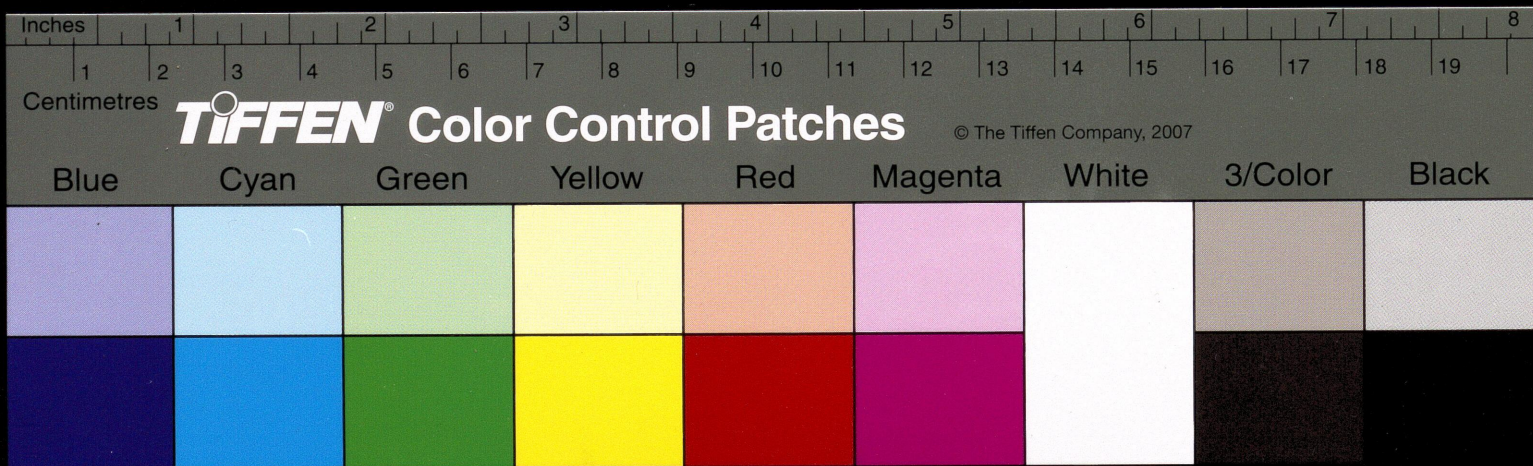


RK BHATNAGAR

9.XI.73. New Delhi

# Newsletter for Birdwatchers

VOL XIII NO. 11 NOVEMBER 1973



NEWSLETTER FOR  
BIRDPWATCHERS

Volume 13, Number 11

November 1973

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THE EDITOR DEPARTS

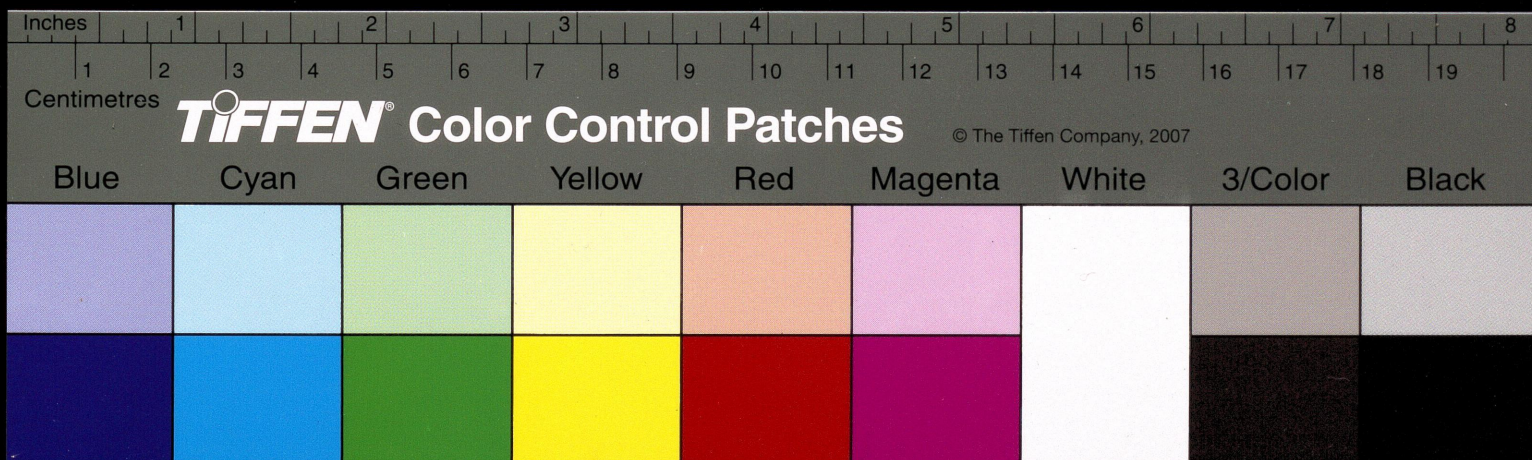
Zafar Futehally

The Editor is shifting his residence to Bangalore from November and though he will continue to be in close touch with Bombay and with the Newsletter, for reasons of practical convenience it is necessary to entrust the editing and publishing to a permanent resident of Bombay. It is fortunate that S.V. Nilakanta, with whom all readers of the Newsletter are familiar, has agreed to undertake this responsibility. He could only do so, of course, because of the willing assistance of J. S. Serrao who has been such a help to the Newsletter all these years.

