



First sighting of Long-tailed duck from West Bengal

Long-tailed duck, *Clangula hyemalis* is vulnerable and one of the rare vagrants in Indian subcontinent. This species was first sighted in Arunachal Pradesh in 1935 (Parsons, 1935), subsequently, in Kashmir (Ludlow, 1940), Uttarakhand (Mohan *et al.*, 1992), and Punjab in 2001 (Prasad, 2008). On 21 February 2013, Shantanu Prasad sighted a single female long-tailed duck at Gajoldoba, West Bengal. This is the first record of this bird from Eastern India observed on 28 February 2013 (Fig. 1). Gajoldoba (26°40'N, 88°29'E) is a barrage on the River Teesta situated, 25 km south-east of Siliguri town in Jalpaiguri District of West Bengal. Biogeographically, the site falls in the Lower Gangetic Plain (7B) biotic province of India (Rodgers *et al.*, 2002).

The female duck remained for a period of three weeks until the water level of the barrage reduced considerably. It preferred foraging in early morning ~06:30 h near to the shore with the flock of other diving ducks such as *Aythya fuligula* and *Aythya ferina*, etc. When the sun becomes brighter, the duck gradually shifted to deeper water of the barrage and rest of the time it was seen either busy in grooming activities or sleeping with its bill tucked into its back feathers. The reservoir and the surrounding area of Gajoldoba barrage is one of the important wintering abode of several other migratory bird species like, *Aythya nyroca*, *Aythya marila*, and *Anas platyrhynchos*. Therefore we recommend immediate protection and further investigation of this important wetland.

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Fig. 1: The long-tailed duck (photo: D. Gupta).

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