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Cover: Golden-headed Lion Tamarin *Leontopithecus chrysomelas*. Watercolor and acrylics by P. Kritika.

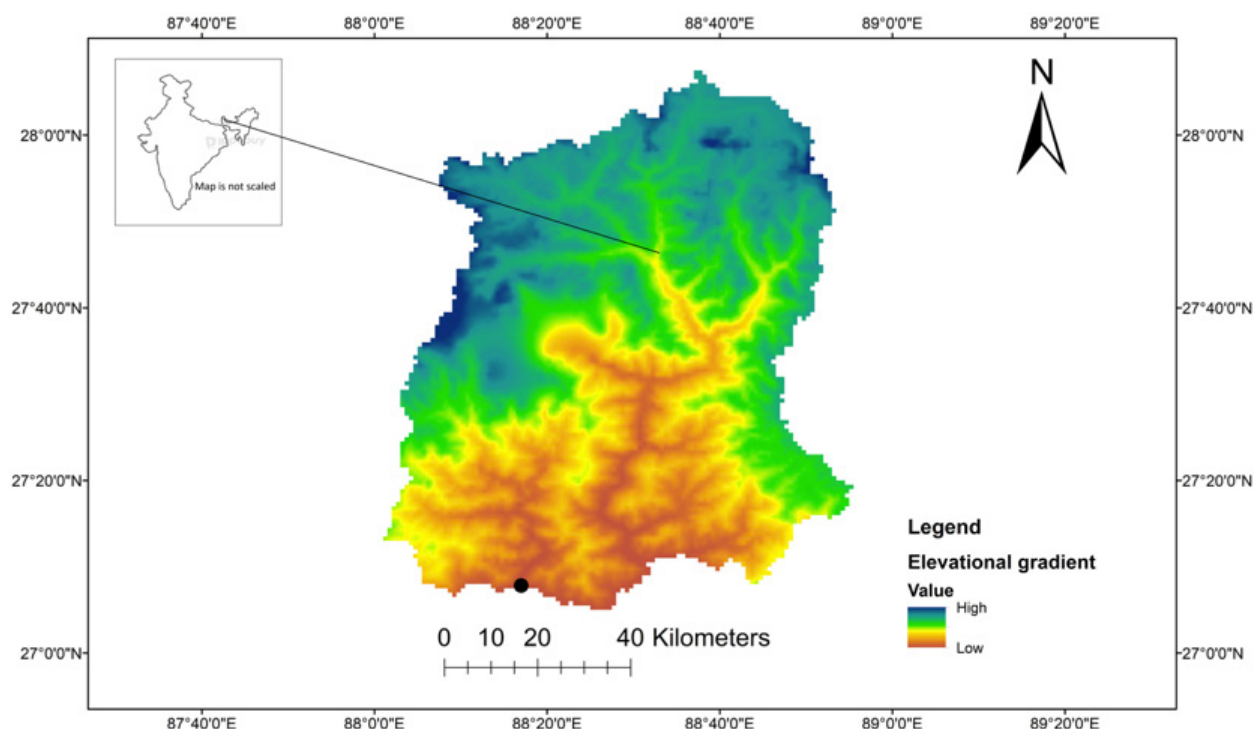


Figure 1. Photographic record of Red-naped Ibis *Pseudibis papillosa* in Jorethang, South Sikkim (black dot).

poles and Vaishnav et al. (2022) recorded them on mobile towers in Rajasthan.

Feeding

Probing behaviour is the principal feeding mode for this species, frequenting feeds which are often found in municipal garbage dumps and wastewater bodies. The species shows a significant non-nocturnal foraging rhythm and occupies the terrestrial habitats during morning and evening and aquatic habitats during noon; it usually consumes frogs, snakes, insects, fish, earthworms, and carcasses; it is also known to eat grains and seeds in dry agricultural fields (Katuwal & Quan 2022). Sinha (2022) observed the species feeding on the nectar of the Silk Cotton Tree *Bombax ceiba*, which has a single occurrence of ibis feeding on non-carnivore items.

