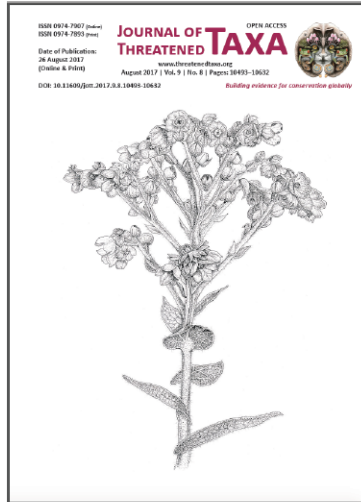


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SHORT COMMUNICATION

WINTERING OF THE GREY-HEADED LAPWING *VANELLUS CINEREUS* (AVES: CHARADRIIFORMES: CHARADRIIDAE) IN KERALA, INDIA

R. Roshnath

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WINTERING OF THE GREY-HEADED LAPWING *VANELLUS CINEREUS* (AVES: CHARADRIIFORMES: CHARADRIIDAE) IN KERALA, INDIA

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Abstract: Sightings of Grey-headed Lapwings wintering in Kerala were compiled from different sources. With a total of 77 sightings from 1999–2016 in Kerala the bird, which was earlier thought to be a rare winter visitor, was found to be a frequent visitor to the state. Kole wetland, Vellayani-Punchakkari paddy fields and Kattampally wetlands were the sites in Kerala with fairly regular sightings of the bird. From the records, it was found that they are here from October to April, with a maximum number of sightings in January.

Keywords: Kattampally, Kole Wetlands, wintering.

The Grey-headed Lapwing *Vanellus cinereus* is a wetland bird distributed from East Asia (northeastern China, Japan) to Southeast Asia, mainly found in lowland farms and riverbeds (Sonobe & Robinson 1985; Nakamura & Nakamura 1995). As their diet consists mostly of small invertebrates on or under the ground, farmlands with different microhabitats with high diversity of organisms are favored for foraging (Yamazaki et al. 2001, 2003).

Grey-headed Lapwings are monogamous and breed from March to August (Takahashi 2007, 2008) in northeastern China and Japan and migrate to the northern part of Southeast Asia in the non-breeding season (Sonobe & Usui 1993; Piersma 1996, Fig 1). Later reports showed an expanded breeding range to the south primarily along the Pacific seaboard to

western Japan and southern Japan (Takahashi 2007, 2008). According to Robson (2005) and Bamford et al. (2008), the Grey-headed Lapwing has two breeding populations - a sedentary population in Japan and a larger migratory population breeding in north-eastern China and wintering in southern China, Indochina, Myanmar, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and parts of mainland Southeast Asia. After October most of the population breeding in snowy regions head south, but some of them stay and winter in the breeding grounds and the birds that went south return to the breeding sites around late February (Takahashi 2007, 2008). The largest wintering concentrations of these birds were recorded in Bangladesh and China (Bamford et al. 2008; Li & Mundkur 2004).

The Grey-headed Lapwing is believed to be a rare / uncommon winter visitor in peninsular India (Kumar et al. 2003) with only a few published records (Kasambe et al. 2012). In India, its major wintering grounds are in the northeastern part of the country (Grimmett et al. 1999; Lainer 2004). Ali & Ripley (1983) mentioned this bird as a winter visitor, regularly seen in small flocks in West Bengal, Assam, Manipur and Bangladesh and stragglers recorded from Kashmir, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and the Andaman Islands. According to Grimmett et al. (2011)

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in the Indian subcontinent, it is mainly distributed in northeastern India. But as per Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) they are regular winter visitors to Bihar, southern Assam hills, southwestern Bengal and Odisha, a few reaching Delhi and Bharatpur (Rajasthan) areas, and straggling to Kashmir, northern and southern Gujarat and the southern peninsula. In peninsular India it has been reported from Maharashtra (Palkar 2010), Andhra Pradesh (Pittie 2001; Conroy 2003; Sreekar & Ram 2010), in Goa (Lainer 1991) Karnataka (Subramanya 1987), Tamil Nadu (Sundar 2000; Santharam 2003; Santharam et al. 2006) and the first report for the Kerala state was in 1999 by Ravindran & Nameer (2002). Grey-headed Lapwings were believed to be rare winter visitors in Kerala, but since 1999, many reports have been recorded from various areas of Kerala. Hence the objective of the study is to summarise the available reports on the presence of the species from Kerala and to understand its wintering behavior in the state.

