

one was at sea (eBird 2026). In the Lakshadweep Sea, the Red-footed Booby has previously been reported between Bangaram Island and Minicoy Island, with a flying encounter recorded near Bangaram Island (Vishnulal et al. 2025). That constituted the first record for the archipelago (Raju et al. 2021) though there have been historical claims without adequate documentation (see Praveen et al. 2013). Also, our observation documents the first confirmed record of a Red-footed Booby spotted on land in the Lakshadweep Archipelago. The individual, a healthy bird, was observed walking and resting on the island rather than flying over nearby waters. In fact, this would be the first report a healthy Red-footed Booby from the land, from anywhere in India – all previous reports were of beached or exhausted birds (seven) or at-sea observations (four).

Remote islands such as Kalpeni may serve as occasional resting or stopover sites for such species traversing the Arabian Sea, considering its proximity to the breeding colonies in the Chagos Archipelago (Votier et al. 2024), located c.1,825 km south of Kalpeni Island.

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Observations on predation of Indian Courser *Cursorius coromandelicus* chicks by a Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

At a grassland patch, near the village Kumbhari (17.666°N, 75.975°E; 480 m asl), in the Akkalkot Tehsil of Solapur district, Maharashtra, we documented previously unreported prey by Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*, a raptorial songbird. While observing a pair of Indian Coursers *Cursorius coromandelicus*, during the breeding season of the species, which lasts from late February to August (Sangha et al. 2025), we witnessed a predation event involving the Great Grey Shrike and Indian Courser chicks.

The Great Grey Shrike is highly opportunistic and flexible in the use of different food spectra and hunting tactics (Yosef et al. 2025). Its diet mainly consists of invertebrates, small vertebrates, as well as, occasionally, carrion and plants (Yosef et al. 2025).

Shrikes are also known to target young, ailing, wounded or exhausted migratory passerines (Ali & Ripley 1987; Lefranc 1997; Yosef et al. 2025).

On 20 March 2016, at 1800 h, a pair of breeding Indian Coursers, accompanied by two chicks, was being observed. The coursers were observed displaying an alarmed stance, which is likely indicative of the presence of predators. One adult Indian Courser was then observed initiating a protective posture by sitting on the ground with its neck lowered, which was suggestive of the presence of either a nest or young ones nearby [124]. Shortly thereafter, the Great Grey Shrike landed on the ground at a distance of a meter away from the courser, triggering defensive responses from the courser pair, such as giving alarm vocalisations, and performing threat displays, such as stretching the wings wide open and fanning the tail. The adults started giving specific threat calls, similarly documented by Sureja et al. (2021), which likely alerted any nearby chicks or nestlings, and would make the young ones hunker down and remain completely still. At this point, one of the adult coursers was also observed to perform the broken-wing display [125]. Such strategic movements used by birds to distract or avoid detection by predators are known as paratrepsis; these behaviours of distraction displays are closely related to the broader concepts of camouflage and predator-prey interactions, used to lure predators away, and is generally associated with protecting nests or young (Caro 2005). A flock of around 10–12 adult coursers joined them to distract the predator away from the chicks. Despite these defensive efforts, the shrike successfully preyed upon one chick located a meter away from one of the adult coursers. At the time of the attack, the adult courser was positioned directly between the chick and the shrike, with the shrike having landed a meter away on the opposite side. Although the chick relied on its camouflage for protection, the shrike successfully seized it and flew away [126].

Due to the low-light conditions and the distance between the observers and the bird, we could not locate where the shrike flew away with its prey. In European studies, wintering shrikes typically moved every 8.6 min and used 5.6 perches per km to travel 11.8 km daily (Olsson 1984). The Great Grey Shrike generally searches the ground for hours on end, perched on a number of quite high vantage spots, ideally at a height of 3–10 m (with extremes of 1–18 m). After 20 min, the shrike reappeared; this time, the shrike used the surprise attack strategy. It attacked the other adult courser, which was perched on the ground covering the second chick, and swiftly picked up the vulnerable chick [127], and then flew to a nearby *Acacia* spp. tree, c.50 m away. Shrikes are known to frequently carry their prey to a nearby perch offering a commanding view of the surroundings (Probst et al. 2003). In this species, larders can be found across the area at any time of year, sometimes up to 1,500 m from an occupied nest, there is typically at least one nearby, preferably within 15–20 m, especially if there are nestlings older than a week (Antczak et al. 2005).

