

**FIRST RECORD OF CINEREOUS VULTURE
AEGYPIUS MONACHUS (FALCONIFORMES:
ACCIPITRIDAE) FROM SOUTHERN RAJASTHAN,
INDIA**

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Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* is a member of the family Accipitridae and order Falconiformes. According to IUCN it has been categorized as “Near Threatened” (Birdlife International 2013). This species is resident in the high mountains of Pakistan (Baluchistan) and in India it is distributed in Jammu and Kashmir (Gilgit), Punjab (Lahul), Assam and along the stretch of the Himalayan dry temperate zone (Ali & Ripley 2001). It is also a rare winter visitor to Sindh and northern India, Kutch, northern Gujarat and the central part of the country, and Nepal (Grimmett et al. 1999; Ali & Ripley 2001).

Ubeshwer (24°37'08.04"N & 73°33'45.41"E, elevation 872m) is a famous pilgrimage site located about 15km north-west of Udaipur City and has lush green vegetation with scanty human presence. On 09 December 2011, we were birding in the hills of Ubeshwer and we saw two large dark black vultures at a distance at about 08.08 hr. They were sitting on a large rock (Image 1). Without disturbing them we approached the birds carefully. At about 60m, we stopped and observed the

birds for about 25 minutes using binoculars (10x50 DPS). We also took photographs with the help of a Canon SX40 camera for further identification. After 25 minutes of our observation the birds flew away. The species was identified as the mature male Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* with the help of Grimmett et al. (1999) and Ali & Ripley (2007). During the observation it was noted that the bird had uniformly black or blackish-brown body, except for pale areas on the head and bill (Image 1). The female of the same species was observed on the same site twice on 03 January 2012 and 05 February 2012, respectively.

The Cinereous Vulture is a winter visitor to the northern and central part of India but in the peninsular region it is identified as a vagrant (Rao 2006) and its presence has been identified from Andhra Pradesh (Choudhury 1990), Kerala (Kumar 1991) and Karnataka (Subramanya 2001). In Rajasthan State, it is documented from Jodhpur, Bikaner, Bharatpur and Jaisalmer districts during winter (Chhangani 2009; Kushwaha & Kanaujia 2011; <http://www.kolkatabirds.com/bharatpurlist.html>). Many scientists have worked on the avian fauna (Sharma & Tehsin 1994; Sharma 1998; Chhangani 2002; Saxena 2003; Sangha & Devarshi 2006; Koli et al. 2011; Bhatnagar et al. 2007, 2011, 2013) of the southern part of the state and identified four species, namely, the Long-billed Vulture, the White-rumped Vulture, the Red-headed Vulture and the Egyptian Vulture. Therefore, the presence of this species in Udaipur District is a new addition to the bird list of the area.



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Image 1. Two Cinereous Vultures *Aegypius monachus* basking in Ubeshwer area, Udaipur

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