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## Spotting of *Rostratula benghalensis*, Greater Painted Snipe at Village Sail Saloon, Tehsil Udhampur Jammu & Kashmir, India

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### ABSTRACT

The present note deals with the spotting of Greater Painted snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* from a small marshy wetland area of village Sail Saloon Udhampur Jammu & Kashmir. It was the first complete photographic record of Greater Painted snipe from village Sail Saloon Udhampur Jammu & Kashmir.

**Key words:** *Rostratula benghalensis*, village Sail Saloon, Udhampur, Jammu& Kashmir.

### INTRODUCTION

The Greater Painted snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* is a medium sized wader and wide spread resident at fresh water, vegetated pools and fine swamps, and mangroves of southern and central India. This species prefers mainly fresh water marshes with deep pools, ditches with thick vegetation, mud patches and mangroves. The genus *Rostratula* is a species of wader in the family Rostratulidae. *R.benghalensis* breeds across most of sub-Saharan Africa and Madagascar, Nile Delta in Egypt, and in Asia from Pakistan to China, Japan, South-East Asia, Philippines and Indonesia (Kirwan, 2016). Greater Painted snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* has an uneven or patchy distribution pattern in south Asia. The distribution maps in Grimmett et al. (1999), Ali & Ripley (1986), Kumar et al. (2005), and Kazmierczak & Perlo (2006) have not any indication of sighting this species from small stretch of marshy land of village Sail Saloon Udhampur. There are no published complete photographic records of this species from

District Udhampur Jammu and Kashmir (Singh et al. 2013; 2014, Pandotra et al. 2014).

### SPECIES DESCRIPTION AND HABIT

Greater Painted Snipe is a medium-sized, plump wading bird. It has a long reddish-brown beak, slightly decurved at tip and separate white or yellowish and pinkish eye patch. Rounded, buff-spotted wings and short tail. White colour of breast covers up around top of folded wing. Head and neck chestnut in colour and a distinct black band across the breast and broad, median and buff stripe on head down to bill. Body coloration metallic bronze green spotted and streaked with bands in general with the sides of the head, neck and throat a rich chestnut brown, Male is smaller than females, sexes more or less alike. The male is paler and greyer in color. Male and females are difficult to identify in non-breeding plumage.

During breeding time the female is more brightly colored than the male. The Plumage of female is strongly patterned, head and neck mostly dark rufous with broad white patches around and

behind the eye. Most of upper parts dark bronze green, finely barred black; under parts white. Flight fairly slow, showing rounded wings and white under wing (Skerrett, 2017).

Greater painted snipe active during early morning evening and night may be found solitary or in small flocks and breeds almost throughout the year. The mode of nutrition is omnivorous feeding on invertebrates includes annelid worms, snails, and prefers aquatic and marsh insects and crustaceans by probing in squishy mud. The seeds of grasses such as millet and rice are also consumed, and may form a major part of the diet of some populations (Hoyo & Elliot, 1996).

## BREEDING SITE



Fig. 1. Map of Udhampur District

## STUDY AREA

The area under investigation situated at village Sail Saloon of Tehsil & District Udhampur, Jammu & Kashmir, India (Fig. 2). Sail Saloon village is the nearest village of Udhampur Town. Udhampur is located in the Shivalik range of Himalayas which is a part of the Northwest Lower Himalayas with mountainous topography mostly. (Fig.1). The city of Udhampur is located at 32.93°N 75.13°E in a relatively semi plateau part of the district at an elevation of 756m (2480 feet) from mean sea level. The climate of study area is sub-tropical and the temperature ranges between 40°C during summer while in winter dips to 2°C or even sometimes to zero with annual rainfall is 130cm mainly in monsoons and winters due to Western disturbances. However due to altering climate patterns snowfall has been experienced in some years. Heavy hailstorms with piles of hail can be experienced in February and March of 2011. The forest is of temperate type. The study was carried out from March 2017 to July 2017. During the regular field survey to study avian diversity at the study area, the key observations were made by the naked eye with 10m away from the Greater Painted snipe and for

The nest is a shallow scrape in a mound of vegetation on the ground, lined with plant material and situated among grass or stalks at the water's edge; sometimes a pad of vegetation or a nest of grass and weeds that concealed amongst thick emergent vegetation of *Ipomea fistulosa* in marshy land. Alternatively nests may be placed in more open environments such as on dense mat of floating water-weed (Wesley, 1991). The females court the males, are polyandrous with males incubating and raising the young as predicted by parental investment theory. Chicks are buff coloured and have black stripes running along their length. Immature birds resemble the male but lack the broken dark band across the breast. Males are also known to carry the chicks to safety under the wing. The breeding season is between April and July.

