



66. Various anthropogenic materials in the nest.



Both: Rajat Chordia

67. Laggar falcon with kill of an unidentified bird.

Although falcons are not known to use such materials in their nest, Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* nests are known to contain many anthropogenic items such as pieces of clothes and other plastic items (Mori 2019). This area is frequented by Egyptian Vultures. Laggar Falcons are known to take over empty and abandoned nests of other birds, such as Egyptian Vultures (Mori et al. 2023); therefore, it is possible that the nests we observed initially belonged to an Egyptian Vulture. However, urbanization can affect different aspects of nest design of birds (James et al. 2019). Several studies have highlighted a change in nesting materials along an urbanization gradient (e.g., Wang et al. 2009; Radhamany et al. 2016; Reynolds et al. 2016). The proximity of the nest site to a Highway along with farmlands in this situation made such nesting materials more readily available. Further studies are required to understand the effect of such anthropogenic materials in the nest of Laggar Falcon.

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## Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*: A new species for Goa, and a review of its status in the Indian mainland

On 06 January 2024, SF and AF visited the Maina-Curtorim wetlands opposite the Sonbem Lake in Curtorim (15.299°N, 74.006°E) to conduct a birding trip. At approximately 0810 h, SF noticed a medium-sized wader with a flat back, pot belly, long rear end, small head, and slightly decurved bill tip actively feeding in a mixed flock of other waders, such as the Pin-tailed Snipe *Gallinago stenura*, Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*, Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* and a few Common Redshanks *Tringa totanus*. It was initially difficult to identify as we were unfamiliar with it. The bird looked like a Ruff *Calidris pugnax* but was different. Gradually, it made its way onto the bund [68], allowing SF to obtain good photographs. The bird was repeatedly observed in the area for 17 days, from 06 January to 22 January 2024, during which it was photographed by MD and OD [69–71].

The photos were subsequently uploaded to social media, where the species was identified as a Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*. We also used literature (Hayman et al. 1986; Harrop 1993; Grimmet et al. 2011; Vinicombe et al. 2014) to confirm the identification. This bird appeared slightly larger than Dunlin *Calidris alpina*, with a small head on a neck that appeared





Savio Fonseca

68. Pectoral Sandpiper (front) standing on a bund with a Marsh Sandpiper (back). 06 January 2024.



Omkar Dharwadkar

71. (L-R) Pectoral Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper, and Ruff together on 18 January 2024.



Mangirish Dharwadkar

69. Pectoral Sandpiper adopting an erect stance, 14 January 2024.



Omkar Dharwadkar

70. Pectoral Sandpiper in flight, 14 January 2024.

short while feeding. It resembled a small Ruff, particularly when it adopted an erect stance with its neck stretched [69, 71]. Its bill was similar to a Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* but shorter and thicker at the base, with a blackish tip to the slightly decurved bill and a brownish-yellow base to the lower mandible [68, 69]. The bird's distinct 'pectoral' band of brown streaks on

the buffy breast formed a gorget that was sharply demarcated and contrasted with the unmarked white belly, although a few streaks extended below the gorget at the extreme sides of the breast [69, 71]. At rest, the closed wings reached beyond the tail, and the primary projection was longer than that of Dunlin or Ruff [68]. In flight, it resembled a Reeve (female Ruff), where the wing stripe is virtually undetectable to the naked eye [70]. It also had a broad, black-centered rump and tail, with prominent white sides, and the toes did not project beyond the tail tip [70].

The Maina-Curtorim wetlands (Fig. 1), locally known as 'Aadis,' measure approximately 40 ha. They are cultivated twice a year utilizing stored water from the nearby Sonbem Lake, producing a high yield of paddy crops (Pandit et al. 2022). This wetland system serves as a wintering ground for numerous residents and migratory birds. More than 260 species of birds, both resident and migratory, have been recorded here (eBird 2024). Species such as Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* (Dumadag 2020) and Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* (Pandit et al. 2022) were recorded from these wetlands in January 2020 and December 2021, respectively, both of which are the first records for Goa. This emphasizes the conservation value of the Maina-Curtorim wetland ecosystem, justifying its protection by the state administration.

