

15 October 2023	Harinagar (27.152°N, 84.329°E)	20
17 October–22 November 2023	Bholapur Kharhat (27.200°N, 84.226°E)	4000–5000 (aggregated)
12 October 2024	Gobardhana village (27.311°N, 84.315°E)	4 (One adult male, rest females)
17 October 2024	Bholapur Kharhat (27.200°N, 84.226°E)	>200
23–30 October 2024	Bholapur Kharhat (27.200°N, 84.226°E)	4000–5000 (aggregated)
24 November 2024	Bholapur Kharhat (27.200°N, 84.226°E)	28

Table 3. Year-wise records of Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* during autumn passage migration in West Champaran District, Bihar (2020–2024)

Date	Location	Number of Individuals observed
12 November 2020	Gobardhana village (27.311°N, 84.315°E)	>8
03 November 2021	Gobardhana village (27.311°N, 84.315°E)	7
29 October 2022	Harinagar (27.152°N, 84.329°E)	2 (juvenile birds)
19 October 2023	Harinagar (27.152°N, 84.329°E)	2 (juvenile birds)
24 October 2023	Harinagar (27.152°N, 84.329°E)	2 (juvenile birds)
05 November 2023	Gobardhana village (27.311°N, 84.315°E)	1 (juvenile birds)
07 November 2023	Bholapur Kharhat (27.200°N, 84.226°E)	>9
12 October 2024	Gobardhana village (27.311°N, 84.315°E)	6

Across years, roosting behaviour was consistent; falcons assembled on powerlines, trees, and agricultural fields in the evenings, departing between 0900 and 0945 h the next morning, earlier on windy days. Vocalizations at communal roosts were prominent. Lesser Kestrels were most often seen in small flocks, sometimes within Amur Falcon groups, while Eurasian Hobbies were generally fewer, but occasionally associated with larger congregations.

The Lesser Kestrel is currently considered monotypic. However, Corso (2016) described notable plumage variation between western *F n naumanni* and eastern populations as Chinese Lesser Kestrel *F n 'pekinensis'*, with the latter showing more saturated coloration and grey on the upper wing extending to the scapulars. Between 2016 and 2024, the Lesser Kestrels I observed and photographed, consistently exhibited features matching those of the eastern population [210, 211]. I shared several photographs with Andrea Corso (in litt. email dated November 2023 and September 2025) who confirmed the birds as 'wonderful *pekinensis'* corresponding to the eastern population.



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210. Two Chinese Lesser Kestrels *F n 'pekinensis'* from Bholapur Kharhat, West Champaran District, Bihar showing saturated grey on the upper wings extending to the scapulars.



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211. A Chinese Lesser Kestrel *F n 'pekinensis'* in flight from Bholapur Kharhat, West Champaran District, Bihar showing grey extending to scapulars.

These observations confirm that the Ramnagar–Gobardhana–Bholapur Kharhat landscape in West Champaran District, Bihar serves as a regular passage area for all three falcon species during autumn migration. The repeated occurrence of large numbers, especially in recent years, highlights the significance of this part of north Bihar as a migration stopover. Together with comparable records from adjoining Nepal (Budhathoki 2024; Chaudhary 2024), the observations suggest that the Bihar–Nepal Terai landscape forms part of an important migration corridor for these long-distance migrants.

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Observations of the Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* from Odisha

The Eurasian Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* is an uncommon winter visitor across northern India, and it is known to straggle across the rest of India, where it inhabits wetlands with dense reed-beds, especially *Typha* (Ali & Ripley 2001; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). Its status is considered scarce to rare (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). While some records exist from the western

part of the Indian peninsula (Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat), records from states on the eastern coast, such as West Bengal, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh, are very few. Most of the records south of Gujarat are restricted to c.200 km from the coastline, barring records from Amravati that were c.550 m from the western coastline (Gupta 2015; Giri 2018). This species has occasionally been reported in West Bengal, with records on eBird from Chatta Kalikapur, South 24 Paraganas (Pramanik 2020), Digene Beach, Purba Medinipur (Das 2023; Chowdhury 2024), Khidirpur, Dakshin Dinajpur (Pandey 2024), between December and February. In Odisha, it has been recorded from Mangalajodi wetlands (Behura 2016; Sahu 2016) and near North Odisha University in Takatpur, Baripada (Lahkar 2010). A photograph by Indranil Sengupta, taken on 28 January 2012, also exists from Mangalajodi (Megha 2016).

We report two Eurasian Bittern records from two separate locations within Odisha in January 2025. At Bhatrajore Reservoir, Kalahandi (19.847°N, 83.002°E), the species was first recorded and photographed [212] by PM on 06 January 2025 (Mangaraj 2025). The bird was initially noticed while foraging in waterlogged fields, where it flushed on close approach by the observer. It was seen again on 17 January 2025 by SM in similar circumstances (Mohanta 2025), and once more on 20 January 2025 by AM, who observed the bird flying slowly and gracefully above the waterbody, resembling a Purple Heron in flight (Mishra 2025). Despite subsequent visits to the site in January and February, the bird was not relocated, suggesting that it had moved on. All observations at this location occurred between 0800 and 1000 hrs. Given the repeated sightings over a span of about 15 days, it is likely that Bhatrajore served as a temporary stopover during migration rather than a wintering site.



212. Eurasian Bittern from Bhatrajore, Kalahandi, Odisha.

In addition, RM documented the species at Gahirmatha (20.485°N, 86.736°E) on 18 January 2025 at 1100 hrs, where it was seen in an abandoned prawn *gherry* (farm). Photographs [213] obtained during this encounter confirm the identification beyond doubt. Notably, the record from Kalahandi lies c.200 km inland from the eastern coast of India, contrasting with previous records from coastal and brackish-water habitats, such as Mangalajodi in 2016 and Gahirmatha in 2025. This makes the Bhatrajore observation particularly significant.

