



Records of Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni* (Blyth, 1842) (Aves: Falconiformes: Accipitridae) in Andhra Pradesh, India

Sathyanarayana Srinivasan¹, B. Ramakrishna², C. Srinivasulu³ & G. Ramakrishna⁴

¹ Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India

^{2,3} Department of Zoology, Osmania University, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh 500007, India

⁴ Office of the Divisional Forest Officer (Wildlife Management), Pocharam Wildlife Sanctuary, Medak, Andhra Pradesh 500005, India

Email: ¹satya.srini@gmail.com, ²raaam27@gmail.com,

³hyd2masawa@gmail.com (corresponding author),

⁴gubbala_rkrishnarao@yahoo.com

Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni* occurs in South and Southeast Asia in a rather discontinuous range. Five subspecies are recognized: (a) nominate *Aviceda jerdoni jerdoni* (Blyth, 1842) (Range: mainland Asia including the Himalayan foothills east from Darjeeling,

Southeast Asia to Sumatra, SW Yunnan and Hainan, and rarely in Malaysia and Singapore), (b) *A. j. ceylonensis* (Legge, 1876) (Range: Sri Lanka and peninsular India), (c) *A. j. magnirostris* (Kaup, 1847) (Range: the Philippines), (d) *A. j. borneensis* (Brüggemann, 1876) (Range: Borneo), and (e) *A. j. celebensis* (Schlegel, 1873) (Range: Sulawesi, Bangai and Sula Islands) (Grimmett et al. 1998; Wells 1999; Ferguson-Lees et al. 2001; Wang & Lim 2003; Robson 2005).

In India, two subspecies - *жерdoni* and *ceylonensis* are reported (Ali & Ripley 1987; Grimmett et al. 1998). The former taxon is known from tropical evergreen and moist deciduous evergreen forests of the Himalayas along Sikkim, eastward to Myanmar, while the latter occurs in the tropical and subtropical evergreen and moist deciduous forests of Western Ghats, Eastern Ghats and Sri Lanka. However, owing to lack of information on the subspecific identity of *Aviceda jerdoni* in the northern Eastern Ghats, the boundaries of the northern and the southern subspecies, whether distinct or overlapping is debatable. Very few sighting records of the taxa *A. j. ceylonensis* in India are published and this species has been known from a few localities in Kerala (Vishnudas 2007) and Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka (Achar & Nayak 2000). Ripley et al. (1987), Grimmett et al. (1998) and Nair (2007) reported the presence of *A. jerdoni* in the northern Eastern Ghats in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. Naoroji (2006) maps this species' distribution in the Western Ghats from south of Goa, parts of Eastern Ghats including Shevarayan and Javadi hills in Tamil Nadu, Seshachalam, Nallamala and Papikonda hills in Andhra Pradesh and Similipal hills in Orissa. In the northeast, the species occurs in eastern Nepal, Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam and most of the northeastern states (Image 1).

In recent years there have been additional sightings of Jerdon's Baza in Andhra Pradesh (Image 1). Through this note we report the sightings of this taxon in tropical forested tracts further away from the Eastern Ghats and also corroborate our findings with its calls.

Srinivasulu (2004) has reported the sighting of this species in Kawal Wildlife Sanctuary, Adilabad District. A single individual was sighted on the edge of open agricultural fields at Udhumpur Village (19°12'N &

Date of publication (online): 26 August 2012

Date of publication (print): 26 August 2012

ISSN 0974-7907 (online) | 0974-7893 (print)

Editor: V. Shantharam

Manuscript details:

Ms # o2922

Received 23 August 2011

Final received 11 May 2012

Finally accepted 30 July 2012

Citation: Srinivasan, S., B. Ramakrishna, C. Srinivasulu & G. Ramakrishna (2012). Records of Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni* (Blyth, 1842) (Aves: Falconiformes: Accipitridae) in Andhra Pradesh, India. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 4(9): 2920–2923.