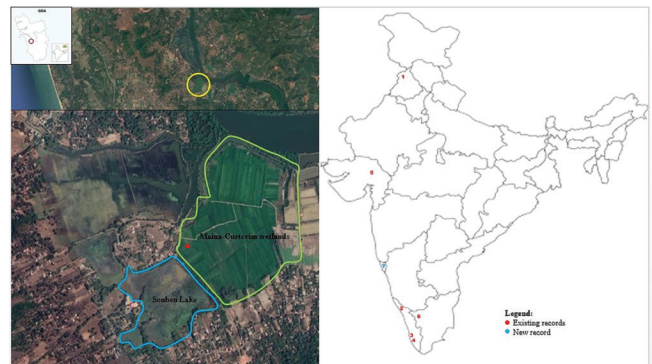


Fig 1. The red triangle marks the location of the Pectoral Sandpiper within the Maina-Curtorim paddy fields. The inset map shows all the sightings in India.

The Pectoral Sandpiper breeds in the Arctic Tundra, extending eastwards from Siberia's Taimyr Peninsula to Canada's Hudson

**Table 1.** Records of Pectoral Sandpiper from India, listed statewise and chronologically. S – Sight; P – Photograph

S. No.	Month & Year	Place	District	State	Type	Reference	Accompanying species
1	May 1998	Harike wetlands	Ferozepur	Punjab	S	Undeland & Sangha (2002)	Not mentioned.
2	September 2013	Madayippara	Kannur	Kerala	P	Rajeevan et al. (2014)	Lesser Sand Plover <i>Charadrius mongolus</i> Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i> Curlew Sandpiper <i>Calidris ferruginea</i> Broad-billed Sandpiper <i>Limicola falcinellus</i>
3	September 2017	Kadamakudy	Ernakulam	Kerala	P	Reghuvaran (2017)	Common Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> Spotted Redshank <i>Tringa erythropus</i> Broad-billed Sandpiper <i>Limicola falcinellus</i>
4	October 2018	Kottayam	Kottayam	Kerala	P	Sreedevi (2018)	Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i>
5	December 2020	Parij wetlands	Kheda	Gujarat	P	Patel (2022)	Not mentioned
6	October 2021	Achankulam Lake	Tuticorin	Tamil Nadu	P	Gajamohanraj & Sarang (2022)	Little Stint <i>Calidris minuta</i> Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i> .
7	January 2024	Maina-Curtorim wetlands	South Goa	Goa	P	Present record Fonseca (2024)	Pin-tailed Snipe <i>Gallinago stenura</i> Marsh Sandpiper <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i> Wood Sandpiper <i>Tringa glareola</i> Common Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> Ruff <i>Calidris pugnax</i>

Bay, migrating largely to spend the winter in South America, with a small number wintering in Southeast Asia, Australia, and New Zealand (Farmer 2020). The migratory path of the Pectoral Sandpiper into the Indian subcontinent is unknown. One possibility is that some individuals or small flocks probably drifted into the Indian Subcontinent while migrating from their breeding grounds to Australia and SE Asia via the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (Rajeevan et al. 2014). More studies are required to determine the movements of this species to the Indian Subcontinent and across it. With more than 1,760 occurrences in Britain alone between 1958 and 1992, the Pectoral Sandpiper is the most common transatlantic vagrant to Europe (Harrop 1993, Undeland & Sangha 2002). The Pectoral Sandpiper is a rare vagrant in the Indian Subcontinent (Grimmett et al. 2011; Kazmierczak 2000; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; Rajeevan et al. 2014). In India, the Pectoral Sandpiper was first recorded in the wetlands of Harike in Punjab (Undeland & Sangha 2002). Other records in the country exist from Gujarat (Patel 2022), Kerala (Rajeevan et al. 2014; Reghuvaran 2017; Sreedevi 2018) and Tamil Nadu (Gajamohanraj & Sarang 2022). Previously, there were only six records of this species in India, which can be attributed to the difficulty of correctly identifying it in the field. Since this species has not been included in Goa's avifaunal checklist of Goa (Baidya & Bhagat 2018, 2023), the sighting of this rare vagrant at the Maina-Curtorim wetlands makes it the first record for the state and possibly the seventh record for India. All records of Pectoral Sandpiper in India are shown below (Table 1, Fig. 1).

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