

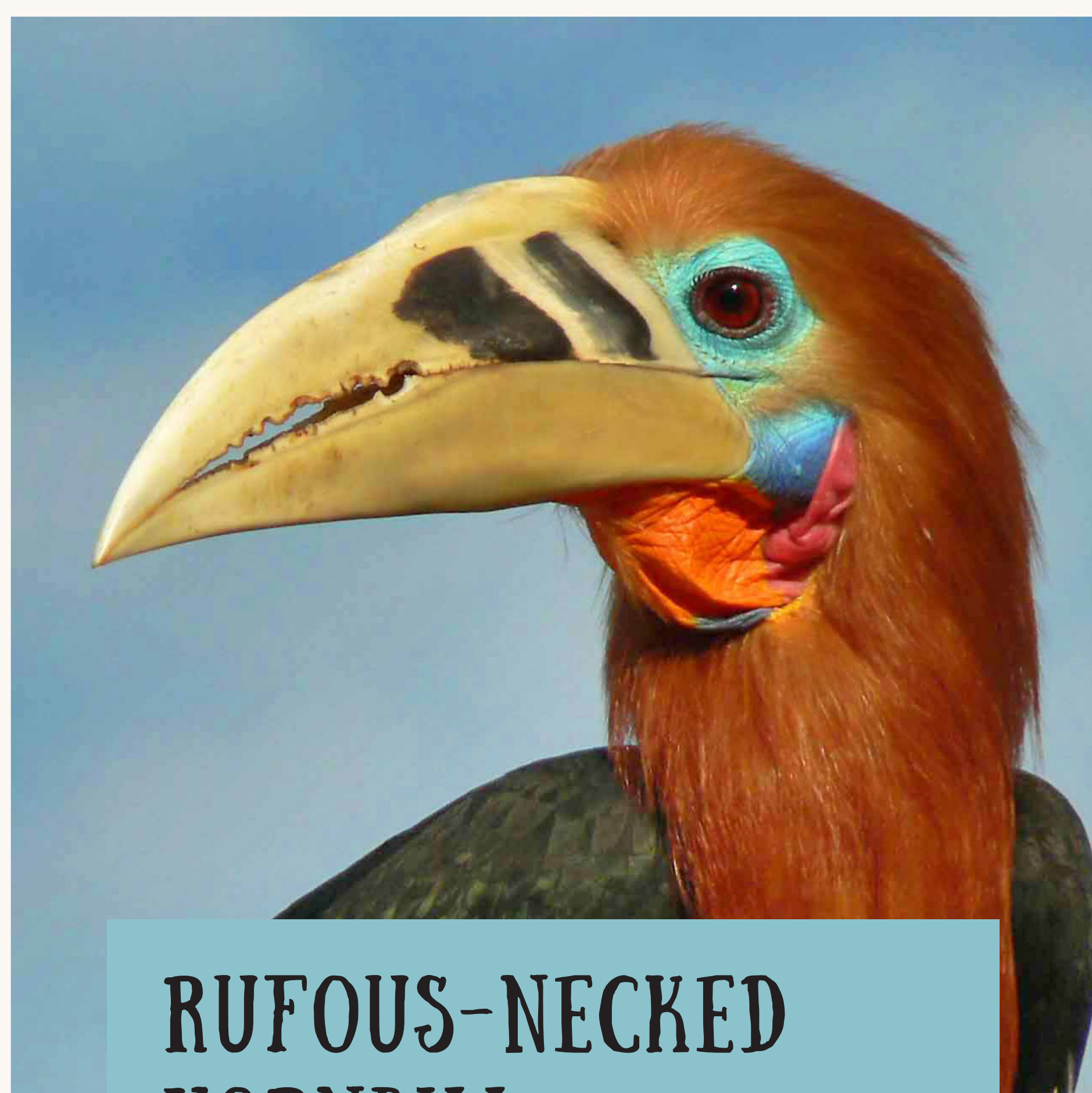


OUR HORNIBILLS

friends of the forest



Hornbills are big birds, with males larger than females. When they fly through the forest, they sound like a small airplane. Hornbills nest inside “cavities” of tall trees. They cannot make their own cavity like woodpeckers. Once they find a good cavity, the mother hornbill enters, and seals herself in so that she and her chicks can be safe. She leaves a small gap through which the father hornbill brings her food. Four species are found in Pakke Tiger Reserve—Oriental Pied Hornbill, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Wreathed Hornbill and Great Hornbill.



