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– Sachin Kumar Bhagat, Anu Ramotra, Hemant Kumar & Gurpartap Singh

Sachin Kumar Bhagat, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Government Degree College, Marh 181206, Jammu & Kashmir, India.

E-mail: sachinbhagat_skb@yahoo.com [SKB]

Anu Ramotra, Lecturer, Environmental Sciences, Government Higher Secondary School, Kalakote 185202, District Rajouri, Jammu & Kashmir, India.

Email: anuramotra16@gmail.com [AR]

Hemant Kumar, Billawar 184204, District Kathua, Jammu & Kashmir, India.

E-mail: hemantzyx@gmail.com [HK]

Gurpartap Singh, 1969, Sector 64, Mohali 160062, District Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar, Punjab, India. E-mail: prof.gurpartap.singh@gmail.com [GPS] [Corresponding author]

The Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* in Assam

The Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* is a distinctive waterbird, easily recognized by its long, curved bill and streaked brown plumage (Smith et al. 2025). It has a white underbelly marked with dark streaks, a mottled brown and gray back, and a prominent white stripe above the eye that contrasts with the dark crown and nape. On 04 October 2024, at 1507 h, I observed a Whimbrel resting near the sand dunes of Khabolughat on the Subansiri River in Upper Assam's North Lakhimpur district. Despite the rain, the bird displayed typical behavior and allowed close observation. I photographed the individual [132] and recorded a video, later confirming the identification.



Photo: Jugal Borah

132. Whimbrel Khabolughat, Subansiri River, Assam.

This record represents the first documented photographic evidence of the Whimbrel in Assam. Earlier surveys, including

those by Stevens (1914, 1915a,b) and Betts (1956), did not record the species in the Subansiri floodplains. Historical accounts, however, include the sighting of a small flock in Lakhimpur in 1900 and individuals shot in North Cachar (present-day Dima Hasao district) in 1899 (Baker 1929), but specimens remain untraced. There is also a mention of the species from Dibru-Saikhowa (Choudhury 2006, 2009), though the number of birds and exact locations were not specified.

Highly migratory, the Whimbrel has a wide global distribution. In India, it is most frequently recorded along the coasts but also occurs in inland wetlands. Records from much of inland north-eastern India, however, remain scarce. The lack of systematic surveys, particularly along river floodplains outside the birding season, further limits our understanding of seasonal movements in the region. Although not a rare waterbird (Skeel et al. 2020), this observation highlights the underexplored biodiversity of the Subansiri floodplains and their importance as stopover sites for both resident and migratory species. This record makes a significant contribution to Assam's ornithological documentation. It also adds to our understanding of the Whimbrel's distribution in India, particularly with respect to inland flyways.

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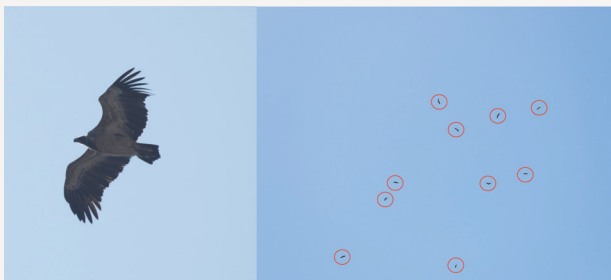
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– Jugal Borah

Jugal Borah, North Lakhimpur, Assam, India.

E-mail: cbipb9054l@gmail.com.

Errata



133. An Indian Vulture in flight at Vaibhargiri Hill and a large flock at Rajgir Zoo area.

In the last issue (IB 22(1): 32A), we covered a photograph (#76) of a vulture from Rajgir Wildlife Sanctuary, Bihar, India labelled as an Indian Vulture *Gyps indicus*. However, it is in fact a juvenile Himalayan Vulture *G. himalayensis*. The mistake is regretted. The correct photo of the Indian Vulture that should have accompanied that article is presented here [133], which indeed is an Indian Vulture. Our thanks to Adhithyan N.K. for spotting this mistake.