



Sighting of Partial Leucistic Large-Billed Crow in Dumping Site of Gonda district Uttar Pradesh, India

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ABSTRACT: Leucism is derived from the Greek word 'leukos', which means white because all or a portion of the skin and feathers are devoid of melanin. There are two forms of leucism, therefore: pied and all-white. A partial leucism occurs when pigment cells are only present in certain parts of the feather, leaving those areas pigment-free. Leucism causes white coloration, white patches, spots, or splotches on the fur and it is not a common occurrence in animals. This note is a description of a partial leucistic large-billed crow also called jungle crow in the Gonda dumping sites in Uttar Pradesh, India. The sighting was at Gonda districts of Uttar Pradesh, which is located between 26°47' and 27°20' North latitude and 81°30' and 82°46' East longitude. The holy rivers Saryu and Ghaghara pass through the district.

Keywords: Leucistic, Large-billed crow, Color, Gonda, Uttar Pradesh.

Plumage coloration in birds is mainly the result of the deposition of pigments in the feathers (Fox and Vevers 1960). The absence of pigment cells in the epidermis to supply melanin pigment to the developing feathers is the reason behind all-white plumage occurrences. Sighting of birds with such unusual plumage often attracts birdwatchers, especially for those cases which show strange white markings (Shillaker, 2016). Such instances are often eye-catching in the dark-colored species. Leucistic birds are quite remarkable, but there are also several practical ways in which field ornithologists may be affected. An obvious one is the matter of misidentification (Lee and Keeler 1951). Age and injury may also contribute to feathers that fail to correctly pigment though this is poorly understood (Guay *et al.*, 2012). Somatic genetic mutations *i.e.* (mutations that occur after conception) are associated with increased age, and indeed, older crows are more often seen with white feathers. Leucistic birds can have one or multiple white feathers as the individual lacks the normal coloration and its flight feathers are in the white color patch on the right side and it is the cause of leucism. The enzyme tyrosinase is generally present in leucistic birds, and melanin generation in basic color cells and transition into color cells is normal (Sinha and Gupta 2023).

However, melanin deposition in feather cells does not occur due to a hereditary pigment transfer disruption disease. As a result, colorless (white) feathers appear at random throughout the plumage (van Grouw, 2006, 2016, 2018; Koparde *et al.*, 2014).

During the survey on 17th January 2024, an individual of a large-billed crow with unusual plumage was observed. Partial leucistic large-billed crow (Fig. 1) documented in near dumping site of Gonda coordinate of the site (Fig. 2) (27°06'59.90"N 81°58'27.63"E) of Uttar Pradesh, India. In this case, a partial leucistic large-billed crow shows a white spot on the flight feather, but remains unaffected, retaining their natural appearance. I have noticed some hair loss on the head area of a large-billed crow and a slightly whitish appeared.



Fig. 1. Partial Leucistic large-billed crow.

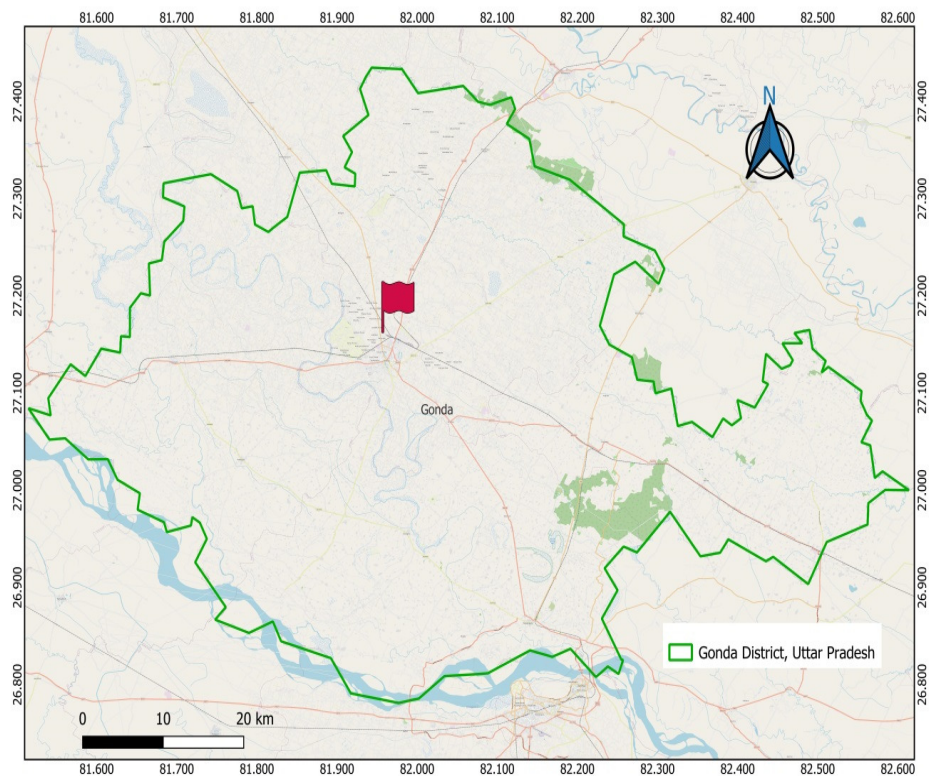


Fig. 2. Location of Partial Leucistic Large-Billed Crow in Gonda of Uttar Pradesh, India.

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