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First Report of the Rare Banded Bay Cuckoo, *Cacomantis sonneratii* (Latham, 1790) in Navegaon National Park of NNTR Gondia Maharashtra, India

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ABSTRACT

One of the tourist attractions in the Gondia districts is the Navegaonbandh Reservoir. It is located in the Arjuni Morgaon subdivision and is a component of the Navegaon National Park. This is a significant place for birds in the region, as well as for the variety of flora and wildlife. The history of the reservoir is impressive, spanning from reservoir building through the protection of biodiversity, related ecosystems, and its ecological niche. The diversity of birds among the diverse biodiversity is one of the crucial aspects to research in order to evaluate the habitat's quality. In the present paper, the occurrence of "Banded Bay Cuckoo" (*Cacomantis sonneratii*, Latham, 1790) in the Navegaon National Park of NNTR in the month of April, 2023 is discussed. This is the first occurrence report of this bird from the Gondia district.

Key words: First Report, Banded Bay Cuckoo, Navegaon NP, NNTR, Gondia.

INTRODUCTION

Gondia district is home to Navegaon National Park sometimes referred to as Navegaon Bandh. The eastern Vidarbha area of Maharashtra is well known for its diverse flora, which ranges from dry mixed forest to rainforest. This southern tropical dry forest, which is a crucial area for conservation in central India, is home to a wide variety of fauna. It helps to preserve natural harmony and serves as a green lung for adjacent communities. The Navegaon Lake, which supports a wide variety of bird species, is the park's most significant ecosystem. This gorgeous lake receives flocks of migrating birds each winter. There are 312 bird species in all, divided into 57 families and 14 orders. 252 of them were local inhabitants, 5 were seasonal tourists, 5 were passage migrants, and 2 were breeding migrants, Paliwal, 2021 published a

complete checklist of the birds of Navegaon National Park. Paliwal et al., (2022) studied 84 birds for monitoring of aquatic birds with reference to ecological niche in Navegaonbandh Reservoir. Chinchkhede and Kedar, (2013) studied 127 species of birds for the habitat niche and status of birds in Navegao NP Chinchkhede and Kedar, (2020) studied 167 species of the bird, Paliwal and Bhandarkar, (2017), studied ecology and conservation of 12 species of threatened birds from the Navegaon National Park. In context of above cited study in Navegaon and its environs, a new bird now added in the checklist for the first time and now the total number of birds is counted as 313. In this first report of Banded Bay Cuckoo, distribution, habit and habitat is discussed.

METHODOLOGY

A regular survey was conducted in the Navegaon National Park around reservoir area from the several years. The observation was done with the help of

photographic evidences during the survey conducted over a lengthy period of time (2005 to 2023) for biodiversity research. Standard literature Grimmett et al., 2011; Ali & Ripley, 1983 used for species Identification.

