangladesh

The Critically Endangered White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* was once an abundant and widely distributed raptor in South and South-East Asia (Prakash 1999; Gilbert et al. 2006; Chaudhary et al. 2012; Ghimire et al. 2019), including Bangladesh (Harvey 1990; Thompson & Johnson 1996). These vultures breed colonially or singly on tall trees even occasionally on cliffs, and has a global population estimate of 4,000–6,000 mature individuals (BirdLife International 2025). The species has been declining, especially since the 1990s mainly due to a widely-used painkiller and anti-inflammatory drug diclofenac used for treating livestock (Anonymous 2004; Baral et al. 2005; Cuthbert et al. 2016; BirdLife International 2025). It is the only vulture known to breed regularly in Bangladesh (Khan 2013).

White-rumped Vulture population declined by c.60% in Bangladesh during 2008–2012 (Khan 2013). The last countrywide

survey estimated 260 individuals with two major breeding hotspots in Moynabeel of Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary, Sylhet division and in the Sundarbans of Khulna division (Fig. 1). Both the areas are within the 'Vulture Safe Zones' declared by the Bangladesh Government in 2014 (Alam et al. 2016; MoEF 2016). Here we report two previously unreported breeding colonies from Pabna district, under Rajshahi division and Habiganj district under Sylhet Divisions of Bangladesh. After locating the nests, we monitored them from a safe distance (at least 15 m away) to minimize disturbances. Nests were subsequently visited at irregular intervals. Data on nesting parameters were collected following the guidelines provided by Barve et al. (2020).

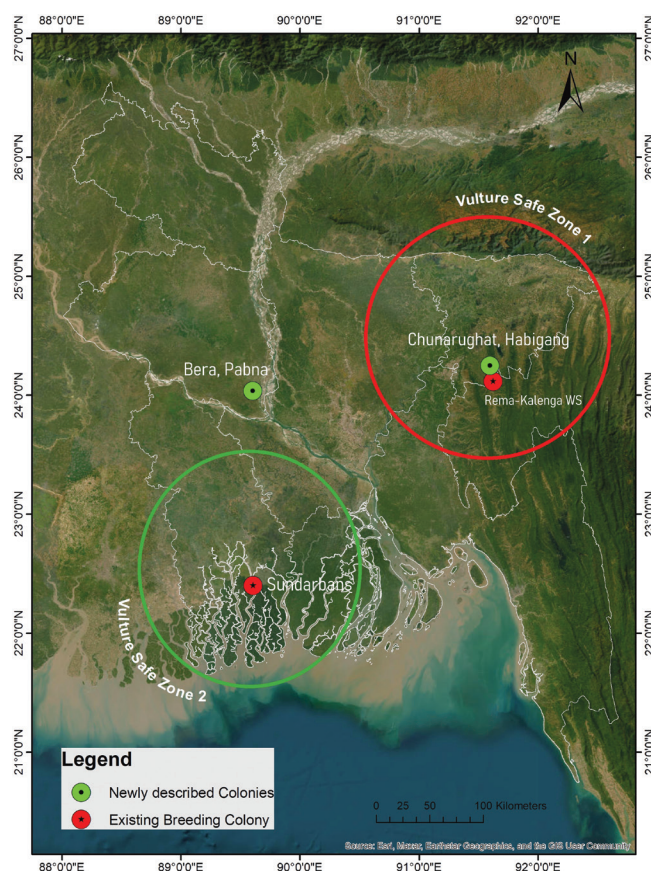


Fig. 1. Vulture safe zones, existing breeding colonies and newly described colonies in Bangladesh

Site 1: Mollah Para, Chakla Gram, Pabna district

On 14 February 2023, ASS, SS, and MJK observed seven White-rumped Vultures with four nests, of which one was active [164], two abandoned [165], and one under construction in Mollah Para (24.037°N 89.603°E), Chakla Gram. The site was an abandoned private land inside the human settlement under Bera Upazila [=subdistrict] of Pabna district in northwestern Bangladesh, 32 km upstream of the confluence of Jamuna and Padma Rivers. During our visit we observed one White-rumped Vulture incubating the active nest [164] and six were roosting on different trees in the nesting area. Three nests were built on False Ashoka [=Debdaru] *Polyalthia longifolia* and one on a Coconut Palm *Cocos nucifera*. Mean height of the nesting trees was 17.4m (n=4) and mean diameter at breast height (DBH) was 1.2m (n=4).

