



*Research Paper*

**SIGHTING OF ORIENTAL PIED HORNBILL (*Anthracoceros albirostris*)  
FROM GOMATI FOREST DIVISION, TRIPURA WITH A NOTES ON ITS  
HABITAT STRUCTURE AND CONSERVATION THREAT**

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This communication describes sightings of the Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris* in Gomati Forest Division (IBA: A1,A4i), Tripura, North East India after a gap of many years or probably for the first time. On 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016 at 0810 hrs author as a part of avian fauna exploration field study at nearby area of Bampur Forest Beat (BFB) under Gomati Forest Division, 6.5 Km away from Amarpur town, district Gomati Tripura sighted a pair of Oriental Pied Hornbill comprising male and female individual in twig of tree *Ficus hispida* where they came from adjoining vegetation complex paying a short flight and after staying few minutes they moved to *Carica papaya* plant where they are eating ripen fruits. After eating a some part of fruits they take off and perched on a nearby *Oroxylum indicum* tree for a minutes and back to feed on fruit and this behaviours during feeding most probably monitoring whether any threats present or not. The birds were observed for at least 18-20 minutes and were photographed with the help of high resolution digital camera (NIKON COOPIX P610) and the identification at the species level was confirmed by following field guides (Ali, S., and Ripley, S. D., 1983; Ali S. 1996).

The landscape of the study area comprises numerous small hills covered with tropical semi ever green forest, tropical moist deciduous forest, riparian forest, high level sal forest, grass land, bamboo, manmade rubber plantation and sparsely distributed human habitation. The entire area stretching between 23<sup>o</sup>33/35.12// N and 91<sup>o</sup>.38/00.12// E and an average elevation of 49 meters above the sea level. The area receives an annual rainfall of about 180.76 mm. The minimum and maximum temperature varies between 23.66<sup>o</sup> C and 43.88<sup>o</sup> C. It is experienced tropical climate with three distinct seasons throughout the year ie. summer, winter and autumn. Agriculture is poorly developed, mainly they are practice Jhum cultivation but recently it is gradually replace by rubber plantation and most of people depend solely on forests for their daily need. The available tree species in the study area is *Shorea robusta*, *Tectona grandis*, *Dipterocarpus turbinatus* Gaertn. f., *Schima wallichii* (DC.) Korth, *Artocarpus lacucha* Roxb., *Dillenia pentagyna* Roxb., *Ficus hispida* L. f., *Syzygium cumini* (L.) Skeels, *Albizia procera* (Roxb.) Benth, *Alstonia scholaris* (L.) R. Br., *Terminalia bellirica* (Gaertn.) Roxb., *Oroxylum*

*indicum*, *Mangifera indica*, *Artocarpus heterophyllus*, *Bombax ceiva*, *Tona ciliata*, *Cassia fistula* etc.

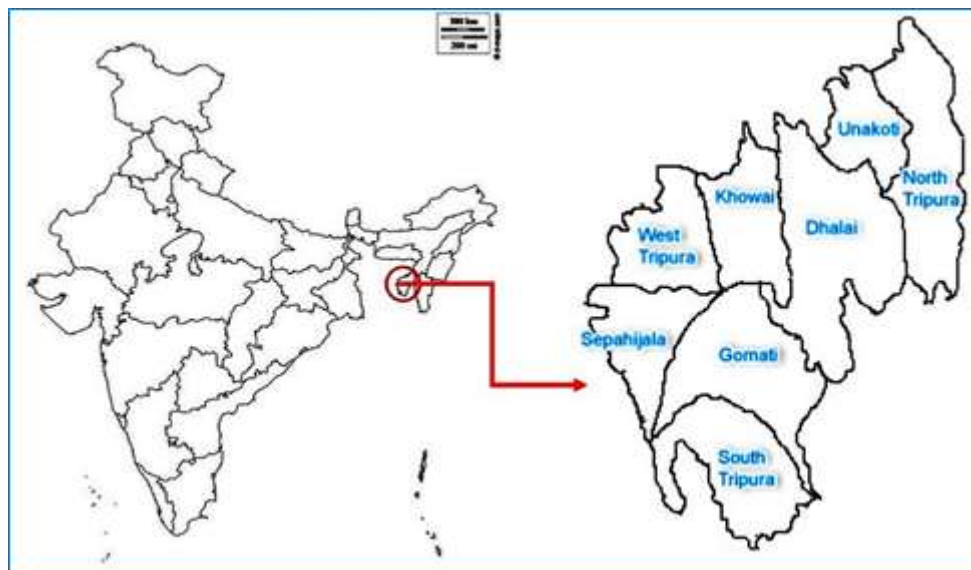


Fig 1: Location map of study area



Fig 2: Satellite map of study area

The Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris* belonging to the family Bucerotidae considered as Least Concern species under red list category of IUCN(IUCN 2016) and is found in the Indian Subcontinent and throughout Southeast Asia ranging across Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, Eastern and Northern India, Indonesia, Laos, North peninsular Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Singapore, Thailand, Tibet, Vietnam and the Sunda shelf islands. In Indian region, the widely distributed state is Delhi, Haryana, the

Himalaya Foothills states to Arunachal Pradesh (Arafat et al 2015; Ved N 2011; Choudhury A 2010; BirdLife International, 2016. Species factsheet).

Only little work has carried out by the host of researcher for exploration of the avian fauna of the Tripura (Majumder *et al.* 2002; Choudhury 2010; Bhattacharjee 2013). In earlier studies regarding the presence of this species in Tripura, Eastern Himalaya Endemic Bird Area (EBA 130) was only in the form of preserved casqued and feathers were seen at a few huts near Gondachara in Dhalai district. Call heard near Tripura-Mizoram border (Jampui Tlang) in April 2000 (Choudhury 2010). But present records of the species from BFB where Gomati River is flow which is actually originated from Gomati Lake show that the species is still distributed in Gomati district of Tripura, North East India.



**Figure: Different activity during sighting**

Like other states of the northeast, Tripura also suffers from the problems of shifting cultivation (jhum), deforestation and unsustainable hunting since long time. Oriental Pied Hornbill is adapted to habited changes and able to thrive around human habitation as long as there is an ample supply of food and large mature trees for nesting (Chong 1998). This probably the main reason for reappearance this species in BFB, a part of Gomati Wildlife Sanctuary. The key threats to the study area is large scale habitat loss due to unscientific jhum cultivation and monoculture rubber plantation which decrease the availability of suitable nesting and fruiting trees and in addition to that the species are subject to some hunting pressure as casqued are sold as souvenirs in illegal trade market. Besides age old practice of shifting agriculture, the habitat is undergoing rapid transformation due to over exploitation of forest products, tree felling, developmental activities (bricks industries) which is getting accelerated after declaration Amarpur-Teliamura road as National Highway etc. are the most important threats for conservation aspects. Conservation efforts such as protecting the nesting sites, plantation of their fodder plant, reduce of disturbance level by the children as they are very much interested to getting a close view practical knowledge about this

important bird which they are learned from books and also generate awareness among local people to develop understanding the conservation importance of the species. Besides that the role of forest department officials are not deniable. Further study is required to identify the nesting sites, fodder plants, daily activity budget and landscape use in diverse habitats to understand their ecological tolerance and to design appropriate conservation strategies.

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