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Graham Tebb, Graf Starhemberggasse 20/14, 1040 Vienna, Austria. Email: tebb@fwf.ac.at

Steve Arlow, 162 Bournemouth Park Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 5LT, England. Email: birder.steve@btinternet.com

Dinesh Giri, Aqua Birds Unlimited Camp, Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, West Kusaha-4, Sunsari, Koshi Zone, Nepal. Email: rubythroat11@yahoo.com

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*: first record for the Philippines

JAN VAN DER PLOEG and TESSA MINTER

On 8 September 2002, at around 16h00, D. Salamagos observed a large black bird on the cliffs along the coastal road from Basco to Mahatao on Batan Island, Philippines. At 19h00 on his return journey he saw the bird again. It showed signs of exhaustion and he was able to catch it (D. Salamagos verbally 2003). The bird was put in a cage and later identified as a Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* by staff of the Provincial Environmental and Natural Resource Office (PENRO) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Following local informants, and despite our initial skepticism of the occurrence of a vulture in the Batanes Islands, we were able to confirm this identification and photograph the bird on 17 August 2003. Unmistakably a vulture, the bird was huge with a uniformly blackish plumage, blackish down on the head, a large pale bluish-grey cere and bill with a black tip, some areas of pale bare skin on the cheeks and immediately above the eye, dark irises, and grey scaly legs. It was aged as a juvenile Cinereous Vulture by the uniformly blackish plumage and blackish down on the head. Adults are dark brown, with grey-white down on the crown and cheeks, and a mauve to bluish cere (Ferguson-Lees and Christie 2001). The bird was still being held in captivity in Basco in April 2004 at least.

Cinereous Vulture occurs in open habitats in hilly and mountainous areas, especially grassland, semi-desert, scrub and open forest the southern Palearctic from Spain through Turkey and Afghanistan to southern Siberia, northern China and Mongolia. The species is largely sedentary in most of its range, but Asian populations are somewhat more nomadic and partly migratory: some northern breeders move south in winter, with a few reaching the Indian subcontinent, southern China and Korea (Ferguson-Lees and Christie 2001). In Taiwan, 190 km north of the Batanes Islands, the species is listed as a vagrant (Chinese Wild Bird Federation 1995). Globally, the species is listed as Near Threatened (BirdLife International 2001).

The bird was not ringed nor were its wings clipped, and we have no reason to suppose that it was an escaped cagebird. Juvenile Cinereous Vultures are known to disperse more widely (Ferguson-Lees and Christie 2001), so it seems likely that it was of wild origin.

Local informants did not relate the occurrence of the bird to weather patterns, but typhoon 'Sinlaku'

(TY22W) tracked westward over north Taiwan on 6–7 September 2002, attaining maximum winds speeds of 110 knots, leading to strong northerly winds in Batanes (Furze and Engel 2002). It is plausible that these weather conditions could have carried the bird to Batan Island.

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Jan van der Ploeg and Tessa Minter, Cagayan Valley Program on Environment and Development (CVPED), Isabela State University Cabagan Campus, 3328 Isabela, Philippines. Email: vanderploegjan@pacific.net.ph, tessaminter@pacific.net.ph

Frequency of avian road-kills in Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary, Rajasthan, India

ANIL KUMAR CHHANGANI

Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary (KWS) in Rajastan, India, as with most of the country's wildlife sanctuaries and national parks, is traversed by several public roads and railway tracks. Collision of birds and other animals with vehicles and trains are common. Although there are published studies of collision of birds with aircraft in India (Ali and Grubh 1984, Grubh 1988, Satheesan 1990, Satheesan *et al.* 1992) there is little information available on the bird taxa killed in road accidents, and the frequency of road-kills. Here I present such data from KWS.

METHODS

KWS (20°5′–23°3′N 73°15′–73°45′E) lies c.200 km south of Jodhpur in the west Aravalli hills of Rajasthan, India, at 270–1,150 m, and covers an area of 585 km^2. The climate is characterised by distinct winter, summer and monsoon seasons. Temperatures range from 2°C in December–January to 46°C during May–June; annual rainfall averages 725 mm. The sanctuary is primarily covered in dry deciduous forest dominated by 'gorya dhawa' *Anogeissus latifolia*, 'salar' *Boswellia serrata*, 'gol' *Lannea coromandelica*, 'kherni' *Wrightia tinctoria*, 'dhawa' *Anogeissus pendula*, 'kumbat' *Acacia senegal*, 'khair' *Acacia catechu*, 'ber' *Ziziphus mauritiana* and 'dhonk' *Butea monosperma*, with an undergrowth comprising 'jharber' *Ziziphus nummularia*, 'adusa' *Adhatoda zeylanica*, 'gangan' *Grewia tenex*, 'franger' *Grewia flavescens*, 'kanter' *Capparis sepiaria* and lantana *Lantana indica*.

Road-kill data were collected during a long-term study on the behaviour of hanuman langur *Semnopithecus entellus*. Two state highways (c.25 km long) and three ancillary roads (c.30 km long) pass through the sanctuary. Between December 1995 and August 1999, about five days per week were spent in the field driving along these roads checking for road-kills. Survey effort was constant throughout the year and between years. Occasionally road-kills were also reported by forest officials and drivers. These were verified and where confirmed were included in the totals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 228 individuals of 32 species of birds were found dead on the roads in KWS (Table 1). The most frequently killed species included abundant species in the sanctuary such as Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* and Laughing Dove *S. senegalensis.* Road-kills of scavengers such as White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*, Indian Vulture *G. indicus*, House Crow *Corvus splendens* and Large-billed Crow *C. macrorhyncus* were often found near mammal carcasses, where presumably they had been feeding. The two vulture species are listed as Critically Endangered (BirdLife International 2004), and the threat from road-kills must compound the poisoning by veterinary drugs that has largely caused the recent catastrophic declines in these species. Other species such as doves may have been attracted to roadsides to collect digestive grit. The maximum frequency of road-kills was in the monsoon months of August–September, with the lowest frequency during the summer months of May–July (Fig. 1). Although my data did not permit me to quantify the importance of collision with vehicles as a source of mortality in birds, it clearly is not insignificant. For threatened species, even the death of a few