Materials and Methods

The data on the presence of Grey-headed Lapwings were collected from different sources such as eBird, Birdwatchers of Kerala (Facebook group) and KeralaBirder (Yahoo group) apart from published reports from Kerala. The collected data also include the sighting location, date and number of birds, which were then compiled and analyzed for understanding the wintering behavior of Grey-headed Lapwing in Kerala.

Result and Discussion

A total of 77 sightings (192 individuals) of the Grey-headed Lapwing are available from Kerala State, since its first record in 1999. The numbers of wintering Grey-headed Lapwing were found to increase over the years (Fig. 2), with the number varying from 1 to 23. The first record in January 1999 from Kole Wetlands in Thrissur-Malappuram districts was followed by sightings in 2001 and 2005 at the same site (Sashikumar

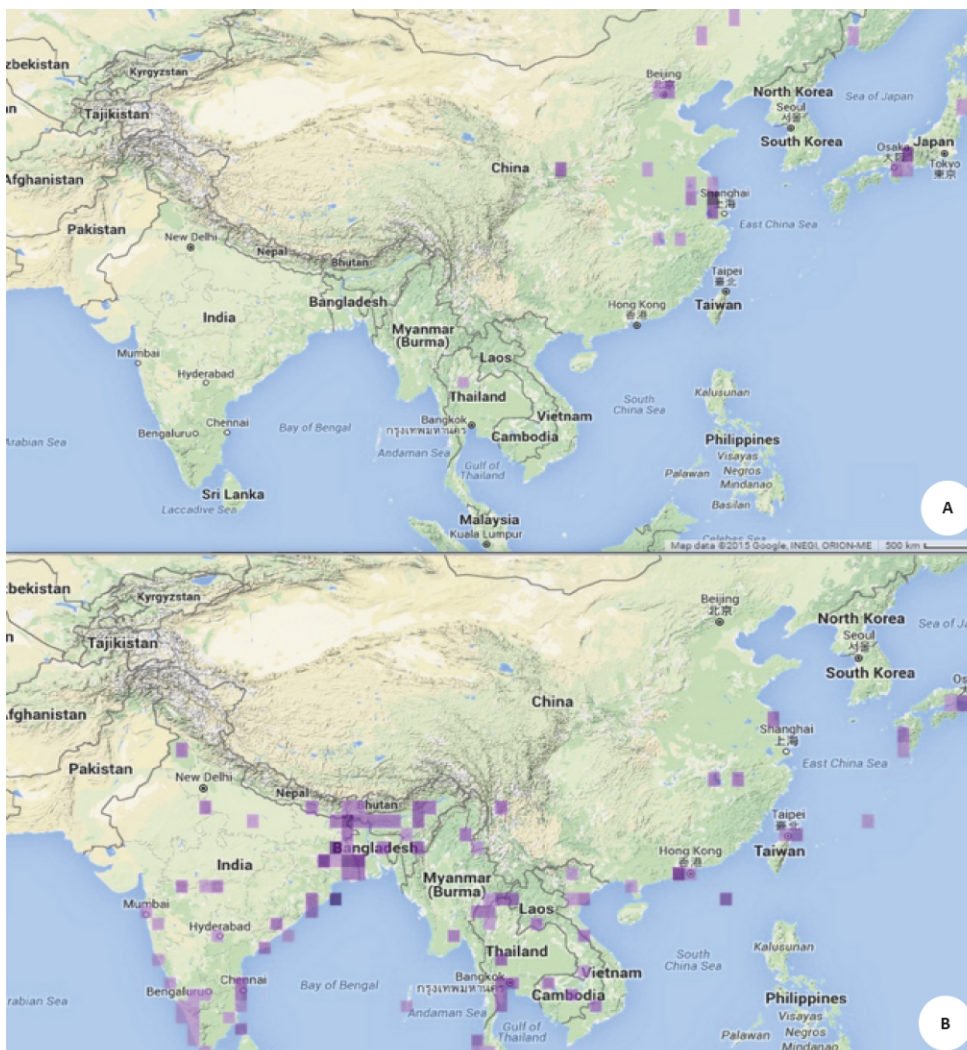


Figure 1. Range of Grey-headed Lapwing during breeding season (A) and wintering season (B)

