

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=oKmM94y5k4s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oKmM94y5k4s)), the bird suddenly appears near the nest, first perching at a grass blade at a distance of 0.5 m from the nest, then jumping to approach the nest directly, and subsequently taking off and flying away; the entire event of the male approaching and leaving the nest lasted for 20 sec in the video [55, 56]. We also recorded the chicks walking out of the nest independently and exploring their surroundings. The chicks were also recorded walking outside the nest, begging for food and trying to snatch the food from the adults instead before the adults could feed them at the nest. Our inference from these behaviours was that the chicks were probably mature enough to start fledging in addition to the increased level of food competition between them. Our time-lapse video of the nest, showing a male Little Bittern approaching the nest and chicks, along with other circumstantial evidence described in this note, conclusively proves the nesting of the Little Bittern at this location. Our record appears to be the first documented and videographed record of Little Bittern nesting in Haryana, India.



55. Little Bittern male at the nest showing its black back and tail.



All: Time-lapse video camera

56. Little Bittern male perched over at the nest showing bill and wings.

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## The Critically Endangered Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* from Ratnagiri, Maharashtra

The Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* is a Critically Endangered migratory bird species known for its rapid population decline due to habitat loss and other threats (Wiersma et al. 2020). In India, Sociable Lapwing is considered a winter migrant and is mainly reported from parts of Gujarat and Rajasthan (Tiware 2010; Kasambe 2011). There is only one confirmed record of Sociable Lapwing from Maharashtra, and it dates to 2001 in the Pohara-Malkhed Reservoir, Vidarbha region (Kasambe 2001; Wadatkar & Kasambe 2002). Hence, any new observation is a noteworthy event.

On 18 November 2022, two Sociable Lapwings were seen by Prasad Gokhale and me during a routine birdwatching expedition at Champak ground (17.001°N, 73.315°E) in the Ratnagiri District. Both were characterized by an olive-brown back, black crown and lores, thin dark line behind the eye, and bold, white supercilia that met at the forehead and nape. Both individuals had a buff wash to the supercilium and neck, indicating non-breeding plumage. One individual had a clear breast with a hint of black in the belly [57].

This lack of strong colour and contrast could imply a young bird or a female. The other individual had a heavily streaked breast, indicating a juvenile bird [58]. The lapwings foraged gracefully in the partially burnt grasslands, providing a captivating spectacle. The excitement was palpable as we carefully approached the birds, maintaining a respectful distance to avoid disturbance. We carefully observed and photographed the lapwings. They were feeding on seeds, plant matter, and insects. We observed them picking up grass and seeds with their bills. Both individuals stayed in the same area for the next two days.



57. Sociable Lapwing from Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra



58. Juvenile Sociable Lapwing from Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra

Both: Viraj V Athalye

Ratnagiri district is a stopover site for many migratory species during their long-distance journeys (pers obs.): species such as Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*, Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*, Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*, Ruff *C. pugnax*, Dunlin *C. alpina*, and Broad-billed Sandpiper *C. falcinellus* have been recorded here. We also note that many species of shorebirds, as well as our Sociable Lapwing record, have been from the lateritic plateaus of the district. Lateritic plateaus, found along the Konkan coast and northern Western Ghats, are barren, and weathered iron-rich soils characterize their flat tops (Giri

& Mukherjee 2023). They support a unique ecosystem and contain grasslands that may attract bird species that prefer open habitats. The observation of two Sociable Lapwings in Ratnagiri is a significant contribution to the records of this species in India. The accumulated observations over the years highlight the area's importance as a crucial habitat and migratory stopover for diverse bird species. Therefore, it is essential to amplify conservation initiatives and research in this region to guarantee the preservation of its flora and fauna.

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## The Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* from Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, India

On 21 December 2021, at 0910 h, while birding at Deepor Beel (26.114°N, 91.655°E; c.100 m asl), Assam, PK, PM, and RK observed an unfamiliar gull flying alongside Brown-headed Gulls *Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus* and cormorants. PK took a few photographs of the unidentified gull. In flight, the bird showed a prominent black collar, black ear spots, grey upper wings with black tips, a broad black band across median coverts, a black-tipped tail, and a black bill. After analyzing and discussing the photographs with several expert birders, we confirmed its identification as an immature Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*. This observation is only the second record from Assam after Chatterjee (2012), who photographed an immature individual near Majuli Island on the Brahmaputra River.

On 14 January 2024 at 0800 h, RM and BD photographed a Black-legged Kittiwake along the banks of the Noa-Dihing River near Miao, Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh (27.497°N, 96.210°E; c.280 m asl). The bird is likely to be an adult because of the dull yellow bill, dark spot behind the ear, grey in the nape and back of the head (breeding adults have an all-white head), lack of nuchal collar, and overall, less black in the head and nape than a second cycle bird (Hatch et al. 2020). This observation is the first record of this species from Arunachal Pradesh.

The Black-legged Kittiwake is a small pelagic gull primarily distributed in North America and Europe. It breeds mostly along the coastlines of the North Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, while it winters in the open sea, away from the mainland (Hatch et al. 2020). In India, Black-legged Kittiwakes have been reported from Goa, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, and Kerala (Kasambe et al. 2020). Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) mentioned the sighting of an immature bird from Goa