

Grey-headed Lapwing increases the avian species count of Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary



Solitary Grey-headed Lapwing searching for food (© Sayyad Kazim Kabir)

Lapwings are medium-sized wading birds with long legs, short, straight bill, fairly large head and rounded wings (Kazmierczak 2009) belonging to the family Charadriidae and order Charadriiformes. Out of the seven species of lapwings from the Indian subcontinent, three species, viz., River Lapwing *Vanellus duvaucelii*, Yellow-wattled Lapwing *V. malabaricus*, and Red-wattled Lapwing *V. indicus*, are resident birds in northern India.

But the Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus*, Blyth, 1842 is a rare winter visitor in peninsular India and there are only a few records (Grimmett et al. 1999; Lainer 2004) and hardly any published records

from northern India (Bamford et al. 2008; Chandra et al. 2004,2005). It can be differentiated from other lapwings because of its grey head, neck, and breast, with black border and black tail band. It has a yellow bill with a black tip and yellow legs (Grimmett et al. 2011).

Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary (NBS) is about 45km from Lucknow geographically located at 26.492°N and 80.301°E in Tehsil Nawabganj, District Unnao, Uttar Pradesh and renamed in 2015 as Shahid Chandra Shekhar Azad Bird Sanctuary. The average rainfall is <1,000mm per annum and the temperature ranges from 1°C to 48°C, humidity is about 94%. NBS extends



Grey-headed Lapwing sharing their habitat with Pond Heron and Red-wattled Lapwing (© Sayyad Kazim Kabir)

over 224.60ha area. There is a canal near the sanctuary which is a permanent water source for all wildlife—150 species of birds belonging to 17 orders and 46 families, 10 orders of insects with 61 species, 12 species of fishes belonging to five families, 16 species of reptiles, three species of amphibians belonging to 14 families, four species of mollusks belonging to three orders, three species of annelids belonging to three orders and 12 species of mammals belonging to 10 families—in Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary (Kanaujia et al. 2014). Observations were made along line transects with the aid of 10x50 binoculars

and Lumix 14x Digital Camera. The species were identified using standard field guide books of Grimmett & Inskipp (2010); Grimmett et al. (2011); Ali (2012).

A solitary Grey-headed Lapwing was sighted at Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary on 19 December 2017, and group of three lapwings twice on 26 December 2017. A group of four and a pair were again sighted on 2 January 2018 in phase II of Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary (Table 1).

Its grey head, yellow beak with black tip differentiated it clearly from the Red-

Table 1. Overall sighting of Grey-headed Lapwing in NBS.

	Location	Date	Number of Individuals
1	NBS	19.xii.2017	01
2	NBS	26.xii.2017	03
			03
3	II phase of NBS	02.i.2018	04
			02

wattled Lapwing, which were also present in this area. The Grey-headed Lapwing fed mostly in shallow water or muddy area on insects, worms and molluscs. They shared the habitats with Red-wattled Lapwing, Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii*, and White-tailed Lapwing *Vanellus leucurus*.

The Grey-headed Lapwing has been reported from Maharashtra and Bharatpur (Kasambe et al. 2012). This first record of the Grey-headed Lapwing from Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary, Unnao, Uttar Pradesh increases the avian species count of NBS.

IUCN Red List: Global - Least Concern.

Global Distribution: Russia, the Philippines, Indonesia New South Wales, Australia and Sri Lanka, northeastern India to Cambodia.

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