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Distribution range extension of grey-headed lapwing (*Vanellus cinereus*) in Chhattisgarh, Eastern Madhya Pradesh, and Jharkhand, India

AMK Bharos, Ameet Mandavia, Ravi Naidu and Ankit Badesha

Abstract

The Grey Headed Lapwing (*Vanellus cinereus*), is a winter visitor to the Indian subcontinent and reported in small flocks in Assam, Bangladesh, North Bihar, straggler in Kashmir, Rajasthan and Gujarat, elsewhere it is rare. The habitat of the species during winter season is described as marshy places, the edges of Jheels, banks of rivers, wet grazing grounds, ploughed and stubbles. Though it has been recorded from Bastar region in southern parts of Chhattisgarh but not from central and northern regions. It has been categorized as Least Concern by IUCN Red Data List. Our study revealed its presence in central region, eastern Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand. The species was found singly, in pairs and in flocks. Suggest that the it has adopted to its range extension further eastward from Vidharbha region of Maharashtra, in central India.

Keywords: Grey-headed lapwing, sightings, Chhattisgarh, eastern Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand

Introduction

The Grey Headed Lapwing (*Vanellus cinereus*), is a winter visitor to the Indian subcontinent and occurs in small flocks in Assam, Bangladesh, North Bihar, straggler in Kashmir, Rajasthan and Gujarat, elsewhere it is rare (Ali & Ripley, 1987) ^[1], (Grimmett, *et al.* 1998) ^[11] and Kazmierczak (2000) ^[14] have mentioned it as winter visitor in Indian subcontinent and its occurrence area is coastal prominently.

The habitat of the species during winter season in peninsular India has been described as marshy places, the edges of *Jheels*, banks of rivers, wet grazing grounds, ploughed and stubbles (Ali & Ripley, 1987) ^[1]. This species is usually seen in parties of a dozen or twenty birds, which keep loosely together in flight (Smythies, 1940) ^[21].

Past literature surveys of Moss King (1912) ^[15], Osmaston (1922) ^[17], Bates (1927) ^[3], D'Abreu (1932, 1933, 1935) ^[8], Wright (1942) ^[22], Hewetson (1956) ^[12], Newton (1996), D'Cunha (2001) ^[9], Ghosh *et al.* (2008) ^[10], do not mention its occurrence in erstwhile Central India/province.

Later studies by Chandra and Singh 2004 ^[5], Chandra *et al.* (2015) ^[4], mention it from Madhya Pradesh (location unspecified) and Bastar (Chhattisgarh) respectively. However more studies by Sharma *et al.* 2015, WWF-India (2015 draft report) ^[18], Parida, a researcher of Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) (*Pers. comm.*) during his avian studies from July 2013 to December 2014 has not recorded the species in Guru Ghasidas National Park (GGNP) situated in Northern Chhattisgarh.

In a recent publication (Kasambe *et al.*, 2012), pertaining to Vidharba region of Maharashtra report of its occurrence in Malkhed Reservoir near Amravati, Tadoba Andhari National Park, Chandrapur district, and Gondia district, these pockets lie adjacent to the western boundaries of Chhattisgarh.

The distribution range of the species suggests it to be a rare winter visitor; the IUCN has assessed its status as Least Concern (Bird Life International, 2009).

Observations Chhattisgarh

Apart from the sighting of species in Bastar (Chandra & Dutta, 2015) ^[4] no other publication is available from Chhattisgarh. Interestingly on 3rd January 2017 a team from Chhattisgarh Wildlife society led by AMK Bharos, on their way to Bastar visited location Chikhli(N 20° 33' 58", E 081°30' 39") near Charama in Kanker District of Chhattisgarh, came across two Grey Headed Lapwings (*Vanellus cinereus*) with four Red-wattled Lapwing(*Vanellus indicus*) at

banks of Gangrel Reservoir back waters, river Mahanadi, which on approach of vehicle flew to 60 metre distance in harvested paddy fields (stubble). They were with Red-wattled Lapwings (*Vanellus indicus*) and raised short call while taking off. At their new location they were photographed (now unavailable) based on these images and examination with the aid of binocular and visuals, identification was confirmed. Earlier on 29th November 2004 a solitary bird was seen at edge of Kodar Reservoir district Mahasamund, way back in year 1995 in Koriya district, a bird was sighted at the water edge of Ramgarh tank (N 23° 52' 38.42" E 081° 48' 56") (Bharos, Unpublished). This is the northern most sighting location of the species in Chhattisgarh and adjacent to Sidhi

district of Madhya Pradesh.

