

Short Communication

First Occurrence Report of House Swift (Nepal House Swift, *Apus nipalensis*, Hodgson 1837) from Odisha, India

Bibhu Prasad Panda^{1,2,*}, Arjun M.S¹, Abanti Pradhan²

¹Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, South India Centre of WII, Coimbatore- 641108, Tamil Nadu, India

²Environmental Sciences, Department of Chemistry, ITER, Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (Deemed to be University), Bhubaneswar - 751030, Odisha, India

(Received: November 30, 2022; Revised: January 06, 2023; Accepted: January 07, 2023)

ABSTRACT

This is the first occurrence report of House Swift (Nepal House Swift, *Apus nipalensis*, Hodgson 1837) from Odisha, India. During a field visit to Kuakhai River in Bhubaneswar, a few individuals of this species were observed and photographed. This note provides the details of the site and observation of this species. This note represented the new record which was taken nearly 500 km towards the southwest from its nearby record of the distribution range. It can be considered a vagrant, but further study can depict the possibility of its range extension towards the south of India.

Keywords: *Apus nipalensis*, First record, House Swift, Kuakhai, India, Odisha

INTRODUCTION

The House Swift (Nepal House Swift, *Apus nipalensis*, Hodgson 1837) belongs to the Apodidae family of swifts. In size and weight, the house swift measures about 14 to 15 cm in length and weighs about 20 to 25 grams. There is a strong resemblance between the sexes. There is very little difference in size and structure between Little Swift (*Apus affinis*) and House Swift or Nepal House Swift species, except for its tail which is slightly longer and sharply forked in House Swift. The tail is blacker, notably on the head-coverts and the white rump band is narrower than in Little Swift (Grimmett *et al.*, 2011). In juveniles, flight feather fringes may appear paler than in adults. This species forages over a wide range of habitats, including montane and forested land (Chantler & Boesman, 2020). Insects and aerial plankton are their main food sources, as they are highly adapted to living in the air and can use uplifting currents and wind to disperse or migrate (Gatehouse, 1997; Cusimano *et al.*, 2016; Chung *et al.*, 2021). Currently, House swift is classified into two species. These are House swift (Nepal House Swift, *Apus nipalensis*; Himalayas) and Little Swift (Indian House Swift, *Apus affinis*; India South of the Himalayas). Their ranges can also overlap in some regions (Bird count, 2014). The species are widespread throughout Southeast Asia (BirdLife International, 2016). Its distribution in India ranges from the Himalayas to the north-eastern states and some parts of West Bengal. *Apus nipalensis* has not been recorded from Odisha before. The present record reports the occurrence and photographic records of this species for the first time.

OBSERVATION AND NOTES

An avian survey was carried out on the banks of river Kuakhai near Bhubaneswar city on 29th November

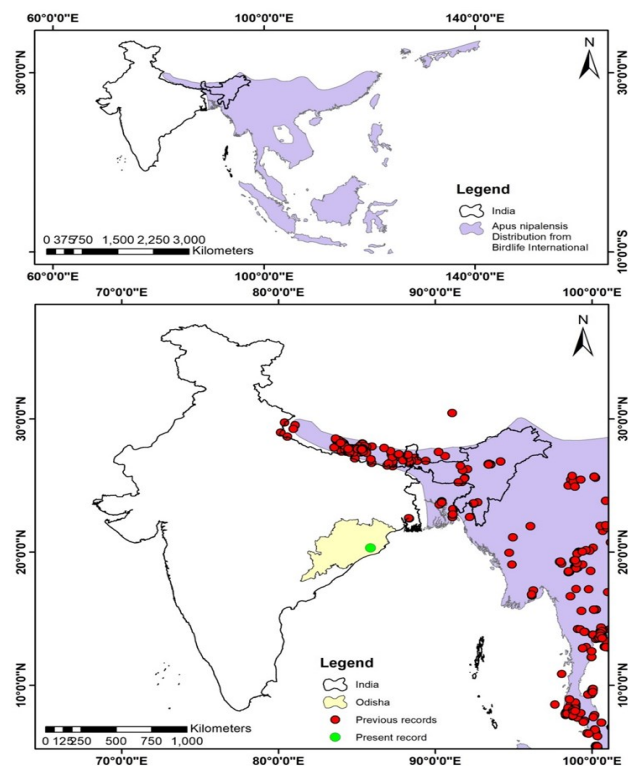


Figure 1. Distribution of House Swift *Apus nipalensis* (BirdLife International and Handbook of the Birds of the World, 2021) and previous records as red dots (eBird, 2022) with the present record as a green dot from Odisha.

