

# Halduparao, Kanda & Lohachaur

Suchitra Ghosh & N. N. Chatterjea

Ghosh, S. & Chatterjea, N. N. 2007. Halduparao, Kanda & Lohachaur. *Indian Birds* 3 (3): 100–102.

Suchitra Ghosh, Reader in Zoology, PG & UG Department of Zoology, Bangabasi College, 19 Raj Kumar Chakraborty Sarani, Kolkata 700009, West Bengal, India. Email: [ghoshsuchitra@gmail.com](mailto:ghoshsuchitra@gmail.com)

N. N. Chatterjea, 45/17A, Moore Avenue, Kolkata 700040, West Bengal, India.

*Mss received on 25.vi.2006.*

## **Halduparao: 13–15.iv.2005**

More often than not people have asked us, since we first visited Rathuadhab in 1998, if we had been to Halduparao (57km from Kotdwar via Vasantvasa Gate) because, they said, it was one of the places that would interest birdwatchers and nature-lovers. After much planning we finally made it in April 2005. It is indeed a place worth visiting. It is 9km from Vasantvasa Gate and en route to the forest rest house (FRH) you ford the Palani River thrice. Therefore, select a sturdy vehicle. You have to carry provisions—and the chowkidar prepares your meals. The chowkidar and the other staff were very helpful and extended all cooperation to make our stay pleasant.

Halduparao's is one of the remotest FRHs of the Corbett Tiger Reserve. Situated on an elevation it commands an

excellent view of the Palani River. You cannot see the bungalow until you have gained the last stretch of the road. An electric fence protects it from Asian elephants *Elephas maximus*. A small herd came in the early morning just outside the fence. Unaware of their presence, the driver started the jeep and fled. Owing to the presence of elephant you cannot trek. When you go outside the periphery of the FRH a guide is mandatory. He knows the safe spots to step out of the vehicle and bird-watch on foot. He took us to a place where there was a small stream and a patch of jungle. The place wasn't bad for bird watching but the lurking fear of elephants made us uneasy. In the circumstances, we could not go bird watching as much we wanted.

A flock of Pin-tailed Green-Pigeon *Treron apicauda*, from lower elevations, flew up in an arc and alighted in one of the



Kaleej Pheasant *Lophura leucomelanos*

two banyan *Ficus benghalensis* trees in the compound. Once they settled among the branches it was quite difficult to pick them out. The new red leaves of 'kusum' *Schleichera oleosa* were turning green. 'Kumbi' *Canarium strictum* were shedding leaves there, had turned red, and come into flower. The Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri* fed on its blossoms. Besides birds, we found a 'kakar' barking deer *Muntiacus muntjak* coming into the compound, unconcernedly and grazing on grass. It would, however, bolt the moment it became aware of our presence. As dusk fell the Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus* showed up. In the beam of our torchlight we could see the white feathers on the throat puff up each time it called. It also moved about with raised wings and, if another nightjar arrived on the scene, chased away the intruder.

**Kanda: 15–16.iv.2005**

Kanda needs no introduction, made famous by Jim Corbett's "Kanda man-eater." The century-old FRH here is the highest in CTR (c1,000m) and commands a magnificent view of Patlidun Valley, Dhikala *chaur*. Unfortunately, we could not stay here more than a night; therefore, missed out on the birdlife, which is particularly rich and varied and characteristic of cooler areas. Here too we found *kakar* quite common, as were the Large-tailed Nightjar close to the FRH. The *kakar* foraged all night in the patch of jungle behind the bungalow, for we could hear them moving about. We walked up to Teria gate and bird-watched on the road leading to Dhikala and on the road to Maidaban. On the northern side of Kanda lies the relatively undeveloped Mandal Valley. You can reach Kanda from Dhikala but the ascent is fairly steep and requires a four-wheel drive vehicle in good condition.

Before venturing to Kanda with a plan to stay a few days, one should ensure at Kotdwar (when booking accommodation) regarding the supply of water. In Kanda it is not only scarce, hence precious.

**Lohachaur: 16–19.iv.2005**

You cannot reach the Lohachaur FRH until after the monsoon, till the bridges are constructed, across the Mandal River (if you are coming from Maidaban) and the Ramganga River (if you coming from Durgadevi gate) at Domunda where Mandal and Ramganga meet. We entered from Maidaban and left by Durgadevi gate. The FRH, situated above the Mandal River, is close to its confluence with Ramganga River at Domunda. It is a moist area and an excellent birding spot with amazing avifaunal and floral diversity. Several trails can be found for bird watching. The walk to Domunda (you cannot do so all by yourself, a guide is a must) along the Mandal River is ideal for birders as the birds are at eye-level while you remain hidden amidst the vegetation. On this stretch we found, among others, a group of five Common Green Magpie *Cissa chinensis* and a few Striated Laughingthrush *Garrulax striatus*. The road along Mandal River and up to a kilometre from the bungalow is very good for bird watching. The trail behind the bungalow, which leads to a hilltop, is also worth taking. A group of three or four Oriental Magpie-Robin *Copsychus saularis* and

one Orange-headed Thrush *Zoothera citrina* were calling in different notes that fooled us to believe that there were a number of various birds around. After patiently following the calls we sighted the birds. The one bird that we thought was very common at Lohachaur was the Kaleej Pheasant *Lophura leucomelanos*. They would come in the evening to forage almost up to the compound of the bungalow. We saw one 4.5m long King Cobra at Domunda opposite the forest watch post.