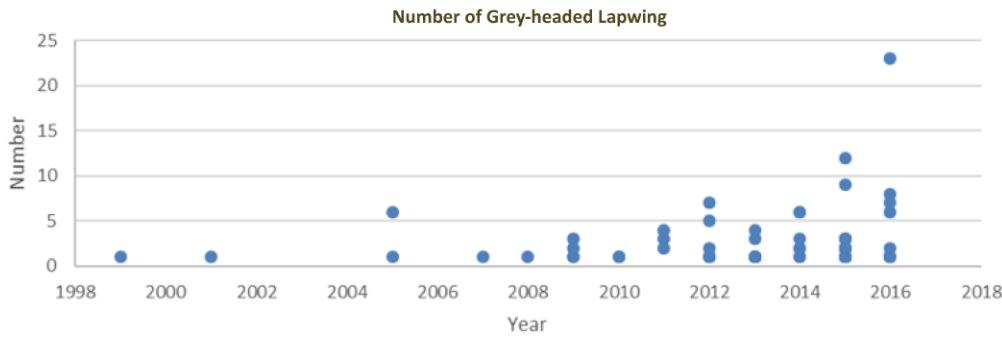


Figure 2. Number of Grey-headed Lapwing wintering in Kerala

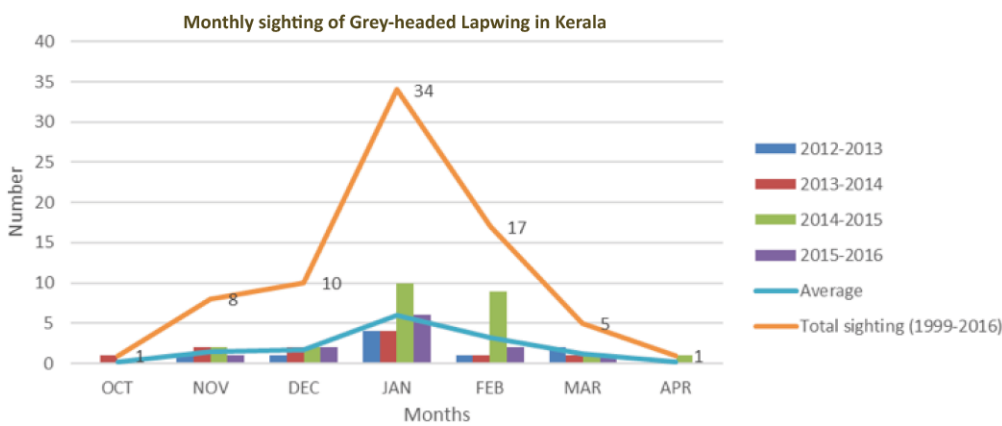


Figure 3. Monthly sighting of Grey-headed Lapwing in Kerala

et al. 2011). Later in 2007 a single bird was reported in Punchapadam in Palakkad District. In 2009 it was reported from Muderikdavu, in the Kattampally wetlands in Kannur District, Puthenkari (Puvathunkari) paddy fields in Vaikomkari division of Kuttanad wetlands in Alapuzha District, and Vellayani-Punchakkari in Thiruvananthapuram District. It was frequently recorded in Kole Wetlands, Kuttanad area and Punchakari Paddy fields in later years. The highest number of wintering Grey-headed Lapwing was recorded in Venchalipadam in Malappuram on 25 January 2016 (23 individuals, Vijesh Vallikunnu pers. comm. 2016) (Image 1), followed by Vellayani-Punchakkari in Thiruvananthapuram (9) and Kole Wetlands (8). Among the recorded sites Kole Wetlands of Thrissur District had the highest number of sightings of the Grey-headed Lapwing (24 sightings in eight years), followed by Vellayani-Punchakkari fields (10 sightings in six years) and Kattampally wetlands (six sightings in five years; Table 1).

