

## Acknowledgements

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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).

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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*

*concolor* on a rock by the Marble Lake (23.20°N, 86.08°E, c. 855 m asl). Adult birds were feeding them on 04 August 2018. Rufous edges to the feathers of upperparts, and a conspicuous gape, indicated they were juveniles. There were fifteen adults in the vicinity, apart from the juveniles. The parents were hawking dragonflies for their chicks, particularly from where water was percolating through the rocks. The heated cliff faces generated thermals, which concentrated the insects near vertical areas.

Next day, in the same area, we found three juveniles [224–226] that the adults were feeding. Sometimes the juveniles were trying to hunt the dragonflies by themselves, like their parents, but they were perhaps not physically strong enough, and would alight from time to time, to rest, on the edge of the rock.



Ali: Santanu Manna

224–226. Dusky Crag Martin juveniles begging, and being fed by parents.

Though the Dusky Crag Martin is widespread in India (Ali & Ripley 1987; Grimmett *et al.* 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012), it is virtually absent in eastern India. Birds are known only from the extreme western part of West Bengal. Within the state, it has been reported from Darjeeling in 1914 (Mackintosh 1986), and in May 2015 (Burman 2015). Other records are from Panchet Dam, Purulia, from near the border of Jharkhand state,

in July 2011 (Ray 2011; Samanta 2011); Dhekiya, Purulia, in February 2018 (Mahato 2018); an undated record from Bankura (Home 1992); and from the Durgapur area in February 1970 (Gauntlett 1986). The above observation appears to be the first breeding record of the species from eastern India.

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## On the elevational range of the Streak-throated Woodpecker *Picus xanthopygaeus*

The Streak-throated Woodpecker *Picus xanthopygaeus* is not generally described as a high-altitude species in any standard works of reference. It is described as being found up to 1700 m in the Himalayas, and 'from plains level to c. 1800m in the peninsular and Ceylon hills' (Ali & Ripley 1983). Its upper elevational limit is documented as c. 1700 m in the Himalayas (Ali & Ripley 1983; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; Winkler & Christie 2018), and c. 1500 m (Winkler & Christie 2018), or c. 1600 m (Rasmussen and Anderton 2012). Kazmierczak (2000) describes the species as being found commonly up to 900 m, and up to 1800 m in exceptional cases. The range maps for the species in Winkler & Christie (2018), and BirdLife International (2016) exclude the highest elevations of the Western Ghats.

We observed a single female Streak-throated Woodpecker in a small valley directly east of the Meeshapulimala Peak on 23 May 2017. The elevation of that point (10.0981°N, 77.1917°E) was 2450 ± 10 m asl (measured via a Garmin eTrex 30x handheld GPS system). The bird was seen on a wooded slope surrounding a marsh [227]; the woods were dominated by *Acacia mearnsii*, among which the bird was first seen. Although no photograph was obtained, the bird was in view for a lengthy period at not more than 50 m, allowing us to observe the black crown, white moustachial stripe, and olive-green back, and to identify the species beyond doubt. We also heard its characteristic, slightly nasal, flute-like whistle.