

An Overview of The Breeding Behaviour of Indian Grey Hornbill in Nagpur, Maharashtra

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Indian Grey Hornbill (*Ocyrceros birostris*) is the only hornbill species in India which is also found in urban habitats besides in forested areas. Its breeding behaviour was studied for two consecutive breeding cycles during 2007 and 2009 in an urban environment in Nagpur city, Maharashtra. In 2007, four nests were located and in 2008, two additional nests (thus a total of six nests) were located. The date of incarceration of the female was between 9 March and 2 April (mean date 20 March+12 days) (n=16). The average duration of incarceration of the female inside the nest was 65.5+4.5 days (n=12). The nesting cycle completed in 93.5+5days (n=9). Only 15 chicks edged from the 16 nesting attempts. In three nesting attempts, the chicks disappeared during the period of a few days after the female had left the

nest and the nest cavity had yet to be sealed back by the chicks. This appeared to be the most vulnerable period of the hornbill's breeding cycle.

Inter-specific and intra-specific competition for nest sites and for food with other birds was documented. It was found that there is severe competition for nest sites and all the nests were occupied by other bird species as soon as the hornbills vacated the nest cavities. The social behaviour of the hornbills was studied and the hornbills were found to indulge in bill-grappling and aerial jousting behaviour which were not reported previously in the species. The nest sanitation methods were studied and some interesting findings were documented.