



Record of *Nettapus coromandelianus*, Gmelin, JF, 1789 (Cotton teal) at Seasonal Wetlands near New Viva Collage, Virar, Palghar district of Maharashtra state, India

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Available online at: www.isca.in, www.isca.me

Received 20th March 2016, revised 7th April 2016, accepted 9th April 2016

Abstract

Avifauna of India is very diverse having many resident as well as migratory birds. Wetland attracts variety of birds by providing ample of food and nesting sites. *Nettapus coromandelianus*, Gmelin, JF (Cotton teal) is one of the aquatic birds which prefer freshwater lagoons, swamps and dams. *Nettapus coromandelianus* is a non-migratory bird which has been recorded from different parts of Indian Subcontinent. As per IUCN Red Data Book List this species is considered as Least Concerned. Shrinking habitat due to anthropogenic activities will definitely impact on the population of this species with other aquatic birds. *Nettapus coromandelianus* recorded at Seasonal Wetlands near New Viva Collage, Virar, Palghar district of Maharashtra state.

Keywords: *Nettapus coromandelianus*, Cotton Teal, Palghar.

Introduction

Nettapus coromandelianus, Gmelin, JF (Cotton teal or Cotton pygmy-goose) is known as a smallest wild Duck found in India. They have small, dark, goose-like bill, large population size but very least concern. They make crackling sound while flight. Males have white head with a glossy green neck and under parts. Black band around the neck is prominent during breeding season. Females mostly brown and wings are dark in color. Both males and females have dark plumage on forehead and crown (Figure-1,4,5). The *Nettapus coromandelianus* almost aquatic species they prefer deep freshwater lagoons

swamps and dams, especially those with floating vegetation. This species makes nest in dead hollow trees present near the water bodies.

The *Nettapus coromandelianus* prefers to feed on aquatic vegetation individuals flattens their head and necks dabbling on the water surface or they eat the seeds and flowers from the aquatic plants. They also feed on aquatic insects. Hence they are omnivores¹. The species probably is monogamous and lays 6-16 eggs in a clutch². Nest of the *Nettapus coromandelianus* is built in hollow trees near water bodies and the nest may be covered by rubbishes and grasses.



Figure-1

Nettapus coromandelianus (Cotton teal or Cotton pygmy-goose), at Wetlands near New Viva Collage, Virar, Palghar district of Maharashtra Left: Female, Right: Male