Copyright: © Sathyanarayana Srinivasan, B. Ramakrishna, C. Srinivasulu & G. Ramakrishna 2012. Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License. JoTT allows unrestricted use of this article in any medium for non-profit purposes, reproduction and distribution by providing adequate credit to the authors and the source of publication.

Acknowledgements: We thank the following for having helped in identification and sharing their valuable comments: Aasheesh Pittie, Krys Kazmierczak, Rishad Naoroji, Humayun Taher, Clive Mann, Robert DeCandido, Alfred Chia, Dirk Van Gansberghe and Ralph Buij. Fellow birders from Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad have been a great help in more than one way and we thank them all. For the Eastern Ghats trip, we would like to thank Mr. Prabhu Podipireddy and Mr. Rudra Podipireddy of the Asian Wildlife Foundation for all their enthusiasm and support both on and off the field in making the trip possible. As for Medak, we would like to thank Forest Department staff at Pocharam WLS, whose interest in birds made this trip possible. We greatly appreciate the encouragement and permissions to study fauna by Andhra Pradesh Forest Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, and we express our heartfelt gratitude to Shri Hitesh Malhotra, IFS, PCCF (Wildlife). CS acknowledges research grant received from DBT, New Delhi and facilities extended by Osmania University, Hyderabad.

OPEN ACCESS | FREE DOWNLOAD



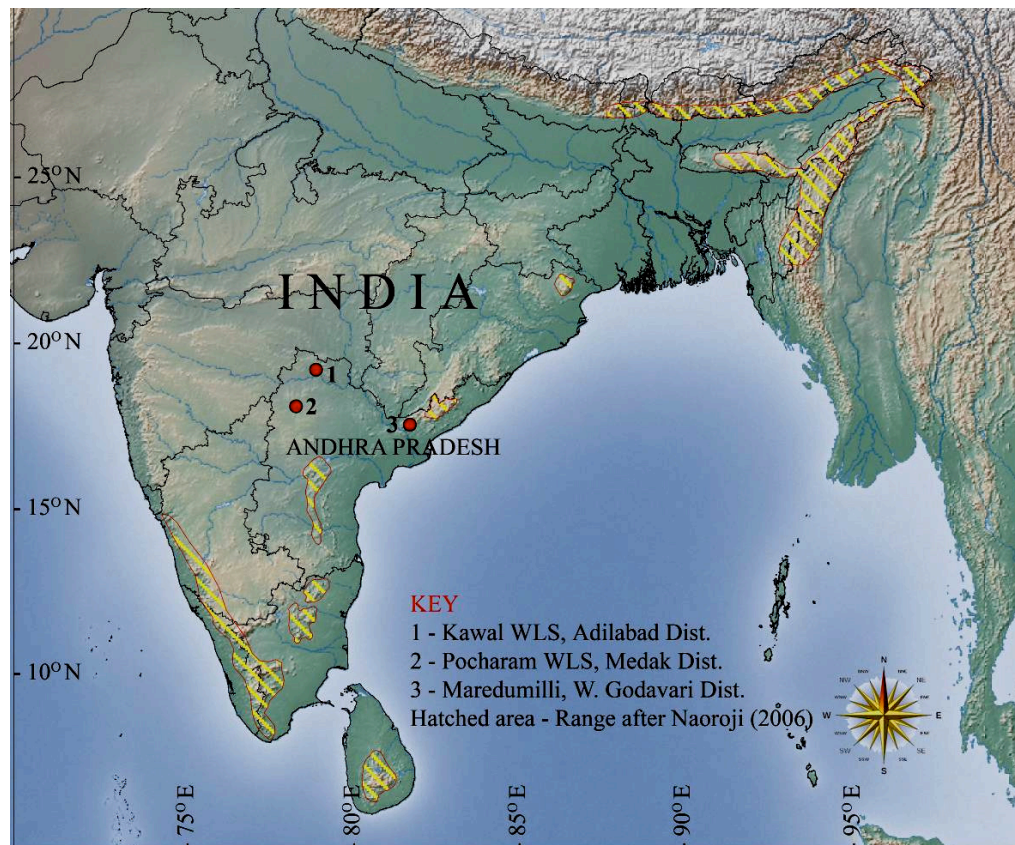


Image 1. Map depicting the distribution range of *Aviceda jerdoni* in India and site records from Andhra Pradesh

