

RESPONSE Dated 18 June 2025

Correspondence regarding Black-necked Grebe first sighting report from Chhattisgarh

Citation: Jageshwar, V., & S. Damre, D. Verma, A.M.K. Bharos & S. Pandey (2025). First sighting report of Black-necked Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) from Chhattisgarh. *Bird-o-soar* #284, In: *Zoo's Print* 40(5): 12–13.

Query from Avinash Bhoi avibhoi@gmail.com:

Please issue a clarification regarding the article on Black-necked Grebe first sighting in Chhattisgarh, as it was first sighted on 14 December 2024 by Mr. Lokesh Sharan, and an article was already published in other journals/newspapers. The *Zoo's Print* article authors sighted it on 20th December 2024. Please seek clarification from them as it undermines your journal's credibility and issue a clarification in the magazine/journal itself so that people of India believe in your future articles.

We are ready to provide further details. The *Hitavada* article states it was recorded on 14 December 2024, and Mr. Lokesh Sharan's Facebook post also supports this (Facebook doesn't allow posting in the past). Your article states the authors recorded it on 20th December. I request the journal to verify before publishing and obtain a declaration from authors that no competing interests exist, as Mr. Lokesh Sharan and Mr. Pratik Thakur have declared.

The species was reported earlier and an article is already published in another journal at: <https://mbimph.com/index.php/UPJOZ/article/view/4832>

Please publish a small note/correction in the next edition regarding this error so that original credit goes to Mr. Lokesh Sharan and Mr. Pratik Thakur.

REPLY Dated 29 May 2025

The facts in the matter are as follows:

Lokesh Sharan and Prateek Thakur observed the Black-necked Grebe at Kopra dam on **14 December 2024**. They submitted their article to UPJOZ on 25 December 2024, which was accepted on 26 February 2025 and published on 28 February 2025, reporting the species as the first sighting record.

Subsequently, on **20 December 2024**, our team led by Shirish Damre observed it at Kopra Dam (22.06°N, 82.058°E, alt. c. 210 m asl), Bilaspur district, and photographed it. Based on our observations and after verification of its distribution and identification confirmation, an article was prepared and submitted to *Zoo's Print* on 10 January 2025, which was acknowledged with MS-BoS-284 and published on 21 May 2025.

Others also visited this wetland and photographed the species on 21st and 22nd December 2024.

In light of the above facts, it is justified to give credit to Lokesh Sharan and Prateek Thakur for the first report of the species, who also managed to get it published before us, about which we were unaware.

Our record may be treated as a subsequent follow-up, and appropriate corrections should be made in the paper. The correction needed will be in the Caption: **"OUR FIRST SIGHTING REPORT..."** and in the conclusion: **"The sighting of Black-necked Grebe in Chhattisgarh is a rare sighting and is our first record for the state."**

Had we known about their sighting and publication, we would have withheld our paper.

We regret the inconvenience caused.

A.M.K. BHAROS & other authors

Dated: 29 May 2025