

To confirm or to unconfirm!

20 July 2024

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How many here have watched videos on how to review?

General guidelines

- Send emails/unconfirm only when 1) documentation is lacking from the area/season 2) the species is uncommon and very hard to identify
- Send emails where you use qualifiers to show that you also have some uncertainty, especially in difficult cases – do not give the impression that you are completely confident that you are correct
- Send emails/unconfirm for high counts only when the counts are truly exceptional

Some case studies

- 2 Lesser Yellownape from Sundarban
- 5 Bank Myna from Sundarban
- 10000 Lesser Whistling-Duck
- 2 Long-tailed Shrike from Bangalore city in Sep
- 1 Crow-billed Drongo from outside habitat
- 80 Glossy Ibis where the filter limit is 30
- 30 Ashy Prinia where the filter limit is 20
- 20 Grey Wagtail from a wetland
- 4 Jungle Myna from Delhi

Some case studies

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Sending an email in a difficult case

Apologies for the delay in replying. Some emails had piled up with travel.

I must admit that I'm still confused about this bird. The bill looks strong and tends towards Crow-billed but the tail, underpart markings (so much white near the vent but less further up the belly and breast), the presence of a rictal spot, and most notably the lack of the gape extending behind the bill (seems to be a consistent feature in Crow-billed) suggest Black Drongo to me. Given that the photos are from a single angle, I think there may always be some doubt about the ID. Both field notes and calls are generally very valuable but calls become a little difficult to use between Drongos due to their vast repertoires. I would say that this is quite an unusual case given the unusual location and the state of wear.

You are welcome to retain it on your checklists as Crow-billed as you are confident of the ID. Anything on your list will count towards your life lists and no one can change that, not even a reviewer's decision. It's just that this may be difficult to keep confirmed in public output due to the uncertainty. I have plenty such records that I have retained on my lists even when reviewers felt it might be too difficult to confirm given available evidence. Here's an example of [Black Tern from Kachchh](#). I have some more like this and some unconfirmed with unconvincing photos too :) But many others have been confirmed based on photos/notes for all of us.

Do let me know if this sounds reasonable. The good thing is that we can always come back to this photo when similar photos show up from within Crow-billed habitat and with associations with more conventionally plumaged birds. I would also encourage you to send this to experienced birders from E/SE Asia who will know more about the range of Crow-billed plumages although they have a different ssp. of Black Drongo. Their opinions will also help make the best decision here.

Regards
Ashwin

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Thu, Jun 27, 7:08 PM



Thanks Ashwin for replying in such detail. I will try to seek out birders in E/SE Asia as you suggested.

is cc'd here and is a much more experienced birder than I am, he might have something more to add towards this sighting/identification so I'll leave the thread open. It sounds like you are open to revisit this at a later time, thank you for that.