78°53'E) on 23 February 1998. The bird was identified as Jerdon's Baza based on the prominent white-tipped black crest, mesial stripe and distinct banding pattern on the ventral side while in flight. The vegetation of the Kawal Wildlife Sanctuary is tropical dry deciduous - mainly teak and mixed forest type.

More recently, on 6 February 2011, between 0900 and 1000 hr, a juvenile Jerdon's Baza was sighted (Image 2) near Dantepally (18°10'N & 78°19'E), Pocharam Wildlife Sanctuary by the first two authors. This bird was observed for well over 20 minutes and was heard calling. From the lake bund, we observed the Baza calling from an exposed perch on a tall tree surrounded by rice fields just beyond the bund - this lake forms a barrier between some low but dense dry deciduous forest on one side and cultivation on the other. The Baza was seen on the cultivated side. The call was a *pi-weeu* repeated after short intervals (Video 1). This was the only type of call made by this bird, heard by us. The bird was calling for quite some time and did not seem in any hurry to move away - having got some pictures and some video, we decided to go ahead along the bund, walking behind some tall

shrubbery, for a closer look; in the couple of minutes it took us to come out again, into the open, we found a much larger bird in place of the Baza - this was a Changeable Hawk-eagle *Nisaetus cirrhatus*. We infer that the Hawk-eagle had flown in displacing the Baza. We could, however, still hear the Baza calling - this time even closer. We then went further along the bund to see the Baza perched on a thin branch at the top of *Butea monosperma* calling. This time we again recorded the call, videoed and photographed the bird. After about a couple of minutes or so, the bird flew away. We were able to record a video of the takeoff. This video is our only source of under-wing views (Video 1). In addition to the Changeable Hawk-eagle seen above, we also observed a Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* in the vicinity (quite far from us, though) shortly after the Baza flew away. We are not clear if the loud persistent calling was in some way correlated with the presence of the two much larger raptors. The Baza's calling did not appear to elicit any kind of response from the Changeable Hawk-eagle. After the Baza had flown away, we found the Hawk-eagle sitting at the same perch for a long time (> 10

min) before we walked off to get better views of the Crested Serpent Eagle. Subsequent visits a day later, about one week later and about two months later did not yield any sighting of the Baza.

The bird was identified as juvenile Jerdon's Baza based on the combination of the following characters - small size (significantly small relative to the Changeable Hawk-eagle seen nearby, but larger than a Shikra), white-tipped black crest (Image 3), barring on the belly and flanks (Image 2), trailing edge of underwing lined with black (Video 1), mesial stripe (Image 3), indentations on the beak (Image 3), aspect, small size of feet relative to body (as against the Changeable Hawk-eagle, the only other raptor in the vicinity with an erect crest), and calls. The vegetation at Dantepally is that of a typical tropical dry deciduous secondary forest. It is interesting to note that both the inland records of the Jerdon's Baza were in dry deciduous forests. The subspecific status of the individual sighted could not be ascertained with confidence.

