

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

and added that the species, though known to typically winter within its pelagic range, may be found as a rare vagrant far inland during migration such birds blown inland by storms, or if its ill.

Black-legged Kittiwake has two sub-species: *R. t. tridactyla* (Atlantic population) and *R. t. pollicaris* (Pacific population). As India is almost equidistant from the populations that winter in the Pacific and Atlantic regions and most sightings in the subcontinent have been from either the west coast or eastern India and Bangladesh (eBird 2024), it is an interesting possibility that both subspecies may occur in the Indian subcontinent.



59. Ventral view of an immature Black-legged Kittiwake from Deepor Beel, Assam



Both: Prasanna Kalita

60. Dorsal view of the same individual from Deepor Beel, Assam



Ravi Mekola

61. Immature Black-legged Kittiwake from the Noa-Dihing River, Arunachal Pradesh

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A Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* feeding on carrion

Diet is an important part of a species' biology, and opportunistic observations often provide new insights into the breadth of a species' diet and trophic ecology. Birds belonging to the order Ciconiiformes (Storks) are large, wading, and primarily carnivorous birds (Winkler et al. 2020). The Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* is distributed in the tropical plains of the Indian Subcontinent and sparsely distributed in the Southeast Asian countries of Myanmar, Thailand, Lao PDR, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Cambodia (BirdLife International 2023). It usually inhabits inland shallow lakes, jheels, ponds, marshlands, and riverbanks. Although the bird is chiefly considered piscivorous, it feeds on a variety of foods, including insects, crustaceans, and amphibians (Ali & Ripley 1987; Kalam & Urfi 2008; Urfi 2011a). Moreover, it has been reported to consume snakes and hatchling Mugger crocodiles (Urfi 1988; Somaweera et al. 2013). In this note, we provide conclusive evidence of carrion feeding by a Painted Stork.



Anney Paranjape

62. Painted Stork feeding on carrion at the Mula-Mutha River, Pune, Maharashtra, India.

On 25 December 2023, at approximately 0700 hours, while birding at the Mula-Mutha River (18.542°N, 73.882°E), near