

FIRST SIGHTING RECORD OF EASTERN SPOT-BILLED DUCK, *ANAS ZONORHYNCHA* R. SWINHOE, 1866 FROM BIHAR

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ABSTRACT

The present study is reporting first sighting record of Eastern Spot-Billed Duck, *Anas zonorhyncha* R. Swinhoe, 1866 from Kahalgaon, Bihar.

Keywords: Eastern Spot-Billed Duck, First Record, Bihar

INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Spot-Billed Duck (*Anas zonorhyncha*) is a type of dabbling duck mainly found in East and Southeast Asia. It shares a close relationship with the Indian Spot-Billed Duck (*Anas poecilorhyncha*), but can be identified by its geographic range and specific morphological features. This duck has blackish-brown feathers with lighter edges, nearly white head and neck, a black cap, a dark stripe across the eye, a green speculum edged in white, a black bill with a yellow tip, and coral-red legs and feet. Its length ranges from 55 to 63 cm (22 to 25 in), with a wingspan of 83 to 95 cm (33 to 37 in) and a weight between 790 and 1,500 g (1.74 to 3.31 lb). Breeding populations are prevalent in the Far East of Russia, Mongolia, northeastern China, Korea, and Japan. Breeding or wintering populations migrate to countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, and the Philippines, and they are occasionally spotted in northern India during migration. Due to yellow spot found on its bill the name is termed as "Eastern Spot-billed Duck". Among the three species of Spot-billed Ducks in Eurasia, the Eastern Spot-billed Duck is the only one that has been recorded in North America, with a few sightings reported in the Aleutian Islands. Partial migration occurs in the northernmost populations, which travel to winter in lower latitudes in southern and eastern China from October to April.

In the context of India, some individual's migration reported, from Bharatpur in Rajasthan on 5 December 1969. In Bihar, authors recorded a pair of Eastern Spot-billed duck in Kahalgaon during bird survey on 29 December 2024 in flight mode (GPS Coordinates: 25.214, 87.238) and after that photographic evidence collected on 08 January 2025 at the same location. Recently Laughing Gull and Whimbrel was also reported from Bhagalpur (Gyani *et al.*, 2024). An extensive review of literature and occurrence data from citizen science platforms has verified that the previously mentioned species have not been observed in the Gangetic basin in Bihar.

A unique behaviour documented is infanticide carried out by a female Eastern Spot-billed Duck during the breeding season (Shimada *et al.*, 2002). Certain studies suggest that the parent birds of Eastern Spot-billed ducks exhibit greater aggression towards other ducks, leading to higher instances of infanticide in urban settings where they are compelled to nest closely together due to limited nesting sites.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Images were captured using a Nikon D5600 Camera (200mm-500mm VR Zoom Lens) during the daytime on December 29, 2024 and 08 January 2025. Taxonomic identification validated by pertinent literature

via various photographs by Bhagya Shree, images also submitted to the eBird citizen science platform (Available at: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S207056685>).

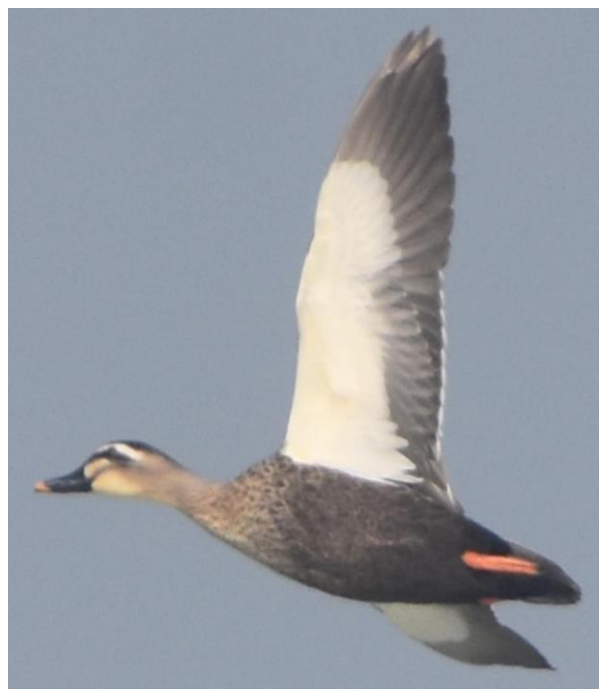


Image: 1. Eastern Spot-Billed Duck, *Anas zonorhyncha* R. Swinhoe, 1866 in flight mode.



Image: 2. Eastern Spot-Billed Duck, *Anas zonorhyncha* R. Swinhoe, 1866 resting with Northern Shoveler and Black-winged stilts.

DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Eastern Spot-billed Ducks are a species that breeds almost throughout Japan and typically remains a year-round resident in areas south of Honshu. Banding research has indicated that some individuals migrate to Sakhalin and parts of the Chinese Continent. These ducks favour lowland habitats, often found in lakes, marshes, wetlands, rice paddies, tidal flats, and rivers. They nest individually from late April to July in meadows and reed beds near lakes, ponds, and rivers, but they may also breed in colonies in island-like areas such as sandbars in rivers. During the winter months, they inhabit a variety of water bodies, including lakes, marshes, ponds, and rivers. They also tend to gather in flocks with Mallards in coastal regions.

In the Gangetic basin, various elements influence the diversity of migratory and native birds. Instances of poaching, illegal netting, and hunting activities have also been noted in the area at times. The reasons behind the birds migrating to non-coastal wetlands remain uncertain. It could be that they encounter other migratory birds and are in search of safer foraging areas for adaption. It appears that this region holds significant potential for discovering more undiscovered species, and birdwatchers are encouraged to meticulously examine all microhabitats. Birders and authorities should prioritize documenting the behaviour of species in their new foraging zones, along with addressing threats to the aforementioned newly reported species.

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Ethical approval: The ethical guidelines in relation with animals are followed in the survey for observation & identification.

Data and materials availability: The present study associated with all data regarding this study.

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