

Photo: Lobsang Serap



55. Tibetan Partridge.

Partridge is listed as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List (BirdLife International 2025), but in India it is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. This record confirms the species' presence in the easternmost extent of the Indian Himalayas and underscores the ornithological significance of the Thembang-Bapu landscape. Continued avifaunal surveys in this under-explored region may reveal additional range extensions of other high-altitude species. (Ali & Ripley 1983)

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Intraspecific aggression exhibited by adult Painted Storks *Mycteria leucocephala* towards an immature at Chawandiya Wetland, Bhilwara, Rajasthan, India

The Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* is a large wading bird belonging to the family Ciconiidae and is widely distributed across South Asia, including Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, and parts of Southeast Asia (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). The species typically inhabits wetlands, lakes, and shallow water bodies where it feeds mainly on fish but may also consume frogs, reptiles, crustaceans, and aquatic insects (Elliott et al. 2020). Painted Storks breed colonially, and usually nesting on medium-sized trees near wetlands and water bodies (Urfi 2011). Several breeding colonies of Painted Storks have been documented across India in both protected wetlands and human-dominated landscapes. In western India, the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan support several nesting colonies due to the presence of suitable wetlands and nesting trees. In this note, we document the behaviour and social interactions of the species showing intraspecific aggression between adults and an immature at a wetland in Bhilwara District, Rajasthan.

From August 2024 to January 2025, we conducted regular observations of a Painted Stork breeding colony at Chawandiya Mata Pond (25.331° N, 74.775° E; 420 m asl) in Bhilwara District, Rajasthan. The wetland is surrounded by *Vachellia nilotica* trees that provide suitable nesting sites for several colonial waterbirds. In addition to Painted Storks, other species, such as, Eurasian Spoonbills *Platalea leucorodia* and Little Cormorants *Microcarbo niger* were also observed using the site. The colony was visited once every week during the breeding season to document nesting behaviour. Observations were conducted using Vanguard FR-1650 binoculars, and photographs were taken using a Nikon D500 camera mounted on a tripod. During the survey period, several breeding activities were recorded, including nest construction, courtship behaviour, mating, egg incubation, feeding, and parental care.

On 22 December 2025, at 1030 h, during a routine observation of the breeding colony, an aggressive interaction involving adult Painted Storks and an immature individual was observed. The immature bird was perched on a branch of a *V. nilotica* tree within the nesting colony, close to an active nest. An adult Painted Stork was then observed approaching the immature individual and began pecking its head and neck. Shortly afterwards, a second adult joined the interaction. Both adults repeatedly pecked at the immature individual and attempted to displace it from the branch. The adults would also spread their wings, likely showing dominance or aggression, and struck the immature bird with their bills during the interaction. The immature bird attempted to avoid the attack by moving along the branch and lowering its body posture. However, the adults continued the aggressive interaction for c. 30–40 sec. During the encounter, the immature bird was also observed to briefly lose its balance while attempting to evade the attacking adults. The event was photographed, and images were obtained showing the adults attacking the immature bird [56, 57]. Following the interaction, the immature bird moved away from the immediate nesting branch, and was no longer



56. Close-up of the adult Painted Storks attacking an immature bird.



57. Adult Painted Storks attacking an immature bird.

Both photos: Farhat Zabi

clearly visible due to dense foliage and the movement of birds within the colony. Consequently, the subsequent condition of the immature bird could not be confirmed.

Aggressive interactions among individuals are commonly observed in colonial breeding birds, particularly in dense nesting colonies where adults defend nesting territories and compete for space (Gopi & Pandav 2007; Urfi 2011). Such behaviour may occur when immature or non-breeding individuals approach active nesting areas. Although infanticide has been documented in several bird species, confirmed reports in Painted Storks remain limited. The present observation therefore highlights an instance of intense intraspecific aggression by adults directed towards an immature individual within a breeding colony. Further observations may help clarify the ecological factors influencing such behaviour in colonial waterbirds.

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The Common Swift *Apus apus* from Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary: An addition to the Maharashtra avifauna

The Common Swift *Apus apus* is a long-distance migrant that breeds across Europe and Asia and winters in sub-Saharan Africa (Chantler & Driessens 2000; Kirwan et al. 2025). In South Asia, it is mainly a passage migrant, particularly during post-breeding movements from August to September (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012a). In India, the species breeds in Gilgit, Ladakh, Kashmir, and Himachal Pradesh in the western Himalaya. During passage, it is widespread across the southern peninsula and the Lakshadweep Islands (Praveen 2025).

On 04 August 2024, during a preliminary survey for the “Biodiversity Counts” programme under the “Sustainable Phansad” project by Green Works Trust (in partnership with SBI Foundation and Maharashtra Forest Department’s Thane Wildlife Division), NB and AS found a dead swift in Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary, near Supegaon village in Murud Taluka, Raigad District, Maharashtra (18.424°N, 72.944°E). The specimen was photographed and examined with permission from the Forest Range Officer. It was identified by NB as a juvenile Common Swift, based on its blackish-brown plumage, scaly back, deeply forked tail, whitish chin and throat, and whiter forehead with extensive pale scaling on the underparts (Grimmett et al. 2011; Manakadan et al. 2011) [58, 59]. Similar looking Blyth’s Swift *A. leuconyx* was excluded due to the clearly demarcated pale throat patch contrasting with darker surrounding plumage and lack of white rump (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012b; Chantler & Driessens 2000). The biometric data of the specimen are provided in Table 1.



58. Dead specimen of juvenile Common Swift from Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary, Maharashtra. Whitish chin and throat, whiter forehead can be seen.



59. Common Swift having whitish brown body, deeply forked tail, and scaly back.

Both photos: Aditya Soman

Table 1. Biometrics of the specimen recovered from Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary, Maharashtra

Body part	Handbook (Ali & Ripley 1983)	Specimen from Thaikadappuram, Kerela (Karuthedathu et al. 2014)	Current Specimen
Wings	160–180 mm	165 mm	174 mm
Wingspan	-	370 mm	372 mm
Tail	66–77 mm	70.5 mm	68 mm
Tarsus	10 mm	10.17 mm	12 mm

There is one unconfirmed report of this species from Lonavala, Pune District, Maharashtra on 10 November 2002 (Prasad 2006). The present note documents the first confirmed record of the species from Maharashtra. The previous confirmed records of Common Swift from Peninsular India are from the states of Gujarat, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Lakshadweep (Karuthedathu et al. 2014; Aju et al. 2019; eBird 2025). Given previous unconfirmed report from Maharashtra, the species may have been overlooked in the region. This record raises the possibility of an under-reported migration route along the northern Western Ghats and adjacent coastal plains.

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