

Observation of Shaheen Falcon in Odisha, India

Shaheen Falcon *Falco peregrinus peregrinator* is a subspecies of Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* found mainly in the Indian subcontinent, Sri Lanka (Döttlinger 2002; Döttlinger & Nicholls 2005), central, southeastern China, and northern Myanmar (de Silva et al. 2007). The Shaheen Falcon has also been reported in Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Pande et al. 2009). It is said to be a resident bird of this region (Ali & Reply 1987) and described as a migratory subspecies by (Molard et al. 2007).

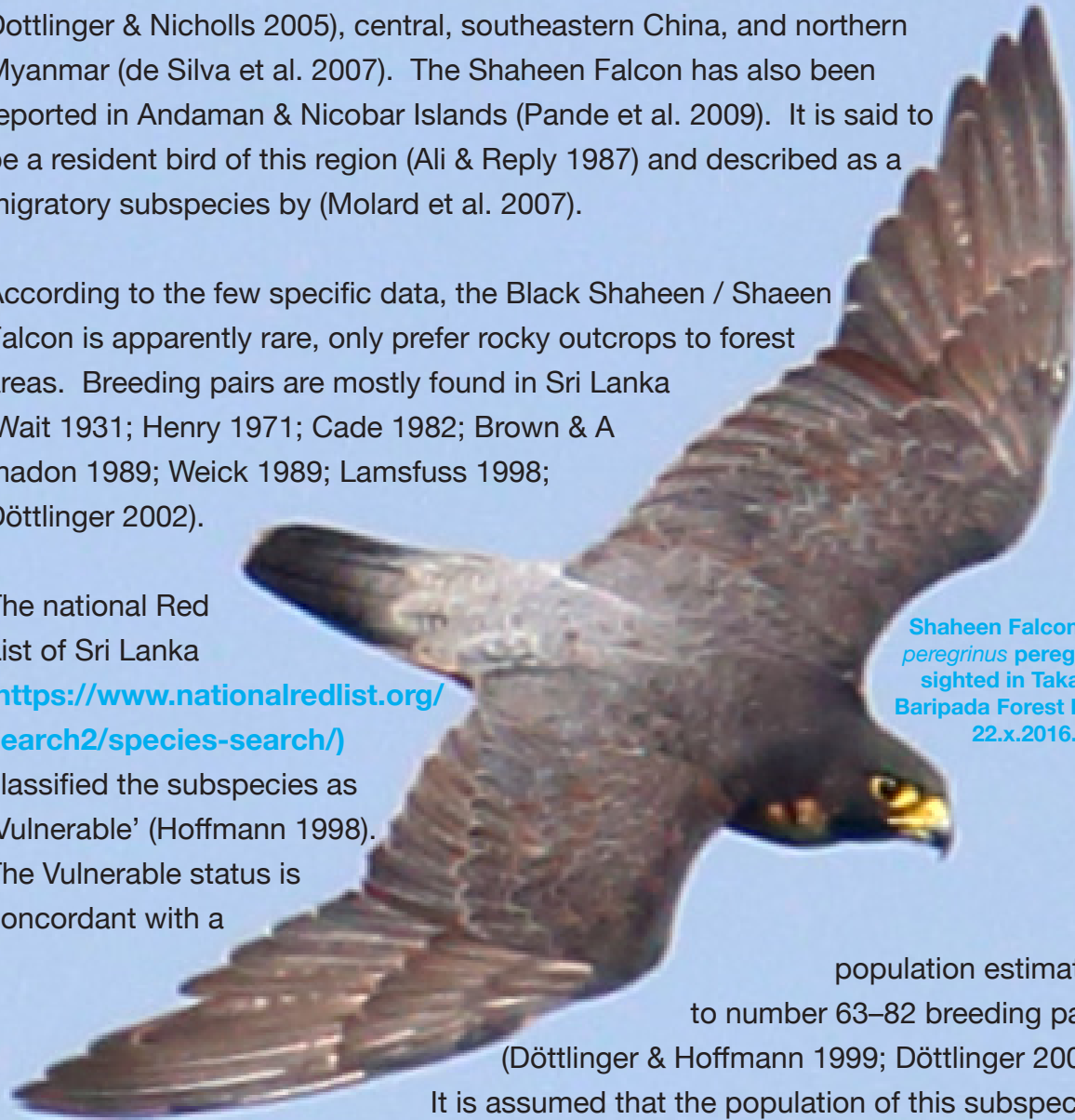
According to the few specific data, the Black Shaheen / Shaheen Falcon is apparently rare, only prefer rocky outcrops to forest areas. Breeding pairs are mostly found in Sri Lanka (Wait 1931; Henry 1971; Cade 1982; Brown & Amadon 1989; Weick 1989; Lamsfuss 1998; Döttlinger 2002).

