

Table 1. Records of Greater White-fronted Goose from Uttarakhand

S. No.	Date	Location	Reference
1	20 January 2008	Asan Conservation Reserve, Dehradun	Suvarna (2008a, 2008b)
2	14 January 2023	SH 22, Herbertpur, Dehradun	Singh (2023a)
3	27 January 2023	SH 22, Herbertpur, Dehradun	Singh (2023b)
4	27 January 2023	Asan River, Herbertpur, Dehradun	Arora & Mahajan (2023)
5	28 January 2023	Asan Conservation Reserve, Dehradun	Khan (2023)
6	10 February 2023	Asan Conservation Reserve, Dehradun	Jain et al. (2023)
7	03 December 2023	Asan Conservation Reserve, Dehradun	Rao (2023)

suggests that the species may occasionally occur in riverine wetlands within the Kumaon Himalaya during winter.

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Nest of Streak-throated Swallow *Petrochelidon fluvicola* usurped by Brahminy Starling *Sturnia pagodarum*

The Brahminy Starling *Sturnia pagodarum* is a widespread resident in the Indian Subcontinent (largely excluding the north-western and north-eastern parts) (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). It inhabits open deciduous forest, scrub, and cultivated areas near human habitation; and is especially fond of waterlogged areas (Craig & Feare 2020). Both sexes build the nest, which is an untidy structure of dry grass, dead leaves, paper, and other material, lined with finer material, placed in hole in tree, often one made by woodpecker (Picidae) or barbet (Capitonidae), or nest of tit (Paridae) taken over, or sometimes hole in wall or roof of building used, or nest box accepted (Craig & Feare 2020). A pair nesting in steel anchor-pipe of a telephone pole has also been reported (Sharma 1996). Streak-throated

Swallow *Petrochelidon fluvicola* breeds in large colonies, and is a mud-nesting aerial insectivore that constructs very closely spaced (honeycombed) retort-shaped nests with a long entrance tube, on natural sites and buildings close to water, notably bridges over large rivers (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). We report opportunistic sightings of a pair of Brahminy Starlings usurping and occupying a nest-structure of Streak-throated Swallow in the nesting colony of the latter.

On 08 June 2025, at 0630 h, while birding in Rampura (24.460°N, 75.436°E), Neemuch District in Madhya Pradesh, we saw a pair of Brahminy Starlings visiting the nest colony of Streak-throated Swallow that were built on the inner wall inside the dome of a temple [214]. The temple is situated on the banks of Gandhi Sagar reservoir which is part of the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary (BirdLife International 2026). The starlings were observed to be in the process of repeatedly removing the nesting material which was originally inside the nest of Streak-throated Swallow. It could not be determined whether this nest of Streak-throated Swallow was active or was an old inactive nest structure. The pair of Brahminy Starlings were removing fine material from inside the nest with their bills and discarding it on the temple floor, while large pieces of nesting material, such as feathers etc., were discarded further away up to a distance of c.5–20 m in flight. During this process of removing nesting material, and after each time this was done, Brahminy Starlings were observed cleaning their bills on the floor or on grass. The nests were being visited by the starlings frequently (i.e., every 2–3 min). While they were in the process of repeatedly discarding the original nesting material, they were also observed to be bringing fresh grass straws from nearby and depositing it inside the nests. Photographs were taken to document this behavior [215–216]. We followed recommended practices and guidelines in Barve et al. (2020) for documentation of the nest observations.

Two days later, on 11 June 2025, the Brahminy Starlings were again observed to be busy cleaning and tending to the nest structure but the frequency of this activity was noted to be relatively lower than earlier. Incidentally, some Streak-throated Swallows were also seen around the nest site. On 14 June 2025, Brahminy Starlings were not observed removing any original nesting material from the nest nor seen placing fresh grass straws in the nest, and thus, it was suspected that the starlings had laid eggs in this nest structure and were in the process of egg incubation. It was noted that they would return to the nest in c.15–20 minutes after each flight, and were found staying inside the nest for as long as c.10–32 min. It was also noted that the nest was seldom left empty by the starlings. When one bird flew away, the other bird would be present at the nest. Occasionally both the birds would leave the nest and fly away, but would usually return within 2–3 minutes.