Contrary to the usual distracting display of the Indian Courser, in this case, the courser was sitting in a protective manner, covering the chick, and was likely unaware of the shrike's presence, leading to an ambush. Following this predation event, we observed the Great Grey Shrike's characteristic behaviour of butchering and impaling its prey [128]. This intentional and systematic impaling is recorded exclusively in the true shrikes and has not been documented in non-Laniidae bird species (Yosef & Pinshow 2005). The shrike was later observed decapitating the chick [129] and then impaling that decapitated head on



124. Adult Indian Courser was then observed initiating a protective posture.



125. One adult Indian Courser performing the broken-wing display while the Great Grey Shrike is perched close.



126. Great Grey Shrike successfully preyed on the first Indian Courser chick.



127. Great Grey Shrike successfully preyed on the second Indian Courser chick.



128. Great Grey Shrike impaled its prey, the Indian Courser chick.



129. Great Grey Shrike decapitating its prey, the Indian Courser chick.



130. Great Grey Shrike impaling the decapitated head on another *Acacia* spp. tree thorn.

another *Acacia* spp. tree thorn [130]. This is known behaviour of the species, Great Grey Shrikes use a relatively large number of feeding places; these are their impaling sites where they store food larder (Schön 1994).

In existing literature, there are no documented cases of Great Grey Shrike preying on a chick of Indian Courser, and our observations appear to be the first such recorded case (Ali & Ripley 1987). These observations highlight the ability of Great Grey Shrike to detect and capture cryptically coloured and large-sized prey. In contrast, the defensive responses of Indian Courser, although limited only to threat displays rather than direct physical aggression, suggest its sole reliance on camouflage to avert the risk of predation during the vulnerable stages of life, such as breeding and nesting.

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Addition of the Crow-billed Drongo *Dicrurus annectans* to the avifauna of Jammu & Kashmir, India

In this note, we report the sighting of a Crow-billed Drongo *Dicrurus annectans* near Kalakote (33.242°N, 74.440°E), Rajouri District, Jammu & Kashmir, India.

On 25 November 2025, SKB, AR, their daughter, and HK visited the area for birdwatching and reached the site at 1015 h. At 1110 h, while observing birds along a small hill stream, we noticed a drongo sallying for insects from a tree branch. Shortly afterwards, the bird was displaced by Large-billed Crows *Corvus macrorhynchos*, forcing the drongo to fly away. Thereafter, a distinctive metallic call was heard from the surrounding pine *Pinus* sp. trees. We followed the call and soon spotted the bird perched on the top of a pine tree. It was identified as a Crow-billed Drongo [131], on the basis of a broad tail with shallow fork, white spotting on the underparts, and the characteristic stouter bill (Grimmett et al. 2011). We took some photographs and shared them with GPS who confirmed the identification as a first-winter Crow-billed Drongo.

In the Indian Subcontinent, the Crow-billed Drongo breeds in the Himalayan foothills from Uttarakhand eastwards through the north-eastern India and winters mainly in Bangladesh and the adjoining north-eastern India (Rocamora & Yeatman-Berthelot 2020). There are no previous records of this species from Jammu & Kashmir (Kichloo et al. 2024; Kichloo 2025). In the



131. Crow-billed Drongo near Kalakote, Rajouri District, Jammu & Kashmir, India.

Photo: Sachin Kumar Bhagat/Anu Ramotira

area between the present location and the eastern Uttarakhand, this species has been reported only from Sirmour District of Himachal Pradesh (Abhinav et al. 2019; eBird 2025).

This observation constitutes the first record of the Crow-billed Drongo from Jammu & Kashmir and extends the known distribution of the species further north-west in the Western Himalaya. The record also suggests that suitable habitat for the species may exist in the Kalakote region and adjoining areas.

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