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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 again. It showed signs of exhaustion and he was 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. 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’
Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary (KWS) in Rajasthan, 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 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 capture of the Cinereous Vulture. We are grateful for the comments of Merlijn van Weerden on an earlier draft.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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case 6 (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.

**REFERENCES**


**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. macrorhynchos 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

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

**ANIL KUMAR CHHANGANI**

Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary (KWS) in Rajasthan, 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 capture of the Cinereous Vulture. We are grateful for the comments of Merlijn van Weerden on an earlier draft.

**METHODS**


Road-kills 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.