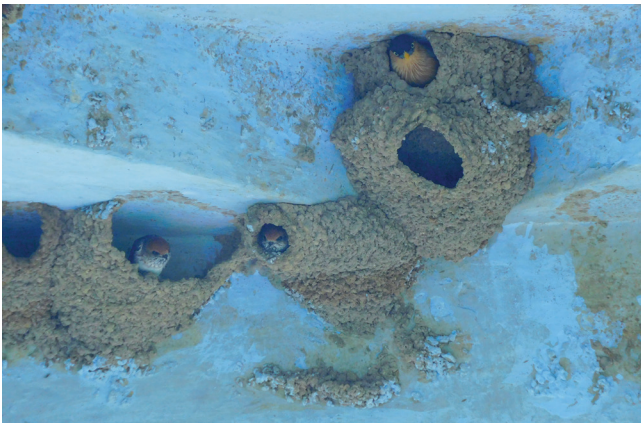
In the initial days of the observation, a small number of Streak-throated Swallows (about c.5–10) were seen around the nests, whereas after good rains on 18–19 June 2025, hundreds of them were seen flying around the temple. On 21 June 2025, after a close observation, it was found that the Streak-throated Swallows were restoring and renovating some of their nest-structures with wet mud. Meanwhile, the Brahminy Starlings were also seen in the occupied nest. Despite the Streak-throated Swallows flying around the nest, the starlings remained present in the occupied nest. We did not observe any antagonistic interaction between the starlings and the swallows, but the swallows attempted to reoccupy the nest that



214. Brahminy Starling (center) in the nesting colony of Streak-throated Swallow.



215. Brahminy Starling with nesting materials on nest of Streak-throated Swallow.



Ali: Lakhan Kumar

216. Brahminy Starling occupying the nest of Streak-throated Swallow while the latter species occupies neighbouring nests.

had been occupied by the starlings. After the Brahminy Starling took over the nest, the swallows made several tries to regain it. They would hover around the nest and its entrance but could not enter because the Brahminy Starling was always present inside; instead, they would land at neighbouring nests. No physical confrontation or aggressive fighting was observed between the two species during this time.

It is uncertain whether the starling eggs eventually hatched, or whether the starling chicks survived and reached fledging maturity. It is also uncertain whether either the eggs or the chicks had naturally survived as the stage of the breeding cycle could not be ascertained. The possibility of the eggs or the chicks being

predated before maturity must also be considered. Thus, it is uncertain and inconclusive whether the Brahminy Starlings had successfully bred at this nest structure. That said, we can conclude that Brahminy Starlings usurped and occupied a nest of Streak-throated Swallow and attempted to breed in the latter's nest.

Many birds fiercely compete for nesting sites, such as cavities or tree-holes, especially in the case for cavity-nesting birds. Other species, such as, House Sparrows *Passer domesticus* have been known to occupy and usurp nests of Streak-throated Swallow (Pawar et al. 2025). Our observations show the adaptive breeding behavior of Brahminy Starling and breeding challenges faced by Streak-throated Swallow.

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The Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala* from Wular Lake: An addition to the avifauna of Jammu & Kashmir

The Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala* is widely distributed across Asia, breeding in central and eastern Asia from the upper Ob' valley and northeast Altai, east to the coasts of the Sea of Okhotsk, and the northern half of Sakhalin (Byers et al. 1995). All breeding populations undertake southward migration during the northern winter. Their distribution includes much of southern and eastern China, Taiwan, extending along the Himalayan foothills from central Nepal, east through northern Myanmar, and extreme northern Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam (Kirwan et al. 2022). In India, the species winters in West Bengal, Assam, adjoining areas of Arunachal, Nagaland, Cachar, the Manipur valley, and Tripura (Praveen 2025). Vagrant records have been observed from Ladakh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, and northwestern Uttar Pradesh (Praveen 2025).

On 24 January 2026 at 1155 h, during a birdwatching session near Wular Lake, Bandipora, Kashmir, the authors sighted a passerine bird perched on a willow tree *Salix* sp. along the lakeshore (34.381°N, 74.652°E, c.1580 m asl). The individual was photographed for documentation and identification. The images were shared in the 'Birds of Kashmir' WhatsApp group, where it was identified as Black-faced Bunting by Irfan Jeelani based on greyish head, black lores and chin, grey breast well demarcated from the lower yellowish-white underparts, and chestnut back [217].

There are no previous records of Black-faced Bunting from Jammu & Kashmir (Kichloo et al. 2024; Kichloo 2025), hence