



Shyamal Saikia

50. Dark-sided thrush *Zoothera marginata* feeding on a frog (belonging to Dicroglossidae family).

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Reports of melanistic Indian Paradise-flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi* from India

On 30 June 2017, while birding in Pawalgarh Conservation Reserve, Nainital, Uttarakhand (29.46°N, 79.20°E), PK spotted a bird that we thought was a Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea*, moving very quickly inside the bushes. However, after closer inspection, the bird's appearance seemed rather unusual for a Monarch. When we got a better view, we saw a black bird with white underparts and iridescent purplish black upperparts. Like an Indian Paradise-flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi*, it also had blue eyes.

PK took a few photographs [51], which were later used to identify the bird. While searching the Internet, the initial hypothesis was that it was a Japanese Paradise Flycatcher *T. atrocaudata* because it closely resembled the bird in the photograph. However, during later discussions over several social media groups (Ask ID of Indian Birds, Indian Birds), we realised that it was a melanistic Indian Paradise Flycatcher.



Prashant Kumar

51. Aberrant coloured Indian Paradise-flycatcher in Nainital, Uttarakhand.

NB reported seeing a melanistic Indian Paradise-flycatcher on 6 March 2022, in the Union Territory of Puducherry (11.95°N, 79.64°E). This bird shared many traits with the bird seen by PK in 2017. NB was able to capture some images of the bird [52] and gave them to PK for additional identification. We deduced that it was also a melanistic Indian Paradise-flycatcher because all of the ID pointers coincided with the bird that PK photographed.



N. Balamurugan

52. Aberrant coloured Indian Paradise-flycatcher in Puducherry.

Mahabal et al. (2016) did not report any kind of colour aberrations for the Indian Paradise-flycatcher. Hence, this is the first report of colour-aberrant Indian Paradise-flycatchers for the country.

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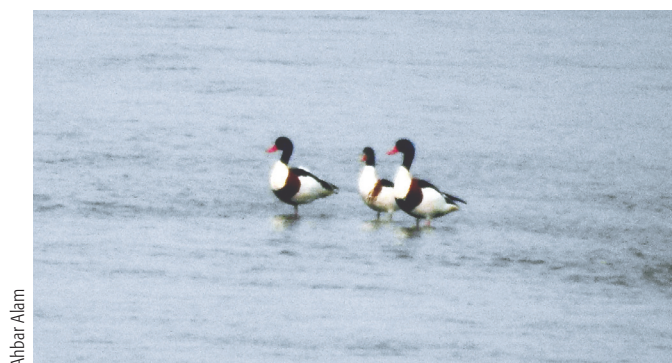
The Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* in Patna, Bihar

The Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* breeds in parts of Europe, the Mediterranean, Central Asia, through eastern Siberia, Mongolia, and Tibet (Ali & Ripley 1987). During winter, it is seen in northern Africa, Iran, the Indian Subcontinent, coastal China, south-western Korea, Japan, and Taiwan (Ali & Ripley 1987). In India, it is an uncommon visitor to the northern parts of peninsular India (Rahmani & Islam 2008).

We conducted a survey during November 2021–January 2022, to document the avian diversity along the 40 km stretch of the banks of the Ganges, from Danapur (25.64°N, 85.04°E) to Fatuha (25.51°N, 85.30°E) in Patna. This survey included 33 ghats between Danapur and Fatuha. We covered the study area on foot and by boat along the banks of the Ganges.

On 20 and 21 January 2021 we documented three Common Shelducks *Tadorna tadorna* near Bans Ghat (25.64°N, 85.14°E), Patna, (Bihar, India) [53]. The birds were identified with the help of Ali & Ripley (1983) and Grimmett et al. (2011). On 17 January 2022, Arvind Mishra sighted Common Shelduck at Vikramshila Dolphin Sanctuary (25.17° N, 86.55° E) (Arvind Mishra pers.

comm.); a site located in Bhagalpur District of Bihar, c. 200 km from our sighting, further downstream on the Ganges.



Ahbar Alam

53. Common Shelducks near Bans Ghats, Patna, Bihar.

There is only one report of the Common Shelduck from Bihar, prior to this record. In February 1999, Arvind Mishra reported 47 and 25 birds on two consecutive days at Vikramshila Dolphin Sanctuary and three birds on 20 May 1999 (Rahmani & Islam 2008).

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The Status of the Upland Pipit *Anthus sylvanus*, in its range eastwards of Nepal

The Upland Pipit *Anthus sylvanus* is a large, heavily streaked pipit, with an upright stance. It usually prefers high-altitude meadows with grass covered rocky slopes. It is identified by its dense vertical dark streaks on body, breast and flanks, short and broad bill, a white or creamy supercilium, and warm buff or fulvous underparts (Ali & Ripley 1998; Grimmett et al. 2016). It is generally found in the Himalaya ranging from Pakistan (Murree Hills) to east Nepal, and breeds between 1,219–2,438 m asl (Oates 1890; Grimmett et al. 2016); Ali & Ripley (1998) added Sikkim to its distribution. Subsequently, Tyler (2020) added north-western and northern Pakistan to southern and south-eastern China to its distribution and, hesitantly, norther and north-eastern Myanmar too. Mackintosh (1915) stated that it was found on the uplands around the Darjeeling station during winter and early spring.

At 1130 h on 28 August 2022, while I was roaming around for birds and butterflies with my non-birder friend inside Happy Valley Tea Estate ((27.05°N, 88.25°E), just outside the main town

of Darjeeling, West Bengal, when, suddenly, a pipit flushed from a nearby heap of rocks on a grassy slope, and sat on a rock just a few meters away. I identified it immediately as an Upland Pipit (Ali & Ripley 1998). It is probably that there was a nest with fledglings, that's why it was trying to distract me and drawn away my attention by hopping and moving farther away from where it has flushed. It breeds from March to July Tyler (2020); though Hume (1890) recorded breeding in April–July, and Oates (1890) in May–June. So, I decided to take few photographs and came back without investigating that place. This record was uploaded to eBird (Giri 2022). This is also the first photographic record from West Bengal [54].



Asim Giri

54. Upland Pipit in its typical habitat, Darjeeling Town

Trimble (2005) reported eight individuals of Upland Pipit from north Sikkim, seeing it twice in June at Thangu, and Balgopal (2019), with four other birdwatchers, spotted it at 27.867°N, 88.693°E. There are only three records from West Bengal: two by Inskipp (1971) on 16 and 18 January 1971, from the same area, and one by Robson (1982) in May 1982 from Rimbick, Darjeeling. Besides those records, very recently in January 2023 Manna et al. (2023) photographed two individuals from Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary of West Bengal. These data are retrieved from eBird, but there was no single photographic evidence until mine.

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