

Ciconia nigra. Black Stork.

This is probably an annual visitor to the upper reaches of the Irrawaddy, as I saw two large gatherings on sandbanks in November 1934, one being in exactly the same place as I observed them in November 1933.

Ardea imperialis. Great White-bellied Heron.

I again found this bird by no means uncommon between Sinbo and Myitkyina in November 1934. Individuals were seen at various places along the river and were not at all shy, feeding close to villages, and allowing a launch to approach quite near to them, before they took to flight.

Podiceps c. cristatus. Great Crested Grebe.

There are two previous recorded occurrences of this Grebe from the District but very few Burma records otherwise. On November 20th, 1934, I saw one on the river a few miles south of Myitkyina, and shot one of a pair on the Hokat jheel still further south. On November 21st I saw one swimming with a party of cormorants near Sinbo.

MYITKYINA,

UPPER BURMA.

December 21, 1934.

J. K. STANFORD,

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XII.—MATING HABITS OF MYNAHS AND CROWS.

Between January and March, I had occasion to observe the pairing habits of certain birds. My attention was attracted by the extraordinary noise made by some Common Mynahs (*Acridotheres tristis*). To me, it seemed, that a pair of them were in a deadly combat. I watched them from a distance. A third one suddenly appeared on the scene but it remained an indifferent spectator. The interesting aspect of the combat was, that though the participants could have separated and taken to wing they continued the struggle. Each fiercely pecked at the other's beak, legs, wings or body. Finally the combat ended. The birds lay by each other with their vents apposed. This continued for about 15 seconds, then they parted and flew off.

It was then, I concluded that the strenuous combat may have been only a method of courtship or 'love play' and the apparent rest they took was actual copulation.

I was able to watch the behaviour of some mynahs two days later when two pairs were through a similar performance. They began their 'fight' on the branches and the house-tops and finally fell to the ground in the course of the combat. What I presume was that copulation took place during the 10-15 seconds of quiescence which followed. The whole performance was repeated at short intervals.

It is interesting to compare this habit of mynahs with the normal pairing habits of birds. The same method is apparently adopted by crows. Coitus is presumably effected side by side with



Varghese, K. I. 1935. "Mating Habits of Mynahs and Crows." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 38, 186–187.

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