

observed in other areas and whether other bird species were attracted to the acacia seeds.

CROWS WITH A WHITE SHOULDER. DR. M.L. NARANG, Associate Professor, Dr. YASHWANT SINGH, Parmar University of Horticulture & Forestry, Solan 173 230

Sometime back I had visited a small village about 100km from Solan in Himachal Pradesh. There I had observed some Himalayan Jungle Crows *Corvus macrorhynchos intermedius* which is a common species in Himachal Pradesh. The unusual thing about these Crows was that majority of them had a white shoulder patch in their wings (Secondaries) similar to the red shoulder patch in Himalayan Slaty-headed Parakeets *Psittacula himalayana*. The description of this species as given in the Handbook of Birds by Ali & Ripley makes no mention of such white shoulder patches. Very recently about fifteen days back, I saw one such crow at Solan proper. It does not appear to be a case of albinism.

THE SIBERIAN CRANE IN THE LITTLE RANN OF KUTCH. DHANRAJ MALIK, Camp Zainabad, Via Dasada 382 751, Gujarat

While watching a flock of cranes in the Little Rann of Kutch on the 04.01.91, I saw a fairly large crane with a white plumage. But I thought that the sun was playing the trick, so to confirm this I walked up to the cranes and looked through my 60x scope and what did I see? The crane was a Siberian Crane *Grus leucogeranus* and I immediately recognised it as I had seen 6 in Bharatpur in 1988. I could see the red face marking of the bird. But, I was still not sure of my sighting as I had never thought of seeing this bird here, so only to double check the sighting I made the flock fly and the bird did have the black primaries that a Siberian Crane should have.

I hope this information is enough for confirming a sighting of the Siberian Crane in the Little Rann of Kutch.

NEW PARADISE FOR PEREGRINE FALCONS. AAMIR ALI, 14 ch. de la Tourelle, 1209 Geneva

"Peregrine falcons are increasing in New York, attracted by the numbers of pigeons and sparrows and the sky scrapers which remind them of their native cliffs.

There are at least 9 couples nesting in the city. In 3 years, the peregrine falcons have adapted to the roofs of sky scrapers, churches, hospitals, pillars of bridges.

Last spring 6 out of 13 young falcons survived long enough to fly off, a rate better than the five in Yosemite, where there are 5 couples nesting.

Workers on bridges and buildings have been instructed not to disturb the falcons during the nesting period, so the windows round the nests are not washed and walls are not repainted.

The falcons, spoilt by human contact, tend to build their nests rather shallow and these risk being blown away by a strong wind. So, friends of the birds are placing boxes filled with gravel, in strategic places such as the Pan Am building.

Sometimes, the falcons are fooled by the windows, and last spring two were killed when they crashed into windows, confused by their own reflection.

Some 15 years ago, DDT and other insecticides had reduced the population of peregrine falcons to about 100 couples; today there are some 500 in the US."

BIRD NEWS FROM RAJKOT. ANVAR KHAN BABI, Fauzia Bungalow, Near Amrapali Cinema, Rajkot 360 001

This week the temperatures in the field are near freezing point and farmers are finding many dead birds particularly Brown Doves, Pigeons and Sparrows. Many farmers have come across slabs of ice in their water tanks.

I had a strange experience on the night of 9th January. On two successive occasions within half an hour, two Brown Doves came into the room where I was sitting and allowed me to warm them up with my hands. One of these Doves had some Water-skater like insects on them. Farmers believe many kinds of birds carry parasites on themselves. I couldn't collect any samples of these insects as I was busy trying to warm and save the doves.

On the 10th morning I came across another Brown Dove frozen to death and a dying sub-adult pigeon. This was near a village called Sindhevaka in Wonkoner Taluka. I spent two days there telling friends what they could do to help the birds - putting up drinking water in the sun in a sheltered place and feeding them in the compounds and fields.

Around lakes and roadsides I must have seen at least a thousand Demoiselle cranes and a hundred or so common cranes. There was also one sub-adult common crane *Grus grus* accompanied by its very vigilant parents (has to be).

I do not know if many people have seen sub-adult Demoiselles. Personally I think common cranes show better parental love. This is an interesting point. I should be glad to hear of other such observations. It is common knowledge that Saurashtra and environs have more Demoiselles than common. The ratio varies from year to year. Demoiselle is most abundant during good monsoon years and the common during lean periods; although the Demoiselle always of course outnumbers the common. I believe the common can do with scantily stocked fields (Groundnut left unplucked) and can also do with very little water around its roosting sites. I have seen vast flocks of cranes (both) roosting miles away from any water in the day time in the little Rann of Cutch round Dasada, though.

There are reports of sightings of the Houbara Bustard *Chlamydotis undulata* around Odov and Zhizhwoda, also near Dasada, although fewes than usual. Normally we have 8 to 13 just around Dasoda.

CANNIBALISM IN BIRDS. FREE PRESS JOURNAL, Bombay, 22 December 1990

Interaction of common birds which live within human habitation indicates not only a particular type of behaviour and food habits but also determines which bird is more powerful than the other; a study said.

The study conducted by noted ornithologist U.N. Dev at the aviaries on 'project bihang' under aviary condition for different birds, claims that whether out or inside an aviary, the animal behaviour and their basics remain the same after the species overcomes the initial shyness.