

In summary the quality of photographs that illustrate this book, and the breadth and depth of its coverage of the Indian Subcontinent's bird species, makes it the best buy in its genre of photographic bird guides. It would enhance any birder's library.

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Letters to the Editor

Carcass feeding by Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus*

On 24 February 2016, while birding at Ekling or Kailashpuri Lake (24.73°N, 73.70°E; c. 660 m asl), Udaipur District (Rajasthan, India), we came upon a carcass of a domestic cow with three Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis*, and two juvenile Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* near it. We stopped to observe the birds' behaviour, 10 m from the carcass. We seem to have initially disturbed the birds by our presence, but soon the egrets came back and started feeding around the carcass. After ten minutes, the juvenile ibises also returned, and started feeding on the carcass [30]. They walked slowly around the carcass, probing, and pecking at the carrion as they fed. One ibis appeared to dominate over the other, forcing the other away from the carcass, at least twenty times during the one hour of our observation. Egrets were not seen feeding on carrion, but focused on catching insects attracted to it. After one hour, both ibis flew away.



31. Black-headed Ibis feeding on carcass at Udaisagar Lake.

Of the 29 ibis species worldwide (Threskiornithidae: Threskiornithinae; Matheu & Hoya 2016), only two, Sacred Ibis *T. aethiopicus* (Hancock *et al.* 2001), and Indian Black Ibis *Pseudibis papillosa* (Ali & Ripley 2007), have been reported to feed upon carcasses. The Black-headed Ibis normally feeds upon fishes, frogs, mollusks, insects, worms, and sometimes, on vegetable matter (Ali & Ripley 2007; Matheu *et al.* 2016); carrion is an addition to the food items consumed by this species.

We thank the Head, Department of Zoology, Mohanlal Sukhadia University Udaipur (Raj.), for providing necessary facilities during the study.

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Both Sunil Chaudhury

30. Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* feeding on a carcass at Ekling or Kailashpuri Lake.

In another instance, we observed three Black-headed Ibis feeding on a carcass of cow on 11 March 2016 at Udaisagar Lake, Udaipur (24.55°N, 73.80°N; c. 540 m asl), along with Cattle Egrets with similar insect catching activities [31].

Chestnut Thrush *Turdus rubrocanus*

With reference to Hore & Goswami's (2016) record of the Chestnut Thrush *Turdus rubrocanus* in Buxa Tiger Reserve, I would like to correct their statement: 'There are no records in published literature from northern Bengal.'

Oates (1890), Baker (1924), and Ali & Ripley (1997) do not mention its occurrence in the area; however, the reference in Ali & Ripley (1997), to a Stevens record from Sikkim, actually refers to a locality now in West Bengal (see below). Reference to Pittie (2016) brings up Edwards (1945, 1947)—but there are at least 11 relevant published references. The species is rare in the area and some of the references are difficult to access, even in good libraries, and so full details are given below chronologically.

Blyth (1852): 'A Male, B Female, Darjiling. Mr Webb (1845).'

Horsfield & Moore (1854): '♀ Darjeeling. From Pearson's Collection.'

Jerdon (1862): 'I procured a few specimens of this Ouzel at Darjeeling, in winter only; and it is not very common there.'

Kazmierczak & Singh (1998): Recorded from Lava.

Seeböhm (1881): '♀ ad. sk. Darjiling (Pearson). Indian Museum.'

Stevens (1925): '♀ Kalopokhari, Singilela Ridge, 10000' 03/05/12'.

Edwards (1944): ♂ 4 April 1943, Darjeeling. 'Messrs Curry and Taylor saw a flock of these birds in March while shooting on the Balusan.'

Matthews & Edwards (1944): 'Rare winter visitor. Recently recorded: below Kurseong, 2900 ft, March 1943; Darjeeling, 7200 ft, 4/4/43 and 11/12/44.'

Edwards (1945): ♂ Observatory Hill, Darjeeling, 11 December 1944.

Edwards (1947): Sonada, 6500 ft, February 1946.

Ali & Ripley (1998): 'Two records from Sikkim, January and May (Biswas, Stevens).'

More recently it has been recorded from the Lava area, e.g., Chatterjee (2005); Darjeeling, e.g., Pradhan (2014); Rishyap, e.g., Chaudhuri (2009); Buxa Tiger Reserve, e.g., Hore (2014); and Gorumara National Park, e.g., Basu (2016).

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The Indian Checklist in *Indian BIRDS* vol. 11 no. 5&6

When I pulled the latest copy of *Indian Birds* out of its cover yesterday afternoon, I got one of the most pleasant shocks of my life.

Those birds – on both covers – are an absolute marvel. I peered at them through the most powerful magnifying glass I possess, and then I thought, "What the hell do you think you are doing. What difference will identification make? This issue of the magazine has become a collector's item in itself. Keep it with all the other IBs on your shelf, or lock it up with your precious books.

