

Fig. 2. Spectrogram of the call recording of Blue Whistling-Thrush observed on 15 December 2023. (Pande 2023)

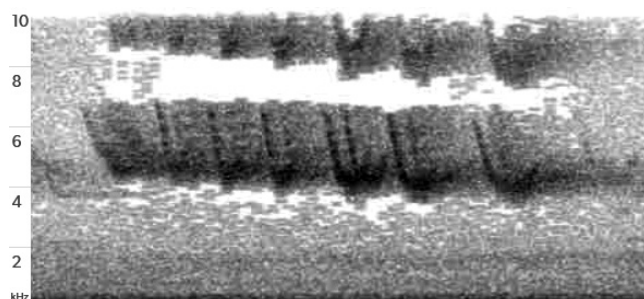


Fig. 3. Spectrogram of the call recording of Blue Whistling-Thrush observed on 24 March 2024. (Pande 2024a)

species was reported from Polo Club, Delhi Cantonment, on 28 March 2010 (Gupta 2010). An additional record exists from the broader neighbourhood of the Capital, from Rithal, Gohana near Sonipat, in January 2018 (Vyas 2023). On 05 October 2024, the species was sighted again at the same location for a second consecutive year, remaining there till the end of December 2024 (Pande 2024b). Considering the limited number of wintering records of the Blue Whistling-Thrush in the northern Indian plains, the repeated appearance of an individual at the same location in New Delhi for two consecutive winters is particularly noteworthy.

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## An Indian Skimmer *Rynchops albigollis* at the Harike Bird Sanctuary, Punjab, India

The Harike Bird Sanctuary (31.151°N, 74.994°E), a large, shallow, man-made reservoir situated on the Sutlej River just downstream of its confluence with the Beas River, has historically been a known site for the Indian Skimmer *Rynchops albigollis* (Kazmierczak et al. 1998). However, global population declines have resulted in increasingly rare sightings at the site (BirdLife International 2001).

On 09 March 2025, a solitary Indian Skimmer was observed between 0945 and 1030 h, resting and sleeping on sandbars c. 100 m downstream of Harike Barrage (31.144°N, 74.946°E). Although surrounded by a group of River Terns *Sterna aurantia*, the individual remained largely inactive. Unlike the terns, which intermittently flew and scanned the surroundings, the skimmer mostly stayed grounded, occasionally taking brief flights before returning to the same resting spot. Its identification was unmistakable, having black upperparts contrasting with white underparts and a characteristic bright orange beak with the lower mandible distinctly longer than the upper (Grimmett et al. 2011) [162].



162. Indian Skimmer photographed from Harike Bird Sanctuary, Punjab.

The Indian Skimmer is currently listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List, with a global population size of 2,450–2,900 mature individuals (BirdLife International 2020). eBird designates it as a *Sensitive Species*, restricting public access to the online records during its breeding season (eBird 2025). The species is highly sensitive to habitat disturbance, altered flow regimes due to dams and barrages, sand mining, and increasing human activity along river corridors (Rajguru 2017; Shaikh et al. 2018).

The present observation from Harike Bird Sanctuary, alongside the recent sighting by Majumdar (2022), reinforces the ecological importance of this wetland, given its location near the historic range of the species and its complex riverine habitat.

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### A Brown Boobook *Ninox scutulata* from Nangal, Punjab, India

We report the sighting of a Brown Boobook *Ninox scutulata* from Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary (31.397°N, 76.361°E), Naya Nangal, Rupnagar District, Punjab, India, that occurred on 26 November 2024 at 0845 h. It was perched on a branch of a tree with a thick canopy, in an area with dense undergrowth of *Lantana camara*. Finding an approach for taking good photographs was impossible. However, the best shot that could be managed [163] proved sufficient to identify the species. The tail had broad dark bands and was tipped white. There was a small white patch between the eyes, the upper parts were uniform brown, and the scapulars were white tipped. These identifying features are confirmed in König & Weick (2008) and Taylor (2016).



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163. Brown Boobook at Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary, Punjab showing broad dark bands on its tail.

In India, the Brown Boobook is distributed widely, throughout the Himalayan foothills, all eastern India, central India, and most of southern India (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). Until recently, the western extent of its distribution was believed to be the Himalayan foothills of Uttarakhand. However, now the presence of this species has been documented further to the west of Uttarakhand (Abhinav et al. 2023) – from north Haryana, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu. Abhinav et al. (2023) also show one old record from Jalalpur, Hoshiarpur District, Punjab, based on a skin in the collection of Frank S. Wright. The date is given as 16 January 1892, and this skin is presently in the collection of Cornell University Museum of Vertebrates (CUMV). We checked the specimen details in GBIF (2025), but the name of the district is not mentioned. We checked with C. Abhinav,

who informed us (in litt., email dated 11 December 2024) that he had chosen the most probable location to depict on the map. We also checked with Vanya Gregor Rohwer, the curator of birds and mammals of CUMV, who informed us (in litt., email dated 08 January 2025) that the specimen is of a female and no district name is indicated in their records. Upon searching for Jalalpur in Punjab on Google Maps, the broader location was suggested as Hoshiarpur district. We also know that there are multiple places by the name Jalalpur in Punjab. We could not find any record of Brown Boobook from other sources, such as journals, social media, and citizen science platforms. Hence, this 1892 record from 'Jalalpur' is the only known record from Punjab until the record presented here. The three closest locations where this species has been recorded are Amb Doli, Pathiar, Kangra district, Himachal Pradesh (Thakur 2023) at a straight-line distance of c.53 km in the northwest direction, Mandi in Himachal Pradesh (Abhinav et al. 2023) at a straight-line distance of c.65 km in the northeast direction, and Chandigarh (Singh 2021; eBird 2025) at a straight-line distance of c.80 km in the southeast direction. Therefore, this new record, coming 132 years after the previous one from Punjab, is significant as it complements other records from neighbouring states that extend the commonly accepted western limit of the species' distribution. It is also likely the first photographic evidence for the state.

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### Two new breeding colonies of the White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* in Bangladesh

The Critically Endangered White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* was once an abundant and widely distributed raptor in South and South-East Asia (Prakash 1999; Gilbert et al. 2006; Chaudhary et al. 2012; Ghimire et al. 2019), including Bangladesh (Harvey 1990; Thompson & Johnson 1996). These vultures breed colonially or singly on tall trees even occasionally on cliffs, and has a global population estimate of 4,000–6,000 mature individuals (BirdLife International 2025). The species has been declining, especially since the 1990s mainly due to a widely-used painkiller and anti-inflammatory drug diclofenac used for treating livestock (Anonymous 2004; Baral et al. 2005; Cuthbert et al. 2016; BirdLife International 2025). It is the only vulture known to breed regularly in Bangladesh (Khan 2013).

White-rumped Vulture population declined by c.60% in Bangladesh during 2008–2012 (Khan 2013). The last countrywide