

## Photographic record of Horned Grebe from Harike Bird Sanctuary, Punjab, India

During the course of documentation status survey of Avian diversity from Harike Bird Sanctuary, a pair of rare Horned Grebe or Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auratus* was sighted, photographed and identified on 23 and 24 January 2021, during the annual bird census at Harike Bird Sanctuary (HBS) (31.15°N, 74.97°E).

Two individuals were spotted in their non-breeding plumage with distinguishable features such as a black cap pattern around their eye forming straight line toward neck, pale lores, grey sides of neck, white fore neck, and two white patches on upper wings (Grimmett et al. 2014).

Earlier individuals of same species were reported at Harike lake, Punjab in 2001 and Dighal, Haryana in 2017 (Prasad 2008; Ahlawat 2018) other sighting was from Jodhpur at Bhaniyana wetland in 2018 published in Hindustan Times newspaper. After a gap of 20 years, these



Horned Grebe 24th January 2021 at Harike Wetland.



Horned grebe feeding with Little grebe 23rd January.

birds were spotted at the same wetland again. The species is a winter vagrant in India and found in Pakistan and northwestern India (Grimmett et al. 2014). The Horned Grebe is listed as 'Vulnerable' under the IUCN

Red List of Threatened Species (BirdLife International 2021).

A pair of birds was observed with Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* as they were feeding together on small fishes

and amphibians by diving into water; diving duration last for 30 seconds to 1 minute and emerge a few metres away from the diving location. They were found near the bank of Beas River just beside the confluence point of the rivers Satluj and Beas amid the wetland. Earlier birds were considered as Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* but during its identification at Harike we finally confirmed it as Horned Grebe. This rare species was sighted again the next day on 24 January, at HBS during the annual bird count.

#### References

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**Acknowledgements:** I am highly thankful to the chief wildlife warden Punjab to provide necessary permission to conduct bird surveys, Department of Forest and Wildlife, Punjab, World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) for inviting me to the annual bird census and to the entire team of birdwatchers present during the bird census.

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**Citation:** Singh, J. & O.S. Bbraich (2021). Photographic record of Horned Grebe from Harike Bird Sanctuary, Punjab, India. *Bird-o-soar* #88, In: *Zoo's Print* 36(5): 51–52.