

meeting with him that year, during the Jaipur Literature Festival, he informed me about this and later sent me the photograph. The bird in his photograph [179] was easily identified as a Pallid Scops Owl.

We are not aware of any previous records of the species from Rajasthan although in the surrounding states there have been a spate of sightings. It has been regularly recorded from Gujarat (Sangha & Malik 2010), and a specimen was collected from Ambala, Haryana (Roberts 1991). Recently one bird was flushed on 23 January 2013 from reed beds on an islet in the lake at Harike Bird Sanctuary, Punjab. (Narbir Singh Kahlon *in litt.*, vide email of 30 January 2013). Mohd Shahnawaz Khan (WWF-India team leader based at Harike) saw and photographed the species at Kirria check post (31°10'N, 74°58'E) of Harike Bird Sanctuary, Punjab, on 28 December 2012. The owl was seen sitting in a 'cliff-side hole of an elevated alluvial deposition,' on the bank of the Beas River (Shahnawaz *in litt.*, email of 7 March 2013).

Thus recent sightings of the Pallid Scops Owl in Rajasthan are not unexpected. Tal Chhappar and Mehrangarh birds constitute the first records of the species from Rajasthan. It is very likely that the species has been overlooked in the past.

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## Occurrence of Black-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata* in Satpura National Park, Madhya Pradesh

Anant Pande, Gaurang Patwardhan & Amol Kumbhar

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**B**lack-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata* is mainly a coastal kingfisher found in India along the coasts of Maharashtra in the west and up to the coasts of West Bengal in the east. It has been described to often move up-river, above tidal limits, and sometimes farther inland along larger rivers in forested habitats (Grimmett *et al.* 1998; Ali 2002; Rasmussen *et al.* 2005).

We present here the second sight record of the species from Satpura National Park. On a usual camera checking trip in the morning of 16 January 2011, we saw a Black-capped Kingfisher perched on a dry 'ghirria' tree *Chloroxylon swietenia* in Topideo beat of Kamti range (22°31'N, 78°17'E). The individual was quickly identified by the presence of a black cap on its head, distinctly separated from its body by a white collar on hind neck. Its beak was bright red, and the under parts rufous. However we could not take a picture as it flew away before the camera was ready. It showed the diagnostic white patch on the wings

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during flight. The aerial distance of the location was about 1.33 km from the nearest river, Nagdwari, one of the major perennial streams in the park. Earlier, Whattle (2000) sighted the bird in the park near Sonbhadra River in late October 1999. The bird was not seen again for the next one and half month we were inside the park.

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