

without giving subspecies, from Nurpur, Kangra District, Himachal Pradesh. Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) later accepted this as a Slender-billed Vulture, based on the details provided.

The Indian Vulture is listed as 'Critically Endangered' under the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (Birdlife International 2018) because of the catastrophic fall of its population during the past two decades. In this dismal scenario, its sighting in a new area, well beyond of its known range, is welcome news, and demonstrates the importance of vulture feeding stations, as they attract a 'good' number of many species of vultures. The present is a first record for Himachal Pradesh, and the northern-most record for the species.

Acknowledgements

I thank Manoj Sharma for helping with references and comments, and Harkirat Singh Sangha, Prasad Ganpule, Ramit Singal, and Nirav Bhatt for confirming the species. I retrieved relevant literature from the online 'Bibliography of South Asian Ornithology' (Pittie 2018).

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Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* at Bhandup Pumping Station, Mumbai, Maharashtra

On the morning of 19 September 2018, Sekhar Vishvanath and I decided to visit Bhandup Pumping Station (19.15°N, 72.96°E), a local birding hotspot in Mumbai, for some backyard birding. The pumping station is, primarily, a sewage treatment facility for the eastern suburbs of Mumbai city, and it is located on the shores of Thane Creek, an intertidal zone sandwiched between the

Mumbai- and Thane/Navi Mumbai- cities. We decided to cover the salt pans that day: for their seclusion, decreased salinity levels due to monsoon rains, and with shallower waters, and, therefore, greater potential of attracting waders.

After birding for a while in the salt pans, I saw a restless shrike (Laniidae) flitting capriciously alongside the pathway. The bird moved further away and we could not track it. It did not look like a Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*, which is seen here, but we just had a fleeting glimpse to clearly identify it. Luckily, the bird took refuge in a peepal tree *Ficus religiosa* down the road. It was somewhat hidden in the luscious monsoon foliage of the peepal, but its broad mask, and missing rufous colouration were good enough rule out a Long-tailed Shrike. Then, as it turned, we saw that its back was not brown/chestnut, and that it looked more like a Great Grey Shrike *L. excubitor*, with a wide mask. We waited for the bird to emerge from the foliage, on its own. Our patience paid off when it came out to catch a big bug, probably a carpenter bee, and settled on the bare branches of a nearby tree, giving us one clear record shot [223], before flying away. We could not identify the bird conclusively from the photograph, and sent the pictures to experts. Returning from birding we saw it flying once again, but it did not settle, but flew away across the salt pans.



223. Lesser Grey Shrike in Mumbai.

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Later in evening, we posted the pictures on a Whatsapp group for identification of birds; Prasad Ganpule, and Adesh Shivkar confirmed that it was a Lesser Grey Shrike *L. minor*. Accordingly it was posted on eBird (www.eBird.org), wherein eBird-India's editors reached out for opinions from birders familiar with the species elsewhere in its range. Mark Smiles, of the Emirates Bird Records Committee, commented that the bird in the picture looked good for a post-breeding adult Lesser Grey Shrike with stout bill, full mask extending well onto the forehead, lack of white on the tertials, and the long primaries. The hint of a pinkish tone on the flanks, fit a Lesser Grey better than it would any other 'grey shrike'.

The Lesser Grey Shrike is a vagrant to the Indian Subcontinent with two sight reports from Ladakh (Delany *et al.* 2014), and two unconfirmed reports from Balochistan, Pakistan (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). It is a summer visitor to parts of Afghanistan (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). Breeding in southern, central, and western Europe till Central Asia and north-western China, birds migrate to southern Africa in autumn (Yosef & International Shrike Working Group 2018). Our bird might have been migrating, but got swept eastwards from its regular migration route through the Middle East. Nevertheless, this appears to be the first photographic record of the species for the Indian Subcontinent.

Acknowledgements

I thank Prasad Ganpule, Adesh Shivkar, the editors of eBird-India, and Mark Smiles for contributing towards identifying the bird.

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Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis* and Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* in the Padma River, north-western Bangladesh

The Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis*, and the Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* are rarely sighted in Bangladesh (Siddiqui *et al.* 2008). The Spot-billed Pelican is listed as Near-threatened under the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (BirdLife International 2017). Siddiqui *et al.* (2008) and IUCN Bangladesh (2015) treated it as extirpated in Bangladesh, as it was not recorded post late nineteenth century (Cripps 1878). The Eurasian Spoonbill is a rare winter visitor, especially to estuaries and coastal areas, and is treated for Bangladesh as Critically Endangered (IUCN 2015).

Since 2005, we have been regularly birding along the Padma River, its sandbars and along its banks, in the districts of Rajshahi (24.37°N, 88.60°E), and Chapai Nawabgonj (24.57°N, 88.27°E) in the extreme western part of Bangladesh. The meandering Padma River is a hotspot for wintering migratory birds (Reza & Parween 2014; Reza *et al.* 2014). There are six major birding areas in the Padma River's sandbar areas, which we visited once in a week in the winter. During other months these sites are visited once a month. The survey period was for three to five hours, usually early in the morning, and/or for two hours in the evening, until the sun set. Each visit covered an area of about 2–4 km from east to west, and 3–5 km from north to south.

On the evenings of 10 and 28 October 2017, one Spot-billed Pelican was sighted opposite 'T-bandh, Police line', Rajshahi (24.35° N, 88.53°E). It was foraging with a flock of about 50 Painted Storks *Mycteria leucocephala*. When photographing the pelican on 10 October, a local man informed us that there had been four pelicans there on 06 October; but that claim could not be confirmed. Except for those two days there were no sightings of the pelican during our visits in that period, at that, or other sites on the Padma River. Spot-billed Pelicans are reported from West Bengal, India (Sen 2014). Chowdhury & Nandi (2014) reported this species from a wetland in the Diara region of Maldah District, West Bengal, India, situated on the right bank of the Padma River. This is the first confirmed record of a Spot-billed Pelican from Bangladesh, after Cripps (1878).

On the morning of 17 February 2018, 16 Eurasian Spoonbills were spotted on a *char* (river sandbar) near Shayampur, Rajshahi

(near '10 no. Char'). The spoonbills were foraging amidst a mixed flock of waterbirds that included small numbers of Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*, Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*, Common Shelduck *T. tadorna*, Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, and a single Great Egret *Ardea alba*. The spoonbills were not seen before 17 February 2018, nor afterwards. In addition, some birders (Anik, *pers. comm.*) reported that they saw this species in the beel area near Rohanpur (24.82°N 88.33°E), Chapai Nawabgonj District, with a flock of Painted Storks, during June–July 2018.

The flock of Eurasian Spoonbill is the largest reported in Bangladesh since 2006, the first from Rajshahi Division, and the largest number recorded at an inland site. Based on the Asian Waterbird Census, this species has declined as a winter visitor to Bangladesh: during 1987–1998 on average 33 birds were seen per year, during 1999–2008 on average four were seen per year (four years with records), and during 2009–2018 on average three birds were seen per year (four years with records) (Paul Thompson, *pers. comm.*, e-mail dated 30 September 2018).

The authors are grateful to Jalal Ahmed, Additional Secretary, MOF, GOB, and Anik for their support, and special thanks to Paul Thompson for his suggestions, information, and improvements to an earlier version of this manuscript.

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Dusky Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne concolor* breeding in Purulia, West Bengal, India

While on a family vacation to Purulia, West Bengal, India, in August 2018, we found two juvenile Dusky Crag Martins *Ptyonoprogne*