

Black-and-yellow Grosbeak *Mycerobas icteroides*: a new species for Nepal

ALAN LEWIS

On 22 March 1993 I located a flock of about 100 Collared Grosbeaks *Mycerobas affinis* at an elevation of about 3000 m, just below the Deorali teashop, about 1½ hours walk from Ghorepani on the Jomsom trek, Annapurna Conservation Area, west-central Nepal. They were astonishingly confiding as they fed on the ground under pine trees, although sections of the flock would occasionally fly up into the trees when alarmed, but these birds returned almost immediately.

I walked back to the teashop and met Richard Rowland. On returning to the flock, I noticed a mid-grey grosbeak *Mycerobas* with the Collared Grosbeaks. We watched this bird at close range for about 10 minutes, feeding with the Collared Grosbeaks but also briefly near a male Spectacled Finch *Callacanthus burtoni*. The main features noted were the uniform mid-grey head, mantle and breast, black tail and wings, and a buffish belly and flanks. There was no perceptible difference in structure or bare part colouration from the nearby Collared Grosbeaks.

On reference to Ali and Ripley (1983) it was easy to confirm our suspicions that this bird was a female Black-and-yellow Grosbeak *M. icteroides*. One feature not noted, presumably because the wings were held closed, was the buff rump and uppertail-coverts.

This is the first confirmed record of this species for Nepal, although Inskipp and Inskipp (1991) mention a previous (probably erroneous) record, which they place in square brackets. It is also the easternmost record of the species, apart from that of a specimen collected in Darjeeling, held in the collection of the Zoological Institute in Leningrad (Neufeldt and Vietinghoff-Scheel 1984).

REFERENCES

- Ali, S. and Ripley, S. D. (1983) *A pictorial guide to the birds of the Indian subcontinent*. Bombay: Oxford University Press.
- Inskipp, C. and Inskipp, T. (1991) *A guide to the birds of Nepal*. Second edition. London: Christopher Helm.
- Neufeldt, I. A. and Vietinghoff-Scheel, E. v. (1984) *Mycerobas icteroides* (Vigors). In H. Dathe and I. A. Neufeldt, eds., *Atlas der Verbreitung Palaearktischer Vögel*, 12. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.

Alan Lewis, 4 Troutbeck Avenue, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 4 JA, U.K.

Oriental Honey-buzzard *Pernis ptilorhyncus*: a new species for the Andaman Islands

VIBHU PRAKASH, NIKITA V. PRAKASH and
WILLIAM S. CLARK

While conducting surveys for diurnal raptors on the Andaman Islands, we sighted and identified four juvenile Oriental Honey-buzzards *Pernis ptilorhyncus*, apparently the first records of this species for these islands. Ali and Ripley (1978) do not mention these islands in the species's distribution, nor did Abdulali (1964, 1967) collect or report observing this species during his collecting expeditions there. Finally, Tikader (1984) does not include the Oriental Honey-buzzard in the list of birds for these islands.

On 16 February 1983 at Kalighat on North Andaman Island, we saw three juvenile Oriental Honey-buzzards begin to soar about 09h00. The next day, at about 09h00, we saw a single juvenile of this species soaring on the very eastern slopes near Saddle Peak, also on North Andaman Island.

All four birds were identified by their wing and tail shape and long narrow necks (Clark and Schmitt 1992). All of us are extremely familiar with this species from numerous sightings in all parts of India. All the individuals observed in the Andamans were judged to be juveniles by their darker secondaries that contrasted with paler primaries when viewed from below, and by the dark on the outer primaries extending from the tips inward beyond the feather emarginations (Clark and Schmitt 1992), as confirmed by photographs taken of three of these individuals. One of the three birds seen on 16 February was a dark morph; the others were light morph individuals.

We do not feel confident to judge the race of these individuals in the field and, therefore, it was not possible to determine whether these birds were migrants from north-east Asia on their wintering grounds (*P. p. orientalis*), or were the offspring of local breeding birds or short distance migrants from mainland India or Myanmar (*P. p. ruficollis*). Vaurie and Amadon (1962) discuss the races and status of this species.

This research was conducted by the Bombay Natural History Society as part of its birds of prey survey project. Clark's visit to India was supported by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. D. Ferguson is thanked for his support of this project.

REFERENCES

- Abdulali, H. (1964) The birds of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.* 61: 483-571.
- Abdulali, H. (1967) The birds of the Nicobar Islands, with notes on some Andaman birds. *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.* 64: 139-190.