

First record of *Acridotheres ginginianus* (Latham, 1790) (Passeriformes: Sturnidae) in Iraq

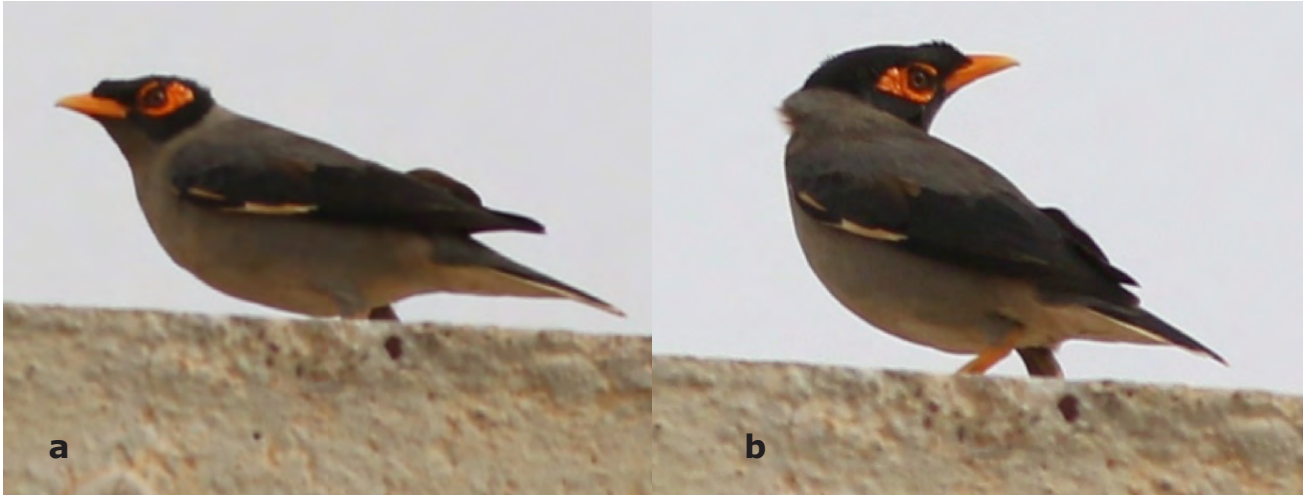


Image a & b - Bank Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus* in Al-Majara dumpsite in southern Iraq.
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Bank Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus* (Latham, 1790) occurs in the northern Indian subcontinent from central Pakistan and the Himalayan foothills east to south of Nepal and Assam, south to Sind, northern and central India (Gujarat, central Maharashtra, south of Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal), and west of Bangladesh (Craig & Feare 2018).

In the Middle East, Bank Myna populations originated from escapees. Breeding populations established from escapees in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Oman (Porter & Aspinall 2010). It is vagrant to Iran, where a flock of 10 individuals was recorded in April 2017 (Shokouhi et al. 2018).

On 29 March 2015, two adult individuals of the species were sighted foraging and perching frequently on concrete embankment in Al-Majara dumpsite (31.004°N & 47.642°E), ca. 17km to the southwest of Al-Nashwa Village in Majnoon area, Basra Province, southern Iraq.

The birds were observed for 20min from ca. 30m away. One of the individuals was photographed using a Canon ESO 7D Mark II with lens Canon EF 400mm (f 5.6). The birds resembled the Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* (Linnaeus, 1766) but were rather smaller. Each individual had a slate-grey body, a black head with a short crest on the crown and bare, bright orange-red patch around the eyes, and a deep orange heavy

bill. In flight, the birds had large rusty-buff patches across bases of primaries feathers and pale edges in the outer tail feathers.

Bank Myna is not listed in the avifauna of Iraq (Salim et al. 2012); therefore, this is the first confirmed occurrence of this species in southern Iraq. Moreover, it has not been recorded as one of the cage birds in the local animal markets in southern Iraq. The observed Bank Mynas are vagrants to Iraq and probably originated from the nearest breeding population in Kuwait that requires confirmation.

IUCN Red List status: Least Concern

References

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