



Of late, I have been thinking how do the vultures see and locate the carcass, miles away and reach there in congregation to feed.

There are thousands of instances when a carcass has been left after skinning and vultures arriving to feed within a short time. Of course the omnipresent kites and crows are the first to reach the spot, but soon the vultures follow the suit.

When the vultures were plentiful they could be seen converging from all directions. Even when a few of them start feeding, others continued to arrive.

The species is known to soar high in the sky and from such a height how they manage see and locate the food is really amazing.

Of course, it is understandable that they observe the movements of the predators such as the wild dogs and proceed to get their share; if at all if anything is left out.

How do the Vultures communicate?

A.M.K.Bharos, B-101, Gayatrinagar, RAIPUR. CG. 492007.

This was observed by me at Kanha National Park three years ago.

Once the food is located by any of the vultures, others soon follow and assemble. Do these birds possess extreme sighting powers of locating the food lying on the ground or do they smell, as birds have not been known to have the sense of smelling.

Then the only possibility remains is that when any of them locates a carcass, it somehow communicates to others, or simply by the mode, follow me, about it and the congregation moves.

Or do they observe the movement of crows and kites or get attracted by their calls and follow them towards the food.

In the case of elephants, they are said to communicate long distances in low frequency messages, but are the vultures equipped with some communication device or it is simply the natural instinct that forces them to do so. Are there any literatures on this subject ? I solicit comments and views on the subject matter.

CORRESPONDENCE

BILL DEFORMITY IN BLUE ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*), IN THANE, MAHARASHTRA, by RAJU KASAMBE, Bombay Natural History Society, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road, Mumbai-400001. Maharashtra, Email: kasambe.raju@gmail.com

On 7th June 2010, I saw a Blue Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*) with a hooked bill. The bill of this particular pigeon looked like the one of a Shikra (*Accipiter badius*) or some raptor. The upper mandible of this pigeon was quite elongated. But the lower mandible was normal. There was no difference in the behavior of this pigeon or of other pigeons towards it.

I saw and photographed this pigeon from my 7th floor apartment in Thane in Maharashtra, as it perched in the window of the nearby apartment.

Blue Rock Pigeons are abundant in Mumbai and Thane and breed in tall buildings and apartments. They are fed usually by people in parks, playgrounds, and tourist spots.

Bill deformities have been reported in Indian corvids like the House Crow *Corvus splendens*, the Large-billed or Jungle Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* and the Yellow-billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa flavirostris* (Kasambe et. al., 2009). I think that birdwatchers need to look at all the common species of birds for deformities.

Reference:

Kasambe, R., Joshi, A., and Meppayur, S. (2009): Bill deformities in House Crows *Corvus splendens*, Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* and Yellow-billed Blue Magpie *Urocissa flavirostris* in India. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers*. 49(5): 73-78.

SIGHTING RECORD OF THE GREATER ADJUTANT (*Leptoptilos dubius*) In Kanha National Park, India, by AJEET BHAROS, B-16, Sriramnagar, Raipur, CG. 492007.

The distribution range of the Greater Adjutant (*Leptoptilos dubius*) has been mentioned as resident, nomadic and locally migratory, and recorded from South Pakistan to Assam and south to Karnataka, India. Grimmett and Inskips consider the Greater Adjutant as a globally threatened species and they have indicated a very restricted range in Central India in their distribution map of the species.

On my way back to Raipur from Kanha NP, at Chilparha tank in Supkhar area of the Kanha National Park, around 0800 hrs on 4 May 2008, I sighted a bird on the edge of a waterbody. It was stationary and kept still for quite some time during the 5 minutes observation period. Its size, plumage and the prominent neck pouch, matched with those in illustrations. Hence there was no doubt about its identification.