The nights were thrilling. During our birding trips we found (everyday) fresh tiger *Panthera tigris* pug marks on the 'kutchha' road near the bungalow. That was something for us. Sometimes we thought we could hear the growl of the big cat! One evening, the sound of rustling leaves just outside the boundary wall of the bungalow sent a thrill of excitement through us. We thought it was a prowling tiger. But the *chowkidar* corrected us—it was a porcupine *Hystrix* sp. However, we could not muster enough courage to go and have a peek at it.

**Table 1. List of species seen**

Species	H	K	L
Indian Pond-Heron <i>Ardeola grayii</i>	+		
Oriental Honey-Buzzard <i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>	+		
Lesser Grey-headed Fish-Eagle <i>Ichthyophaga humilis</i>	-	+	
Crested Serpent-Eagle <i>Spilornis cheela</i>		+	+
Shikra <i>Accipiter badius</i>	-	+	+
Changeable Hawk-Eagle <i>Spizaetus cirrhatus</i>	+	-	-
Red Junglefowl <i>Gallus gallus</i>	+	+	+
Kaleej Pheasant <i>Lophura leucomelanos</i>	+	-	+
Indian Peafowl <i>Pavo cristatus</i>	+	-	+
River Lapwing <i>Vanellus duvaucelii</i>	+	-	+
Red-wattled Lapwing <i>V. indicus</i>	+	-	-
Green Sandpiper <i>Tringa ochropus</i>	+	-	+
Blue Rock Pigeon <i>Columba livia</i>	+	-	+
Oriental Turtle-Dove <i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	+	+	-
Spotted Dove <i>S. chinensis</i>	+	+	-
Eurasian Collared-Dove <i>S. decaocto</i>	-	+	+
Orange-breasted Green-Pigeon <i>Treron bicincta</i>	-	-	+
Yellow-legged Green-Pigeon <i>T. phoenicoptera</i>	+	-	-
Pin-tailed Green-Pigeon <i>T. apicauda</i>	+	-	-
Slaty-headed Parakeet <i>Psittacula himalayana</i>	-	-	+
Plum-headed Parakeet <i>P. cyanocephala</i>	+	+	+
Red-breasted Parakeet <i>P. alexandri</i>	+	-	-
Brainfever Bird <i>Hierococcyx varius</i>	+	-	+
Indian Cuckoo <i>Cuculus micropterus</i>	+	+	+
Common Cuckoo <i>C. canorus</i>	-	+	-
Asian Koel <i>Eudynamys scolopacea</i>	-	-	+
Greater Coucal <i>Centropus sinensis</i>	?	?	?
Brown Hawk-Owl <i>Ninox scutulata</i>	+	-	+
Indian Jungle Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus indicus</i>	-	-	+
Large-tailed Nightjar <i>C. macrurus</i>	+	-	+
Crested Tree-Swift <i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>	+	-	+
Small Blue Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i>	+	-	-
Stork-billed Kingfisher <i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>	+	-	-
White-breasted Kingfisher <i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	+	-	+
Greater Pied Kingfisher <i>Cerlye lugubris</i>	-	-	+
Small Bee-eater <i>Merops orientalis</i>	+	-	-
Chestnut-headed Bee-eater <i>M. leschenaulti</i>	+	-	+
Indian Roller <i>Coracias benghalensis</i>	+	-	-

