



182. A Red Knot at Vashi mudflat along with Curlew Sandpipers, Little Stints, Broad-billed Sandpipers, and Lesser Sand-plovers, 9 November 2021.

We are grateful to Tim Inskipp for confirming the identification of the birds. We sincerely wish to thank Bivash Pandav, Director, BNHS, Rahul Khot, Deputy Director, Sameer Bajaru, Assistant Curator, Mrugank Prabhu Scientist C, and Reshma Pitale Scientist C, for providing all the necessary resources and facilities in the organisation.

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– Shashank Sankpal & Pranay Khadanga

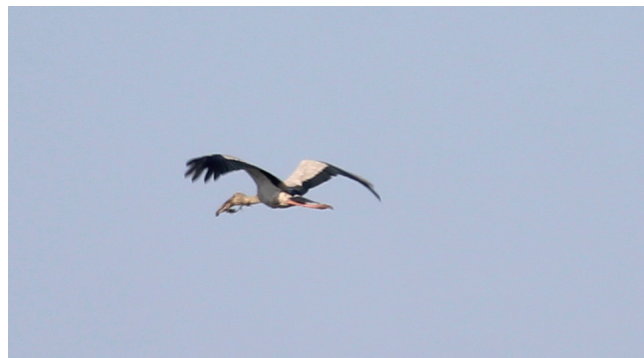
Bombay Natural History Society, Hornbill House, Opp. Lion Gate, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road, Fort, Mumbai 400001, Maharashtra, India.

The Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans* from the Union Territory of Ladakh, India

The Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans* that mostly inhabits inland wetlands, freshwater marshlands, and paddy fields in South and Southeast Asia (Elliott et al. 2020). In India it is a widespread resident in the plains, except in the Thar landscape of Rajasthan, north-eastern India (except Assam), and the Himalayan region (Grimmett et al. 2011).

On 30 November 2021, while surveying under the GEF-UNDP funded 'Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan of UT of Ladakh' project, two Asian Openbills were sighted

in flight over the Indus River (34.17°N, 77.33°E; 3,113 m asl) in Leh District, UT of Ladakh, India at 1625 h, where one of them was carrying its prey [183]. The birds were identified as adults and were largely white with black flight feathers and tail, and with a distinctive gap in the dull greyish yellow bill (Grimmett et al. 2011).



183. Asian Openbill flying over the Indus River at Leh, UT of Ladakh, India, 30 November 2021.

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This is the first sighting record of the Asian Openbill in the UT of Ladakh. Though the species is widespread and common in its given range, it was not recorded in the trans-Himalayan region earlier (eBird 2022). Its nearest record is from Kathua in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir, which is 260 km from the location of our sighting (eBird 2022). The elevation of this observation, at 3,113 m asl, is also the highest recorded for the Asian Openbill in India (assessed with GeoCAT). None of the extant published works (Ali & Ripley 1983; Kazmierczak 2000; Grimmett et al. 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; eBird 2022; iNaturalist; Global Biodiversity Information Forum) mention the elevation range of the species. However, Liu et al. (2015) have recorded the Asian Openbill at an elevation of 3,840 m asl at Wudi Lake (at Yunnan province) in China.

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– Debaprasad Sengupta & Tania Ray Bhattacharya

All: Debaprasad Sengupta, The Celestial Earth, Ocus Quantum, Sector 51, Gurugram, Haryana 122003, India. Email: debaprasad.sengupta40@hotmail.com / debaprasad.s@thecelestialearth.org. [Corresponding author]