On 22 February 2023, ASS and MJK noted at least one vulture incubating in the active nest. On 03 March 2023, ASS



164. White-rumped Vultures on an active nest on a Coconut tree.



165. An abandoned nest on a False Ashoka tree.

Both: Allama Shibli Sadik

and MJK found no trace of vultures; the locals informed that the nestling died due to an attack from Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* [166–167].

We identified 27 resting/roosting trees previously used by vultures within 180 m of the nesting trees, based on fecal droppings under the trees and interviews with local people. Of all species used (n=5), False Ashoka was the most frequent (81%). The rest were Tamarind *Tamarindus indica* (7%), Mango *Mangifera indica* (4%), Malabar Plum *Syzygium cumini* (4%), and Coconut (4%). The landowner reported that the vulture nesting colony is over 40 years old and there were more vulture nests in the recent past. During the 2024 breeding season, we monitored the nesting site and a single nest was built but no fledglings were observed.

Bangladesh's largest dairy cooperative named Milk Vita is located in Pabna district and the bulk supply of milk reaches from the adjacent districts, mostly from Sirajganj and Pabna (Amin & Afroz 2021). For better milk production, people living in Pabna and Sirajganj district extends *bathans* (cattle farms), which supply a large quantity of milk to the dairy farms. During the field visit in Bera upazila of Pabna district, SS found cattle carcasses in the river side by the *bathans*. As per regulations, they should have been buried. Such areas of *bathans* in remote areas may serve as the foraging grounds for White-rumped Vultures. A juvenile vulture was spotted near the Jamuna River by a resident birder in October 2018 (Samir Saha pers. comm. February 2023). Aside, a flock of 8–10 White-rumped Vultures was seen soaring over the Padma River by another birder in Pabna district in April 2019 (Md. Arifur Rahman pers. comm.



166. Vultures disturbed by Large-billed Crow.



167. White-rumped Vulture nestling reportedly killed by the Large-billed Crow.

Ali: Allama Shilbi Sadik

February 2023). Our field observations and perceptions of local people suggest that there may be more undiscovered breeding colonies of White-rumped Vulture in Pabna and Sirajganj district. Surveying the whole districts together with awareness campaigns and regular monitoring of this reported colony to understand the breeding potential of the species is recommended.

Site 2: Jungle Bari, Habiganj district

On 27 December 2022, ASS found three vulture nests on a Shimul Tree *Bombyx ceiba* in Jungle bari area (24.249°N, 91.583°E) under Chunarughat Upazila of Habiganj District [168]. Two nestlings successfully fledged from two nests and one nest was unsuccessful. We followed up monitoring the nesting sites in successive breeding seasons, where one nestling from a single nest fledged in 2023–2024 season. In 2024–2025 breeding season, again three nests were built and occupied by vultures from which two nestling were successfully fledged. This nesting site is located near a tea estate and human habitation.

To halt the vulture crisis, the government of Bangladesh has taken a number of actions, such as banning the cattle painkillers diclofenac and ketoprofen, formulating a 10-year national vulture conservation action plan, establishing two vulture safe zones that span nearly 47,380 sq. km, establishing vulture rehabilitation centers, and involving local community members

in conservation efforts by forming vulture conservation teams (Alam et al. 2016; MoEF 2016). Nonetheless, there are certain incidents that suggest the need for more conservation efforts. In 2023, national and international media reported that c. 14–26 vultures were killed at Moulvibazar, in one of the vulture safe zones, as a result of poison bait that locals had placed to kill stray dogs or jackals (Siddique 2023; Deshwara 2024). Hence nationwide population survey of vultures and their nesting colonies should be conducted, along with extensive awareness campaigns.



168. White-rumped vulture nest in a Shimul Tree at Chunarughat, Habiganj.

The study was conducted under the SUFAL-Innovative Grant of the Bangladesh Forest Department, funded by the World Bank, we are thankful to them. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Md. Arifur Rahman and Mr. Robi Kasta, conservation activists for their continuous support to monitoring the nests during this study. We are grateful to Paul Thompson for his guidance in carrying out systematic survey. We thank IUCN Bangladesh for collaborating with Bangladesh Forest Department in organizing awareness program and for providing technical support.

