

bird presented no identification problems. Nevertheless, I recognised its local rarity (I suspected that it had not previously been documented as occurring in Goa), and took some hurried field notes. During my subsequent closer approach I also managed to obtain some identifiable digitised images.

We were able to compare the bird directly with the neighbouring Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters and there were also small numbers of Green Bee-eaters *M. orientalis* in the area for further comparison.

Description

The first thing that caught my attention was the Blue-cheeked Bee-eater's bright green upperparts.

Other features that separated it from the neighbouring Blue-tailed Bee-eaters included – prominent bluish-whitish supercilia above a narrow black ear-covert 'face mask'. The supercilia were short (extending behind the eye by a distance not much more than the diameter of the eye itself), and blunt ended at the rear. They appeared to join narrowly on the forehead.

The Blue-cheeked also lacked any suggestion of a blue

hue to its rump and tail with both of these areas being greenish and essentially concolorous with its upperparts. The bird possessed whitish sides to its chin and a similarly coloured narrow horizontal stripe below its black eye mask.

The chin and throat were coppery-orange-paler and less intensely coloured or less 'saturated' than the same feather tracts on the Blue-tailed. The remainder of its underparts were uniformly greenish, being slightly paler than its upperparts.

An orange-copper hue to its underwing coverts, while only seen fleetingly when the bird flew, appeared not very much different to that of the Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, but possibly contrasted more with the darker trailing edge to the secondaries (and possibly inner primaries?).

Structurally the Blue-cheeked Bee-eater appeared very similar to the Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, but was possibly slightly slimmer and 'rangier'. In particular it seemed to be narrower across the body this being especially noticeable in its slimmer rump. The bird's bill also appeared very subtly finer and its crown slightly flatter. The Blue-cheeked Bee-eater's legs were possibly slightly shorter than those of its congeners and, perhaps as a result of this, it more often adopted a horizontal posture when perched on the power lines.

7. MALABAR PIED HORNBILL *ANTHRACOCEROS CORONATUS* PREYING ON SPOTTED DOVE IN BANDHAVGARH NATIONAL PARK¹

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On March 24, 2006 at 1600 hrs while travelling inside the Bandhavgarh National Park in Madhya Pradesh, India, for fieldwork related to tiger population estimation, I observed a Malabar Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros coronatus* perched about 45 m away on a *Cassia fistula* tree holding a prey in its beak. After observing through a pair of binoculars (7 x 35) I confirmed that the prey was a Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*. The Dove was still alive and the Hornbill was trying to kill it by dashing it against the branch on which it

was perched. I observed the Hornbill for about 10 minutes, after which the Hornbill flew away with the dead Dove in its beak.

Malabar Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros coronatus* is mainly frugivorous, but can also subsist on small reptiles, mice and juvenile birds as has been reported by Ali and Ripley (1987). According to BirdLife International (2004), this species is omnivorous, taking fruit, fish and small mammals. However, there are no reports of it feeding on adult Spotted Doves.

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