

The first record of Grey-headed Fish-Eagle and Brown-breasted Flycatcher from Makwanpur District of Nepal

The Grey-headed Fish-Eagle *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus* is a raptor species, widely distributed in countries across southern and southeastern Asia (Birdlife International 2023). It lives near slow-moving rivers and lakes in forested areas, feeding almost entirely on fish, eating on perch, and occasionally in flight (Grimmett et al. 2016).

The species is listed as 'Near Threatened' (Birdlife International 2023) internationally, and it has been listed as Critically Endangered in Nepal's National Red Data Book (Inskipp et al. 2016) showing that the species is facing more threats nationally. It is a rare and local inhabitant of Nepal, that has been observed in Kaski, Chitwan, Kanchanpur, Bardiya, Kailali, Dang, Bara, Sunsari, and Morang districts (Inskipp et al. 2016).

Brown-breasted Flycatcher *Muscicapa muttui* is a forest



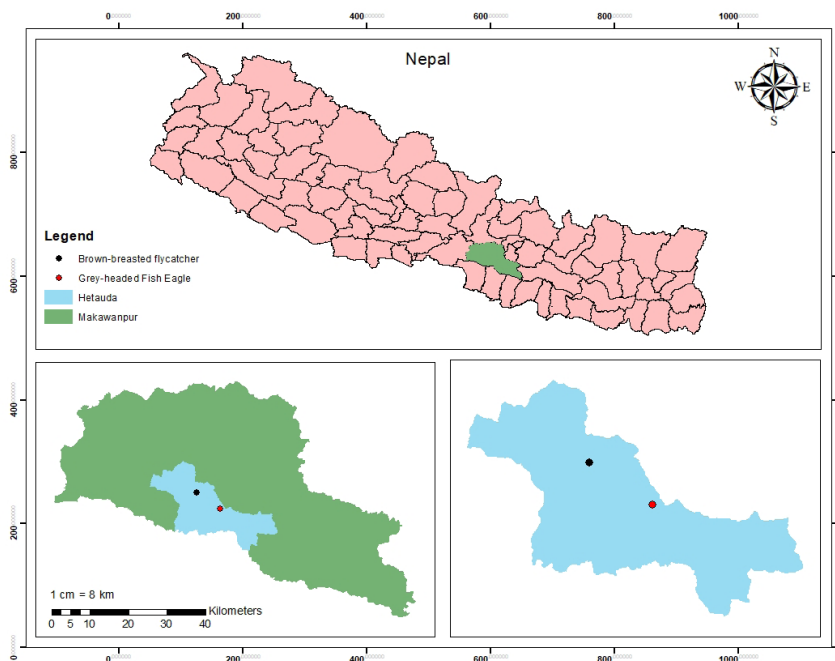
A Grey-headed Fish-Eagle observed in Hetauda, Makwanpur. © Nikeet Pradhan.



A Brown-breasted Flycatcher perched on the wire observed in Hetauda, Makwanpur. © Nikeet Pradhan.



A Grey-headed Fish-Eagle in flight. © Nikeet Pradhan.



Map showing the records of Grey-headed Fish-Eagle and Brown-breasted Flycatcher.

bird belonging to the family Muscipidae. The species is found in the broadleaved forest, and its typical winter habitat in India is evergreen

for the most part resting, frequenting thick shrubs and tangles, forest margins, and amid dense vegetation near rocky streams (Ali & Ripley

1987). It is classified as 'Least Concern' in both global and national status; however, the population trend is declining (BirdLife International 2023). There are just a few reports of this vagrant species in Nepal, from the districts of Kathmandu, Kaski, Sunsari, Lalitpur, Chitwan, and Taplejung.

Both of these species have not been recorded from the Makwanpur District yet (Inskipp et al. 2016; eBird 2023), making this the first record of the species in Makwanpur District, Nepal.

The observation was made during an ornithological survey using the point count method and the line transect method in the Makwanpur District's Nawalpur Saraswati (Basamadi) Community Forest and Macchaplan. In Hetauda's previously studied areas, Macchaplan recorded 164 bird species and the Institute of Forestry Complex recorded 132 bird species showing the areas are rich in bird diversity (Bajagain et al. 2020; Bhusal & Paudel 2021). The elevation is 450 m and the climate is tropical, with an annual

precipitation of roughly 2,474 mm and an average temperature of 22.7°C (CBS 2017). The bird was photographed with a Nikon D7000 and seen using Nikon Acculon binoculars 8 x 42.

Results

Brown-breasted Flycatcher was photographed on 20 August 2022 at 1126 h in Makwanpur District, Nawalpur Saraswoti (Basamadi) Community Forest (27.4526 N & 85.0001 E) using the point count method. It had a grey head, brown flanks, and two noticeable dark mustache lines, and the head was dark brown above and white below. The photo of the bird was afterward verified with ornithologists, who confirmed that it was a Brown-breasted Flycatcher.

A big bird perching in the *Shorea robusta* tree was observed exactly at 1623 h (27.4151 N & 85.0556 E) on a clear day while performing a line transect survey of birds on 26 July 2023 in Macchaplan. It was in flight when it noticed us and had a contrasting white belly and a white tail with a broad black band across the tip, both of which were contracting traits in its identification as an adult Grey-headed Fish-Eagle.

The adult Brown-breasted flycatcher was recorded in the Nawalpur Saraswoti (Basamadi) Community Forest, which is one of Makwanpur District's active Community Forests. The Grey-headed Fish-Eagle was first observed in the Macchaplan, a significant Fisheries Promotion and Conservation Center in the Makwanpur District. Habitat loss, human disturbance, siltation, hunting, overfishing outside protected

areas, illegal fishing within protected areas, as well as the deterioration of habitat quality caused by pollution, including the effects of pesticides that are widely and frequently used, particularly in the lowlands, endangers the survival of species (Thiollay 1978; BirdLife International 2023). The Machhaplan Complex's primary risks to avifauna were identified as increasing human settlement, industry, and pollution (Bhusal & Paudel 2021).

There are no previous records of the Brown-breasted Flycatcher and Grey-headed Fish-Eagle from the Makwanpur District of central Nepal (eBird 2023; Inskipp et al. 2016). Our study concludes that this is the first record of Brown-breasted Flycatcher and Grey-headed Fish-Eagle reported from Nepal's Makwanpur District.

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