Species	H	K	L	Species	H	K	L
Oriental Broad-billed Roller <i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>	-	-	+	Jungle Babbler <i>Turdoides striata</i>	+	-	+
Indian Grey Hornbill <i>Ocyroceros birostris</i>	+	-	+	Red-billed Leiothrix <i>Leiothrix lutea</i>	-	-	+
Oriental Pied Hornbill <i>Anthracoeros albirostris</i>	+	-	-	Yellow-naped Yuhina <i>Yuhina falvicolis</i>	-	-	+
Great Pied Hornbill <i>Buceros bicornis</i>	-	-	+	Black-chinned Yuhina <i>Y. nigrimenta</i>	-	+	+
Great Barbet <i>Megalaima virens</i>	+	+	+	Franklin's Prinia <i>Prinia hodgsonii</i>	+	-	+
Brown-headed Barbet <i>M. zeylanica</i>	+	+	-	Yellow-browed Warbler <i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>	-	+	-
Lineated Barbet <i>M. lineata</i>	+	+	+	Western Crowned Warbler <i>P. occipitalis</i>	-	+	-
Blue-throated Barbet <i>M. asiatica</i>	-	+	+	Grey-headed Flycatcher-Warbler			
Coppersmith Barbet <i>M. haemacephala</i>	+	-	+	<i>Seicercus xanthoschistos</i>	-	+	+
Speckled Piculet <i>Picumnus innominatus</i>	-	+	-	Sooty Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa sibirica</i>	-	+	-
Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker				Red-throated Flycatcher <i>Ficedula parva</i>	+	-	-
<i>Dendrocopos canicapillus</i>	+	+	-	Little Pied Flycatcher <i>F. westermanni</i>	-	+	-
Fulvous-breasted Pied Woodpecker <i>D. macei</i>	-	+	+	Blue-throated Flycatcher <i>Cyornis rubeculoides</i>	-	-	+
Large Yellow-naped Woodpecker <i>Picus flavinucha</i>	-	-	+	Asian Paradise-Flycatcher <i>Terpsiphona paradisi</i>	+	-	+
Black-naped Green Woodpecker <i>P. canus</i>	+	+	+	Black-naped Monarch-Flycatcher			
Greater Golden-backed Woodpecker				<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	+	-	-
<i>Chrysocolaptes lucidus</i>	+	-	+	White-throated Fantail-Flycatcher			
Black-shouldered Woodpecker <i>C. festivus</i>	+	-	-	<i>Rhipidura albicollis</i>	-	+	+
Long-tailed Boradbill <i>Psarisomus dalhousiae</i>	-	-	+	Red-headed Tit <i>Aegithalos concinnus</i>	-	+	-
Sand Martin <i>Riparia riparia</i>	+	-	-	Great Tit <i>Parus major</i>	+	-	+
Large Pied Wagtail <i>Motacilla maderaspatensis</i>	+	-	+	Black-lored Yellow Tit <i>P. xanthogenys</i>	-	+	+
Grey Wagtail <i>M. cinerea</i>	+	-	+	Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch <i>Sitta castanea</i>	-	+	+
Large Cuckoo Shirke <i>Coracina macei</i>	-	+	-	White-tailed Nuthatch <i>S. himalayensis</i>	+	+	+
Rosy Minivet <i>Pericrocotus roseus</i>	+	+	-	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch <i>S. frontalis</i>	+	-	-
Pied Flycatcher-Shrike <i>Hemipus picatus</i>	-	-	+	Bar-tailed Tree-Creeper <i>Certhia himalayana</i>	-	+	-
Black-headed Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus atriceps</i>	-	-	+	Purple Sunbird <i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>	-	-	+
Red-whiskered Bulbul <i>P. jocosus</i>	+	+	+	Crimson Sunbird <i>Aethopyga siparaja</i>	-	-	+
Himalayan Bulbul <i>P. leucogenys</i>	+	+	+	Oriental White-eye <i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>	+	+	+
Red-vented Bulbul <i>P. cafer</i>	+	+	+	Crested Bunting <i>Melophus lathami</i>	-	-	+
Brown-eared Bulbul <i>Hemixos flavala</i>	-	+	+	Grey-headed Starling <i>Sturnus malabaricus</i>	+	-	+
Black Bulbul <i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i>	-	+	+	Common Myna <i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	+	-	+
Common Iora <i>Aegithina tiphia</i>	+	-	-	Jungle Myna <i>A. fuscus</i>	-	-	+
Gold-fronted Chloropsis <i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>	+	-	+	Eurasian Golden Oriole <i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	+	-	-
Orange-bellied Chloropsis <i>C. hardwickii</i>	-	-	+	Black-headed Oriole <i>O. xanthornus</i>	+	-	-
Blue-headed Rock-Thrush <i>Monticola sinclorhynchus</i>	-	+	+	Ashy Drongo <i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>	+	+	-
Blue Whistling-Thrush <i>Myophonus ceeruleus</i>	+	-	+	Bronzed Drongo <i>D. aeneus</i>	+	+	+
Orange-headed Thrush <i>Zoothera citrina</i>	+	+	+	Spangled Drongo <i>D. hottentottus</i>	+	+	+
Oriental Magpie Robin <i>Copsychus saularis</i>	+	+	+	Red-billed Blue Magpie <i>Urocissa erythrorhyncha</i>	-	-	+
White-capped Redstart <i>Chaimarrornis leucocephalus</i>	-	-	+	Common Green Magpie <i>Cissa chinensis</i>	-	-	+
White-crested Laughingthrush <i>G. leucolophus</i>	+	-	+	Jungle Crow <i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	+	+	+
White-throated Laughingthrush <i>Garrulax monileger</i>	-	+	+				
Striated Laughingthrush <i>G. striatus</i>	-	-	+				
Streaked Laughingthrush <i>G. lineatus</i>	-	+	-				
Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler							
<i>Pomatorhinus erythrogenys</i>	-	+	+				

**Abbreviations**

H=Halduparao

K=Kanda

L=Lohachaur