

Wood Sandpiper *T. glareola* and Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus* cannot be termed as Pigeon+, these are probably based on museum measurements from beak tip to tail tip which appeared in auxiliary literature but are extremely confusing for a bird-watcher in the field. Authors miss a helpful \pm notation (denoting 'roughly the same size') used in other books. Comparisons with quail and vulture are a little superfluous; an average birder does not encounter these species often. Perhaps myna and peafowl would have been more ideal. The hornbills (Malabar Grey *Ocyrceros griseus* and Malabar Pied *Anthraceroceros coronatus*) are both Kite+ though there is a large difference between the sizes of the two.

It is common practice now to include a checklist of birds along with any field guide. I think most books falter here and probably this one also. Birds like Rufous-bellied Plaintive Cuckoo *C. merulinus*, Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* and Silver-backed Needletail *H. cochinchinensis* are extralimital while others like Black-breasted Weaver *Ploceus benghalensis* and Rock Bush-

Quail *Perdicula argoondah* are unlikely to occur within this region. Treatment of some birds like Eurasian Scops Owl *Otus scops* and Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* are based on old taxonomy and now refer directly to extralimital species.

Bibliographic listing in annexure is not technically sound and no standard format has been followed. And lastly, rather than a computer generated format for field observations a photograph of a hand-written field diary would have been more ideal. This is how most recordings in the field are made and not in an Excel sheet format. Last three pages for format for recording birds should be given a skip.

In summary, by producing this book – authors have added yet another cap to Indian ornithology, by covering one more region with a photo field guide that shall hopefully trigger more people to take up this hobby.

– Praveen J. & S. Subramanya

Letter to the Editor

Parasharya *et al.* (2010) reported variations in the plumages of Black-winged Stilts *Himantopus himantopus*. I would like to report the sighting of a Black-winged Stilt with a black crown, nape, and hind neck (See photo). In the afternoon of 1 April 2012 I had gone birding with a few friends—Dheeraj, Shafaat Ulla, and Aasheesh Pittie—to the Ameenpur tank (17°31'22"N, 78°19'22"E) near the BHEL township in Hyderabad. Dheeraj had informed us that an adjacent pond held reed-beds where large numbers of wagtails, weavers, and munias roosted. Before proceeding to this roost site we stopped to watch birds on Ameenpur tank where, amidst a flock of about twenty stilts, we spotted the odd one. Except for the different plumage, we did not see any behaviour that set it apart from the other stilts.

Reference

Parasharya, D., Patel, B., & Parasharya, B. M., 2010. Plumage variations in Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*. *Indian BIRDS* 6 (4&5): 98–99.

– Humayun Taher

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Photo: Humayun Taher

Black-winged Stilt with black crown, nape, and hind neck.

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