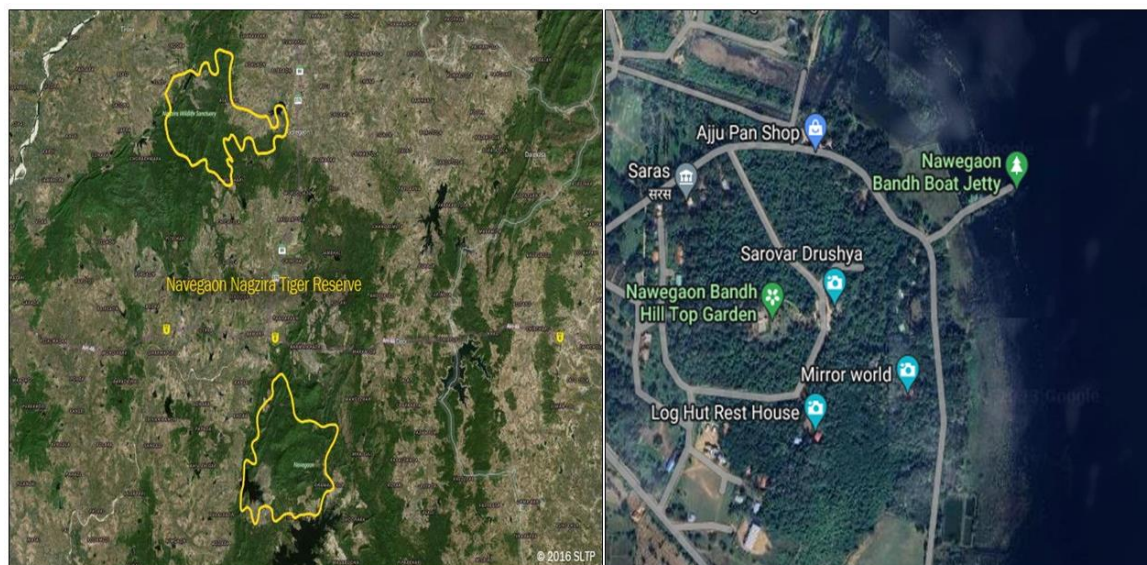


Fig. 1 [left] Map of NNTR showing NNP, Source: savingindia'stiger.org; [right] Map of Navegaon National Park area (Location of Banded Bay Cuckoo Occurred).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Though the Navegaon National Park and its environs had many avifaunal studies on various aspects of avifauna Paliwal et al., (2022); Paliwal and Bhandarkar, (2013, 2014, 2017); Bhandarkar and Paliwal, (2014); Bhandarkar and Chavan, (2008); Bhandarkar et al., (2023); Raut et al., (2022); Chinchkhede and Kedar, (2013, 2020); Kedar et al., (2021). The complete check list of birds has been published before by Paliwal, (2013, 2021), now due to occurrence of Banded Bay Cuckoo, a new bird added in the checklist for the first time and now the total number of birds is counted as 313. In this occurrence report of Banded Bay Cuckoo in NNTR for the first time, species identification, distribution, habit and habitat is discussed.

Species Identification: The banded bay cuckoo (*Cacomantis sonneratii*) is a little cuckoo that is around 20 cm long and weighs 35 grams. These banded bay cuckoo species have whitish underparts and reddish brown upperparts. Brown bars are visible on the higher regions. The eye has a dark line across it. Above the eye stripe, there is a characteristic whitish supercilium. The nostrils are rounded. The banded bay cuckoo has dark brown wings and a tail. On the tail, there is a black subterminal band. The tail tip is a light buff color. Fine, dark gray striations can be seen on the white underparts. The irises are

brownish-yellow. The legs have a grey color. Their call is a high-pitched "wee-te wee-tee" whistling sound. The Cuculidae family of cuckoos, roadrunners, koels, malkohas, and couas includes the banded bay cuckoo (*Cacomantis sonneratii*). The banded bay cuckoo is a kind of brood parasite that incubates its eggs in another bird's nest and depends on the host to care for its young. These cuckoo species have four recognized subspecies.

Habit and Habitat preference: Most of the food consumed by these varieties of banded bay cuckoo is insects. Their main food sources are grasshoppers, beetles, caterpillars, mantises, dragonflies, and mantises. They collect the prey from the ground or the surrounding vegetation. They've been observed to hawk their prey in the air. These banded bay cuckoo species are brood parasites that deposit their eggs in other birds' nests and depend on the host to nurture their young. These species reproduce during the same time as their nearby hosts. In western India, these banded bay cuckoo species breed from February to August. In northeastern India, the breeding season lasts from April to August. The breeding season lasts from June to October in Sri Lanka. It is well known that the cuckoo chicks expel the host species' eggs or young (Birdlife International). The biology of birds is intriguing because of brood parasitism. Certain species, known as brood parasites, lay their eggs in the nests of other species, known as hosts, who then

raise the parasitic young and act as foster parents. These birds incubate their own eggs alongside the parasite eggs, and when the parasite egg hatches, they feed the young, frequently at the expense of their own ability to reproduce. Only a few species of cuckoos (Cuculidae: Cuculinae) and one species of honeyguide

(Indicatoridae) are brood parasites in South Asia (Praveen and Lowther, 2020). The Banded Bay Cuckoo mostly parasitizes Common Iora, (Baker 1907b; Becking 1981), following is the Banded Bay Cuckoo host species (Table 1).

