

Crested honey buzzard mobbed by house crow

Subjects: Crested honey buzzard, *Pernis ptilorhynchus* (Aves: Accipitriformes: Accipitridae).
House crow, *Corvus splendens* (Aves: Passeriformes: Corvidae).

Subjects identified by: Contributor.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Serangoon Avenue 4; 22 March 2014; 0730 hrs.

Habitat: Highrise concrete apartment building in public housing estate.

Observer: Contributor.

Observation: A lone dark morph honey buzzard was observed perched on the roof of an apartment building next to an antenna (Fig. 1). As its back was turned, an adult house crow suddenly swooped past in close proximity to the raptor, obviously trying to chase it away (Fig. 2). The crow then landed on the roof about a metre away from the raptor and continued to vocally threaten the raptor (Fig. 3). The honey buzzard responded by calling out in apparent defiance (Fig. 4) and stood its ground. The crow's harassment seemed to be ineffective.

Remarks: Two subspecies of the crested honey buzzard (also known as the eastern or Oriental honey buzzard) occur in Singapore. One is an uncommon resident while the other is a common winter visitor and passage migrant (Lim, 2009: 214). The example featured here seems to be the dark morph of the migrant subspecies *Pernis ptilorhynchus orientalis*. Honey buzzards are specialist feeders of bee and hornet larvae and beeswax but are known to opportunistically take reptiles, frogs, small mammals and birds (Ferguson-Lees & Christie, 2001: 345). The crow's distrust and mobbing of the honey buzzard therefore, seems justified.

References:

- Ferguson-Lees, J. & D. A. Christie, 2001. *Raptors of the World*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, USA. 992 pp.
Lim K. S., 2009. *The Avifauna of Singapore*. Nature Society (Singapore) Bird Group Records Committee. 611 pp.



Photograph by Ron K. H. Yeo

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