During a visit by Mandavia with his team, on 3rd December 2017 to Kachradih Dam (N 21° 26' 58.12", E 082° 31' 11.34") located on fringes of Barnawapara Sanctuary of Balodabazar district, a solitary bird along with Red-wattled Lapwings (*Vanellus indicus*), was seen a little away from water and photographed. On the basis of images it was identified as Grey-headed Lapwing (Kasambe, R. *Pers. comm.*). Possibly three more birds were also present but at a distance. Ravi Naidu during his avian survey in Jashpur district on 16 February 2018, saw a scattered congregation of 17 birds at Kukur Bhuka tank Near Kansabel Bagbahar road, (N 22° 30' 47.66", E 083° 44' 6.10").

Table 1: Location and coordinates Chhattisgarh

Location & Coordinates	District	Date of Observation	Number of Birds	Observer
Ramgarh Tank (N 23° 52' 38.42" E 081° 48' 56")	Koriya	20/01/1995	01	AMK Bharos
Kodar Reservoir (N 21° 10' 49", E 082° 13' 48")	Mahasamund	29/11/2004	01	AMK Bharos
Chikhli, Mahanadi River (N 20° 33' 58", E 081° 30' 39")	Kanker	03/01/2017	02	AMK Bharos & team
Kachradih dam area (N 21° 26' 58.12", E 082° 31' 11.34")	Balodabazar	03/12/2017	04	Ameet Mandavia, Ravi Naidu, Ankit Badesha
Kukur Bhuka, near Kansabel- Bagbahar Rd (N 22° 30' 47.66", E 083° 44' 6.10")	Jashpur	16/02/2018	17 Scattered	Ravi Naidu, Mahesh Kashyap

Madhya Pradesh

During stay at Sidhi district (N 24° 23' 54", E 081° 52' 2") situated in North eastern parts of Madhya Pradesh, in 1991 recorded 2 birds irregularly at edge of Bandh Sagar Dam (N 24° 23' 54", E 081° 52' 2") 1.5 km away from Sidhi Town. Solitary on sandy banks of River Son near Churhat. Two birds

with Red-wattled Lapwings (*Vanellus indicus*) at edges of Jamodi Tank (1991) and a solitary at a small tank at Hanumangarh- Churhat (1992) (Bharos, Unpublished). K. K. Tekam Guide (*Pers. Comm.*) on 5th Nov 2017, saw a solitary bird at Mainhar nullah, Kanha Zone, Kanha National Park, Madhya Pradesh. (Photographic record)

Table 2: 1991 recorded 2 birds irregularly at edge of Bandh Sagar Dam (N 24° 23' 54", E 081° 52' 2") 1.5 km away from Sidhi Town

Location & Coordinates	District	Year of Observation	Number of Birds	Observer
Bandhsagar Sidhi (N 24° 23' 54", E 081° 52' 2")	Sidhi	1991	2	AMK Bharos
Son River, Churhat (N 24° 19' 19.47", E 080° 23' 7.07")	Sidhi	1991	1	AMK Bharos
Jamodi, Sidhi (N 24° 23' 54", E 081° 52' 2")	Sidhi	1991	2	AMK Bharos
Hanumangarh- Churhat (N 24° 19' 19.47", E 080° 23' 7.07")	Sidhi	1992	1	AMK Bharos
Kanha Range of Kanha National Park (N 22° 18' 49.09" E 080° 50' 21.96")	Mandla	5 November 2017	1	KK Tekam

Jharkhand

At a medium sized pool located on Saraikela- Kharswan Road, Amda, Jharkhand, Chandresh Rathore (*Pers comm.*)

recorded 5 birds on 5th November 2017. Birds were in flight and on water edge when photographed.

