

# Recent wintering records of Sociable Lapwings (Plovers) in north-west India

Raju Kasambe, Project Manager, IBA-IBCN

The Sociable Lapwing or Sociable Plover (*Vanellus gregarius*), is a critically endangered species. A possible total population size of 5,600 breeding pairs, i.e. 11,200 mature individuals was estimated but work is continuing in order to refine this estimate. This total is consistent with record counts of 3,200 individuals in Turkey in October 2007 (<http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/speciesfactsheet.php?id=3172> as accessed on 22nd December, 2010). Recent sighting records of the species from 1995 to 2010 in north-west India from internet and published literature were collated. They are presented in the following tables.

BirdLife is conducting a radio-tagging study of the Sociable Lapwings to understand the migration route of the birds from their breeding grounds in Eastern Kazakhstan to its wintering grounds. The tagged bird named 'Dinara' was traced close to the city of



A flock of Sociable Lapwings sighted near Ahmedabad

Ahmedabad in Gujarat. The location of the tagged bird and the one where Mr. Kandarp Kathju (see Table-4) saw the flock of 90 birds looks the same. (<http://www.birdlife.org/sociable-lapwing/2011/01/dinara-celebrates-new-year-in-india/> as accessed on 5th January 2011).

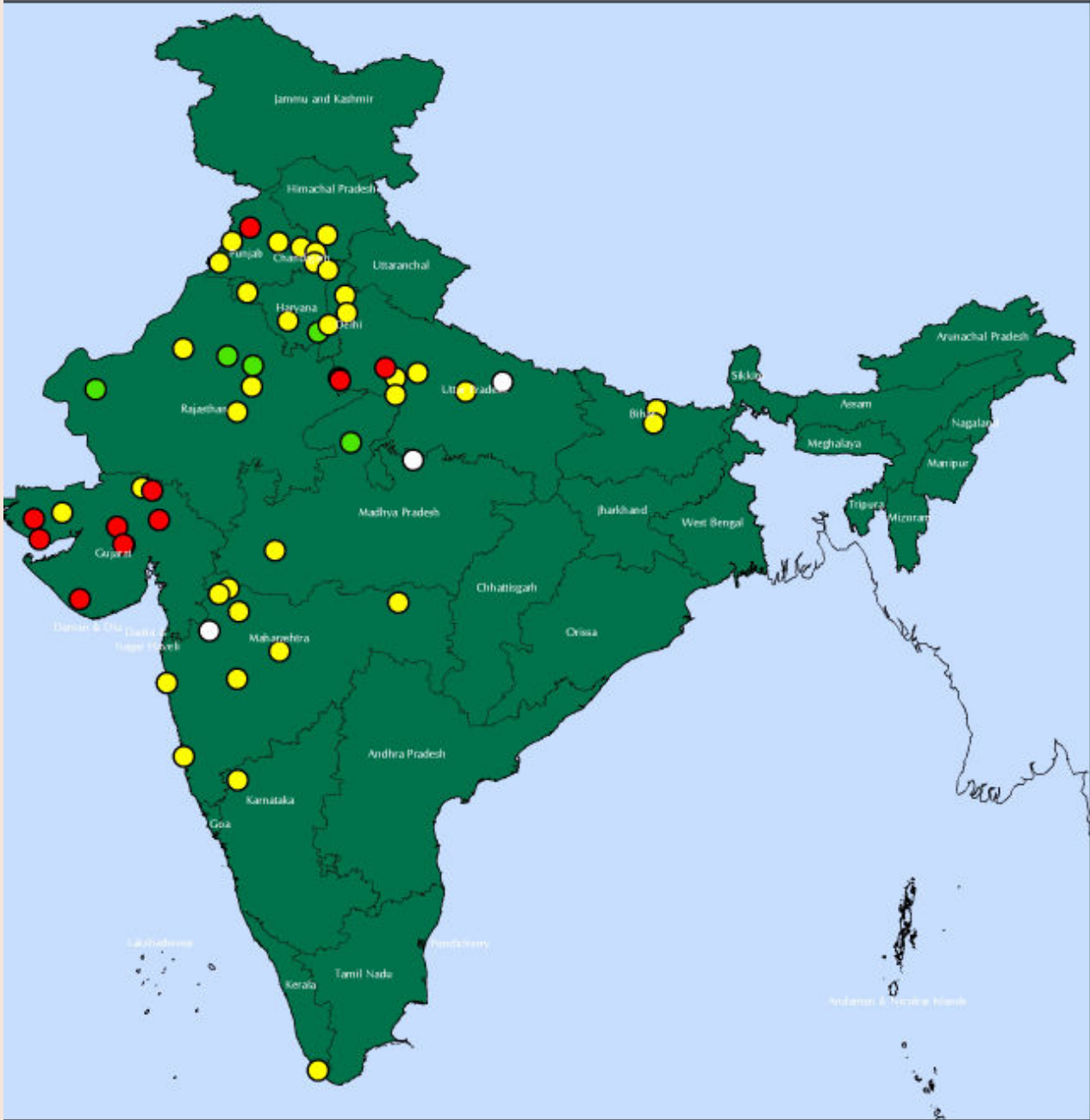
From these recent sighting records (see tables) it becomes clear that the frequent wintering sites of Sociable Lapwings are Dasada near Bajana in the Little Rann of Kutch and Chhari Dhand area in the Great Rann of Kutch in

Gujarat and Tal Chhappar Wildlife Sanctuary, District Churu in Rajasthan. The fourth location is near Sanaand town in Ahmedabad district of Gujarat. The total maximum known population of Sociable Lapwings wintering in north-west India from these four sites could be put approximately at 200-210 birds. It seems that more birds could be wintering in the areas falling in the middle of sighting range shown in the map (see map). Extensive efforts by birders will give us more data about new

