

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



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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

the Bund Garden of Pune, Maharashtra, India, we came across a Painted Stork feeding on carrion from a plastic bag. The bird was trying to remove a chunk of meat from within the bag. We watched the stork for approximately 45 min of which, for about 21 min the individual was trying to feed on the contents of the bag. A few photographs and videos of the observations were taken using a Nikon P900 digital camera [62]. We also observed a few House Crows *Corvus splendens* and a Black Kite *Milvus migrans* attempting to steal the carrion from the Painted Stork. After thorough inspection, the carrion appeared to be a goat offal. After a few days of this incident, we visited the place twice, but no carrion feeding by Painted Storks was recorded, although four Painted Storks were observed feeding in the shallow water in the area.

Previously published studies have shown that among Indian storks, Adjutant Storks *Leptoptilos* sp. (Greater Adjutant *L. javanicus* and Lesser Adjutant *L. dubius*) are well-known scavengers and carrion feeders (Winkler et al. 2020). The Woolly-necked Storks *Ciconia episcopus* have also been observed to scavenge on carcasses (Sivakumar et al. 2011). Previously, Painted Storks have been reported to pick up floating dead fish from the water surface in the Bhindawas Bird Sanctuary (Urfi 2011b). However, members of the tribe Mycteriini (which Painted Storks belong to) predominantly feed on fish, and the birds have never been reported to feed on carrion or carcasses, making our observation noteworthy.

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Status of the Chinese Bush Warbler *Locustella tacsanowskia* in the Indian subcontinent with a recent song recording from eastern Assam

The Chinese Bush Warbler *Locustella tacsanowskia* is a winter migrant to the lowland grasslands of southern Nepal, Bhutan, north-eastern India, Vietnam, and south-western China. This species breeds from eastern Russia and adjacent northern

Mongolia and in parts of China. During the breeding season, it prefers grassy upland meadows and open areas within larch forests, including wide clearings with a variety of shrubby thickets, tall grasses, and herbs; typically, these areas are between 2,800 and 3,600 m asl. In the non-breeding season, it mainly occurs at the edge of plains in lowland grasslands (elephant grasses), reedbeds, paddy fields, and scrubby edges of lowland cultivation (Madge 2020).

On 05 February 2023 at 0749 h, we were birding in the Maguri grassland (27.583°N, 95.352°E), eastern Assam, a lowland area that has *Auundo donax* and *Phragmites karka* grasses [63]. We were attempting to photograph the Grey-sided Bush Warbler *Cettia brunnifrons* that was expected there. After photographing that species, we explored further with the intention of documenting other warblers in that patch. We kept hearing a 'zack-zack-zack' call reminiscent of a Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola* as well as the typical song of Baikal Bush Warbler *Locustella davidi*. Along with those, an insect like 'treeeeeeeep' call was also heard that we initially assumed to be just an insect. We started recording the vocalization of the presumed Paddyfield Warbler. Luckily, the same raspy, insect-like vocalisation was heard again, and our recorder picked it up (Fig. 1). It was then that we realised that a third bush/reed warbler was also present in the vicinity; its call obviously distinct from what we knew of the typical calls/songs of Paddyfield Warbler and Baikal Bush Warbler. We could not place it to any species then, and we started searching for it. For some time, we did not see the Paddyfield Warbler, and it created some confusion that the 'zack-zack-zack' call and the new vocalisation were being produced by the very same bird. We then played back the newly recorded vocalization in an attempt to lure the species out. The bird responded, and we were able to see the movement of the bird in the grasses—a small warbler producing a low 'truk' rasps with minimal pauses in between. We recorded this vocalisation as well (Fig. 2), and then the bird offered a glimpse. It was an overall dark Locustella-type warbler; dirt-brown above, with a white throat with some streaks across the upper chest, and flanks appeared dusky. After that, we also saw a Paddyfield Warbler in the vicinity there by making us believe that the 'zack-zack-zack' calls were, after all, from that bird. In summary, we obtained average views of a Locustella-type warbler and recorded two of its vocalizations.

Having not been able to nail down the species, we transmitted the vocalizations to Ashwin Viswanathan, who later confirmed it to be a Chinese Bush Warbler. We verified this ourselves and found the first insect-like 'treeeeeeeep' to be a part of its diagnostic song (e.g., Thomas 2017; Stork 2022), while the 'truk', perhaps also produced by other bush/reed warblers, was one of its calls.



63. *Arundo donax* and *Phragmites karka* grasses in the Maguri grassland, Tinsukia, Assam.