The Asian Koel *Eudynamys scolopacea* is a fairly common species within its normal distribution in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia, and has been assigned the status of “Least Concern” in the 2007 IUCN Red List of threatened species. Iran is located in the extreme western part of its global distribution (Clements 2007), although the species breeds as near to Iran as the Indus Valley in Sind Province, Pakistan (Roberts 1991). Porter et al. (1996) describe it as a rare but regular winter visitor to Iran and Oman and vagrant in the United Arab Emirates. However, most records in Oman are in the southern half of the country, with a very small wintering population on Masirah Island, and there have been very few records in the north of Oman in the area opposite Iran (I.D. Harrison in litt. to Editor). There are 139 records of Asian Koel in the database of Oman. Eight are from northern Oman, 61 are from Masirah Island where there is a small wintering population in a very small area of woodland, and 70 are from the southern part of the central desert and from Dhofar, southern Oman.

The third report of this species in Iran is also from an island in the Persian Gulf. At around 11:00 hrs on 21 November 2007, an exhausted adult female Asian Koel was captured near the north Coast of Hengam Island following a period of very windy weather. Hengam Island (26°41’07.2”N, 55°53’28.7”E) is located two kilometers south of Qeshm Island, Hormozgan Province, and has an area of 9.8 km² and maximum elevation of 100 m. a.s.l. The island has a very warm, arid climate, and there is little vegetation cover. The bird had a slight injury to its right wing, but there was no evidence of any gun-shot wound, and we concluded that the bird’s inability to fly was a result of exhaustion rather than any specific injury. We did not carry out any treatment on the bird, and by 11:17 hrs,
it had recovered sufficiently to fly off (Figs. 1–2).

It seems that the Asian Koel remains a rare vagrant to the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea coasts of Iran. Two of the three occurrences of this species, including the one described here, were in fact after unusual weather conditions which may well have disoriented the birds – inexperienced young birds in particular are prone to becoming confused during their migration south if adverse winds or storms occur (Anonymous 2008).

REFERENCES


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