The first issue of the Newsletter was brought out in December 1960 and it might interest readers to be reminded of the comments made by some of the people to whom the Editor wrote enquiring whether such a venture would be worth while and what form it should take:

" I do not think the time is ripe yet for forming such a Society .... I would suggest forming local ornithological clubs. "

" The remarks about the three rather languishing zoological institutions is quite true ... How can we be sure that politics will not invade our Society also. Under the circumstances, don't you think it would be advisable to explore thoroughly the suggestion about regional clubs? "















as possible. To the serious bird student the Checklist, together with the Catalogue of Bird specimens in the BNHS Collection which the author publishes in the Society's Journal from time to time and the Handbooks by Drs Sálím Ali & S. Dillon Ripley will help in intelligently collecting over the State and thus enable to fill the gaps in our knowledge.

J. S. Serrao

Readers interested in purchasing copies of the Checklist may contact J. S. Serrao. - Ed.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

In accepting the onerous responsibility of undertaking to edit and publish the Newsletter, I am fully aware of my shortcomings and it will be no easy matter to successfully continue the activities of such an efficient and experienced Editor as Mr Zafar Futehally.

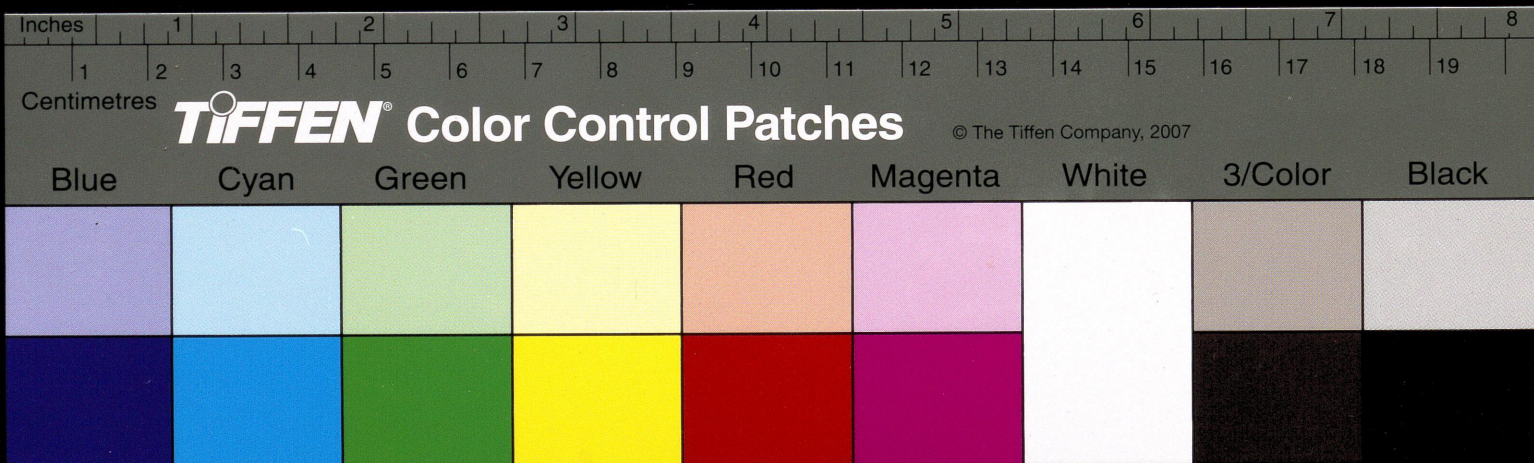
However, as the Newsletter is mainly sustained by articles contributed through the energy and enthusiasm of its readers, I appeal to our readers to continue their efforts.

In this connection, readers may rest assured that all contributions are appreciated. At times some articles are not published for many months owing to limitations in the size of our modest publication, and the necessity to select each month a representative variety of matter. Therefore readers and contributors should not stop writing just because they feel that a particular observation is not worthy of publication. Perhaps even the mere sighting of a bird at a particular place on a particular date may establish some valuable record. Diffidence and shyness in the recording of observations is one of the stumbling blocks in the progress of an organization like ours.