RUFIOUS-NECKED HORNBILL

Aceros nipalensis

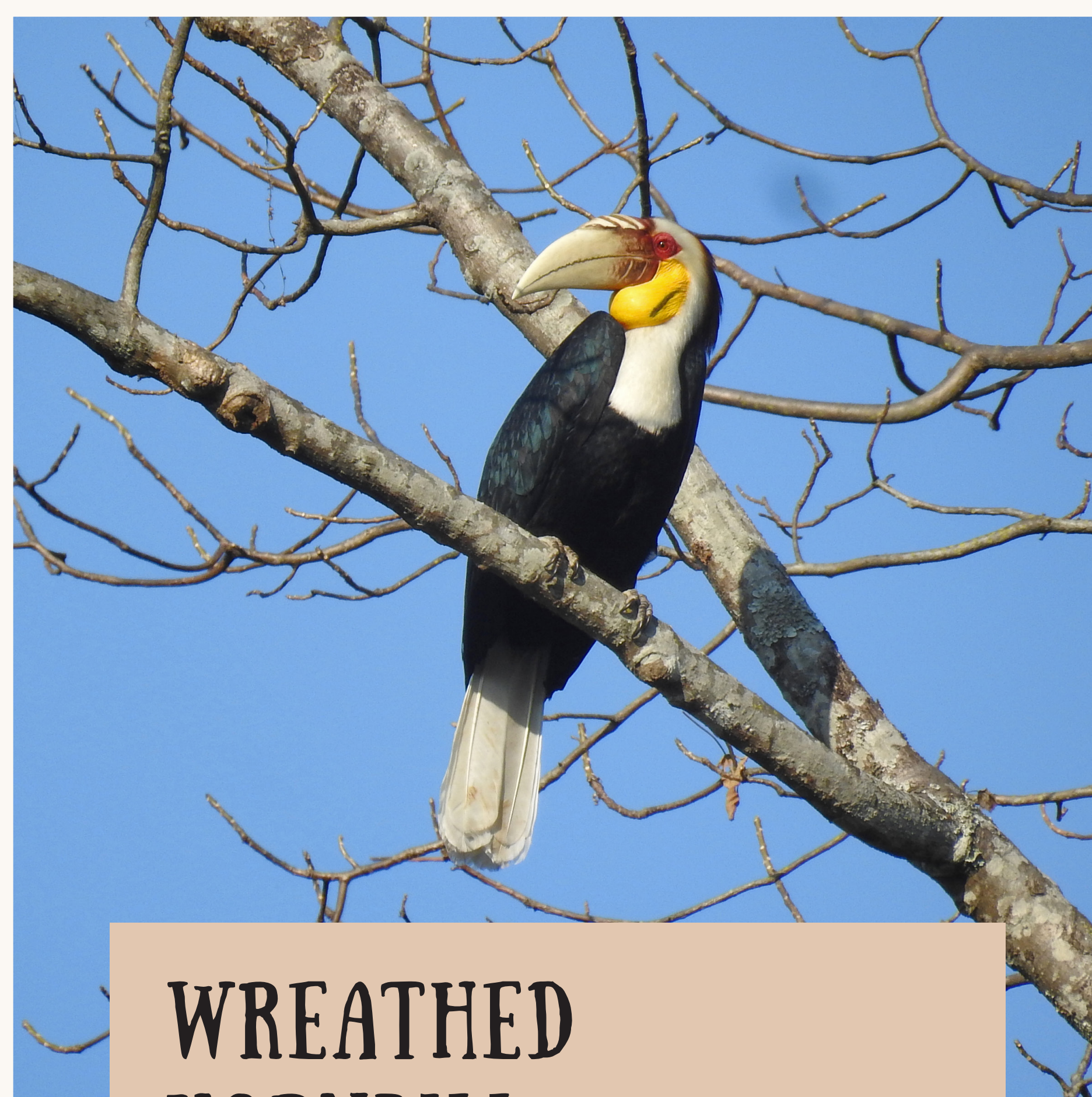
Adi: Pesik; Apatani: Pesu; Lisu: Michuti sikhoo; Miju Mishmi: Kaunsahala; Monpa: Wakhaari/Wagroschi; Nyishi: Poo; Sherdukpen: Monchhu; Tangsa: Hujung/Wujung; Wancho: Kung-ap

Male: Rufous-brown on its head, neck and breast.

