

New site on distribution map of Indian pond heron (*Ardeola grayii*) with red legs in Rajasthan

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It has been observed that during the breeding season there is a significant change in colouration of birds. They become very attractive and colourful in contrast to non-breeding ones. In Indian pond heron *Ardeola grayii*, breeding season is from March-September (Ali and Ripley 2001). In non-breeding season the colour of legs of *A. grayii* is generally green while at the time of breeding it becomes greenish yellow (Ali and Ripley 2001). Besides, it has also been noticed that some times its leg colour turns salmon-pink flush early in the breeding season (Hancock and Kushlan 1978), reddish (Grimmett *et al.* 1998), pinkish (Rasmussen and Anderton 2005) and coral red (Wesley 1993). In Udaipur district (Rajasthan), Menar pond (24°35'16"N, 74°06'43"E; 1563m above MSL) (Fig. 2) has a lush biodiversity. On 25th June, 2013, we were at Menar village pond for birding, at 11.22 am; opportunisticly we saw an Indian pond heron in breeding plumage with black tip of beak, brownish neck and red coloured legs (Fig 1.). At 50 meters, from that one, we saw two other individuals of Indian pond heron in breeding plumage but they had yellow colouration on legs. Therefore, we took photographs for further consulting with literature and experts. After consulting, it was clear that this was breeding colouration of species which is mainly found in southern and eastern part of the country. Again on 29 March, 2014 we saw two individuals of Indian pond heron at same place with red legs.

Distribution of Indian Pond heron with red legs is mainly restricted in southern and eastern part of the country (Sunder 2004), along with Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat (Sunder 2005).

In Rajasthan, Sunder (2005) has reported this species with red legs, in only Bharatpur and Kota districts. Thus, present report may be helpful in addition of new site on the distribution map of this species in Rajasthan as well as India.

References

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Fig 1. Indian pond heron with red legs at Menar Pond (Photo: Deependra Singh Shekhawat)

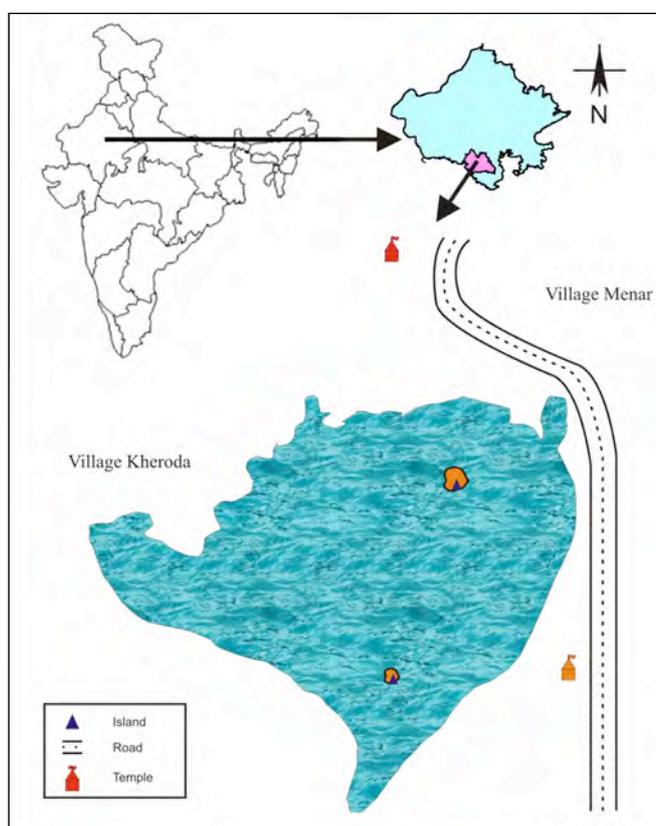


Fig 2. Study area, Menar Pond

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