

**ASSOCIATION BETWEEN LONGBILLED VULTURE, *GYPS INDICUS* (SCOPOLI)
AND HOUSE CROW, *CORVUS SPLENDENS* VIEILLOT**

During a visit to Harike bird sanctuary in Amritsar district, Punjab, the authors observed a strange association between a long-billed vulture, *Gyps indicus* and House Crow, *Corvus splendens* on a Eucalyptus tree, growing in the campus of the Canal Rest House, Harike Pattan. It was on the 1st December, 1985 at 08.15 hrs., the authors observed the above mentioned association in the lawns of the Canal Rest House. The long-billed vulture was sitting on the top of the tree probably to bask in the sun. The vulture was besieged by three to five House Crows. The crows singly and occasionally in twos, approached and pecked at the back of the vulture, probably, to feed on ectoparasitic lice. The crows kept on flying during the process of pecking and on a few occasions, they were able to sit on the back of the vulture. The vulture appeared to be enjoying the game being relieved of lots of lice, though it would not allow the crows to sit on its back for more than a few seconds. The process continued for more than one and a quarter hours when two more longbilled vultures joined the game. The number of crows involved in the process varied between three and five. The new arrivals, likewise, were besieged by the crows and they too enjoyed the game. At about

0.9.30 hrs, the authors left for field work when this game was still continuing.

Sometimes, birds scare away intruders from their territory, particularly during breeding season, by pecking at them but in the present instance, it was not a breeding period of the crow and hence it did not appear to be a case of territorial safety or avoiding a trespasser. However, birds like mynas and crows are known to feed on ectoparasites like ticks of cattle (Whistler, 1963 ; Ali and Ripley, 1972 and Narang and Lamba, 1984). But the above mentioned process of a bird taking ectoparasites from another bird, has been observed, perhaps for the first time.

REFERENCES

- ALI, S. AND RIPLEY, DILLON (1972). *Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan*. Vol. 5 : 182, Oxford University Press, Bombay.
- NARANG, M. L. AND LAMBA, B. S. (1984). A contribution to the food habits of some Indian Mynas (Aves). *Rec. zool. Surv. India, Occ. Paper*, No. 44 : 49.
- WHISTLER, HUGE (1963). *Popular Handbook of Indian Birds* : 7, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh and London.

*RAJ TILAK
Zoological Survey of India,
Dehradun

†M. L. NARANG
Zoological Survey of India,
Solan

RAJ TILAK*

M. L. NARANG†