

Black Drongo/King Crow

Dicrurus adsimilis

Order: Dicruridae

Family: Passeriformes

Genus: *Dicrurus*

Species: *adsimilis*



STATUS

Resident/ Common

MORPHOLOGY

- A glossy black bird with long, deeply forked tail.
- Sexes alike. Singly, mostly seen on telegraph wires.

DISTRIBUTION

- Throughout the Indian Empire, within which four races are recognised on differences in size of wing, tail and bill.

- The largest race, albirictus, is found in the Himalayas (up to about 7000 feet), the Indo-Gangetic Plain and Assam; the smallest, minor in Ceylon.
- Peninsularis occupies the whole of continental and peninsular India, and cathoecus Burma

HABITS

- The Black Drongo is one of the most familiar birds of our countryside.
- It frequents every type of country except dense evergreen jungle and actual desert, though even in the latter it is steadily penetrating wherever irrigation canals make cultivation possible.
- The birds, however, are most abundant in open intensely cultivated areas, and may invariably be seen perched upon stakes, telegraph wires and the like in the proximity of crops.
- From these look-out posts they swoop down from time to time to carry off an unwary grasshopper.
- If too large to be swallowed entire, the victim is held under foot and torn to pieces with the sharp hook-tipped bill.
- They also capture moths and winged insects in the air like a flycatcher.
- Drongos may commonly be seen in attendance on grazing cattle - often riding on the animals' backs — snapping up the insects disturbed by their feet.
- For the same reason, forest fires or tired grass patches never fail to attract the birds. This species is highly beneficial to agriculture on account of the large number of injurious insects it destroys.
- They have a number of harsh, scolding or challenging calls, some closely resembling those of the Shikra hawk, and the birds become particularly noisy at the breeding season.

HABITS

- Over its wide range the Black Drongo breeds principally between April and August.
- The nest is a flimsy-bottomed cup of fine twigs, grasses and fibres cemented together with cobwebs.
- It is placed in a fork, usually near the extremity of a branch, from 12 to 30 feet from the ground.
- A large tree standing in open cultivation is usually selected.
- The eggs—three to five in number—show some variation in colour and markings, but are mostly whitish with brownish-red spots.