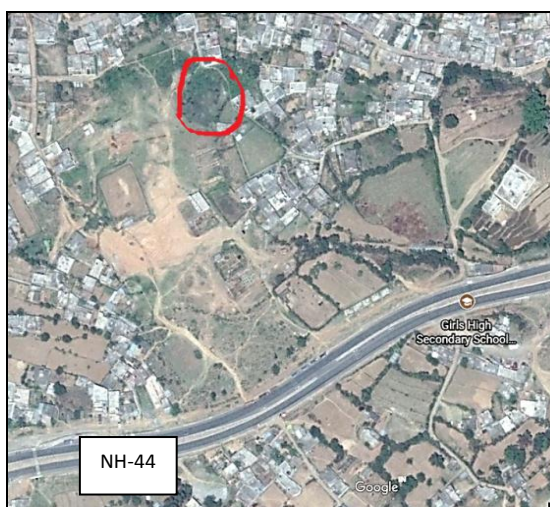


Fig. 2. Spotting area of *Rostratula benghalensis* at Village Sail Saloon, Udhampur.

taking photographs by Nikon D-5300(70-300mm lens) camera to identification the species. The spotting is slightly challenging due to effective concealment and calm behavior shown by the bird for longer periods; it took long time to record photographs to confirm its presence at study area. For these motives the marshy land was sight seen twice a day, early morning and evening to confirm its occurrence at various sites.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The identification of birds sighted during the study were confirmed by using Ali & Ripley (1986), Grimmett et al. (1998), Kazmierczak & Perlo (2006), Manakandan et al. (2011), Kumar & Sati (2005). Firstly I have seen one male individual on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2017(Fig. 4). After that it was consistent sighted till 14 April, 2017 and one more individual was found having different coloration, which was the female greater painted snipe (Fig. 3). On regular visiting the site upto 26<sup>th</sup> April, three chicks following the male parent were observed (Fig. 5). It was very difficult to photograph the little chick because male parent

immediately hide the chick under his wings or camouflaged in the vegetation in presence of humans. On 28<sup>th</sup> of May, 2017 three immature individual feeding in the swampy mud were found and photographed (Fig. 6). During feeding it was seen that the greater painted snipe shows distraction display or threat display by spreading its wings to distract the other birds who tried to share its feeding habitat (Fig. 8). It has been found that the microhabitat of greater painted snipe is shared by White-breasted water hen, Green sandpiper, Common moorhen, Scaly-breasted munia, Red-

wattled lapwing, Yellow-eyed babbler and Pied bush chat at the study area. From these observations the spotting of Greater Painted snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* has been confirmed from the marshy land of village Sail Saloon, Tehsil Udampur Jammu & Kashmir. It seems to be a first complete photographic record. There are no previously complete photographic documented records of Greater Painted-snipe from District Udampur Jammu & Kashmir.



**Fig. 3.** Adult Female Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*. (Photo by: Brinder Kumar.)



**Fig. 4.** Adult male Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* (Photo by: Brinder Kumar)



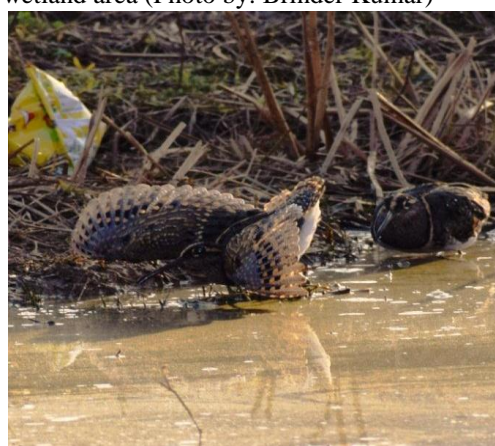
**Fig.5.** Chicks of Greater Painted-snipe follows their father in a line. (Photo by: Brinder Kumar)



**Fig. 6.** Juvenile of Greater Painted snipe feeding in the dusk by probing in squishy mud of the marshy wetland area (Photo by: Brinder Kumar)



**Fig.7.** 40 day's old Juvenile of Greater Painted snipe. (Photo by: Brinder Kumar)



**Fig.8.** Threat Display by Greater Painted snipe (Photo by: Brinder Kumar)

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