References

- Alam, A. B. M. S., Rawshan, K., Kabir, T., Ahmed, S., Ahammed, R., Nasim, R., & Khandker, R. H., 2016. *White-rumped Vulture (Gyps bengalensis) Conservation in Bangladesh: Establishment of Toxic Drug Free Vulture Safe Zones (VSZ) and Monitoring of the Population Trend*. Bangladesh Forest Department, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Pp. x + 78.
- Amin, Md. R., & Afroz, F., 2021. Pabna Cattle of Bangladesh: A Review. *IOSR Journal of Agriculture and Veterinary Science* 8-Series 1 (25–32): 65–73.
- Anonymous, 2004. *Report of the international South Asian vulture recovery plan workshop*. Pp. 1–59. Webpage URL: <https://save-vultures.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Vulture-Recovery-Plan-04.pdf>.
- Baral, N., Gautam, R., & Tamang, B., 2005. Population status and breeding ecology of White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* in Rampur Valley, Nepal. *Forktail* 21: 87–91.
- 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.
- BirdLife International, 2025. Webpage URL: <https://datazone.birdlife.org/species/factsheet/white-rumped-vulture-gyps-bengalensis>. [Accessed on 16 August 2025].
- Chaudhary, A., Subedi, T. R., Giri, J. B., Baral, H. S., Bidari, B., Subedi, H., Chaudhary, B., Chaudhary, I., Paudel, K., & Cuthbert, R. J., 2012. Population trends of Critically Endangered *Gyps* vultures in lowlands of Nepal. *Bird Conservation International* 22 (3): 270–278. DOI: <http://doi:10.1017/S0959270911000426>.
- Cuthbert, R. J., Taggart, M. A., Saini, M., Sharma, A., Das, A., Kulkarni, M. D., Deori, P., Ranade, S., Shringarpure, R. N., Galligan, T. H., & Green, R. E., 2016. Continuing mortality of vultures in India associated with illegal veterinary use of diclofenac and a potential threat from nimesulide. *Oryx* 50 (1): 104–112. DOI: <http://>

doi:10.1017/S003060531500037X.

- Deshwara, M., 2024. Webpage URL: <https://www.thedailystar.net/environment/natural-resources/wildlife/news/international-vulture-awareness-day-the-silent-decline-natures-cleaners-3696316>. [Accessed on 17 August 2025].
- Ghimire, B., Acharya, R., Kuppusamy, S., Biswas, S., & Dorji, C., 2019. Nesting Characteristics and Habitat Preferences of Critically Endangered White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* in Rampur IBA, Palpa, Nepal. *Vulture Bulletin* 8: 3–6.
- Gilbert, M., Watson, R. T., Virani, M. Z., Oaks, J. L., Ahmed, S., Chaudhry, M. J. I., Arshad, M., Mahmood, S., Ali, A., & Khan, A. A., 2006. Rapid population declines and mortality clusters in three Oriental white-backed vultures *Gyps bengalensis* colonies in Pakistan due to diclofenac poisoning. *Oryx* 40 (4): 388–399.
- Harvey, W. G., 1990. *Birds in Bangladesh*. University Press Limited, Dhaka. Pp. i–viii, 1–188.
- Khan, M. M. H., 2013. Population, breeding and threats to the White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* in Bangladesh. *Forktail* 29: 52–56.
- MoEF, 2016. *Bangladesh Vulture Conservation Action Plan 2016–2025*. Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Pp. x + 58.
- Prakash, V., 1999. Status of vultures in Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur, Rajasthan, with special reference to population crash in Gyps species. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 96 (3): 365–378.
- Siddique, A., 2023. Webpage URL: <https://news.mongabay.com/2023/04/bangladeshs-vultures-still-threatened-by-poison-despite-conservation-actions/>. [Accessed on 17 August 2025].
- Thompson, P. M., & Johnson, D. L., 1996. *Birding in Bangladesh: a guide to bird watching sites and a checklist of birds*. Oriental Bird Club, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Pp. i–ii, 1–51.
- Allama Shibli Sadik, Samir Saha, M. Jahangir Kabir, Rima Akter, Shohag Kumar Ray, A. B. M. Sarowar Alam & Ashis Kumar Datta
Allama Shibli Sadik, Bangladesh Wildlife Center, Forest Department Bangladesh.
Email: Shibli.ju@gmail.com [ASS]
Samir Saha, IUCN Bangladesh Country Office, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Email: samir2saha@yahoo.com [SS]
M. Jahangir Kabir, Forest Department, Bangladesh. Email: jahangirkabir2880@gmail.com [MJK]
Rima Akter, Status Distribution and Conservation of Colonial Waterbirds in Bangladesh Project, Bangladesh Wildlife Center, Gazipur, Bangladesh. Email: akterrima827@gmail.com [RA]
Shohag Kumar Ray, Status Distribution and Conservation of Colonial Waterbirds in Bangladesh Project, Bangladesh Wildlife Center, Gazipur, Bangladesh. Email: shohagraysagar@gmail.com [SKR]
ABM Sarowar Alam, IUCN Bangladesh Country Office, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Email: sarowaralam_iucn@gmail.com [ABMSA]
Ashis Kumar Datta, Department of Zoology, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342, Bangladesh. Email: akdatta@juniv.edu [AKD] [Corresponding author]

A Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* in Col. Sher Jung National Park, Sirmaur, Himachal Pradesh, India

Col. Sher Jung National Park, previously known as Simbalbara National Park, is located in the Sirmaur District of Himachal Pradesh. It lies in the Shivalik region and mainly comprises of Sal *Shorea robusta* forests. On 26 May 2022, I stayed in the Forest Rest House, located within the national park. On the following morning, I started birding before the sunrise. At 0545 h, while birding around a stream, running inside the forest (30.429°N, 77.485°E), I saw an unfamiliar stocky built bird, sitting at the top of a large tree. Initially, the bird appeared very dark, due to low light conditions; however, after adjusting the camera exposure settings, key features became visible. The bird was dark greenish blue, with a darker head and a pale patch on the wings. Most distinctive features were the dark red bill with a hook and almost similar coloured legs. Based on these features, it was identified as Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* [169]. The bird was still present when revisited an hour later, this time perched on an adjacent tree. Subsequent targeted searches at the same location by another birder, after a couple of days were unsuccessful in relocating the individual.

Of the ten currently recognised subspecies of Dollarbird, *E. o. cyanocollis* is found in the northern India and further east in



C. Abhinav

169. Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis* at Col. Sher Jung National Park, Himachal Pradesh.

eastern China, south-eastern Russia, Korea, Japan, and Greater Sundas (Fry & Boesman 2020). Ali & Ripley (1987) mentioned it as a resident, from Garhwal (westernmost record Ambala District), eastward through Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan to north-eastern India and Bangladesh. A specimen of Dollarbird was collected from Kalesar National Park, Haryana, which is adjacent to Col. Sher Jung National Park, on 29 May 1935 (Waite 1937) and subsequently cited by Ali & Ripley (1987). Grimmett et al. (1998) also state that its range starts from northern Haryana, with no mention of Himachal Pradesh. Grimmett et al. (2011) also exclude Himachal Pradesh from the distribution range of the species, despite the range is shown close to the border of Himachal Pradesh. However, Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) have stated that the range of Dollarbird starts from eastern Himachal Pradesh. It is possible that the Kalesar record was erroneously treated to be from eastern Himachal Pradesh, as the authors make no reference to Kalesar or Haryana. A review of available specimen databases, including those of the Natural History Museum, London (NHM 2024), VertNet (2024), and GBIF (www.gbif.org) did not yield any specimen records of the species from Himachal Pradesh. Mark Adams further confirmed that there is no specimen of Dollarbird from Himachal Pradesh in NHM, London, but they do possess the specimen from Kalesar (in litt. email dated 01 May 2024). Furthermore, no published records (Pittie 2024; Dhadwal & Kanwar 2018) or any observational record in the eBird and other public forums could be traced from Himachal Pradesh. The present record is thus the first record for Himachal Pradesh. However, the species is not unexpected as the place is only 10 km away from the Uttarakhand border, and adjacent to the Kalesar National Park where the species has previously been recorded.

I thank Mark Adams for his help.

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*, 2nd edn. Oxford University Press, Delhi. Pp. i–xlii, 1 l., 1–737.
- Dhadwal, D. S., & Kanwar, B., 2018. *Birds of Himachal Pradesh (Non-Passerine)*. Published by the author, Himachal Pradesh, India. Vol. 1 of 2 vols. Pp. 1–301.
- Fry, H., & Boesman, P. F. D., 2020. Dollarbird (*Eurystomus orientalis*), version 1.0. In *Birds of the World* (del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A., Sargatal, J., Christie, D. A., & de Juana, E., Editors). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. URL: <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.dollar1.01>. [Accessed on 05 August 2024].
- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 1998. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*, 1st edn.