Methods and Observations

The Red-naped Ibis was observed opportunistically at Jorethang Town, South Sikkim, during a field study at the river Rangeet. The species identification was done with the help of a field guide (Grimmett et al. 2019). The dark brown plumage, greenish wing sheen, long-curved beak, and reddish legs of the medium-sized Red-naped Ibis make it easy to identify. Adolescents lack the red patch on the head that distinguishes the adult bird (Soni & Rana 2023). This species shares a similar

appearance with the Glossy Ibis; however, the Glossy Ibis lacks the red patch and the white shoulder patch. A Nikon DSLR camera (Nikkor Z 28–400mm), Zeiss Terra ED (10 x 42) binoculars, and a Garmin GPS were used to photograph, observe, and record locations, respectively. We generated a digital elevation model (DEM) map of the study area. We observed two adult Red-naped Ibis (male and female) in Jorethang, South Sikkim (27.130° N & 88.283° E, at 332 m; Figure 1). The two birds were perched on the top branches of a Peepal tree *Ficus religiosa*, making loud, squealing calls and sharing their habitat with House Crow *Corvus splendens* and Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* (Table 1).

The dominant vegetation of the area consisted of *Albizia lebbeck*, *Ficus religiosa*, *Mangifera indica*, *Areca catechu*, *Persea americana*, *Ficus altissima*, *Carica papaya*, and *Cocos nucifera* (Table 2).

On 27 July 2024, at 0640 h, the Red-naped Ibis was sighted by Laxmi Rai at Jorethang. Based on the data collected from the locals & fishermen, our observations indicate that these birds are most active in the early morning, making loud calls before flying across the river Rangeet to forage. The birds were seen rarely foraging in the wetlands.

Table 1. Associate bird species found around the study site.

	Common name	Scientific name	Family
1	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Passeridae
2	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	Sturnidae
3	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Motacillidae
4	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Ardeidae
5	Nepal House Martin	<i>Delichon nipalense</i>	Hirundinidae
6	Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	Columbidae
7	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	Corvidae
8	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Scolopacidae
9	Crested Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle lugubris</i>	Alcedinidae

Image 1. Photographic record of Red-naped Ibis *Pseudibis papillosa* in Jorethang, South Sikkim. © Laxmi Rai.

DISCUSSION

Sikkim is a small landscape state with many climatic zones that provide a large gene pool of faunal and floral components. According to a checklist published by Acharya & Vijayan (2011), Sikkim is home to 574 different species of birds. In Sikkim, no photographic documentation of Red-naped Ibis existed; also, the checklist provided by ebird shows a total of 537 bird species, yet no record of Red-naped Ibis sightings (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2024). Thus, our findings on Red-naped Ibis can be useful for the Sikkim Himalayan bird database. The major threats to this species include habitat loss, fragmentation, predators, and pesticides (Anjali & Rana 2022). They are susceptible to anthropogenic pressure and natural disasters, and their population is declining (GreenVerz 2022).

Table 2. Vegetation found around the study site.

	Common tree name	Scientific name	Family
1	Peepal	<i>Ficus religiosa</i>	Moraceae
2	Siris	<i>Albizia lebeck</i>	Fabaceae
3	Papaya	<i>Carica papaya</i>	Caricaceae
4	Coconut	<i>Cocos nucifera</i>	Arecaceae
5	Mango	<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Anacardiaceae
6	Banyan	<i>Ficus benghalensis</i>	Moraceae
7	Betelnut	<i>Areca catechu</i>	Arecaceae

Image 2. A male and a female Red-naped Ibis *Pseudibis papillosa* in Jorethang, South Sikkim. © Laxmi Rai.

CONCLUSION

Climate change is more prominent in the Himalayas, which is further boosted by anthropogenic pressure like habitat fragmentation due to modernisation. These may have been the driving forces for the range extension of the Red-naped Ibis in the Sikkim Himalaya. This occurrence might be crucial for studying more about biodiversity and its conservation strategies in response to climate change in the Sikkim Himalaya. Therefore, it is essential to consistently monitor this species and its habitat for effective conservation and future prospects.

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