The national Red List of Sri Lanka

(<https://www.nationalredlist.org/search2/species-search/>)

classified the subspecies as 'Vulnerable' (Hoffmann 1998).

The Vulnerable status is concordant with a



Shaheen Falcon *Falco peregrinus peregrinator* sighted in Takatpur, Baripada Forest Division 22.x.2016.

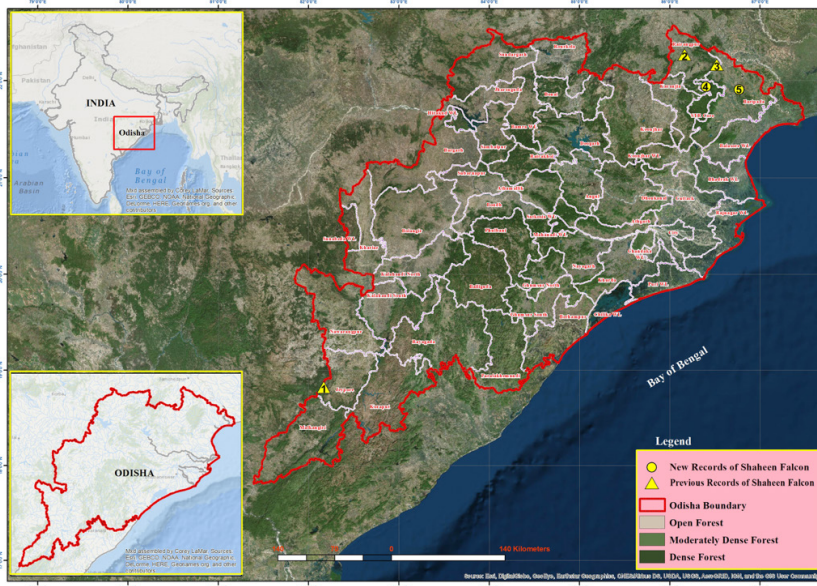
population estimated to number 63–82 breeding pairs (Döttlinger & Hoffmann 1999; Döttlinger 2002).

It is assumed that the population of this subspecies has always been numerically small. At 09.18h on 22 October 2016, we observed the Shaheen Falcon, which flew in front of us and sat on a mobile tower at Baripada, the district of Mayurbhanj, Odisha, which was outside of our university campus (21.90944° N, 86.76911° E). Nearly after a year, on 1 Nov 2017 we spotted this raptor for the second time in Joranda waterfall, Similipal Tiger Reserve, Odisha. It was identified as an adult Shaheen Falcon based on its blackish upper parts, rufous under parts, dark streaks, and white on throat (Ali & Reply 1987). The



Shaheen Falcon sighted in Joranda, Similipal Tiger Reserve, Baripada, 01.xi.2017.

complete black face mask is sharply demarcated from the white throat. The length of the bird ranged from 380 to 440 mm (Dottlinger 2002; de Silva et al. 2007). There is no record of the Shaheen Falcon documented from Odisha before. Shaheen Falcons were frequently reported from Bangiriposi, Rairangpur Forest Division and Gupteswar, Koraput Forest Division, Odisha (Table 1). The high cliffs and rocky mountains of Similipal is one of the best habitats for this raptor. Looking at the rarity of Shaheen Falcon, our information is valuable for protection and conservation of this species.



Sighting Location map of Shaheen Falcon in Takatpur and Joranda, Similipal Tiger Reserve, Baripada, Odisha, India

This sighting extends the range of this species in Odisha and indicates that the species might be rare in the state of Odisha. The

Table 1. Sighting records collected from social media.

Sighted by	Year of sighting	Place of sighting	Source
Barun	2017	Similipal Biosphere Reserve, Odisha	https://m.facebook.com/groups/283892515069116?view=permalink&id=686124621512568
Bapu	2017	Rairangpur Forest Division, Odisha	https://m.facebook.com/groups/283892515069116?view=permalink&id=882209418570753
Swetashree	2017	Gupteswar, Koraput Forest division, Odisha	https://ebird.org/species/perfa19/IN-OR
Chinmaya	2016	Odisha	https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=575073705992445&set=gm.10153456976707411&type=3&theater

present sighting further strengthens the argument that lack of systematic surveys in many parts of Odisha and the Eastern Ghats has resulted in a biased understanding of distribution of many species in Odisha (Debata et al. 2013, 2015; Palei et al. 2018; Sajan et al. 2018). Intensive studies are required in these unexplored areas of Odisha. The frontline field staff of forest department needs to be aware to help the protection and conservation of this species.

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