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Red crested pochard on flight

SIRAJUL HOSSAIN

Kurol of the haor



Kurol perching on Hijol branches

DR REZA KHAN



Golabari village

DR REZA KHAN



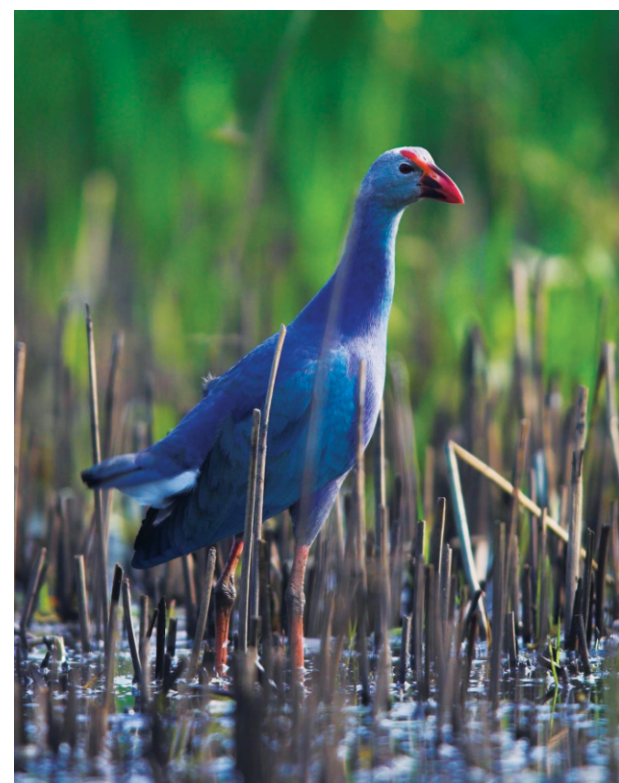
Kurol on a majestic flight

DR REZA KHAN



The Golabari nest

DR REZA KHAN



Purple moorhen

SIRAJUL HOSSAIN

A Sleepy village named Golabari sits on the bank of the River Louwrai that travels from Tanguar Haor towards Sunamganj by joining the Surma River. For an average Bangladeshi village Golabari is possibly a tiny one with just a dozen or so hamlets. Its next door neighbour is Joypara village which is a little larger

the nest. She followed the suit and both chased away whatever other birds were in the vicinity.

Golabari village sits in a rather north-south position. In the north there is a two-hectare area left abandoned by the villagers that has overgrown with indigenous trees such as Baruna, Hijol and Koroch,

a huge nest with sticks. Obviously, the size of the nest gets bigger every year because the same thing gets the makeover. because of this heavy load of nesting materials, a nesting tree sometimes breaks down. In such a case the Kurol may choose another nest tree in the same area or move out to a new location.

attempt to have a look at the eggs, take their weight and measurements. The villagers assured me that they do not disturb the Kurols. They also confirmed that the Kurols have not snatched away any of their domestic ducks that loiter within 50 metres of the nest but kill the migratory ducks, Eurasian Coot, Purple Moorhens

than it. Within next 10 square kilometers or so there are no other human habitations. My attention was drawn to the hamlet when I spotted a large nest on top a tall Baruna (*Crateva nurvala*) tree while passing by it on an engine boat destined for the Tanguar Haor.

I asked our boatman Tajud to anchor. I left the boat and walked up to the village folk who were basking in the mild mid-day sun after a dip in the nearby river. When I asked them whether the nest was of a Kurol, Kura, Bow-ol or Pallas's/Ring-tailed Fishing Eagle the whole folk replied in affirmative. Before I could continue my conversation with the villagers further the female Kurol stood up on the nest, relaxed its muscles a bit and produced its very loud call that sounded like "krru-krru-krowl-krowl". Its call was immediately replied by her male partner from miles away. He also appeared in the scene in no time and started circling over

reeds, sedges and Haor Figs. As a Khash land it has been given to the tiny tin-shed mosque owned by the village. The graveyard is also here. As it is commons property, Golabari residents usually do not use it for timber and firewood harvesting but for cattle grazing. So it serves as a safe haven for many birds, reptiles, insects and rats. The Kurol couple are just one of them.

By the side of the nesting area is the vast stretch of Tanguar Haor where we counted over 3,000 waterfowl. Kurol watches its preys from the top a tall tree like Hijol, Koroch and Baruna and swoop on the unsuspecting waterfowl foraging in water. The villagers told me that a Kurol kills at least two ducks a day.

The village elderly told me that the Kurol is using this site for the past one decade or so. Kurol starts building or rather decommissioning old nests during the onset of winter. After an elaborate courtship it builds

This Golabari nest seemed at least three years old. It is atop a Baruna tree at a height of about 6 metres. The tree was in bloom. Traditionally the Kurol lays and incubates 2 eggs. It takes more than a month of incubation before the chicks hatch. The parents take care of the chicks for up to 45 days during which they bring in freshly killed food, tear these into small pieces and offer them to the chicks.

I took the initiative to go closer to the nest to find out what kind of food the birds were eating. Both the Kurols flew close to their nest as they saw me walking up to the tree, hovered over the nest and chased away all the crows and Brahminy kites loitering around. But they seemed to be too polite towards me and my helper Doblu as we passed under the nesting tree and moved towards their feeding area.

As I did not want to disturb the breeding pair, I did not

and Geese.

Both the parents and their offspring leave the nesting area during spring and spend the remaining part of the year somewhere in Meghalaya and Assam in India.

Within a short time we left the nesting area and headed for the Haor. During one and a half-day stay in the Haor and sleeping in the boat I also saw four more Kurols in Tanguar Beel and three neighbouring beels.

Kurol is an endangered species. As far as I know there are hardly 25 pairs of Kurol in Bangladesh. About 50 years back it was a permanent resident of the country. Now it is a breeding migrant only in winter. However, it is heartening to note that some of this rare eagle species are still breeding on our soil.

Story: DR REZA KHAN

BIRD WATCHING WITH DR REZA



Indian/ Common Grey Hornbill
Ocyrocus birostris

THIS hornbill is the smallest of our Dhanesh Pakhi. Once it used to live in the north-western Bangladesh but it is now feared Extinct. It has a large bill that is very spongy and light. This Dhanesh is also the least colourful amongst the hornbill species we have. It lived outside of our forests, preferring home-stead woodlands. Hornbill builds nest in tree hollows and the female seals herself inside the nest for the entire period of incubation when the male in attendance feeds her through a small side opening of the nest. Omnivore. It has disappeared due to habitat loss.

Actual size ±50cm.