The Grey-headed Lapwings were found to winter in Kerala from October to April. The number of sightings was more in January (34) and least in October and April (1). Compilation of four wintering seasons from 2012–2016 showed the highest sighting of the bird in January followed by February (Fig. 3).

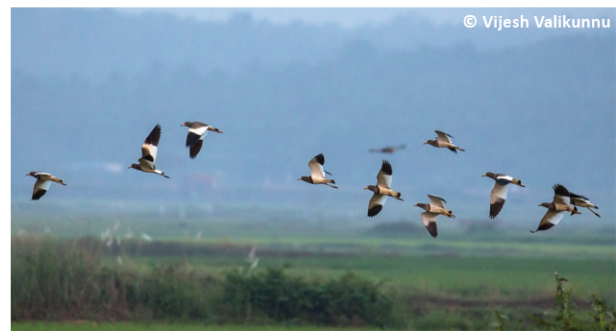


Image 1. Flock of Grey-headed Lapwing in Venchalipadam, Malappuram



Image 2. Grey-headed Lapwing in Vadakara, Kozhikode

Table 1. Sighting record of Grey-headed Lapwing from 1999–2016 in Kerala

Site	District	1999	2001	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Kattampally wetland	Kannur					1	2		1	1	1				6
Kunjimangalam wetland	Kannur										1				1
Ayancheri	Kozhikode												1		1
Vadakara	Kozhikode												2		2
Maranchery Kole wetlands	Malappuram										2				2
Pallathingal-Parappanangadi	Malappuram										1				1
Punchapadam	Malappuram				1										1
Venchalipadam-chemmad	Malappuram												1	1	2
Chammanur	Thrissur											1			1
Edakara	Thrissur													1	1
Erayamkudy paddy fields (Koratty)	Thrissur								1						1
Kanimangalam	Thrissur													1	1
Kole Wetlands	Thrissur	1	1	2				1			2	1	13	3	24
Pallur	Thrissur													1	1
Kakkanad	Eranakulam													1	1
Nedumbassery Wetlands	Eranakulam									1			3		4
Pandanad	Alappuzha											2			2
Upper Kuttanad	Alappuzha										2				2
North Kuttanad	Kottayam									1	1	5	1		8
Viakomkari, Kuttanad	Kottayam						1				1				2
Puthuppally	Kottayam													1	1
Kumarakom wetlands	Kottayam						1	1							2
Vellayani - Punchakkari Paddy fields	Thiruvananthapuram						1		1	3	1	1	3		10
Total		1	1	2	1	1	5	2	3	6	12	10	24	9	77

In Tamil Nadu, Santharam et al. (2006) reported frequent sightings of Grey-headed Lapwings in recent years, which is thought to be an extended range in coastal Tamil Nadu. Records from Kerala suggest that as in the case of Tamil Nadu they are making Kerala also a frequent wintering zone. Most of the birds are found to be adults with pectoral bands (Image 2) contrary to the observation of Ali & Ripley (1983) where they mentioned that a large proportion of birds visiting India are young birds without pectoral bands. Even though this data fails to interpret the actual number of birds wintering in the area, it reflects the wintering pattern of the bird in Kerala.

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Erratum

Tanalgo, K.C. (2017). Wildlife hunting by indigenous people in a Philippine protected area: a perspective from Mt. Apo National Park, Mindanao Island. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 9(6): 10307–10313; <http://doi.org/10.11609/jott.2967.9.6.10307-10313>
Date of Publication: 26 June 2017

- (i) Valid scientific name of Monitor Lizard *Varanus salvator* is corrected to *Varanus cumingi*
- (ii) Valid scientific name of Philippine Cobra *Naja philippinensis* is corrected to *Naja samarensis*



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