

## Sightings of Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* in Rajasthan, excluding Bharatpur records

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The Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* is a monotypic species of the sub-family Vanellinae (family Charadriidae) and a winter migrant to north-west India. The species is classified as Vulnerable because it has suffered a rapid decline and range contraction (BirdLife International 2000).

There are very few records of the species from Rajasthan, except from Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur. The prevailing dry conditions in the park facilitated by an unprecedented water shortage since last four-five years seem to have favoured Sociable Lapwing and other species. The Yellow-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus malabaricus* is commoner in the park than before and the Indian Courser *Cursorius coromandelicus* is breeding in the park this year (Bholu Khan, verbally). Regular sightings of Sociable Lapwing in recent years at Bharatpur suggest that today it is the most consistently visited site, by the species, in India. However, from other suitable areas in Rajasthan, like Tal Chhapar, records are few and far between. Unlike Keoladeo there is too much ground to cover there. Moreover, such sites have generally remained under-observed.

This paper reviews and supplements historical, published, data on this declining species. Keoladeo records have been deliberately excluded as these have been generally well documented (BirdLife International 2001).

The first record from Rajasthan is more than 135 years old (Adam 1873). Although Adam collected four specimens on 5.xii.1869, 5.xii.1872, 17.x.1873 and 6.xii.1873 from Sambhar, he found the species "not very common; during the cold weather it is to be met with sparingly about the plains," (Adam 1873). A January 1912 record is from Bikaner (specimen in BMNH) and A. E. Jones

Table 1: Records of Sociable Lapwing in Rajasthan (excluding Bharatpur)

No. of birds	Date	Site	Source
5	14.x.1995	Tal Chhapar, Churu	Sangha 2000
1	11.i.1998	Revasa, Sikar	Sangha 2000
15	28.i.1998	Tal Chhapar, Churu	Sangha 2000
11	1.ii.1998	Tal Chhapar, Churu	Sangha 2000
2	18.i.1999	Jaisalmer	Sangha 2002

collected a specimen on 30.xii.1937 from Nasirabad, Ajmer (BirdLife International 2001). Whistler (1938) merely described it as "a cold weather visitor and common according to Hume." Many of the references in Whistler's paper (1938) are "in very general terms", for he has not mentioned any date or site and his sources are R. M. Adam, Dr King (who collected birds at Mt. Abu and Jodhpur for nearly two years, but published no account of his observations, except for supplying specimens to Hume), and A. O. Hume. Of the fourteen specimens in the collection of the Bombay Natural History Society none is from Rajasthan (Abdulali 1970).

All other published records from Rajasthan are shown in Table 1.

Unpublished records of Sociable Lapwing in Rajasthan are from Jaisalmer, Bikaner and Hanumangarh districts. I observed a flock on 18.x.2003 comprising of six birds including one juvenile, foraging on a sward at Baramsar depression west of Jaisalmer. Shantanu Kumar (verbally) recorded an individual at Badopal, Hanumangarh district in December 2000 / January 2001. Manoj Kulshreshtha (verbally), Bryan Bland and members of a birding group observed seven birds on 26.xii.1998 at Ganga village on way to Sudasri, Desert National Park, Jaisalmer. R. G. Soni (verbally) observed / photographed one juvenile on 22.x.1991, foraging on the edge of Jor-Bir depression, Bikaner.

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## Some vocalizations of the Jungle Prinia *Prinia sylvatica* during the breeding season in Maharashtra

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### Introduction

Bird vocalizations are of interest for at least two reasons. First, in taxonomy and systematics, similarities and differences in the structure of vocalizations can help

resolve disputes about whether a taxon is a "good" species, and can provide information on the degree of relatedness between species and subspecies, Second, the study of vocalizations tells us about the

behaviour of birds: we can ask what information is being transmitted through these sounds, to whom, and under what circumstances. Much remains to be learnt about the structure of bird vocalizations and