

Short Communication

Pakistan J. Zool., vol. 39(4), pp. 269-270, 2007.

NEW RECORDS FOR THE BIRDS OF LAHORE

Abstract.- This note adds three new bird species to the recorded list of the birds of Lahore, records two bird species as breeding in urban Lahore and notes early arrival of one migratory summer visitor and breeder.

Keywords: Migratory birds, green pigeon, jungle common myna, bank myna, koel, blossom headed parakeet.

New distributional records

Ten Jungle Myna, *Acridotheres fuscus fuscus*, were observed on 2nd April 2004 with a mixed flock of common myna, *Acridotheres tristis*, and bank myna, *Acridotheres ginginianus*, on ground in Kinnaird College Lahore. Its recorded distribution is from Murree eastwards into India (Ali and Ripley, *Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan*. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983; Roberts, *The birds of Pakistan. vol. 1. Passeriformes*. Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1992; Whistler, *Handbook of Indian birds*. Cosmo Publications, New Delhi. pp. 1-438, 1986). It is designated as rare occasional visitor to Murree Hills, Rawalpindi and Islamabad (Amstuz, *A checklist of the birds of Islamabad and Nathia Gali*, published by Asian Culture Study Group, 1977).

Roufous tailed finch lark, *Ammomanes phoenicurus phoenicurus*, was observed sitting in its nest on ground in Jallo Recreational Park on 16th July 2004. The nest was in a cavity on the side of a dried water channel and was hidden under grass. Four white eggs were present in the nest. It is recorded as an erratic monsoon visitor to Northern Punjab (Waite, *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.*, **48**: 97-117, 1948).

Grey bellied plaintive cuckoo, *Cacomantis passirinus*, was recorded on 27th June 2004 at Jallo Recreational Park. It is reported from Margalla Hills from Pakistan (Roberts, *The birds of Pakistan. vol. 2. Passeriformes*. Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1992).

0030-9923/2007/0004-0269 \$ 8.00/0

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New breeding record

Breeding of yellow footed green pigeon *Treron phoenicopetra* in urban Lahore has not been documented in literature (Ali, *The book of Indian birds*. Bombay Natural History Society, Bombay, 1997; Ali and Ripley, *Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan*. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983; Whistler, *Handbook of Indian birds*. Cosmo Publications, New Delhi. pp. 1-438, 1986; Roberts, *The birds of Pakistan. vol. 2. Passeriformes*. Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1992). First nest of yellow footed green pigeon was found on 4th March 2004 in Mayo Gardens. The habitats where it was further found breeding are Mayo Garden, Cantonment, Jinnah Garden, Shalimar Garden, Lahore Zoo, Kinnaird College, Race course Park, GOR, Canal, Aitchison College and Jallo Park. Its nests were found on mango, *Mangifera indica*, Gul-e-Nashtar, *Erythrina suberosa*, jaman *Syzygium cumini* and Shisham, *Dalbergia sissoo*, trees with nests at 20-25 ft height.

Mirza (*Pakistan J. Zool.*, **14**: 237, 1981) shot two green pigeons from a *Ficus* tree in Changa Manga plantation, Lahore district. A nesting bird was also observed for sometime in another nearby ficus tree. These birds were seen in Model Town, Lahore on several occasions, as earlier as 1960's (Mirza *pers.com*).

Five nests of the species were probed for the eggs in urban Lahore. These were of white colour. Each nest had two eggs. The breeding success was 20%. The yellow footed green pigeons have never been seen in the summer season (Ali, *The Book of Indian Birds*. Bombay Natural History Society, Bombay, 1997; Ali and Ripley, *Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan*. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983; Whistler, *Handbook of Indian Birds*. Cosmo Publications, New Delhi. pp. 1-438, 1986; Roberts, *The birds of Pakistan. vol. 2. Passeriformes*. Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1992; Mirza, *Pakistan J. Zool.*, **14**: 237, 1981; Muzaffar, *Some selected urban avian biodiversity of Lahore with special emphasis on the species of concern*, M.Sc. thesis, Kinnaird College for Women Lahore, 2000). However two yellow footed green

pigeons were observed throughout the summers of our study period 2003-2005.

New summer record

Blossom headed parakeet *Psittacula cyanocephala* is a winter visitor to Lahore and the vicinity. A flock of this parakeet was observed in June 2004 and July 2004 at Mayo Gardens and another flock was observed at Jallo Recreational Park. There is a possibility that these birds might have dispersed from their breeding areas to Lahore and vicinity. Their presence in this season is unusual.

Early record for a summer migrant

Koel, *Eudynamys scolopacea*, is a spring and summer visitor to Lahore. Its arrival is recorded in early April though most of the population arrives in May (Roberts, *The birds of Pakistan. vol. 1. Passeriformes*. Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1992). During the last five years of fieldwork in ornithology at Kinnaird College, it has always been first recorded in mid April. This note records its first arrival on 18th March 2005. Najam (*Dispersal pattern of avian biodiversity in one of the southeastern and eastern suburban areas of Lahore*

and study of the biomass increase of nestlings of two of the human associated bird species. M.Sc. thesis, Kinnaird College for Women Lahore, 2001) recorded first arrival of Koel in Lahore at Jallo Recreational Park on 9th April 2001.

One female koel was seen in the lawn of a bungalow at Mayo Gardens on 17th July 2004. It was drinking water from the tap sitting beside it in the lawn. This observation is contrary to the observations of whistler (*Handbook of Indian Birds*. Cosmo Publications, New Delhi. pp. 1-438, 1986) and Roberts (*The birds of Pakistan. vol. 1. Passeriformes*. Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1992) that koel never descends down to the ground.

Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to Dr. Abdul Aleem Chaudary for reviewing this communication.

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(Received 20 February 2006, revised 11 January 2007)