CORRESPONDENCE

Is human disturbance an effective protection for communal roosts of birds?

K. K. Neelakantan's interesting observations on the roost of the Whiteheaded Myna (Sturnus malabaricus) have set me thinking again about a remark of Helen Spurway. She told me that both in Bhubaneshwar and Hyderabad she has been struck with the fact that the birds seem to prefer the most lighted and noisiest places for their communal roost. When Anil Mahabal and I mapped the communal roosts of the Indian Myna (Acridotheres tristis) in Poona, we also noticed that all the roosts were located on the periphery of the city, and always in spots



with good lighting and a fair amount of traffic around them. The birds spend the day feeding mostly in the fields surrounding the city, but come back to the city for the night. I have also seen the Indian Mynas roosting in the railway station at Viramgam; when I changed trains there one night at 1.00 a.m., it certainly did not appear like an ideal place for a quiet night's rest. All these observations suggest to me that the birds do find some sort of protection from nocturnal predators in such well-lit and disturbed spots, and act on the belief that a disturbed night's sleep is a better bargain than an eternal one.

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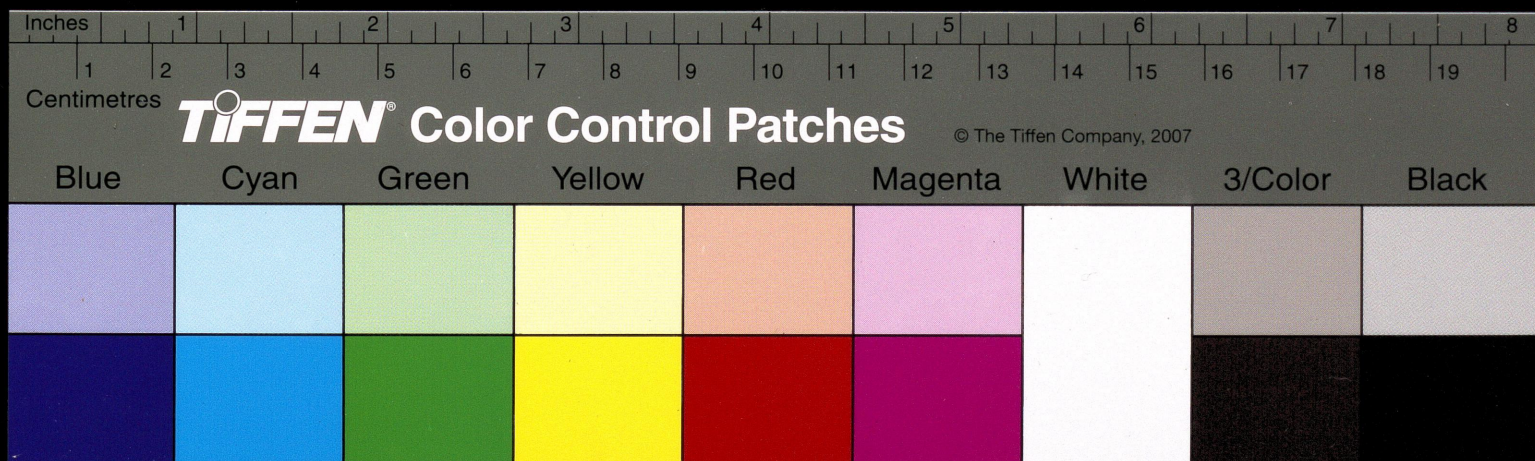
#### House Crow feeding a juvenile Jungle Crow

On 23rd June 1972 I witnessed an interesting phenomenon which I report here.

I was standing on a balcony on the fifth floor of Girnar Apartments, Pali Hill, Bandra, Bombay (I was visiting my relatives) idly watching a mixed group of about 20 or so House Crows and Jungle Crows hobnobbing on the terrace of a much lower building nearby. The smarter House Crows were seen to constantly harass their clumsier jungle relatives some of which were still not of full adult status. As I watched them I saw a juvenile Jungle Crow approach an adult House Crow whose throat was gorged with food and beg in the characteristic fashion: crouched, shivering, with head thrown back and open gape all the while emitting soft caws. Naturally I expected the House Crow to ignore the young one and move away, but to my surprise it did not. On the other hand the House Crow inserted its beak into the Jungle Crow's open gape and disgorged some food. This occurred three times in succession and the House Crow then moved away apparently because its throat was empty.

Crows feeding the young of parasitic species which have hatched in their (the crow's) nests is well documented. However, the feeding of young of one species by an adult of a congeneric, but not conspecific, species especially in an open field situation surprised me. In a personal conversation Dr Salim Ali mentioned having encountered this phenomenon in some other birds. Is this phenomenon not uncommon in nature? Have any of our members observed similar instances?

S. R. Amladi  
Bombay







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