**Table-1:** Sighting records from Dasada and Wild Ass Sanctuary, Little Rann of Kutch, Gujarat

Date of sighting	Name of Peer Birder	Reference	No. of Birds
19-11-2006	Mr. Roger and Denise Lawrence	delhibirdpix@googlegroups.com	14
24-11-2006	Mr. Mujahid Malik	bicosoguj@yahoogroups.co.in	27
November-2007	Mr. Yogendra Shah	bicosoguj@yahoogroups.co.in	42-45
November-2007	Mr. Arpit Deomurari	<a href="http://www.birdlife.org">http://www.birdlife.org</a>	45
04-12-2010	Mr. Kandarp Kathju	Kathju, 2010	24
05-12-2010	Mr. Satyendra Sharma	india-nature-pixs@yahoogroups.com	1
11-12-2010	Mr. Aditya Roy	<a href="http://www.amazing-journey.org/?utm_source=digitalspring">http://www.amazing-journey.org/?utm_source=digitalspring</a>	4
12-12-2010	Mr. Niraj V. Mistry	india-nature-pixs@yahoogroups.com	2
09-12-2010	Mr. Ramki Srinivasan	orientalbirdingpix@googlegroups.com	N.A.
<b>Maximum count</b>			<b>45</b>

### Distribution of Sociable Lapwing in India



**CATEGORIES**

- Historical (pre 1950)
- Most recent (2006-2008)
- Recent (1980-2004)
- Undated Historical



## RESEARCH AND MONITORING

**Table-2:** Sighting records from Banni Grasslands, Chhari Dhhand, Great Rann of Kuchchh, Gujarat

Date of sighting	Name of Peer Birder	Reference	No. of Birds
Winter-98	N.A.	Islam and Rahmani, 2004	39
17-11-2008	Mr. Jugal Tiwari	orientalbirdingpix@googlegroups.com	30
November-2008	Mr. Clement Frances	india-nature-pixs@yahoogroups.com	25
16-12-2009	Mr. Jugal Tiwari	orientalbirdingpix@googlegroups.com	57
24-01-2010	Dr. Tarique Sani	http://tariquesani.net	53
24 to 31-01-2010	Mr. Sunjoy Monga	birdsofbombay@yahoogroups.com	38
01-02-2010	Mr. Shantilal Varu	www.migrantwatch.in	N.A.
11-11-2010	Mr. Jugal Tiwari	orientalbirdingpix@googlegroups.com	20
December 2010	Mr. Davesh Gadhvi	Kathju, 2010	15-17
	<b>Maximum count</b>		<b>57</b>

**Table-3:** Sighting records from Tal Chhapar Wildlife Sanctuary, District Churu, Rajasthan

Date of sighting	Name of Peer Birder	Reference	No. of Birds
14-10-1995	Mr. H.S. Sangha	Sangha, 2000	5
28-01-1998	Mr. H.S. Sangha	Sangha, 2000	15
01-02-1998	Mr. H.S. Sangha	Sangha, 2000	11
24-10-2010	Mr. Surat Singh Poonia	http://www.amazing-journey.org/?utm_source=digitalspring	4
14-11-2010	Mr. Gaurav Bhatnagar	India-nature-pixs@yahoogroups.com	4
	<b>Maximum count</b>		<b>15</b>

**Table-4:** Sighting records from other places in Gujarat and Rajasthan

Date of sighting	Name of Peer Birder	Reference and location	No. of Birds
31-01-1998	Mr. H.S. Sangha	Sangha, 2000. At Revasa, Sikar, Rajasthan	1
29-12-1998	Mr. Justus Joshua	Joshua, 2001. At Lala Bustard Sanctuary, Kachchh district, Gujarat	2
18-01-1999	Mr. Ben King	Sangha, 2002. At Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.	2
5-12-2009	Dr. Maulik Varu	www.migrantwatch.in at Rangmati Dam near Jamnagar, Gujarat	N.A.
14-11-2010	Mr. Kandarp Kathju	Kathju, 2010. Near Bol village, Sanaand town, district Ahmedabad, Gujarat	90

sightings leading to better understanding of the wintering grounds of the critically endangered species.

#### Acknowledgements

Thanks to Mr. Suresh C. Sharma, Mr. Niraj V. Mistry and Mr. Satyendra Sharma for providing information regarding their sighting records. Thanks to Mr. Kandarp Kathju for providing the photographs and information of his sightings near Ahmedabad. Thanks to Mr. Noor I. Khan for help in preparing the sighting map of the species.

#### References

- Islam, M.Z. and Rahmani, A.R. (2004): Important Bird Areas in India: Priority sites for conservation. BNHS and BirdLife International, UK.
- Joshua, J. (2001): Sighting of Sociable Lapwing *Vanellus gregarius* in Kachchh district, Gujarat. *JBNHS* 98(1)p. 111-112.
- Kathju, K. (2010): AWC Newsletter No.18: 7.
- Sangha, H.S. (2000): Recent sightings of *Vanellus gregarius* (Pallas) at Tal Chhapar and Revasa, Rajasthan. *JBNHS* 97(2): 278-279
- Sangha, H.S. (2002): A supplementary note on the avifauna of the Thar Desert (Rajasthan). *JBNHS*; 99 (1): 120-125
- Tiwari, J.K. (2010): Gujarat: Birding destination *par excellence*. *Indian Birds*. Vol.6 (4 & 5). Pp. 88-90.

Contact:  
Email: kasambe.rajju@gmail.com