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## NOTE

### PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD OF LESSER FLAMINGO *PHOENICONAIAS MINOR* (AVES: PHOENICOPTERIDAE) IN RAMGANGA RIVER, BAREILLY, INDIA

Pichaimuthu Gangaikamran, Aftab A. Usmani, G.V. Gopi, S.A. Hussain & Khursid A. Khan

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## Photographic record of Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* (Aves: Phoenicopteridae) in Ramganga river, Bareilly, India

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India is one of the mega biodiversity countries consisting of 12.5% of the total avian diversity (Praveen et al. 2016). A total of 1,317 species of birds have been documented in India with high endemism (Praveen et al. 2020). The Phoenicopteridae family consists of six species of flamingos found worldwide and India possesses two of them, i.e., Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* and Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* (Jadhav & Parasharya 2004). The Lesser Flamingo is one of the smallest flamingo species distributed in eastern, southern, and western Africa, as well as in Pakistan and northwestern India (Zimmerman et al. 1996). In India, the breeding population is confined to the Little Rann of Kachchh in Gujarat, while nonbreeding, the population has restricted distribution and is mainly found along the western coast of the country in the state of Gujarat & Maharashtra (Tere 2008; Rameshchandra 2014) (Figure 1). The Lesser Flamingo can be differentiated from the Greater Flamingo based on smaller size, shorter leg & neck, smaller bill, prominent kinked, and dark red facial skin (Grimmett et al. 2011). It is one of the world's most numerous flamingoes estimated at one million individual birds throughout the world and classified as 'Near Threatened' by the

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species (IUCN 2020). It is also listed in the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) Action Plan (Childress et al. 2008). The Bonn Convention (CMS) and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) have enlisted this species in Appendix II, while it has been listed in Scheduled IV in Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (Tere 2008; Rameshchandra 2014).

The Lesser Flamingo has been reported from Sewri mudflats and Thane Creek (Mumbai) (Vijayan et al. 2011; Nachane et al. 2014), Thol Lake Gujarat, Nalabana Bird Sanctuary in Chilika Lake Odisha (Balachandran et al. 2009), and several other coastal and inland freshwater wetlands in Gujarat (Jadhav & Parasharya 2004). Furthermore, all the recorded sightings of Lesser Flamingo indicate its northernmost distribution in Gurugram, Haryana, and National Chambal Sanctuary which seems to be approximately 248 km and 200 km far away from the current sighting (Figure 2). Its distribution in northern India is scarce and even the vagrant individuals have never been sighted in northern Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. We have recorded a vagrant juvenile of Lesser Flamingo

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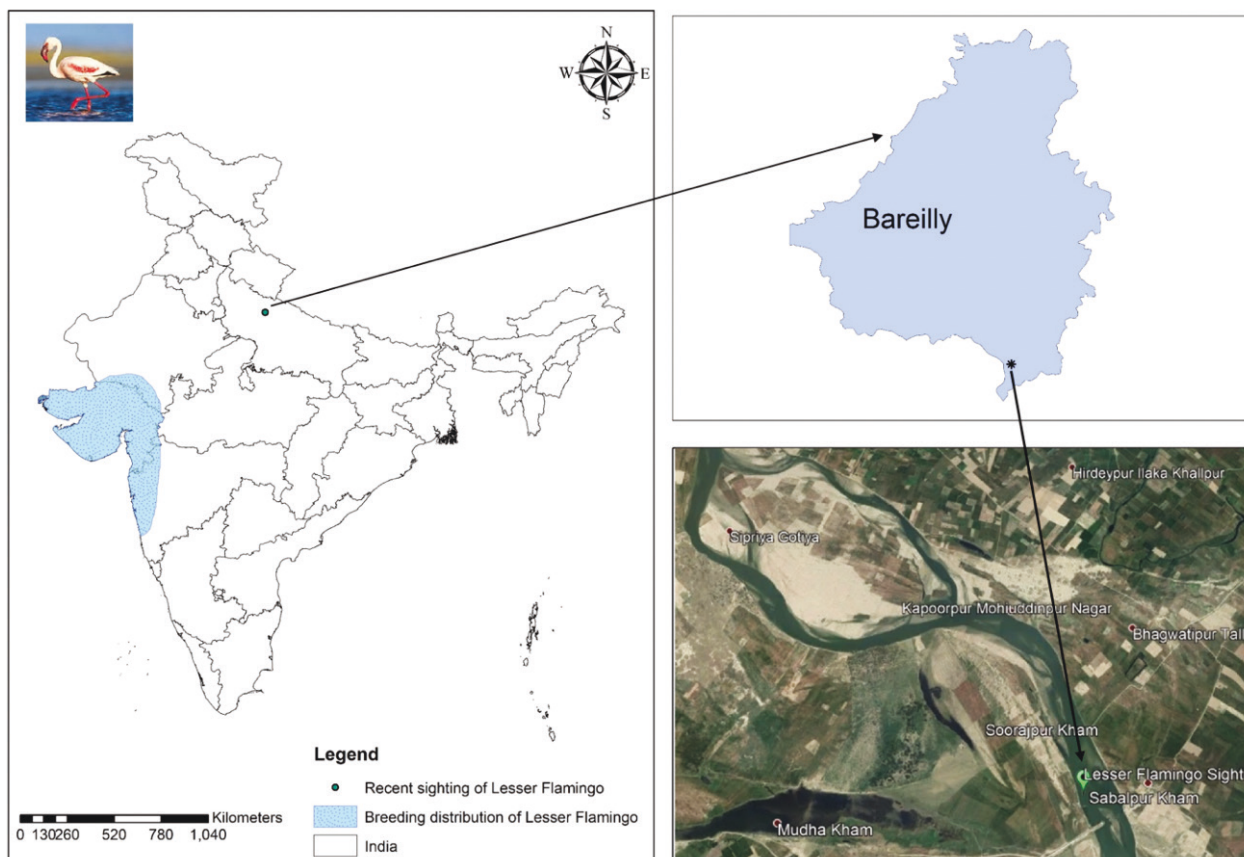