Female: Fully black. The skin on the throat pouch of both is red with a blue patch around each eye. Black ridges on the upper half of the beak and no casque. Upper half of the tail is black, while the lower part is white.

Size: 2.3-2.5 kg; 99-122 cm.

This hornbill lives in hilly forest. A pair fly around calling to each other in short barks, thok, thok, sounding like two woodcutters chopping trees far away. They eat juicy black fruits. The nesting cycle starts from late March-May and the chick fledges in July-early August. The nesting cycle is from 99-121 days.



WREATHED HORNBILL

Rhyticeros undulatus

Adi: Puhuk; Lisu: Kokoi; Mising: Garugare; Nyishi: Poo/Pou; Tangsa: Hwungap/Ungap; Wancho: Ulat

This hornbill is mostly black, with a fully white tail.

Male: Chestnut-brown on the head with a yellow throat pouch.

Female: black with a blue throat. Both have an incomplete black bar on their throat pouch. There are neat furrows or wreaths on the upper beak.

Size: 1.4-3.6 kg; 84-117 cm.

You can hear these birds flying, much before you see them. They have a call with three notes — oek-uk-uk — repeated several times. They love to eat fruits, but also beetles and crabs. After a day of fruit-picking, large groups move towards the forest edge, to roost on tall trees. The female starts nesting in March, and comes out in late July-early August along with the chick. The nesting cycle is from 118-142 days.



GREAT HORNBILL

Buceros bicornis

Adi: Pagang; Apatani: Piga gyalu; Lisu: Tsinna; Miju Mishmi: Awayhala; Gdumhala; Mising: Migumgarer; Monpa/Sherdukpen: Wagroschi; Nyishi: Paga; Tangsa: Hurang/Uchang; Wancho: Kooga

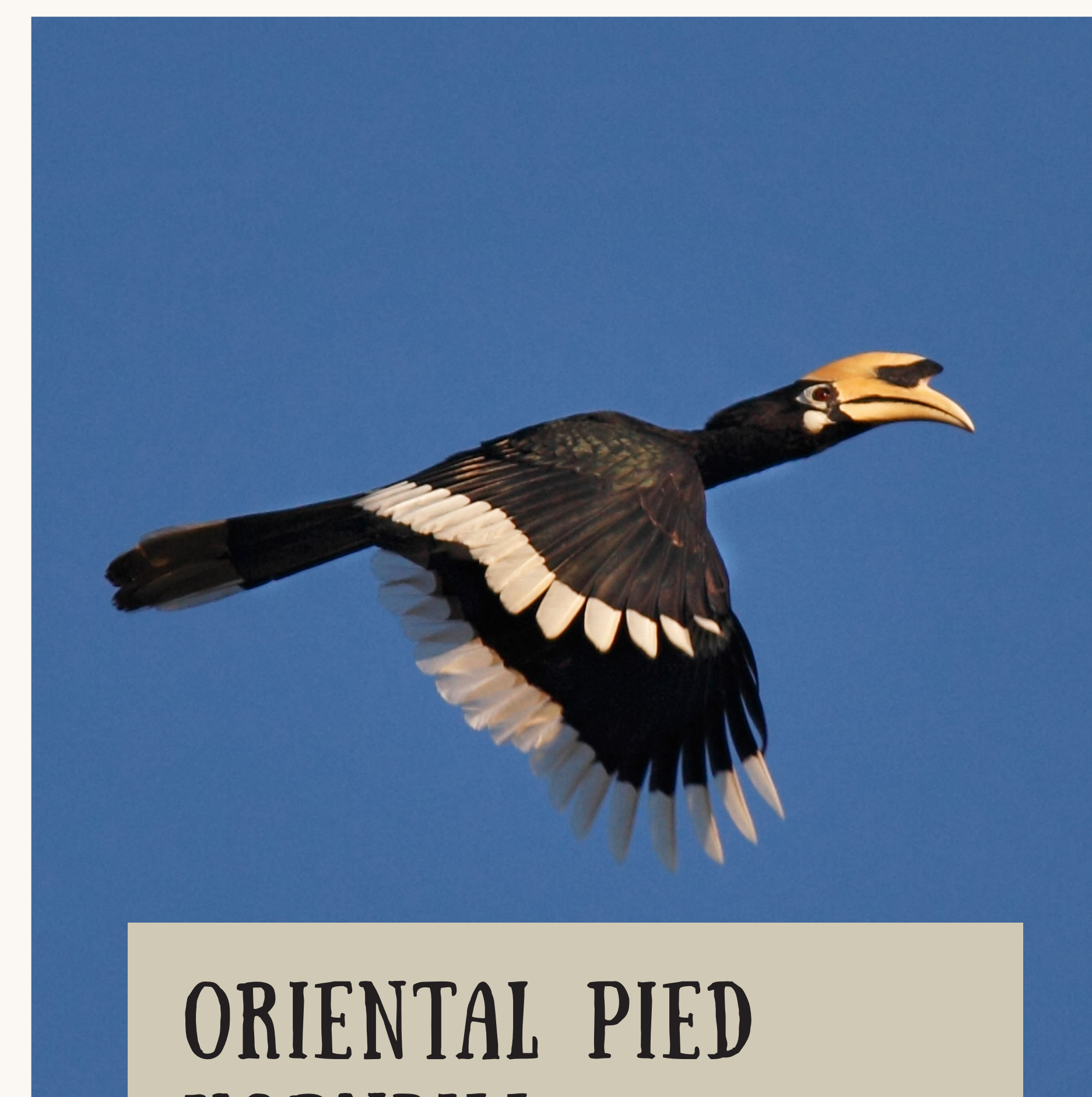
This hornbill is among the heaviest forest birds. Its white tail with a horizontal black band, and its white neck and wing bars, are striking in flight. The wing edges are tipped with white.

