



Published by  
[www.researchtrend.net](http://www.researchtrend.net)

## First report of the *Anthropoidesvirgo* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Gruiformes: Gruidae) from the Ganges near Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India

Ritesh Joshi, Kanchan Puri\*

Environment Education Division, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change,  
New Delhi, India

**Corresponding author:** genetics\_1407@yahoo.co.in

---

| **Received:** 10 April 2021 | **Accepted:** 27 May 2021 | **Published Online:** 31 May 2021 |

---

**How to cite:** Joshi R, Puri K. 2021. First report of the *Anthropoidesvirgo* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Gruiformes: Gruidae) from the Ganges near Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India. J New Biol Rep 10 (1): 38 – 40.

---

### ABSTRACT

This note reports on an observation, made on Demoiselle crane (*Anthropoidesvirgo*) from the river Ganges near Haridwar, Uttarakhand State in India. Though, only quite a few individuals of the species have been reported from some identified areas of the State, it appears that the State has been serving as a stopover site for the species during their migration. Documenting such small reports of use of different landscapes by a vagrant species as stopover sites, especially in context of changing climate, would be of paramount importance in management and conservation of these winter visitors and their habitats.

**Key words:** *Anthropoidesvirgo*, first report, Haridwar, upper Gangetic plains, India.

### INTRODUCTION

The cranes are among the most spectacular birds on earth, which are well known for their large and toughest migrations in the world. Of the 15 species of cranes found across the world, six species are found in India. The demoiselle crane (*Anthropoidesvirgo*) is distributed in parts of Central Eurasia, from the Black Sea to North East China and Mongolia, where they breed and Indian subcontinent and sub-Saharan Africa, where they winter (Animalia 2021). Two remnant disjunctive populations of the species were also reported from Eastern Turkey and North Africa in the Atlas Plateau, which are probably extinct (Ilyashenko 2019). These beautiful cranes are the smallest of all cranes of the world and are monogamous, living in pairs for whole life.

The Indian subcontinent has always served as a favourable wintering ground for these cranes. Every year, large flocks of demoiselle cranes fly from various parts of Eurasia and arrive in the wetlands and marsh lands in northern India, where they mainly congregate along the Arabian sea coast, in parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, eastwards in Assam and West Bengal

(occasionally) and southwards towards Mysore and South Deccan Plateau, where the species is rare (Ali, 1941; Johnsgard, 1983). Every year, large number of flocks of demoiselle crane arrive in the grasslands having close proximity to water bodies, crop fields, sandy riverbeds and open areas of wetlands (Ali & Ripley 1969). Ilyashenko (2019) has identified the species as one of the least water-dependent species among the cranes of the world. Interestingly, the species also prefer to arrive and stay in some part of the Indian desert, where they find adequate habitats and food. Even the species comes every year in Khichan village in the State of Rajasthan, where they are fed upon by the local communities protected by the local communities.

Demoiselle crane is listed as ‘Least Concern’ in IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, however, is listed in Appendix II of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), with a complete ban on its commercial trade. Besides, in order to give trans-boundary protection and conservation using international agreements, the species has been covered under the Appendix II of the

Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). The species is also protected under the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Schedule IV, list the protected species that are not endangered. Though, the species is protected in India, very less work has been carried out on its behaviour and ecology. In this note, we report on the occurrence of demoiselle crane in the river Ganges near Haridwar, which perhaps constitute first report from the upper Gangetic plains in Uttarakhand State.

## OBSERVATIONS

In May 2010 (04:50 h), while documenting the birds in the riparian corridors of the river Ganges across Haridwar city, two individuals of demoiselle crane were observed near Bheemgoda barrage (29°57'13"N, 78°10'41"E)(Fig.1). The pair was observed for 4-5 consecutive days. The cranes were found standing in the middle of the river Ganges, where there was a small mount emerged due to the deposition of river bed materials. Birds were observed searching food from the river water and feeding intermittently. The individuals might be the vagrant and stayed over the site only for few days. The area falls within the Gangetic plains biogeographic zone and Upper Gangetic plains

province (Rodgers et al. 2002) and is dominated by tropical moist and dry deciduous forest types (Champion & Seth 1968).

In the State, large flocks of demoiselle cranes have not been reported, and only occasional sightings of quite a few individuals of the species were made from the Corbett Tiger Reserve's landscape (Tak & Sati 2008; Dhakate et al. 2008; Kidwai 2013). Mohan and Sondhi (2015) has kept the species in the checklist of State's birds, however, any locality record has not been given. It is worth mentioning that a large flock, consisting of about 300 individuals of demoiselle crane was reported recently from the Ganga barrage in Bijnor (Uttar Pradesh State), which is about 100 kms far (through road) from Haridwar (Dabas 2018). Since demoiselle cranes have not been reported from the site till date, for recognizing the species accurately, Nikon Action Series, 10×50 CF binoculars were also used. Besides, photographic evidences have also been captured. Anthropogenic activities along the Ganges, changes in agriculture practices, unawareness about the ecological role of species, etc. are some of the threats observed in the area with respect to stopover site of species.



