

The first breeding record of Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* for Nepal

On 04 August 2015, at 1430 hrs, we were walking along the shore of Tso Lamgyok Lake (30.37°N, 81.58°E; 5010 m asl) in the remote Humla District, Province 6, Nepal. The lake is situated within the Gyau Valley, which is located in the south-western corner of the Tibetan Plateau, bordering the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China to the north of Nepal.

A pair of adult Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* was circling above us, uttering alarm calls of strung-out quick-repeated trilling notes (Ali & Ripley 1987). In due time, we noticed a chick walking slowly along the shore of the lake [33]. Walker & Chandler (1985) report selection of wet areas, for feeding, by Common Redshank chicks for which the adult pairs usually nest close to wetlands such that the family can move to the wetland as soon as the chick(s) hatches. The Common Redshanks in Upper Humla also demonstrated a similar pattern. Here the breeding pair is the most likely to have nested in the alpine steppe near the lake, which comprised abundant grasses, sedges, forbs, and shrubs (*Salix* sp., and *Astragalus* sp.). This vegetation cover may prevent predators from detecting the eggs. The proximity of nesting site and feeding area represents an anti-predator instinct, as long-distance movement of chicks, between such two sites, would provide greater opportunities to predatory birds like a Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*, Upland Buzzard *Buteo hemilasius*, or Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*. The close location of nesting site to the feeding area also precludes the chicks' likelihood of injury, or separation from its parents, when crossing unfamiliar



33. Common Redshank chick at Tso Lamgyok Lake, Upper Humla, Nepal, on 04 August 2015.



34. Common Redshank adult (breeding) in Upper Humla, Nepal, during August 2015.

Pics: Naresh Kusi

terrains (Walker & Chandler 1985). During July–August, we saw Common Redshank adults in breeding plumage [34] on multiple occasions, in the lakes and marshes of Upper Humla, but the reported instance above, was the only time we saw a chick with the adults.

The Common Redshank was earlier considered a winter visitor to Nepal (Ali & Ripley 1987; Inskipp *et al.* 2016). On the Indian Subcontinent, breeding of the species is only reported from the Tibetan Plateau of Ladakh, in Kashmir at an elevation of 4000–5000 m asl (Ali & Ripley 1987) in solitary pairs or in loose colonies (BirdLife International 2016). Because the newly documented breeding site in the Tibetan Plateau of Nepal lies close to the Tibetan Plateau of China, MacKinnon & Phillipps (2000) had already included the region in a map of the breeding range for the species. Our note on the first breeding record of the Common Redshank for Nepal supports the aforementioned map and adds to the knowledge of its breeding areas on the Indian Subcontinent.

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Malabar Whistling Thrush *Myophonus horsfieldii* feeding on a rat snake *Ptyas mucosa*

On 28 July 2017, around 1823 hrs, while photographing frogs at Lakshmi Estate road (10.05°N, 77.03°E), Munnar, Idukki, Kerala, GK spotted a Malabar Whistling Thrush *Myophonus horsfieldii* (Family: Muscicapidae) jumping and trying to catch something on a stream-side rock that was surrounded by grass. The bird was trying to kill a snake that was longer than it. The snake was later identified by AS, as a juvenile rat snake *Ptyas mucosa*, based the long tapering tail, dark irregular transverse streaks, and dorsum marked with fine, somewhat irregular, off-white bands [35]. The snake was aggressively attempting to bite the bird and trying to escape. The thrush repeatedly pecked at the snake and jumped upon it several times. Finally, as the snake's movements ceased, the thrush flew