

Rediscovery of Crested Goshawk from southern Bengal, India

Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus* (Temminck, 1824) is a small-sized bird of prey belonging to the family Accipitridae. It is considered as Least Concern as per IUCN assessment in 2016 (BirdLife International 2016). This bird species is resident and can be found mainly in the Himalaya, northeastern portion and southwestern region of the Indian subcontinent where it prefers mostly the dense, deciduous, evergreen tropical, and subtropical forests (Grimmett et al. 2011). The population of this species is supposed to be declining due to the anthropogenic interventions and habitat destructions (BirdLife International 2016).

An adult individual was first observed on 27 February 2021 at Biharinath Hill, Bankura (23.5764°N, 86.9533°E) (Adhurya et al. 2021). The habitat was typically a tropical deciduous forest with mainly tree species like *Shorea robusta*, *Madhuca* sp., *Terminalis* spp., *Acacia*



Image 1. Crested Goshawk from Biharinath Hills, Bankura. © Debayan Gayen on 27 February 2021.

spp., *Bauhinia* spp., and their associated species. This forest is mainly used as a tourist destination and also villagers collect firewood from here. The bird was seen flying above the canopy layer and photographs were taken.

The bird was identified based on the following characteristics: (i) six primary fingers in flight, (ii) bright yellow iris, (iii) white throat with black mesial stripe, (iv)

alternative black and white tail bands of equal width, (v) white under tail covert, (vi) heavily dark brown streaked breast, and (vii) bold dark brown-barred belly (Naoroji 2006; Clark & Marks 2020). *Besra Accipiter virgatus* shows similar pattern to undertail covert, mesial stripe and tail banding. But it shows five fingers instead of six as in Crested Goshawk and also slimmer in appearance (Chow 2011). Another *Accipiter*,

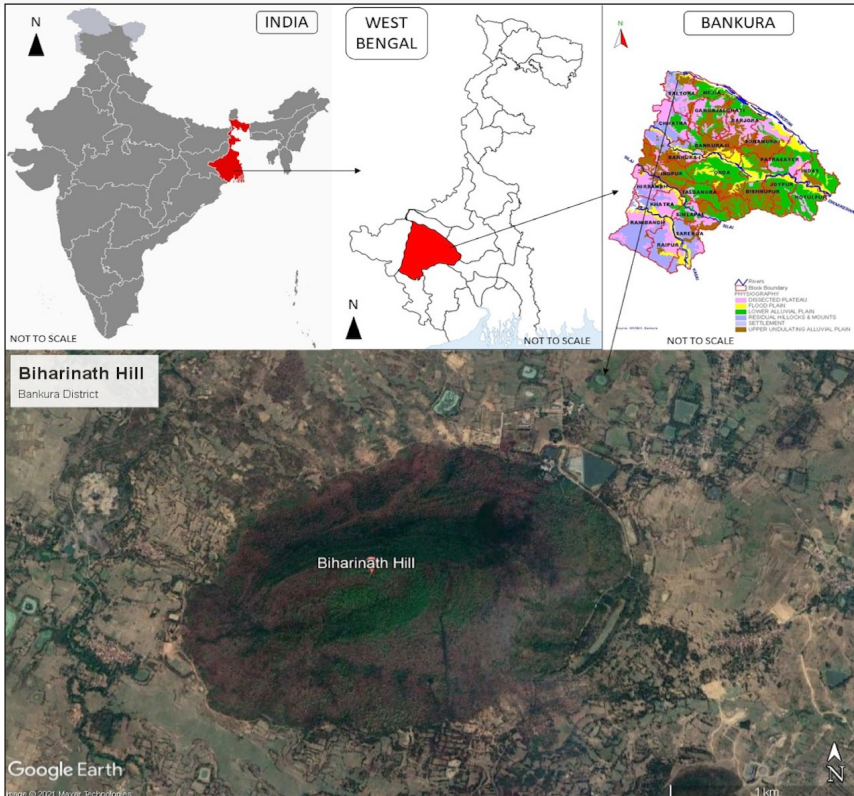


Image 2. Location from where Crested Goshawk was recorded.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* though shows similar tail banding, but it lacks the black mesial stripe (Grimmett et al. 2011).

The species was further recorded around the same location on 7 March 2021 (23.5828° N, 86.945° E) (Gayen 2021). Images of the bird and its habitat can be seen in Images 1-3, respectively.

The range maps found in standard works of (Grimmett et al. 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012), and online sources (BirdLife International 2021; eBird 2021), indicate

that the species is mainly found in the Himalayan foothills of West Bengal (the districts of Darjeeling,

Alipurduar, Jalpaiguri, and Cooch Behar).

There was only one previous record from southern West Bengal till date from Sundarban (Mukherjee 1975). It is probably second documentation of this species after 46 years from southern Bengal. This habitat is affected by various anthropogenic activities like habitat destruction, picnic, collection of firewood and many others. Recently, a forest fire was also noticed in the particular habitat of Crested Goshawk. Hence, conservation of the habitat of this species is the prime need of the hour from the concerned authorities.



Image 3. Habitat of Crested Goshawk from Biharinath Hills, Bankura.

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