SN	Species	Type	Reference
1	Small Minivet <i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	O	Sashikumar et al. (2011)
2	Orange Minivet <i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	O	Philips (1944); Pepper (2008)
3	Black-headed Cuckooshrike <i>Lalage melanoptera</i>	O	Robson (2010); Shekhawat (2018)
4	Red-whiskered Bulbul <i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>	O	Jackson (1971)
5	Common Iora <i>Aegithina tiphia</i>	M	Davidson (1898)
6	Common Wood shrike <i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i>	O	Radhakrishnan (2020)

Table 1: Banded Bay Cuckoo host species, Abbreviations: (M) supporting media and (O) field observations (Source: Praveen J., & Lowther, P., 2020)

The banded bay cuckoo travels some distances each year. Southeast Asian populations are discovered to be residing there. India's populace move around, mostly during the monsoon season. The moderate dependence of these banded bay cuckoo species on forests. These species live in elevations ranging from 0 to 900 meters. Both artificial and natural environments are where they live. Agriculture, pasture, and severely degraded woods are all part of their artificial terrestrial ecosystems. These banded bay cuckoo species' native ecosystems include dense broadleaf forests, evergreen forests, lowland subtropical and tropical moist shrublands, deciduous forests, foothill forests, subtropical and tropical dry

shrublands, open woodlands, and deciduous, subtropical and tropical dry shrublands.

Distribution range: These banded bay cuckoo species are found in Southeast Asian nations, China, and the Indian subcontinent. India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, China, Thailand, and Singapore. It is uncommon or rare according to Indian researcher. According to Ganpule (2016), this may be occurring in several areas of central and northern Gujarat. Chorge et al., (2018) also find a rare occurrence of this bird in Kudal of Sindhudurg, Mhatre et al., (2013) from Nigade in Raigad, Kokan, Patil (2017) also find a rare occurrence during the avifaunal studies in Kolhapur of Maharashtra.

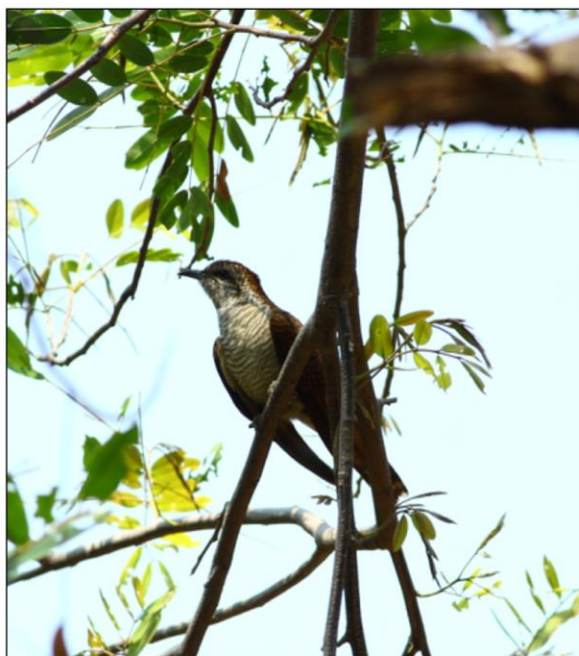


Fig. 2: Sighting of Banded Bay Cuckoo in the Navegaonbandh Reservoir near Pakshi Nirvachan Kendra situated at Navegaon N. Park.

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