Male: red eyes with black skin around the eyes.

Female: white eyes with red skin around the eyes.

Size: 2.1-3.9 kg; 112-150 cm.

With its big size, and large yellow beak and casque, it is amazing how delicately this bird plucks tiny fruits off trees. The loud flapping of wings when they fly over the forest is heard from far away. Its loud call (kok-kok) can be heard from even a kilometer away. It eats fruits, but also eats insects, lizards, snakes, small birds and rats. The mother stays in the nest for nearly three months (March to June). The chick comes out about a month later. The nesting cycle is from 103-137 days.



ORIENTAL PIED HORNBILL

Anthracoceros albirostris

Adi: Peruk; Miju Mishmi: Langsin; Mising: Tekteki; Nyishi: Garhe; Wancho: Long-o

This black hornbill with white underparts likes more open forest.

Male: Creamy bill with black base on lower mandible, casque cylindrical, projecting front part black.

Female: Smaller bill and casque marked with black, red spot on lower mandible.

Both have pale blue bare skin around eyes.

White on outer tail tips and trailing wing edges seen in flight.

Size: 500-900 gm; 60-85 cm.

They gather in big groups when they find a fruiting tree. They catch fish, crabs and pick termites from termite hills. If they find a patch of dry soil or sand, they enjoy a dust-bath. They are noisy and call with squeals and chuckles; main call is a cackling kek-kek-kek-kek. The mother stays in her nest from April to June, and rears 1 or 2 chicks. The nesting cycle is from 76-110 days.



HORNIBILLS HELP FORESTS GROW

Hornbills love to eat the ripe soft fruits of many trees in the rainforest. The fruits that they eat are usually black, orange or red in colour. They swallow fruits, eating only the flesh, throwing out the seeds. They also love figs—the tiny seeds are passed out in their droppings. Trees cannot move from place to place, but hornbills can! Hornbills drop the seeds of the fruits far away, up to 10-13 km. These seeds grow into new trees. This is very important in keeping the forest full of trees. Hornbills are the farmers of the forest, sowing seeds wherever they go.

HORNIBILLS NEED OUR HELP

People cut down the forests that hornbills live in. Hornbills cannot build their own nests and require big trees to nest in. Cutting down big trees makes it difficult for hornbills to live and breed. People also kill hornbills to eat their meat and use their body parts. Hornbills have become rare in many places. If hornbills do not fly free and live in our forests anymore, the trees will find it difficult to spread, and we may lose our rainforests eventually. We must protect forests and stop killing or catching hornbills.

