

Avifaunal record of Great Nicobar Glossy Starling or Asian Glossy Starling (*Aplonis panayensis albiris*, Abdulali, 1967) from Great Nicobar Island, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, India

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ABSTRACT

Great Nicobar Glossy Starling or Asian Glossy Starling (*Aplonis panayensis albiris*) was come across near Suruchi Restaurant, Zero Point, Great Nicobar Island. More than 50 individuals seen on *Ficus* and Coconut trees with white iris and body colour, bill color, legs and feet were black. *Aplonis panayensis* is “Least Concern” however according to IUCN status *Aplonis panayensis albiris* is Not Evaluated.

Keywords: *Aplonis panayensis albiris*, Tukkuliv, Great Nicobar Island, Least Concern

INTRODUCTION

Andaman & Nicobar is the one of the greatly endowed biogeographic areas of Indian biodiversity. This area representing wide variety of biodiversity components with high levels of endemism mainly consisting more than 52 Mammal species, 244 Bird species and 76 Reptile species in which 39% Birds and 32% Reptiles are Endemic (Vishwakannan, 2008). Great Nicobar Island is situated in the south of 10⁰Channel is one of the largest Island of Nicobar Island group. It covers about 1045 km². “Campbell Bay National Park” is situated in the Great Nicobar Island, where temperature ranges between 22⁰C to 32⁰C and relative humidity varies from 65% to 91%. According to Champion and Seth, 1968 (a revised survey of the forest type of India) the forest of these islands can be classified under the following types:

- (i) Giant evergreen forests
- (ii) Andaman tropical evergreen forest
- (iii) Southern hill top tropical evergreen forest
- (iv) Andaman semi-evergreen forest
- (v) Andaman moist deciduous forest
- (vi) Littoral forests
- (vii) Mangrove forest (Tikader, 1984)

Floral diversity containing 648 species belongs to 422 genera and 142 families, out of which 48 species are endemic. This paper is the sighting report of Great Nicobar Glossy Starling (*Aplonis panayensis albiris*, Abdulali, 1967) from the Great Nicobar Island. On 25 Aug 2015 at about 1100 Hrs we encountered Great Nicobar Glossy Starling (*Aplonis panayensis albiris*, Abdulali, 1967) at “Zero point” near Suruchi restaurant.

METHODOLOGY

Several surveys have been conducted to document the avian diversity of the study area, Campbell Bay and

nearby area of Great Nicobar Islands of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, India (Figure 1). Mainly Ad hoc, line transect, point count method and call census were used for the documentation of species, occurrence and population trend.

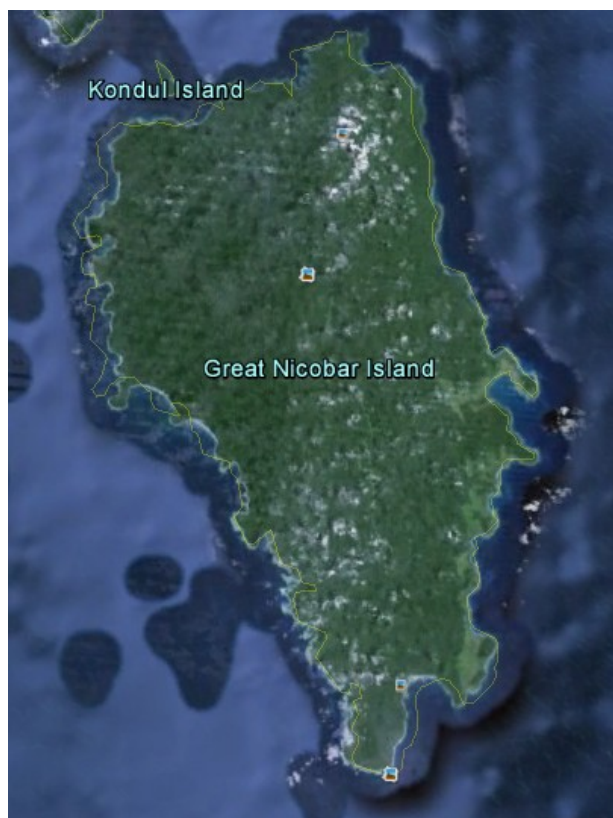


Figure 1. Map of Great Nicobar Island

Available microhabitats thoroughly explored for the searching of species. Field workers were equipped with digital camera (Canon SX10, Canon 1200D), binoculars, field guide books, observation sheets for the proper observations.

Direct count methods were adopted for the documentation. Birds were identified with the help of various diagnostic keys Grimmett *et al.* (1999, 2011); Kazmierczak and Perlo (2006); Manakandan *et al.* (2011); Norman (2014) and Salim (2012). Representative cases were photographed from different angles in the nature to confirm the species of interest.

Study Area: The study area Great Nicobar Island is politically part of India's one of the Union Territory Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Great Nicobar island is geographically situated at 7°01'17.43"N, 93°48'29'.05"E. Geographical area is 1045 km² highest elevation is 642 m. Distance from Port Blair is 300 nautical miles. These areas are inhabited by the population of Shompen indigenous tribes and Nicobari tribe whom mainly dependent to forest for their daily needs viz. food, fodder and other aspects.

Diagnostic features of *Aplonis panayensis albiris*

On 25 Aug 2015 at about 1100 Hrs we have encountered Great Nicobar Glossy Starling (*Aplonis panayensis albiris*, Abdulali, 1967) near Suruchi Restaurant, Zero Point. More than 50 numbers of individuals seen on *Ficus* and Coconut trees.

***Aplonis panayensis albiris*:** Local name is "Tukkuliv". Body length is approx 22 cm. Adult with white iris and black in body colour, bill color, legs and feet were also black. In young (immature), body colour was grayish black with heavily white streaked. Bill, legs and feet's color Greyish black and white iris. Gregarious and Sociable. Feeds on Insects, barriers and small fruit of *Ficus* species (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Great Nicobar Glossy Starling or Asian Glossy Starling (*Aplonis panayensis albiris*, Abdulali, 1967)

Status common at Campbell bay Island. Easily seen at Jetty Bazar, Kamal Basti, RPRS Colony, Babu Lane, Low Point, Zero Point, Gadda Basti, Fishermen's Colony and Joginder Nagar.

Aplonis panayensis is "Least Concern". However, according to IUCN status *Aplonis panayensis albiris* has not yet been assessed for the IUCN Red List, but is mentioned in the Catalogue of Life. Thus, we classified the *Aplonis panayensis albiris* as "Not Evaluated".

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