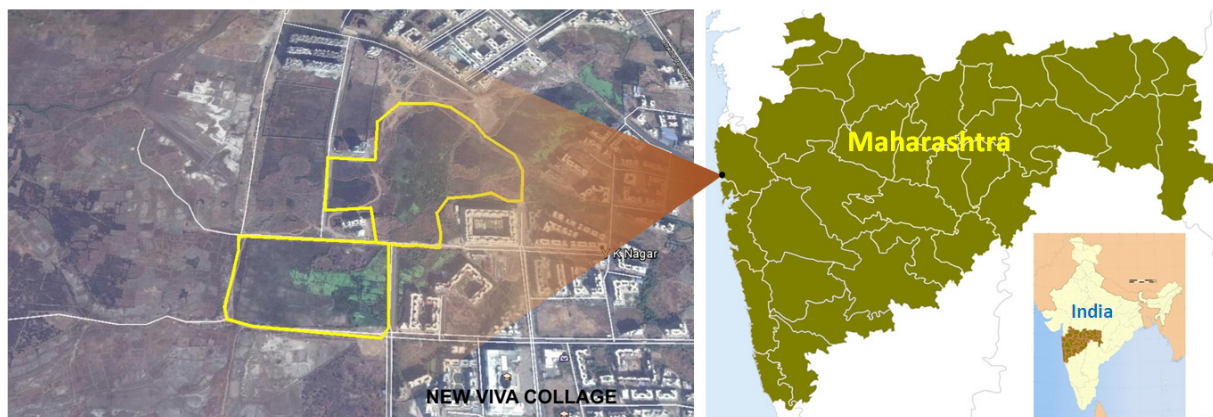


Figure-2
Location of occurrence of *Nettapus coromandelianus*

Results and Discussion

Nettapus coromandelianus were recorded during survey of avifauna in the temporary wetlands near new Viva College, Virar (West) (N 20°27'38.84', E 72°47'28.40') during the month of August to October in late monsoons. These areas are open lands extending till the coastal area. The area temporarily converts into wetlands during monsoon and post monsoon. Large number of aquatic birds visits this area during above said period. Aquatic vegetation grown during late monsoon creates a

food reach habitat which attracts different species of birds. Thus create a complex food web. The favorable conditions allow local people to utilize it for rice cultivation. This area provides an idea feeding ground for *Nettapus coromandelianus*. To fulfill the need of increasing human population in suburban Mumbai this area is under pressure of developmental and anthropogenic activities. Hunting of the aquatic birds is also observed in this area. Similar activity of hunting is been recorded by Johnson Varkeyet.al³ at saltpans in suburban Mumbai.



Figure-3
Habitat of temporary wetlands near Viva College Virar

The *Nettapus coromandelianus* is a non-migratory dabbling duck endemic to South-east Asia. Compared with the other dabbling ducks, the species has fairly high power of flight and other terrestrial adaptations². Though this species has a widespread distribution in India it is uncommon in northern Kokan region and is the first record from Palghar district of Maharashtra state. Nature and Environment Society of Thane recently published a book 'Birds of Palghar' has mentioned total 198 species of birds from Palghar district⁴ excluding *Nettapus coromandelians*. Many researchers documented occurrence of *Nettapus coromandelianus* in different parts of India viz. S.U. padhyaya and P.K. Saikia maintained about clutch size and egg characteristic of *Nettapus coromandelianus* from Assam region². Balkhande et al. recorded cotton teal was Winter Migratory Uncommon bird at Nizamabad, Telangana. Upadhyaya S. and Saikia P. K. Noted population size of cotton teal in Assam². Jalander V. et al mentioned that the cotton teal is uncommon migratory bird at Nizamabad District of Telangana⁵. Occasional sighting of *Nettapus coromandelianus* was reported by Anurag Vishwakarma at Kawardha, Kabirdham District in Chhattisgarh⁶. Number of documents provides the occurrence of cotton teal in Maharashtra viz. N V Henry and K B Bhute reported Cotton teal is Resident bird in Chalbadrilake⁷ and Ghotnimbala⁸ lake near Bhadrawati of Chandrapur District respectively in 2014. Ratuja Kukade recorded Cotton teal at Chattrilake, Amravati, Maharashtra and mentioned that cotton teal is resident bird and it is Omnivores¹. Shital V Kharwade reported Cotton teal was abundant at Wai dam of the Yawatmal district⁹. S.V. Kachare et al recorded cotton teal is migratory bird at wetland area of Kolhapur City¹⁰. Kamini Thakur reported this bird species is breeding resident at Uran near Navi Mumbai¹¹.

Conclusion

Temporary wetlands near new Viva College, Virar provides favorable habitat for *Nettapus coromandelianus*. This species is sighted in the study area only during the months of August to October. Aquatic vegetation grown during late monsoon creates a food rich habitat which attracts different species of birds. The area is also used by local people to utilize it as rice cultivation. Increasing Human encroachment and anthropogenic activities are the major concern to the habitat and *Nettapus coromandelianus*. Hunting is also a threat to the *Nettapus coromandelianus* and other aquatic birds in this area.

Acknowledgement

Authors are thankful to Mr. Prakash Khedekar, Mr. Omkar Patil and Mr. Rohit Singh for participating in the survey. We specially show our gratitude towards Mrs. Anushri Kini (HOD, department of Zoology, Viva College) for her precious support.

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