On 5 March 2011 at around 0640hr, the first author sighted an adult individual of Jerdon's Baza (Image 4 a&b) on a silk cotton tree (*Bombax* sp.) with unopened buds at Vanavihari Eco-tourism Complex, Maredumilli



Image 2. Juvenile Jerdon's Baza at Dantepally, Pocharam Wildlife Sanctuary, Medak District, Andhra Pradesh, India



Image 3. Close up of the head of the juvenile Jerdon's Baza at Dantepally, Pocharam Wildlife Sanctuary, Medak District, Andhra Pradesh, India depicting double indentations on the upper mandible, mesial stripe and white-tipped black crest

(17°35'N & 81°43'E), East Godavari District. The bird was observed to be silent while perching but was calling while in flight. From the calls heard there seemed to be two individuals, but only one was sighted (Video 2). The call was a *ki-kiya* but could not be recorded. The tree where the bird was perched was in a plot of land on a hillside adjacent to a densely forested slope - the forest had moist deciduous vegetation. The surrounding areas though, are planted with rubber, coffee and teak. The bird seemed to be unperturbed by human activities close by, beneath its perch. The bird was identified as an adult female. Light was too poor to ascertain the subspecies, however, it is clear from the photos that there is a lot of rufous coloration on the upper body. Furthermore, this taxon was sighted at Maredumilli and its vicinity on June 2011 (Image 5) and July 2011.

The sighting records in the recent past indicate that the Jerdon's Baza could be more widely distributed in its general range than earlier thought or it does undertake some local migration as the records from Kawal and Pocharam Wildlife Sanctuaries indicate. Although *A. jerdoni* is known to prefer well wooded tracts, the species as such is highly adaptable and has been reported from a variety of habitats from undisturbed



Image 4. Adult Jerdon's Baza at Mareduhilli, East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh, India.
A - side profile; B - frontal view showing mesial stripe

forests to urban areas and from sea level to 1200m (Grimmett et al. 1998; Naoroji 2006; Nair 2007). We feel that there may be resident populations of this species in northern Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh north of river Godavari and some individuals spread their range to nearby areas. Long term observations of the sighting and site records may yield interesting information on its distribution, habitat, and threats.

REFERENCES

Achar, K.P. & K.G. Nayak (2000). *A Field Guide to The Birds of Dakshina Kannada*. Bhuvanendra Nature Club, India, 214pp.

Ali, S. & S.D. Ripley (1987). *Compact handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan*. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 820pp.

Ferguson-Lees, J., D. Christie, P. Burton, K. Franklin & D. Mead (2001). *Raptors of The World*. Christopher Helm, London, 992pp.

Grimmett, R., C. Inskipp & T. Inskipp (1998). *A Guide to The Birds of The Indian Subcontinent*. Christopher Helm,

© Sathyannarayana Srinivasan



Image 5. Adult Jerdon's Baza in flight at Mareduhilli, East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh, India

London, 384pp.

Nair, M.V. (2007). On the occurrence of Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni* in Similipal Tiger Reserve, with some observations on behaviour and vocalization. *Indian Birds* 3(2): 61–62.

Naoroji, R. (2006). *Birds of Prey of The Indian Subcontinent*. OM Books International, New Delhi, India, 692pp.

Ripley, S.D, B.M. Beehler & K.S.R.K. Raju (1987). Birds of the Visakhapatnam Ghats, Andhra Pradesh. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 84(3): 540–559.

Robson, C. (2005). *A Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia*. New Holland Publishers, London, 544pp.

Srinivasulu, C. (2004). Birds of Kawal Wildlife Sanctuary, Andhra Pradesh, India. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 101(1): 1–25.

Vishnudas, C.K. (2007). Notes on the breeding of Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni* in Wayanad District, Kerala. *Indian Birds* 3(2): 62.

Wang, L.K. & K.S. Lim (2003). First record of Jerdon's Baza *Aviceda jerdoni* for Singapore. *Singapore Avifauna* 17(2): 30–31 (mimeo.).

Wells, D.R. (1999). *The Birds of The Thai-Malay Peninsular. Vol. I, Non-passerines*. Academic Press, London, 648pp.



Video 1. Juvenile Jerdon's Baza at Dantepally, Pocharam Wildlife Sanctuary, Medak District, Andhra Pradesh



Video 2. Adult Jerdon's Baza at Mareduhilli, East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh.