For the time being, I think I shall keep it on the table beside my rocking chair in the library, gloat and chuckle.

I don't know how to thank Rohan Chakravarty, but do let him know how much I am impressed and delighted.

– Dr Aminuddin Khan

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This is the one, which I was looking for... Especially when you travel to places like Ladakh, North East, Greater Himalayas and others. We really don't know which name to be referred for the Bird, the names in Grimmett or Kazmierczak or OBC or others vary, each has its own name. a huge amount of time has to be spent for the correct English and scientific name.

This Book is very informative and useful for reference, the details are clear.

I received this book last week, soon after my one month trip to Ladakh and Himachal in June-July'2016 and I also visited Om Parvat in Kumaon in May'2016, this was very useful for my reference. Thank You.

My special Thanks to Editors and to the Publication of Indian Birds.

– Venkatraman T.
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IBP has now integrated the names from the India Checklist publication as its "Clean list" for birds in India. You can view the integrated names [here](#). Going ahead, we would like to keep abreast of changes and reflect them on the portal. For now, editing is limited to admin so if there are changes, please let me know and we will make edits. In future, we hope to enable participatory updating of lists by editors or a taxon curator. We hope such participation can aggregate synonyms under an accepted name, delete/merge spelling mistakes and duplications etc.

– Thomas Vattakaven
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I just managed to take a look at the paper. It is really wonderful. Congratulations!

I personally think this is really a very significant event for Indian Ornithology. There are so many wonderful aspects of this assessment - clear criteria for inclusion, clear rules for English names (lots for me to learn!), peer reviewed publication. Most of all, I am overjoyed, and must congratulate you again, for bringing back "golden-backed" woodpeckers!

I am also glad to read that you will continue to keep updating this checklist, hopefully with the same rigour and critical review!

– Robin Vijayan
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Epic work!

–G. V. Gopi
E-mail: gopigv@gmail.com

It's a great compilation and would be the de-facto reference for me from now onwards.

–M. V. Shreeram
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A major effort and work.

–Paul Thompson
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It will be a seminal paper and will be referred for a long time.

–Asad R. Rahmani
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Great work.

–Paul R. Sweet
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Congratulations on completing the new Indian checklist!

–Per Alstrom
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It is a highly informative and well-researched piece of work, which I shall doubtless turn to on many occasions for reference.

–Philip D. Round
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Monumental piece of work. I eagerly look forward to the *Indian Birds* issue that will undoubtedly be a collector's item and invaluable reference into the future. Now, if I may propose a follow-up project...an updated *Handbook of the Birds of India* by the three of you.

–T. R. Shankar Raman
E-mail: trsr@ncf-india.org

Appreciate that you have put a lot of work into this.

–Krys
E-mail: krys@krys.net

Looks impressive.

–Arun Pratap Singh
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I am so happy to know about this!!! Congratulations that ultimately the effort has brought the result. It was so badly needed because my students were confused to see different scientific names of the same species in different books! In Pamela's book, they have even made different family! Now we could at least refer that we have followed this nomenclature.

–Hillojyoti Singha
E-mail: hillojyoti.singha@gmail.com

It's a fabulous document.

–Paul Holt
E-mail: piholt@hotmail.com

Wonderful and congratulations!

–Pamela Rasmussen
E-mail: rasmus39@gmail.com

Exhaustive, authentic, updated and of course one which was sorely needed. This checklist has put to rest many a dubious record and I'm sure it will be followed very widely.

–Manoj V Nair
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It is nicely done and the layout is also good. Heartiest congratulations to the entire team of editors. It is a commendable job indeed.

–H. S. A. Yahya
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Brilliant work as always.

–Shashank Dalvi
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The HM [Howard & Moore Team] and I look forward to working closely with you well into the future. Our aim is to work closely with regional ornithological experts such as yourselves so that the HM list is truly reflective of the broader knowledge base on avian taxonomy.

–Les Christidis
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Congratulaions! It is great news! It's fine to know that [the] first authentic Indian bird checklist has been published by IB. You have achieved the goal you have been working towards for some time.

–Harkirat Singh Sangha
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Excellent work!

–Ding Li Yong
E-mail: zoothera@yahoo.com

Black-headed ibis (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*). Item Preview. RSCbw_blackheadedibis_gwillim009b.jpg. On back of painting: label "#9". Measurements 27 10/16 x 24 inches. Purchased in London in 1924 by Casey A. Wood as part of a collection of watercolours in a portfolio labelled "E.C.K. 1800", and donated to the Blacker-Wood Library of Zoology and Ornithology. Wood, C. A. Vertebrate zoology, page 502. Ocr.