

New Record of Asian Pied Starling (*Gracupica contra contra*) from Kalar Kahar (Pakistan)

Usman Hanif

University of Malaya, usmanhnf@gmail.com

Fakhar-i- Abbas

Centre for Bioresource Research (CBR), Islamabad, fakharabbas@hotmail.com

Zahid Iqbal Khan

Centre for Bioresource Research (CBR), Islamabad

Afsar Mian

Institute of Natural and Management Sciences (INAM), Rawalpindi

Follow this and additional works at: <https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/jbm>



Part of the [Biodiversity Commons](#), and the [Biology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hanif, U., Abbas, F., Khan, Z. I., & Mian, A. (2017). New Record of Asian Pied Starling (*Gracupica contra contra*) from Kalar Kahar (Pakistan), *Journal of Bioresource Management*, 4 (4).

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35691/JBM.7102.0078>

ISSN: 2309-3854 online

(Received: Jul 28, 2015; Accepted: Sep 28, 2019; Published: Sep 20, 2017)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by CORE Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Journal of Bioresource Management* by an authorized editor of CORE Scholar. For more information, please contact library-corescholar@wright.edu.

New Record of Asian Pied Starling (*Gracupica contra contra*) from Kalar Kahar (Pakistan)

Cover Page Footnote

Hanif et al

© Copyrights of all the papers published in Journal of Bioresource Management are with its publisher, Center for Bioresource Research (CBR) Islamabad, Pakistan. This permits anyone to copy, redistribute, remix, transmit and adapt the work for non-commercial purposes provided the original work and source is appropriately cited. Journal of Bioresource Management does not grant you any other rights in relation to this website or the material on this website. In other words, all other rights are reserved. For the avoidance of doubt, you must not adapt, edit, change, transform, publish, republish, distribute, redistribute, broadcast, rebroadcast or show or play in public this website or the material on this website (in any form or media) without appropriately and conspicuously citing the original work and source or Journal of Bioresource Management's prior written permission.

NEW RECORD OF ASIAN PIED STARLING (*GRACUPICA CONTRA CONTRA*) FROM KALAR KAHAR (PAKISTAN)

USMAN HANIF¹, FAKHAR-I-ABBAS^{2*}, ZAHID IQBAL KHAN² AND AFSAR MIAN³

¹University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

²Centre for Bioresource Research (CBR), Islamabad, Pakistan

³Institute of Natural and Management Sciences (INAM), Rawalpindi, Pakistan

*Email: fakhirabbas@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

A pair of Asian Pied Starling or Pied Myna (*Gracupica contra contra*) was sighted in reed vegetation present around Kalar Kahar Lake (northwestern Salt Range, Pakistan). Subspecies has been sighted for the first time west of Sialkot and Lahore. Further studies are required to determine the status of the population of the subspecies in Kalar Kahar to suggest an extension in distribution range of the species.

INTRODUCTION

Asian Pied Starling or Pied Myna (*Gracupica contra*), family Sturnidae was previously included in genera *Sturnus* and *Sturnopastor*. Recent molecular studies suggested its placement in a separate genus leading to reinstatement of the older genus; Zuccon et al. (2008). According to Lovette et al. (2008), Asian Pied Starling is a bird found at the foothills of Indian subcontinent up to some 700 m above sea line (asl), often seen close to human settlements, especially in areas with access to open water (Ali and Ripley, 1986). *Gracupica contra contra* is a common bird of the Gangetic plains, extending south into Andhra Pradesh in the west and Bangladesh in the east (Rasmussen and Anderton, 2005). The western range of distribution of this sub-species mainly remains within territorial limits of India (Ali and Ripley, 1986); (Rasmussen and Anderton, 2005).

There are indications that population of *G. c. contra* is expanding its western distribution range (Feare and Craig, 1998). Populations of this subspecies were previously established in Rajkot (22°18'34.54 NL, 70°49'32.71E) by Raol

(1966) and in Bombay (19° 4'34.37 NL, 72°52'39.55oE) by George (1971). The westward extension of its distribution range into Rajasthan (27° 1'25.70 NL, 74°13'4.56 E) has been ascribed to changes in irrigation and farming pattern (Sharma, 2004).

Sighting of this species was rare in Pakistan, limited to its eastern border districts of Narowal (32° 6'25.56 NL, 74°52'6.74 E) and Sialkot (32°29'23.76 NL, 74°31'38.45 E:) (Feare and Craig, 1998). Presence of a breeding population of the subspecies has been reported from Lahore (31°32'38.63.NL, 74°18'44.85.E:) (Murtaza, 1997). There is an unconfirmed report on sighting of birds of this sub-species in Islamabad (33°43'3.09.NL, 73° 5'24.04 E:) (BirdLife International, 2009). This paper reported sighting of the bird from Kalar Kakar, a town located between Lahore and Islamabad.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Kalar Kahar (32°46'30.78 NL, 72°42'29.42 E) is a small picnic town in the northwestern parts of the Salt Range (District Chakwal, Pakistan), located at crow flight distance of some 218 and 207 km northwest of Narowal and Lahore,

respectively, and 112 km south of Islamabad (33°43'3.09.NL, 73° 5'24.04 E) (Figure I).