**Fig. 1.** Individuals of *Anthropoidesvirgo* in river Ganges near Haridwar.

Studies carried by the Zoological Survey of India during the years 1982-87 has also indicated the presence of demoiselle crane near Beribara area, Rajaji National Park (Narang, 1995). Bhatt *et al.* (2014) have conducted a study on water birds of

Bheemgodabarrage near Haridwar and adjacent Ganga valley, however, the species was not reported from the sites. A single individual was also reported in the year 2014 from Uttarkashi district of the State for about two days (Sinha *et al.*, 2019).

The riparian corridors in upper Gangetic plains are one of the most diverse wildlife habitats in the north-western Shivalik landscape, which constitutes an important repository for the regional avifauna. Every year, numerous migratory birds arrive in the area, which primarily includes Pallas's fish eagles (*Haliaeetus leucoryphus*), Eurasian teals (*Anas crecca*), gadwalls (*Anas strepera*), mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), northern pintails (*Anas acuta*), red-crested pochards (*Nettion rufina*), ruddy shelducks (*Tadorna ferruginea*), bar-headed geese (*Anser indicus*), black-necked storks (*Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*), black storks (*Ciconia nigra*), painted storks (*Mycteria leucocephala*), Pallas's gulls (*Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*), black-headed gulls (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*), Himalayan griffons (*Gyps himalayensis*) and darters (*Anhinga melanogaster*).

Staying of the bird for some days across the State's territory, especially during their long return journey, indicates that the species is receiving favourable wintering grounds in the State and some other parts of the country. In the year 2020, the species was spotted for the first time from the Teesta riverbed in Jalpaiguri district, West Bengal (Bhattacharya & Mukherjee 2020). Documenting such small reports of use of ecosystems in various landscapes by a vagrant species, especially in context of changing climate, would be of paramount importance in management and conservation of these winter visitors, their habitats and strengthening our trans-boundary conservation approaches.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Authors would like to thank anonymous reviewers, who has given inputs to improve the manuscript.

#### REFERENCES

- Ali S. 1941. The book of Indian birds. Bombay Natural History Society, Bombay, India.
- Ali S and Ripley SD 1969. Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan. Oxford University Press, Bombay.
- Animalia 2021. Demoiselle crane. <http://animalia.bio/demoiselle-crane>. Accessed on 9 March 2021).
- Bhatt D, Sethi VK, Sharma S, Kumar A, Saini V and Singh A. 2014. Waterbirds of selected wetlands of Uttarakhand. in *Water birds of India* (eds Gopi, G. V. & Hussain, S.A.) 140-159 (ENVIS Bulletin: Wildlife and Protected Areas, Wildlife Institute of India).
- Bhattacharya PP & Mukherjee K. 2020. In a first, demoiselle crane spotted in Bengal. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/in-a-first-demoiselle-crane-spotted-in-bengal/articleshow/79104837.cms>. Accessed on 18 March 2021.
- Champion HG and Seth SK. 1968. A revised survey of the forest types of India. Manager of Publications, Government of India, New Delhi
- Dabas H. 2018. In a first, 300 demoiselle cranes flock to Ganga barrage in Bijnor. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/meerut/in-a-first-300-demoiselle-cranes-flock-to-ganga-barrage-in-bijnor/articleshow/62973719.cms> Accessed on 13 March 2021.
- Dhakte PM, Patil TA and Bhartari R. 2008. Wetland birds of Corbett Tiger Reserve land areascape. In: Sengupta, M. and Dalwani, R. (eds), proceedings of Taal 2007: The 12<sup>th</sup> World Lake Conference: 1974-1982.
- Ilyashenko EI. 2019. Species review: Demoiselle crane (*Anthropoides virgo*). In: Crane Conservation Strategy. Mirande CM, Harris JT (Eds), International Crane Foundation. Pp 383-396.
- Johnsgard PA. 1983. Cranes of the world: Demoiselle crane (*Anthropoides virgo*). In: Cranes of the world. Pp. 95-102. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Kidwai Z. 2013. Sighting of demoiselle crane *Anthropoides virgo* at Haripura reservoir, Uttarakhand, India. *Zoo's Print*, XXVIII(9): 19-20.
- Mohan D and Sondhi S. 2015. An updated checklist of the birds of Uttarakhand. Uttarakhand Forest Department.
- Narang ML. 1995. Birds (Aves). In: Fauna of Rajaji National Park (Ed Director, Zoological Survey of India). Zoological Survey of India pp. 25-53.
- Rodgers WA, Panwar HS and Mathur VB. 2002. Wildlife Protected Areas in India: a review (Executive Summary). Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, India.
- Sinha A, Hariharan H, Adhikari B, Krishnamurthy R. 2019. Bird diversity along riverine areas in the Bhagirathi Valley, Uttarakhand, India. *Biodiversity Data Journal* 7: e31588. <https://doi.org/10.3897/BDJ.7.e31588....1-30>.
- Tak PC and Sati JP. 2008. Aves. In: Fauna of Corbett Tiger Reserve, Uttarakhand (Ed Director, Zoological Survey of India). Zoological Survey of India pp. 83-142.