

Snapshot sightings

Red Knot at Chavakkad, Kerala

P. P. Sreenivasan



A single Red Knot *Calidris canutus* was photographed on 15 September 2014 at Puthankadapuram beach (10.57°N, 76.02°E), Chavakkad, Kerala, India, during Onam Brid Count, amongst other waders that included a Curlew Sandpiper *C. ferruginea*. The bird was moulting into winter plumage, showing reddish-tinged under parts. Shorter beak, with wing tips reaching tail tip, separate it from the larger Great Knot *C. tenuirostris*. Though the species is reported as regular on the eastern coast of India (Balachandran 1998), this is the first report from Kerala (Sashikumar *et al.* 2010; Praveen & Narayanan 2014).

B-27, Guruvayur Dewasom Quarters, Puthanpally (PO), Tamarayur, Thrissur, Kerala, India. Email: sreenivasangvr@gmail.com

A leucistic Black-tailed Godwit from Mangalajodi, Odisha

Panchami Manoo Ukil



On 18 November 2014, a leucistic Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* was photographed amongst a flock of 15 godwits that formed a part of a larger 1000+ congregation at Mangalajodi (19.92°N, 85.43°E), Chilika Lake, Odisha, India. The bird stayed there for several days

and was reported by other photographers. There are no earlier reports of godwits in this plumage from India, though such birds have been photographed from Thailand (Sikkens & Sikkens 2009), and China (Townshend 2011).

c/o Mr R. N. Das, IAS (ret'd.), 12/A Forest Park, Bhubaneswar, Odisha 751009, India. Email: panchami14@gmail.com

Little Gull at Okhla, Uttar Pradesh

James Lambert

A first winter Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus* was photographed amongst a large flock of c. 300 Black-headed Gulls *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* on 17 December 2014 at Okhla Bird Sanctuary (28.55°N, 77.31°E), Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India. The Little Gull is a vagrant to India, with very few verifiable reports from northern India (Praveen *et al.* 2014). Though photographs are not sharp,



5/C Tin Po Building, 100 Tai Wai Road, Tai Wai, NT, Hong Kong. Email: james_lambo@hotmail.com

the comparative size, in relation with the Black-headed Gulls, black traverse band on upper wings, more round wings, black terminal band and white on secondaries separate this from other gulls, including first winter Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*.

Short-eared Owl from Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu

Murali Rajagopalan [MR] & Muthunayanan K. [MK]

While birding on 28 December 2014 near Tuticorin Port Area (8.77°N, 78.18°E), Tamil Nadu, India, MR photographed an owl that was later identified as a Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*, based on its yellow iris, shorter ear tufts, and whites on the edges of primaries. On 31 December, both of us observed three individuals in the same location



and more observers reported it since then. Though this species is supposedly widely distributed in southern India, including Tamil Nadu (Grimmett *et al.* 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012), actual reports are few, and historically, it has been reported from the Nilgiris and Chennai (Whistler & Kinnear 1935); recent reports are entirely from the latter area (Anonymous 2014). This is its first report from southern Tamil Nadu.

Murali Rajagopalan, VHA Pvt. Ltd., 5/54-A, Senthilampennai, Tuticorin 628103, Tamil Nadu, India. Email: murali_msc1995@yahoo.co.uk

Muthunayanan K., 117H, Palayamkottai Road (W), Sankar Colony, Tuticorin 628008, Tamil Nadu, India. Email: narayanan.muthu@gmail.com

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