

## Sighting of Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* at Gangapur Dam, Nashik District, Maharashtra, India.

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The Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* is a rare winter visitor to western Maharashtra (Prasad 2004). Kazmierczak (2000) maps its distribution mainly from western India (Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan), Pakistan, the lower Himalaya ranges, Nepal, and the north-eastern regions of India.

Gangapur Dam (Nashik district, Maharashtra) is designated an Important Bird Area (Islam & Rahmani 2004) as it attracts a large number of migratory birds. Some of the important species for conservation, sighted here, include the 'Vulnerable' Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*, Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni* and Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*.

On 5.iii.2004 we saw four Black-necked Grebe at Gangapur Dam. They were gently bobbing up and down in the deep water. Identification was easy as Mr Claudio, our friend from Switzerland, had a spotting-scope.

Prasad (2004) states that Black-necked Grebes are rare winter visitors to western Maharashtra and very few sightings have been recorded from this region, the last one being at Mulshi, Pune district on 14.xi.1972 (Mahabal & Lamba 1987).

Again on 8.i.2005 along with Mr Bob Roberts (UK), we quickly identified 12 Black-necked Grebes. The birds were near the mainland. We even managed to get pictures. This shows that these birds might winter here more regularly than has been recorded up till now.

### References

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## Nidification and site fidelity of the Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* in Chilika Lake, Orissa, India.

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Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* is a common resident bird species in India. It is gregarious, crepuscular and nocturnal in habits (Ali and Ripley 1983). This colonial breeding bird was nesting in the Kalijai area in Chilika Lake (19°28'N-19°54'N and 85°05'E-85°38'E), Orissa, in September and October 2002. 195 nests were recorded in a densely vegetated area dominated by Banyan *Ficus benghalensis*, Peepal *F. religiosa* and Neem *Azadirachta indica*. In the same area they nested again during April-May 2003. 127 nests were recorded during this season. Fledglings were recorded in most of these nests around May. Within a period of six months, this colony of Black-crowned Night-Herons had successfully produced two broods in the same heronry. It seems that the species has a strong site-fidelity in spite of slight decrease in the number of

breeding pairs recorded in April-May 2003.

Ali and Ripley (1983) described the breeding season of the species as April-May in Kashmir valley; June-July to September in north India and December to February in south India. Most large birds and almost all non-passerines raise a single brood per season, because the incubation period and duration of parental care are generally longer in larger birds, leaving them little time, if any, for a second brood (Lack 1968). Even though we have records of Barn Owls (Bunn, et al 1982), Bronze-winged Jacanas (Toothe 1903) and Short-eared Owls (Witherby, et al 1952) rearing two broods, no such information exists for Black-crowned Night-Heron. This note records two successful broods for the species, in the months of September-October and April-May.

### References

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