

Subject: One more New Bird Species for Chitwan
From: Ramesh Chaudhary <ramesh_birder@yahoo.com>
Date: Sun, 23 May 2004 03:41:10 -0700 (PDT)
To: tc.inskipp@which.net

Dear Carol,

I am very delighted to share the news of sighting Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* on May 7th, 2004. A single male was recorded on the sandy island of Rapti River.

I consulted BCN and BES's checklist in order to find out sighting status of the species. I further consulted Hem Sagar Baral and other fellow ornithologists to get more information on bird's sighting status.

I have prepared abstract report on the bird that I am sending now with this mail. If you want to reach me, please feel free to send your mail on my e-mail address <ramesh_birder@yahoo.com> Thanks!

I will be looking forward to hearing you in the near future.

Sincerely yours
Ramesh Chaudhary
Founder Secretary, Bird Education Society,
Bachhauli-2, Sauraha, Chitwan, Nepal.

"First Eurasian Spoonbill in Chitwan"

Date of first sighting: May 7, 2004.
Date of identification and confirmation: May 8, 2004.

Name of observers: Ramesh Chaudhary (Founder Secretary, Bird Education Society and Naturalist), Kapil Dev Pokhrel (Honorary Member, Bird Education Society and Ornithologist, King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation), Padam Chettri (Naturalist, Hotel Royal Park), Tek Bahadur Gurung (Individual Nature Guide) and Raju Tamang (Individual Nature Guide).
Sighting place (spot): approximately 2kilo meter SE from Royal Chitwan National Park's Visitor Centre towards Jaimangala village of old Padampur Village Development Committee, Chitwan which was once located inside the park before evacuation.
Sighting type: The bird has been sighted first time lately. Including Eurasian Spoonbill, *Platalea leucorodia*, total number of bird species recorded by Bird Education Society's members during their weekly, annual and regular bird watching tours have reached 522. With the advent of year 2061, nine new bird species have been record first time for Chitwan.
Habitat type where bird was observed: isolated and tranquil sandy island of Rapti River, which delineates northern boundary of Royal Chitwan National Park.
Behavior of the bird when observed: The bird was standing with left foot only in the middle of sandy island or Rapti River. It was also being associated with a female Common Teal, *Anas crecca* and a male Little Egret, *Egretta garzetta*. The bird was also observed crippling and sweeping its spatulated long bill to hunt its aquatic preys.

Used equipments to identify the bird: Telescope (Kowa, TSN, 077 X 30x WIDE, JAPAN), Binocular (Nikon, 35 X 5, 9.3 Degree, Japan) and Binocular (Carl Zeiss, 32 X 8, BMC, German).

REFERENCE MATERIALS: 1. SAVING ASIA'S THREATENED BIRDS, A GUIDE FOR GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY, BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL, CAMBRIDGE, UK, 2003. 2. BIRDS OF THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT, GRIMMET, INSKIP, INSKIP, OXFORD, 1998. 3. A BIRDWATCHER'S GUIDE TO NEPAL, CAROL INSKIP, PRION LTD. 1988.

Local Name (Nepalese name): Unknown

Common (English) Name: Eurasian Spoonbill

Latin Name (Scientific name): *Platalea leucorodia*

Field characters (Identifications): 80-90cm. Largely white bird, with extraordinary long spatulated bill, and stout black legs, blackish eyes and long neck. In flight, neck is outstretched, and flapping is rather stiff and interspersed with gliding. Adult breeding has yellow tip to back bill, bare orange-yellow skin on throat, prominent crest and yellow wash to breast. Adult non-breeding lacks crest and yellow wash to breast. Immature as adult non-breeding, but has black tips to primaries. Juvenile has pinkish bill and legs, black shaft to secondaries, and more extensive black tips to primaries than immature. Voice silent away from breeding colonies.

Habits: Usually in small parties or flocks, often with other large water birds. Spends much of the day resting on one leg or sleeping with the bill tucked under the wing. Forages mainly in the morning and evening and at night. Wades actively in shallow water, sweeping its bill from place to place sifting floating and swimming prey. Consumes aquatic invertebrates, tellina (a bivalve) and small fishes.

Habitat: Chiefly large lakes, lagoons, rivers, marshes; also tidal creeks, mangroves, and large reed beds.

Breeding: During the monsoon, July-January, varying locally. Forms colonies, usually with other large wading birds. Builds platform nest of sticks and twigs in the trees standing in water.

Distribution: Breeds in Central Asia, and resident in South Asia. In Nepal's context, it is regular winter visitor and nomadic in the large rivers like Koshi depending on water conditions. Very rare elsewhere.

Status: It is not among the globally and Asia's threatened species of birds, unlike Black-faced Spoonbill, which is found in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, but it is amongst the rare birds of Nepal since it is rare winter visitor and nomadic.

Nevertheless, many birds including Eurasian Spoonbill's future is uncertain in Nepal because of loss of its habitats, over fishing, illegal hunting of birds for local consumption, illegal egg collection, human invasion, various kinds of pollution and lack of knowledge and public awareness about importance birds and their key roles that play to balance whole ecosystem.