Figure 1. Breeding distribution of Lesser Flamingo and recent sighting in river Ramganga, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India

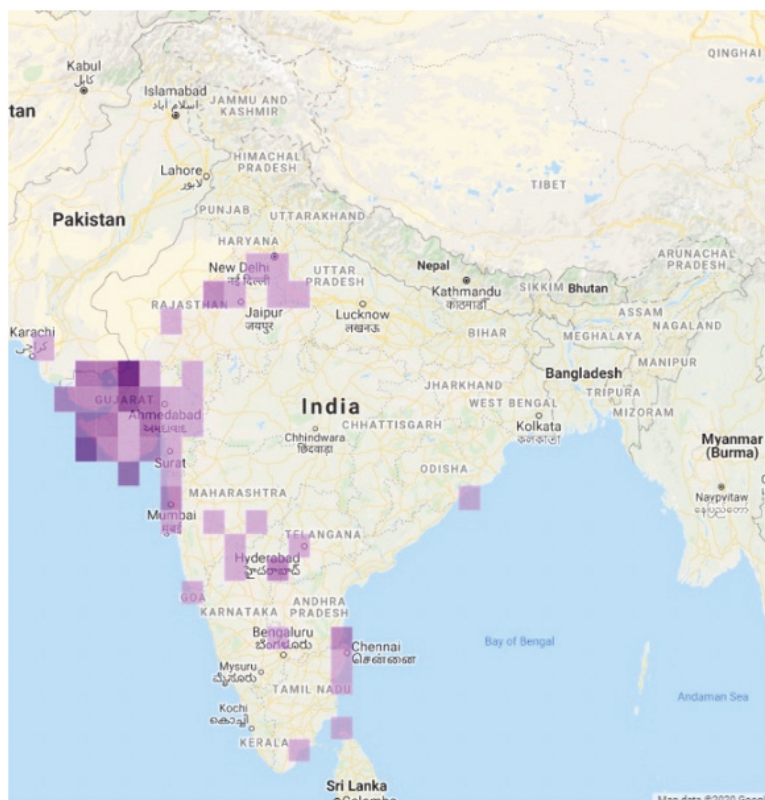


Figure 2. Sightings of Lesser Flamingo in India (ebird.com 2020).





Image 1–2. Lesser Flamingo feeding on shallow water in Ranganga River, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India. © P. Gangaiamaran



Image 3. Lesser Flamingo in flight recorded at Ranganga River, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India. © P. Gangaiamaran

feeding on shallow water on 24 February 2020 in river Ramganga near Kadarganj (28.1484°N, 79.466°E), Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh (Image 1–3) during the biodiversity survey of river Ramganaga. This survey was a part of biodiversity rejuvenation in River Ganges under the auspices of the National Mission for Clean Ganga. This record is one of the northernmost distribution known for the Lesser Flamingos in India.

The Lesser Flamingo is an itinerant species adapted to respond to changes in local environmental conditions by moving across a network of suitable wetland sites (Childress et al. 2007). Despite being numerous, the major threats the Lesser Flamingos face include predation pressure from medium-sized carnivores like Jackals & Hyenas and some birds, especially storks and eagles, which prey upon their young and eggs. Furthermore, the anthropogenic activities and infrastructure development in and around their distribution & nesting sites, flooding in their natural habitat, drought, and toxic load on the wetlands make them vulnerable to local extinction from the distribution ranges.

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