

# Photographic record of Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* from Singalila National Park, West Bengal

Sanjeeb Pradhan, Pemba Tshering Bhutia & Rajarshi Chakraborty

Sanjeeb, P., Bhutia, T., & Chakraborty, R., 2012. Photographic record of Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* from Singalila National Park, West Bengal. *Indian BIRDS* 7 (6): 164.

Sanjeeb Pradhan, WWF-India, Project SERVE, Darjeeling, West Bengal. Email: [saisanjeeb@gmail.com](mailto:saisanjeeb@gmail.com)

Tshering Bhutia, WWF-India, Project SERVE, Darjeeling, West Bengal.

Rajarshi Chakraborty, WWF-India, Khangchendzonga Landscape Programme, Sikkim.

Manuscript received on 29 April 2011.

The Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* is a widespread wader distributed across Europe, Asia, and North America, which winters in warm tropical oceans. The breeding adult has a white throat, and a red stripe down the side of its neck, while the non-breeding adult is mainly pied with dark grey upper parts and a black eye mask (Grimmett *et al.* 2006).

In India, the bird is a winter visitor, found mainly in the western (Gujarat) and south-eastern (Tamil Nadu) coastal waters of the country (Ali & Ripley 1995). Recent records from northern and north-western India indicate its presence in Haryana, where it is a scarce winter vagrant (Jay 1981); Kachchh in Gujarat (Varu 2005, 2010); Sambhar Lake, (Sangha 2009), and Keoladeo Ghana National Park, Bharatpur, in Rajasthan (Grewal 2012). From eastern and north-eastern India, Red-necked Phalarope is reported from Kaziranga National Park, Assam (Choudhury 2004), as well as West Bengal (Sen 2012a). Engel (2011) has reported it from Bhutan.

However, there is no photographic record of the bird from West Bengal, and the annotated checklist of Singalila National

Park (Sen 2012b) does not mention the species; so our sighting possibly provides the first photographic record of the bird from Singalila, and from West Bengal.

Singalila National Park (78.60 km<sup>2</sup>; 2400–3650 m asl) lies at the eastern part of the great Himalayan range, at the border of Sikkim, West Bengal, and Nepal. In its upper reaches it has mainly temperate vegetation comprising rhododendron, silver fir, and a variety of alpine shrubs and herbs.

On 15 September 2007, we had trekked up to Sandakphu, the highest point of Singalila National Park, and beyond towards Phalut, for a vegetation survey. The general elevation of the area was more than 3600 m and the vegetation consisted of dense thickets of rhododendron, a few scattered *Abies* spp., and blooming alpine herbs like *Senecio* spp., *Geranium* spp., and *Primula* spp., (Fig. 1). While crossing Sandakphu and walking a further kilometer towards Phalut, around 1100 hrs, we came across a large seasonal pond, swollen with monsoon downpour. Scanning its surface, we spotted a single Red-necked Phalarope in non-breeding plumage, swimming in the water (Fig. 2).

We were overjoyed, and photographed it from the edge of the pond; the murky weather and mist did not allow clear close-ups. During the three hours that we sampled vegetation in the area, the phalarope remained on the pond. Perhaps it was exhausted after a long flight from its arctic breeding grounds.

## References

- Ali, S., & Ripley, S. D., 1995. *A pictorial guide to the birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 2nd impression ed. Pp. 1–177. Bombay: Bombay Natural History Society; Oxford University Press. (1989.)
- Anonymous. Management Plan of Singalila National Park, West Bengal. 2000/01 to 2009/10. Wildlife Circle (North). Government of West Bengal.
- Choudhury, A., 2004. *Kaziranga: Wildlife in Assam*. Pp. 1–94. New Delhi: Rupa & Co.
- Engel, J., 2011. First record of Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* from Bhutan. *BirdingASIA* 15: 106–107.
- Grewal, B., 2012. Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur: checklist of birds. URL: <http://www.kolkatabirds.com/bharatpurlist.htm> [Downloaded on 18 March 2012].
- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 2006. *Pocket guide to the birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. Pp. 1–384. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. (1999.)
- Jay, M. H., 1981. The Rednecked Phalarope at Sultanpur Jheel, Haryana. *Hornbill* 1981 (3): 32–33.
- Sangha, H. S., 2009. The birds of Sambhar Lake and its environs. *Indian Birds* 4 (3): 82–97 (2008).
- Sen, S. K., 2012a. West Bengal: checklist of birds. URL: <http://www.kolkatabirds.com/clist.htm> [Downloaded on 18 March 2012].
- Sen, S. K., 2012b. Singalila & Tiger Hill: checklist of birds. URL: <http://www.kolkatabirds.com/hillbirdsofind/singalilacheck.htm> [Downloaded on 18 March 2012].
- Varu, S. N., 2005. Red-necked Phalarope in Kachchh. *Flamingo* 2 (5&6): 8 (2004).
- Varu, S. N., 2010. Some rare sightings from Kachchh during April 2008 to February 2010. *Flamingo* 8 (1&2): 15–118.



Fig. 1. General habitat of the sighting area.



Fig. 2. Phalarope at the pond near Phalut.