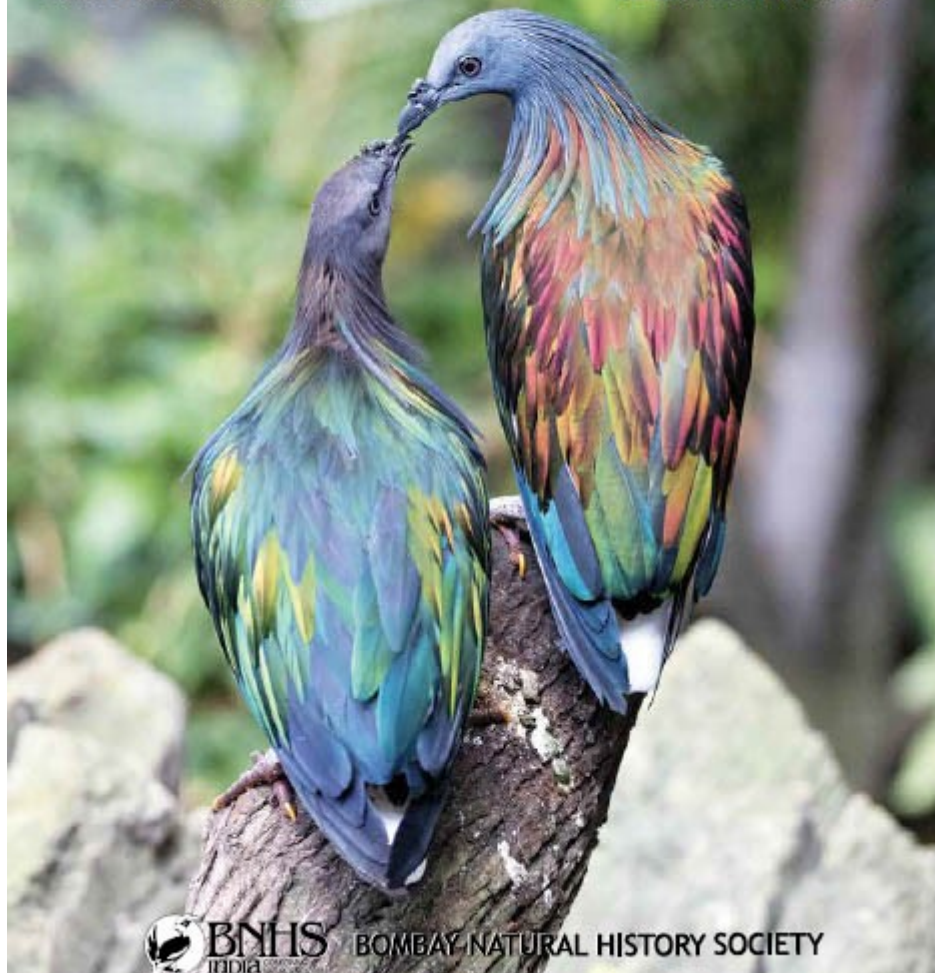


# HORNBILL

DISCOVER THE LIVING WORLD

OCTOBER–DECEMBER, 2022



**BNHS**  
INDIA

BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## A heron's nest in view from my terrace



I first saw a Black-crowned Night-heron from my balcony in July. As this was a lifer for me I rushed to get my Nikon Coolpix P950, and clicked a few pictures. I identified the bird from its ashy grey upperside, with black crown, back and scapulars, and its long black occipital crest; it also had the typical hunchbacked posture.

Initially, I thought that the bird was merely resting on the *Sonmohur Peltophorum pterocarpum* tree near my housing society, but when I spotted the same bird at the same location a few days later, I wondered if this was a coincidence or was I seeing the same bird yet again. I began closely observing the heron and noticed that it was in breeding plumage, and that it appeared to have a partner, of which I could really not be sure at that time, as there is hardly any difference among the male and female of the species, except that the female is slightly smaller and has a less prominent occipital crest.

A few weeks later, I saw some more herons, and an egret too. A few days later, I heard loud calls that were less

noisy than those of juvenile Painted Storks. It was later that I discovered that the calls were of Black-crowned Night-Heron juveniles. I ran to the terrace once again to capture the juveniles in my camera. The juveniles were learning to jump from one branch to another, and their parents were watching over them. These juveniles were in the nest for almost four weeks. They were slow, but restless, and kept taking small flights. Before each flight, they would stretch their necks, observe their surroundings, and then take off. The calls of the juveniles were most audible at early morning and lessened as the day progressed. Thick foliage prevented me from getting a picture of them while feeding.

Bird life was blooming right in midst of such a heavily concretized city as Mumbai, and this can be credited to the tree planters, conservationists, and of course, to the adaptability of the birds. 🐦

— Vikas Pansare  
Mumbai, Maharashtra