

## First sighting report of Black-necked Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) from Chhattisgarh

The Black-necked Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) is an uncommon winter visitor sporadically recorded in Pakistan, Northwest India ie; Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Southwest Gujarat. The species frequents reed bordered *Jheels* with floating vegetation interspersed with expanses of open shallow water in company with little grebe (Ali & Ripley 1987); coastal Odisha and Pune Maharashtra (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). In nonbreeding season plumage mostly black and white, white throat and sides of head contrast with blackish crown and dusky ear coverts, striking white crescent curve behind eye, steep forehead (Grimmett et al. 2011) are clues to identification.

Various studies at national level Ali and Ripley (1987), Rasmussen and Anderton (2012), Grimmett et al (2011) and state level by D'Abreu (1935) central provinces including, Chhattisgarh, Vidharbha; Vishwakarma



et al (2021); Bharos et al (2020); Arjun et al (2023) all in Chhattisgarh, do not mention occurrence of this species in central India inclusive of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Vidharbha region (Maharashtra).

On 20 December 2024, the second author saw it at Kopra Dam (22.06 N, 82.058 E, 210 m) Bilaspur district and photographed, subsequently others had visited this wetland and were lucky to find and photograph it on 21 and 22 December 2024. The bird was first located in company of Eurasian Coot amongst the thinly lotus weeds in noon

hours. Next it came out of weeds in open area and during the rest time of the day they mixed with other avian as the fisherman were sailing their boats towards the water edge the black breasted grebe came closer to us all alone and offered opportunities for obtaining photographs and videos. When it was little far from us, we observed it diving in and emerging out in 30-40 seconds and twice it was seen with a fish in its beak.

Our observation period was for about 1 hour from 0630 h to 0730 h. It was solitary and was seen in open clear water patch. The species like Red-crested

Pochard, Eurasian Coot, Common Pochard and other waterfowls were at distance of more than 80 m. This bird stayed for about a week then left, temperature during its stay was between 30°C maximum to 16°C minimum. The species was identified by its nonbreeding physical features as described above (Grimmett et al. 2011) and consultation with experts. In previous study by Vishwakarma et al. (2021) at Kopra dam, this species was not recorded.

The sighting of Black-necked Grebe in Chhattisgarh is a rare sighting and is the first record for the state. The bird might be a passerby on its way to coastal Odisha as Rasmussen and Anderton (2012) mentioned.

## References

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