

First record of Falcated Duck from Lakhimpur District, Assam, India

The Falcated Duck or Falcated Teal *Mareca falcata* has a large range, with an estimated global extent of occurrence of 1,000,000–10,000,000 km² (390,000–3,860,000 sq mi) (BirdLife International 2024). Its breeding distribution ranges from southeast Siberia to Kamchatka, Mongolia (Call et al. 2019), northeastern China and northern Japan, and the birds migrate to winter mainly in southern Japan, South Korea, eastern China, and India (Carboneras & Kirwan 2020).

Situated in the Lakhimpur District of Assam in northeastern India, Satajan is a small wetland, located between 27.2115–27.2068 N and 94.0520–94.0523 E and at an altitude of 94 m. The mean annual rainfall of the district is 300 cm and experiences 31°C and 7°C maximum and minimum temperature, respectively, in the district (NWAA 2010). Satajan is home to many flora and fauna including seasonal, migratory and resident birds. A total of 87 species of birds were recorded



Falcated Duck *Mareca falcata* at Satajan Wetland. © Lakhijyoti Saikia.

from this wetland in a survey in the years 2021 and 2022 (Bhaduri et al. 2022).

A number of sightings of the Falcated Duck have been recorded from Assam. On 12 January 2021, it was spotted in Potiya Sarala Beel of Jorhat

District of Assam (eBird 2021). Another group of Falcated Ducks were spotted in Maguri Beel (Maguri Wetland) near Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and Biosphere Reserve of Tinisukia District of Assam on 13 January 2023 (eBird 2021).

We went to the Satajan wetland on 6 January 2024 for a weekly birding expedition. At 1707 h, we observed five unfamiliar ducks swimming in the center of a flock of Indian Spot-billed Ducks *Anas poecilorhyncha* almost in the middle (slightly towards the northeastern side) of the wetland. We took photographs of the duck with a DSLR camera (Nikon D3400, 70–300 mm lens). We observed the duck with a binocular (Nikon Prostaff P3 8X30) for several minutes. The birds had bottle-green head, a dark bill and elongated black-grey tertials. It had also black-bordered yellow patch at the sides of the vents.

For identification, we used available literature (Grimmette et al. 2011; Grewal et al. 2016) and for updated nomenclature, we used avibase.bsc-eco.org (the World Bird Database) and merlin.allaboutbirds.org. Finally, we were able to identify it as male Falcated Duck.

The Falcated Duck has not been recorded till now from Satajan. This is the first citation of this species, not only for Satajan Wetland, but also for the district of Lakhimpur, Assam, India.

References

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