

First sighting of Asian Openbill Stork in Haridwar, India

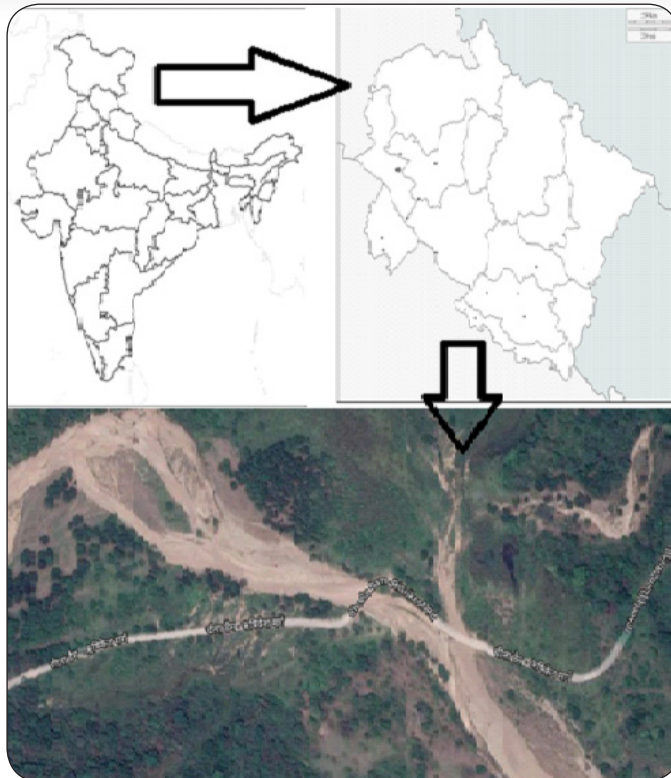


Asian Openbill in Haridwar.

A total of 19 species of storks are found worldwide. Out of these, nine species are found in the Indian subcontinent (Ali & Ripley 1978). The Asian Openbill Stork *Anastomus oscitans* is a local migrant wetland bird belonging to the family Ciconiidae. It is a whitish-grey stork with greyish bill and an open space between the mandibles (Robson 2000). It is widely distributed in India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Thailand but uncommon species in Pakistan. It is a resident colonial breeder (Ali & Ripley 1978). The Asian Openbill measures 64–65 cm in length and weighs 1,300–8,200 g. The name of this species is due to the distinctive gap formed between the curved lower and arched upper mandible of the beak in adult birds but young ones do not have this gap (Gosner 1993). They breed during July to September in northern India, and November

to March in southern India (Sunder 2006). Asian Openbills prepare their nest in trees or areas that are mainly inundated with water. It has generally been accepted that the configuration and composition of vegetation of a habitat acts as one of the determining factors for the distribution and abundance of bird species (Cody 1985). In this note, we document the first photographic record of Asian Openbill in Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India.

We first observed two individuals of Asian Openbills at two different locations in the Chilla Forest Range (29.957N & 78.188E; 310m) and (29.964N & 78.201E; 310m), Haridwar Uttarakhand. First individual was observed on 22 September 2020 and second individual was observed on 28 September 2020. Our observation represents the first



Observation area (Chilla Forest Range), Haridwar.

photographic record of this species in Haridwar. During the winter season, many avian species (resident and migratory both) were reported in the area. Majority of plant species in the study area are Jhingan *Lannea coromandelica*, Sain *Ternanalia tomentos*, Gular *Ficus racemosa*, Amaltas *Casia fistula*, and Sandan *Desmodium oojlinese*. The common bamboo was also observed in this area. The region is situated right at the edge of the Haridwar City and surrounded by different types of forest species (personal observation). Some previous

studies showed that Asian Openbill Stork is also found in other parts of Uttarakhand like Corbett landscape (Bhatt et al. 2015).

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