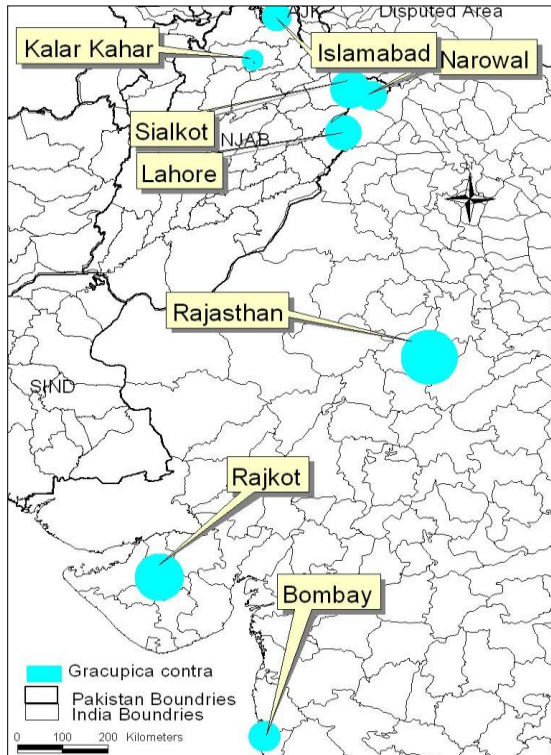


Figure 1: Map of the Area showing Asian Pied Starling (*Gracupica contra*) reported.

This town is present in a natural depression in the midst of a cup-shaped valley, surrounded by low hills, working as a catchment area, falling at 615 m asl without a natural drainage. The salt lake of Kalar Kahar is surrounded by concentric circles of different types of reed vegetation.

The area was visited at regular intervals during different parts of 2011 for sighting avifauna under CBR Bird Watcher Club, and photographs of the unusual records were taken.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A pair of Asian Pied Starlings was recorded perching on reed vegetation present around Kalar Kahar Lake on November, 2011 (Figure 2). Birds persisted in the area throughout the day and remained together perching on reed vegetation around

the lake. Sex of these birds could not be confirmed in the field. The species/subspecies was identified using the existing literature (Robert, 1996; Mirza, 2007)

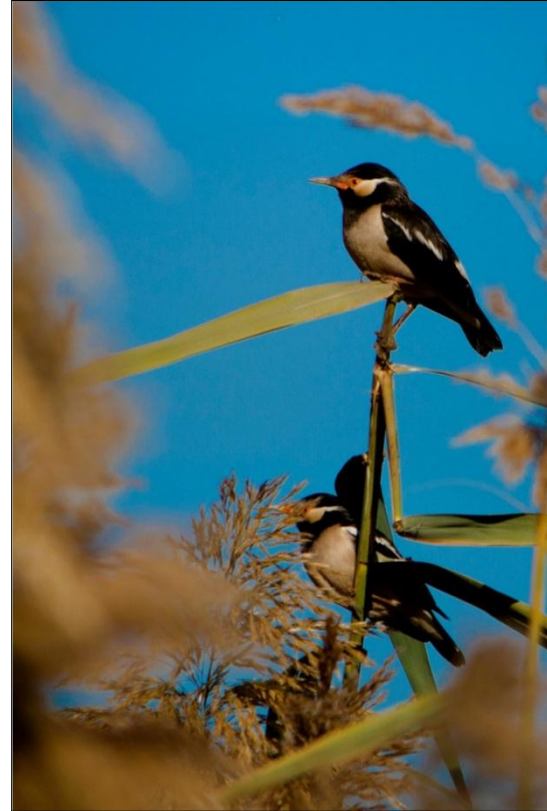


Figure 2: Asian Pied Starling *Gracupica contra* from Kalar Kahar.

REFERENCES

- Ali S, Ripley SD (1986). In: Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan. Volume 5 (2 ed.). Oxford University Press. New Delhi, India: pp 172-175.
- Bird Life International (2009). *Sturnus contra*. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 3.1. International Union for Conservation of Nature. <http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/147659>. Retrieved 12 July 2011.
- Feare C, Craig A (1998). Starlings and mynas. Christopher Helm, A and C Black, London, UK.

- George NJ (1971). The Pied Myna, *Sturnus contra* (Linnaeus) in Bombay. *J Bombay Nat Hist Soc.* 68: 243–244.
- Lovette I, McCleery B, Talaba A, Rubenstein D (2008). A complete species-level molecular phylogeny for the Eurasian starlings (*Sturnidae*: *Sturnus*, *Acridotheres*, and allies): Recent diversification in a highly social and dispersive avian group. *Mol Phylogen Evol.* 47: 251–260.
- Mirza ZB (2007). A Field Guide to Birds of Pakistan. WWF Pakistan: pp 313-314.
- Murtaza SA (1997). Record of the sightings and breeding of pied mynah *Sturnus contra* at Lahore. *J Bombay Nat Hist Soc.* 94: 569–570.
- Raol LM (1966). Unexpected bird. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers.* 6: 9–10.
- Rasmussen PC, Anderton JC (2005). Birds of South Asia. The Ripley Guide. Smithsonian Insti and Lynx Edicions. Washington DC and Barcelona: pp 2:583.
- Roberts TJ (1992). The Birds of Pakistan. Passeriformes. Oxford University Press, Pakistan: pp 463-464.
- Sharma SK (2004). Present distribution of Asian Pied Starling *Sturnus contra* in Rajasthan. *Zoos' Print J.* 19: 1716–1718.
- Zuccon DE, Pasquet E, Ericson PGP (2008). Phylogenetic relationships among Palearctic–Oriental starlings and mynas (genera *Sturnus* and *Acridotheres*: *Sturnidae*). *Zool Scrip.* 37: 469–481.