

Lesser Whistling-Duck: a rare winter visitor in upper Nilgiris, India

Lesser Whistling-Duck
Dendrocygna javanica is a medium-sized duck belonging to the family Anatidae. It is a widespread resident in the Indian subcontinent and is mostly found in fresh water marshes, shallow ponds, and lakes with emergent vegetations (Grimmett et al. 2011).

The species ranges across India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam (BirdLife International 2016). It occurs on islands in the region including the Andamans, Nicobars, and Maldives (Anderson & Baldock 2001). It is assessed as 'Least Concern' by IUCN Red List Assessment (BirdLife International 2016). This note portrays the first known occurrence of Lesser Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna javanica* in Upper Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu, India.

On 19 November 2022 at 1030h. we observed a pair of Lesser Whistling-Duck



A pair of Lesser Whistling-Duck in Ooty lake, Udhagamandalam, The Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu, India. © N. Moinudheen.

Dendrocygna javanica perching on the floaters along with cormorants and Northern Shoveler in Ooty lake area, Udhamandalam, The Nilgiris (11.4033 N, 76.6927 E; 2,206 m), Tamil Nadu India.

The pale brown overall colouration with greyish-buff colour on the head and neck region, darker brown crown and nape, presence of chestnut-fringed feathers on the back, warmer chestnut colour underparts, chestnut upper tail coverts and dark grey bill and legs (Grimmett et al. 2011). We confirmed the pair was Lesser Whistling-Duck and it is a very common winter visitor in southern Indian region.

In Nilgiris, Panchavarnam (2009) recorded two individuals of Lesser Whistling-Duck on 23 December 2009 in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. Mohan (2015) observed three individuals of Lesser Whistling-Duck on 22 August 2015 in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. Kumar (2019) found two individuals of Lesser Whistling-Duck on 20 October 2019 in Gudalur, Mudumalai Tiger Reserve and Arpitha (2020) reported 23 individuals of Lesser Whistling-Duck on 20 October 2019 in Ombetta Lake, Mudumalai Tiger Reserve.

All the four records were observed in lower altitude areas around 900–1,150 m in the Nilgiris. The present observation is the first known record of Lesser Whistling-Duck in higher elevation areas of Upper Nilgiris region (Zarri et al. 2005). Hence, this present observation shed light on migratory water birds in Nilgiris for further observations.

References

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