

Sighting of Greylag Goose *Anser anser* in Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra, India



198. Greylag Goose *Anser anser*.

Siddhesh S. Surve, Mrugank Prabhu, Parveen Shaikh & Sujit S. Narwade

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Siddhesh S. Surve, Hornbill House, Bombay Natural History Society, Opp. Lion's Gate, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road, Mumbai 400001, Maharashtra, India.

Email: siddhesh.surve15@gmail.com (corresponding author).

Mrugank Prabhu, Hornbill House, Bombay Natural History Society, Opp. Lion's Gate, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road, Mumbai 400001, Maharashtra, India.

Email: mrugankvp@gmail.com

Parveen Shaikh, Hornbill House, Bombay Natural History Society, Opp. Lion's Gate, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road, Mumbai 400001, Maharashtra, India.

Email: parveenevs@gmail.com

Sujit S. Narwade, Hornbill House, Bombay Natural History Society, Opp. Lion's Gate, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road, Mumbai 400001, Maharashtra, India.

Email: sujitsnarwade@gmail.com

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The Greylag Goose *Anser anser* breeds in the Palearctic, mainly at boreal and temperate latitudes across Europe and Asia, and winters in northern Africa, West Asia, India, and southern China (Rahmani & Islam 2008). In India it is found in Kashmir, Punjab, in small numbers in Rajasthan, northern Gujarat, the Gangetic plain towards Assam, and in Manipur. It is abundant on the Chilika Lake, Odisha, in some winters (Ali & Ripley 1983).

This bird was not listed in Abdulali's (1981) checklist. Ali & Ripley (1983) did not record it from Maharashtra, and stated that it was virtually absent in the Deccan and southern India. Rasmussen & Anderton (2012), also did not show its distribution in Maharashtra. However Grimmett *et al.* (2011) showed it wintering in Thane District.

There are some records from Maharashtra, which are not well documented. These include Sunjoy Monga's report of three birds flying over Gorai, near Mumbai, on 16 December 2000 (Prasad 2004). One bird was sighted on 16 February 2010 at Bhigwan, by Jyoti Amit Rane (*pers. comm.*, 2014). Rohan Kamath and Mihir Barve spotted an adult Greylag in a flock of c. 108 Bar-headed Geese *A. indicus*, at Veer Dam in Satara District in 2011 (*pers. comm.*, 2014).

However, there are also a few documented records of the species from the state. Kasambe *et al.* (2008) reported 11 birds from Pandhari Reservoir near Warud in Amravati District on 31 October 1993. They also reported a flock of 90–100 Greylag Geese from Shiregaon Bandh reservoir near Navegaon Bandh Sanctuary in Gondia District in eastern Maharashtra on 31 December 2006. This species was also reported from Jayakwadi

bird sanctuary in Aurangabad district (Anonymous 2013). Gogate (2013) recorded it in Nandur Madhmeshwar Bird Sanctuary, Nashik District. Vagrant Greylag Geese have been recorded from as far south as Tamil Nadu (Elamon 2013).

On 17 November 2013, we visited a wetland near Belpada Village in Navi Mumbai, where we sighted one unusual bird amongst a flock of ducks. We used a field guide (Grimmett *et al.* 2011) and identified it as Greylag Goose. It was seen feeding on *Cynodon dactylon* grass. Sometimes the bird was seen in flocks of Garganey *Anas querquedula*, Northern Pintail *A. acuta*, Indian Spot-billed Duck *A. poecilorhyncha*, and Cotton Pygmy Goose *Nettapus coromandelianus* [198–199].

We noted that the bird limped while walking. No external wound was visible. The bird was also able to fly efficiently when disturbed by local fisherman or cattle. Probably this Greylag Goose, which was seen here till 20 December 2013, was a vagrant.

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