Table 3: At a medium sized pool located on Saraikela- Kharswan Road, Amda, Jharkhand

Location & Coordinates	District	Date of Observation	Number of Birds	Observer
Amda, P.O.:Amda, Saraikela- Kharswan area (N 22° 45' 59.77" E 085° 50' 21.96")	Saraikela-Kharsawan. Jharkhand	5 November 2017	5	Chandresh Rathore

Discussion & Conclusion

Year wise recorded sightings at different locations in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand, summarized as below, suggests that Grey Headed Lapwing (*Vanellus*

cinereus) frequents irregularly in small numbers in winter. At other occasions it may have been overlooked or have been absent. All sightings were recorded in winter months only.

Table 4: Report of Chhattisgarh madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand

Year	Chhattisgarh	Madhya Pradesh	Jharkhand
1991	-	3	-
1992	-	1	-
1995	1	-	-
2004	1	-	-
2017	2	1	1
2018	1	-	-

Presence of species was recorded at different habitats like Reservoir water edge, tanks, pool edges, nullah, stubble field near water and invariably associated with Red-wattled Lapwings (*Vanellus indicus*) for the possible reason of social

security as the latter species is more alert and vocal, quick to raise alarm, whereas the Grey Headed Lapwing (*Vanellus cinereus*) is less vocal in winter, seldom heard in non-breeding season (Baker, 1929) [2].

V. Santharam (2006) has mentioned congregation of varying strength from 04 to 80 birds at Pallikarani, Chennai during winter months. The sighting of 17 birds by Ravi Naidu in February 2018 in Jashpur district and 5 birds by C. Rathore, 2016 in Amda, Jharkhand, indicate that the species spend winter in these locations too, in congregation. Crossland and Sitorous (2011) [6] have expressed that, with the building up of flocks in place of individual or one or two birds and increase in wintering population, the species is

showing expansion in its known distribution range.

The above mentioned sighting records from Chhattisgarh, eastern Madhya Pradesh, and Jharkhand suggest that the species has adopted to its range extension further eastward from Vidharbha region of Maharashtra, in central India as apprehended above. Sighting of 17 birds by Ravi Naidu and 5 birds by C. Rathore and the isolated sightings in Central and Northern regions of Chhattisgarh state support and confirm it.

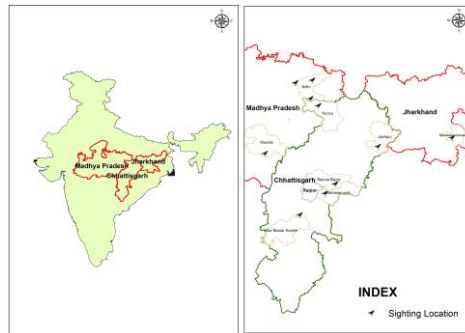


Fig 1: Grey headed Lapwing sighting Map

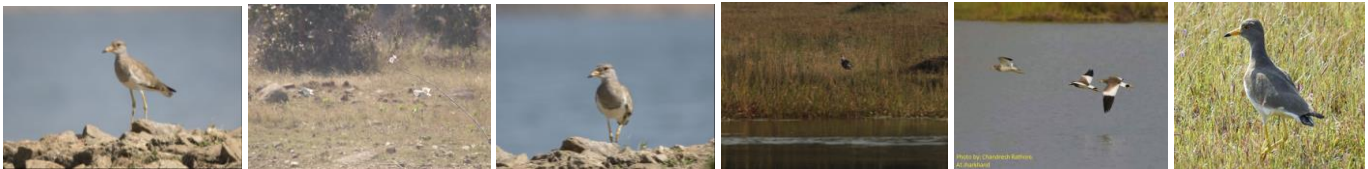


Fig 2: Grey Headed Lapwing, Jashpur, India, **Fig 3:** Grey headed Lapwing in flight, Jashpur, Chhattisgarh, **Fig 4:** Grey Headed Lapwing, Chhattisgarh, **Fig 5:** Grey Headed Lapwing around Wetland at Kachradih, Chhattisgarh, **Fig 6:** Grey Headed Lapwing, Jharkhand, India, **Fig 7:** Grey Headed Lapwing, Jharkhand India

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