*Corresponding Author's E-mail: bibhuprasadpanda14@gmail.com



Figure 2. House Swift *Apus nipalensis* at Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India. (Photograph by Dr. Bibhu Prasad Panda)

2020. During the survey few individuals of swifts were recorded flying over the river (20.326692°N & 85.861227°E) (Figure 1). On the field it was identified as Little Swift (Indian House Swift, *Apus affinis*). Confusion was raised regarding the species identification while rechecking the photographs after a few months. For further clarification and identification, photographs were sent to Dr. Rajah Jaypal and Mr. Praveen Jayadevan, prominent bird researchers in India. As a result, it was confirmed as House Swift (Nepal House Swift) (Figure 2). According to distribution in eBird (eBird, 2022), it was recorded in the Himalayas, northeastern parts of India and very few records from West Bengal. There are few instances of records from West Bengal where it was shown as either Little Swift or House Swift. There is only one confirmed record of this species from southern West Bengal and no records from Odisha (eBird, 2022).

In terms of range size, this species is not considered vulnerable because its range is extremely large (BirdLife International, 2022). Despite its abundance in the Himalayan ranges, this species is rare in the eastern parts of India (eBird, 2022). The present location was nearly 500 km southwest of the closest record of this species in eastern India. More detailed monitoring focusing swifts will be required to determine if it is a vagrant or extended its range towards this region based on current climatic conditions. This region was studied before but there is no record of this species in previous studies (Panda *et al.*, 2020; 2021). All the published checklists of Odisha were explored to conclude this report as the first report of House Swift (*Apus nipalensis*) from Odisha and the recorded location also resides in the peripheral region of Eastern Ghats. Further monitoring of this species can provide a detailed assessment of its status in India.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are very much thankful to Dr. Rajah Jaypal and Mr. Praveen Jayadevan for confirming the ID of the species. The authors are also thankful to the reviewers for their valuable input in this manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of Interest.

REFERENCES

- BirdLife International 2016. *Apus nipalensis*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2016. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2016-3.RLTS.T22686861A93129265.en>. Downloaded on 7th August 2022.
- BirdLife International 2022. Species factsheet: *Apus nipalensis*. <http://www.birdlife.org>. Downloaded on 6th August 2022.
- BirdLife International, Handbook of the Birds of the World 2021. Bird species distribution maps of the world. Version 2021.1. <http://datazone.birdlife.org/species/requestdis>. Downloaded on 6th August 2022.
- Chantler, P. and Boesman, P. F. D. 2020. House Swift (*Apus nipalensis*), version 1.0. In Birds of the World (J. del Hoyo, A. Elliott, J. Sargatal, D. A. Christie, and E. de Juana, Editors). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.houswi1.01>. Downloaded on 6th August 2022.
- Chung, C.T., Wong, H.S., Kwok, M.L., Meng, Q., Chan, K.M. 2021. Dietary analysis of the House Swift (*Apus nipalensis*) in Hong Kong using prey DNA in faecal samples. *Avian Res* 12, 5. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40657-021-00242-z>
- Cusimano, C. A., Massa, B. and Morganti, M. 2016. Importance of meteorological variables for aeroplankton dispersal in an urban environment. *Italian Journal of Zoology*, 83(2), 263-269. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11250003.2016.1171915>
- eBird 2022. *Apus nipalensis*: Available from <https://ebird.org/india/species/houswi1>. Downloaded on 7th August 2022.
- eBird 2022. eBird: An online database of bird distribution and abundance. eBird, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York. <http://www.ebird.org>. Downloaded on 7th August 2022.
- Gatehouse, A. G. 1997. Behavior and ecological genetics of wind-borne migration by insects. *Annual Review of Entomology*, 42(1): 475-502. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.ento.42.1.475>
- Grimett, R., Inskipp, C. and Inskipp, T. 2011. Birds of the Indian subcontinent, 2nd edition. India: Oxford University Press.
- Panda, B.P., Mahapatra, B., Sahoo, A.A., Ray, S.S. 2020. Habitat Use of Urban and Periurban Birds in a densely populated City of Eastern India. *Asian Journal of Conservation Biology* 9(2), 290–297.
- Panda B.P., Prusty B.A.K., Panda B., Pradhan A., Parida S.P. 2021. Habitat heterogeneity influences avian feeding guild composition in urban landscapes: Evidences from Bhubaneswar, India. *Ecological Processes*. 10(1): 31. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13717-021-00304-6>

