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Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis* from Gaidahawa Lake, Rupandehi District, Nepal

The Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis* is a local migrant in Nepal and is categorised as 'Critically Endangered' in the country's National Red List (Inskipp *et al.* 2016). Except for one specimen, collected in the Kathmandu Valley in April, in the early nineteenth century (Hodgson 1844), almost all records have been from Koshi Barrage, and Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, in the south-eastern terai region; except one, sighted in Patana Lake, Chitwan National Park, in March 2005 (Inskipp *et al.* 2016).

We report below the sighting of an immature Spot-billed Pelican during May–July 2017, in Gaidahawa Lake (27.60°N,

83.28°E), Rupandehi District, in the western lowlands of Nepal. The bird was first recorded on 15 May 2017, in the western side of the lake, amidst a flock of Lesser Whistling Ducks *Dendrocygna javanica*. When disturbed, it flew to, and settled upon an adjoining sal *Shorea robusta* tree, where it roosted. The bird mostly foraged in the middle of the lake, and frequently in its southern, and western parts. It appeared to be moulting, and its completely grey wings in May [27] transformed into a whiter plumage by early July [28]. It was last recorded on 10 July 2017. According to a local fisherman, a 'pelican' had been visiting the lake in April–May for the past three years. The timing of our sighting is in line with current knowledge where Inskipp *et al.* (2016) state that the species visits Nepal mainly during February–May, and some stay up to October. The present sighting is c. 400 km west of its regular range in Nepal though it has sparingly also occurred further west in Uttarakhand (Rahmani 2012).

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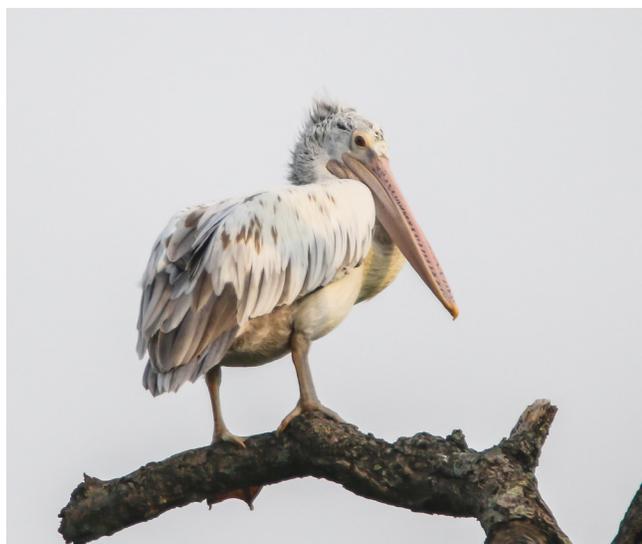
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Prashant Ghimire

27. Spot-billed Pelican in May.



Manshanta Ghimire

28. Spot-billed Pelican moulting in July.

Colour aberration in Black-headed Cuckoo-Shrike *Lalage melanoptera*

On 30 July 2017, while birding near Yarmal (15.77°N, 74.54°E), a village near Belgaum city in northern Karnataka, I noticed a single pale-coloured bird on a hill slope with scattered small bushes.

I took several photographs of this interesting individual. I identified it as a Black-headed Cuckoo-Shrike *Lalage melanoptera* with the help of Grimmett *et al.* (2011), and Rasmussen & Anderton (2012). Although upon initial observation it seemed like a leucistic bird, careful examination revealed that it was missing some of the characteristics of a what is considered a leucistic condition. It had normal-coloured (black; not red) eyes, but was silvery grey (and not completely white) [30, 31]. Compared to the normal-coloured bird [29], it showed a much fainter eye-stripe, lighter grey upperparts, a lot paler grey wings and tail, and whitish-grey underparts that retained barring.

According to Guay *et al.* (2012), and van Grouw (2013) a plumage with these colour aberrations could be referred to as 'dilution'. Mahabal *et al.* (2015, 2016), who recently reviewed the colour aberrations of Indian birds, did not mention any instance of colour aberrations in this species or any other member of the Campephagidae. So this observation would be the first record of colour aberration in this family from India.