

plains. Both the records from Spiti occurred during autumn migration. The above mentioned records suggest that the Red-necked Phalarope is clearly more frequent at Pong Lake than in other neighboring states/Union Territories of northern India and these records, along with records from Spiti, add to the scarce inland records of the species from India.

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A record of the Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* breeding in the Lakshadweep Islands, Indian Ocean

The Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* has a widespread distribution in the Afrotropical and Indo-Malayan region (Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001). It is a resident of the Indian mainland and Sri Lanka and has been sighted in the small atoll

islands of Lakshadweep off the south-western coast of India (Ali & Ripley 1987). Its first record from Lakshadweep goes back to the latter half of the nineteenth century when Hume (1876) procured specimens from the islands of Amini and Kadamat. He categorized them as regular visitors and dismissed any chances of breeding.

A pair of adult Black-winged Kites, along with two immature birds [46], was observed in the afternoon of 26 June 2020 in a nest near the old building of the Administrator of Kavaratti Island, along the northern part of the island. Initially, we saw only the juveniles, but soon two adults flew into the nest. The nest was cone-shaped, built using twigs and sticks and secured between two to three branches almost at the top of a 30 m high Norfolk Pine *Araucaria heterophylla*, an ornamental exotic tree of the islands. On observation, we found that the adults fed the juveniles with Domestic Rats *Mus musculus*. From the size of the juveniles at the time of observation, they might have hatched a few weeks ago, probably in May. They were able to fly, while still being fed by the adults.



46. Nesting of Black-shouldered Kites in Kavaratti, Lakshadweep.

Fazeehisnu Khaleel T.

The small atoll islands of Lakshadweep have confirmed reports of only a few species of breeding land birds: Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopaceus*, House Crow *Corvus splendens*, Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*, Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*, White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*, Indian White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus*, etc., (Daniels 1992; Kurup & Zacharias 1995; eBird, 2020). There are records of

various raptors from Lakshadweep, most of them being stragglers (Kurup & Zacharias 1995). Among them, the Black-winged Kite has maintained the status of a regular visitor, especially since the last decade (eBird 2020). Kavaratti, the capital of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep, is a small atoll with a land area of just 3.26 sq. km and a population of 11,210 (as per 2011 census) (Prakash et al. 2015). It is on this island that we observed the breeding of the pair of Black-winged Kites—which is first for a raptor in Lakshadweep. In the contiguous oceanic islands of the Maldives, their breeding has been reported (Anderson & Shimal 2020), while no such records exist from the British Indian Ocean Territory (Chagos) to the south (Carr 2015).

The domestic rat is the only small mammal that has established itself successfully on the island and voraciously feeds on coconut, much to the worry of the islanders. The Black-winged Kite is a habitual predator of rats and small reptiles (Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001). In Kavaratti, it is certain that domestic rats form the major prey for this typically crepuscular raptor. Interestingly, we noticed them during a late morning in October 2019, hovering for over a minute near the beach to strike a potential prey in the sand. So it seems that they hunt during daylight on the islands. Currently, there are no other resident raptors in Kavaratti except three pairs of Barn Owl *Tyto alba* that were introduced last year to control the rodents (Rajkumar et al. 2019). Being nocturnal hunters, the Barn Owls may not be competitors for the Black-winged Kite during daytime. However, since the rats are usually nocturnal we can assume that the Black-winged Kites are more restricted from preying on them.

We thank Fazeedhibinu Khaleel T., Forest Guard, Environment and Forest Department, Kavaratti, for providing the photographs of the birds.

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Chestnut-winged Cuckoo *Clamator coromandus*: first photographic record from Goa

The Chestnut-winged Cuckoo *Clamator coromandus*, is a resident in northern India, Nepal, and eastwards to South and East China (including Hainan), and the Indochinese Peninsula, and southwards to South Myanmar (Tenasserim). It winters southwards to southern India, Sri Lanka, and the Greater Sundas (Erritzøe, J. et al. 2012). Till 2018, there were no accepted records of the species from the state of Goa (Baidya & Bhagat 2018), but two unconfirmed sightings had been recorded: Rajiv D'Silva and a group of 20 hikers, from Saligao Springs recorded one in 2004 (Baidya & Bhagat 2018), and the naturalist, Ramesh Zharmekar recorded the second from the Ganjem area near Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary in November 2019. The nearest accepted record of the species, to Goa, is from Agumbe, Karnataka (13.50° N, 75.09° E), sighted by Prakash (Prakash 2017).

On 19 November 2020, at 1415h, in Morlem village of Sattari Taluka in Goa, a bird resembling a Jacobin Cuckoo *C. jacobinus* was spotted perched on the Drumstick tree *Moringa oleifera* opposite a friend's house (15.59°N, 74.04°E). Before photographing it, we noted the following characteristics: the crest, head and wings were of black colour, like those of a Jacobin Cuckoo, but it had a dark brown patch on its wings, and a light brown patch below the throat; it seemed slightly larger than a Jacobin Cuckoo. Upon confirming its identity as a Chestnut-winged Cuckoo by referring to Grimmet et. al. (2011), we took photographs [47] using a Nikon D7500 camera, and Nikon 200–500 mm lens. The bird was perched approximately three meters above the ground and seemed to be exhausted, as it did not move at all for 30 min, allowing us to approach it to within two–two and a half meters. After 30 min the bird jumped onto a branch that was half a meter above it, and perched there for another 15 min. After 45 min the bird flew away into the canopy opposite the house. This is the first photographic record of the species from Goa.



47. Chestnut-winged Cuckoo perching on a Drumstick tree.

Mayur Gawas

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