Bhatrajore Reservoir covers an area of 1.22 sq km at the center of the Kalahandi district. The reservoir margins support dense growth of *Ipomoea* and *Typha* reeds, while adjoining cultivated fields provide additional wetland habitat. The surrounding Ghana Reserve Forest contributes to a high diversity of birdlife, with



213. Eurasian Bittern from Gahirmatha, Odisha.

nearly 130 species documented from the area across seasons (unpublished data). The report of the Eurasian Bittern from this habitat highlights the potential importance of inland wetlands with suitable microhabitats as stopover sites for rare migratory species, underscoring the need for continued exploration and monitoring to reveal further noteworthy records. The records from Odisha are summarized by chronological order in Table 1, and the four locations are shown in Fig. 1.

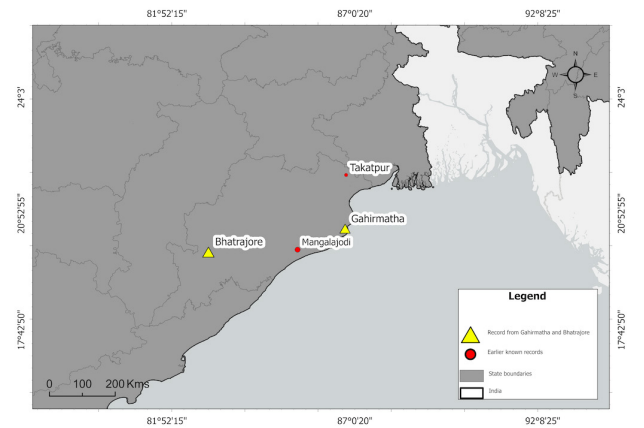


Fig 1. Locations of Eurasian Bittern records from Odisha

Table 1. Records of Eurasian Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i> from Odisha				
eBird Checklist	District	Locality	Observer	Date
S209997261	Kalahandi	Bhatrajore	Anurag Mishra	20 January 2025
NA	Kendrapara	Gahirmatha	Rakesh Mohalik	18 January 2025
S209565277	Kalahandi	Bhatrajore	Siddhanta Mohanta	17 January 2025
S208247939	Kalahandi	Bhatrajore	Prabin K Mangaraj	6 January 2025
S28426435	Khordha	Mangalajodi	Deepak Sahu	19 March 2016
S28094895	Khordha	Mangalajodi	Basanta Behura	11 March 2016
NA	Khordha	Mangalajodi	Indraneil Sengupta	28 January 2012
NA	Mayurbhanj	Takatpur	D Lahkar	2010

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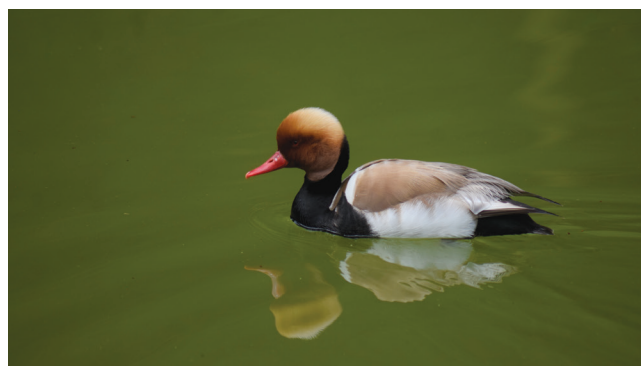
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A Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* at Lampokhari Lake, Sikkim, India

On 14 April 2025, between 1410–1450 h, a male Red-crested Pochard *Netta rufina* was observed and videographed at Lampokhari (Aitar or Ghati Tso) Lake, Dalapchand village, Pakyong District, Sikkim, India (27.187°N, 88.675°E; 1,500 m asl). During a follow-up visit on 18 April 2025, the bird was again sighted and photographed swimming and foraging alongside domesticated Mallards *Anas platyrhynchos domesticus* [214]. It was identified as a male Red-crested Pochard based on rounded rusty-orange head, long bright red bill, black breast, pale flanks, brown upperparts, and a black tail (Grimmett et al. 2011, 2019) [215].



214. Red-crested Pochard photographed alongside domesticated Mallards at Lampokhari Lake, Sikkim.



215. Male Red-crested Pochard photographed in Lampokhari Lake, Sikkim.

This record appears to be the fourth report of the species from Sikkim. Earlier records include one from Kartok Lake, Gyalshing District on 05 March 2021 (Sherpa 2021), another from Bedang Tso Lake, where a female was observed in November 2022 (Dibyendu Ash, in litt. June 2022) and a third from Lampokhari Lake itself on 15 March 2025 (Dhungel & Dhungel 2025). While the species has been reported from Bhutan, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and Arunachal Pradesh (eBird 2025a), there were no published reports from Sikkim prior to these records (Grimmett et al. 2019).

The global breeding range of the species lies in the region across Black and Caspian Seas, and from Central Asia to western Mongolia and north-western China (Salvador et al. 2022). Some breeding populations have also been reported in western and eastern Europe, the western Mediterranean Sea islands, north-western Africa, and parts of middle-western Asia (Salvador et al. 2022). In India, it is mainly a winter migrant (Grimmett et al. 2011; Praveen 2025), but records from March–April in the Himalaya suggest that some individuals linger into the breeding season (BirdLife International 2016).

The species is a specialist of large wetlands, feeding primarily on aquatic vegetation, but also on invertebrates, amphibians, and small fish (BirdLife International 2016). At Lampokhari, it was observed foraging in areas with abundant tadpoles. The lake and its surrounding area support over 77 bird species (eBird 2025b) and has potential conservation value, particularly given its religious and ecotourism significance.

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