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## Birding surprise: New distributional record of Baikal teal in Rajdhani Jalashay, Patna, Bihar, India

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### Abstract

The Baikal teal (*Anas Formosa*) is a migratory duck that breeds in eastern Siberia and China and winters in South and Southeast Asia. The species has been recorded in India, but its distributional records are scarce. In this paper, we report a new distributional record of Baikal teal in Rajdhani Jalashay, Patna, and Bihar, India. The presence of only a single male for some days indicated that it might have deviated from its usual migration path.

**Keywords:** Baikal teal, Rajdhani Jalashay, Patna, Bihar, India.

### Introduction

The Baikal teal (*Anas Formosa*) is a small migratory duck that breeds in eastern Siberia and China and spends its winters in South and Southeast Asia. It is listed as a Least Concern (LC) species in the IUCN Red List (Bird Life International 2016). Islam and Rahmani (2004) have listed this bird as Vulnerable in South Asia. The species has been recorded in India, but its distributional records are scarce (Grimmett & Inskipp 2011). In this paper, we report a new distributional record of Baikal teal in Rajdhani Jalashay, Patna, Bihar, India.

Although an increase in population of Baikal teal has been reported in different parts of Asia during Asian Waterfowl Census from 1987 to 2007, no mention of its sightings in India have been made (Li *et al.* 2009). However, Baikal teal was reported from different parts of India (Smith 1909, MacDougall 1931, Mahaon 1940, Hopper 1958, Chatterjee 1966, 1990, Maharao of Kutch 1966, Deuti *et al.* 1998, Deuti 2000, Lalchandani 2013, Kaushik 2018, Lepage 2023, Sharma 2023). The sighting of this bird has also been recorded in Bihar (Monahan 1909, Dutton 1930, Murphy 1933, Inglis 1945, Reuben 1945).

Rajdhani Jalashay is located in the center of Patna city, Bihar, India (Fig 1). It is a waterbody managed by the Government of Bihar and was established in 2019. The area of Rajdhani Jalashay is 0.03 km<sup>2</sup> and the perimeter is 744 m. This waterbody has an elliptical geometry and is surrounded by a gravel pathway. It has well defined boundaries and is under tight security. We conducted survey for waterfowl in the Rajdhani Jalashay (25.602583°N and 85.118781°E) wetland area from November 2022 to January 2023. We used binoculars (Bushnell 10x60) a Camera (Cannon R10 and Nikon P900) to identify and count the waterfowl species. The average temperature was around 25-18 °C with the lowest dip in temperature recorded as 7°C. The observation period was between 7.30 A.M. to 10.00 A.M.

During our survey, we recorded a total of 18 species of waterfowl, including the Baikal teal. We observed a single male Baikal teal (Fig 2. a, b, c) in the Rajdhani Jalashay wetland on December 28, 2022 for the first time and it remained there till January 13, 2023. The bird was observed foraging on aquatic vegetation and swimming in the open water. Other species of waterfowl recorded were lesser whistling teal (*Dendrocygna javanica*), Garganey (*Spatula querquedula*), Northern pintail (*Anas acuta*), Gadwall (*Anas strepera*), Eurasian wigeon (*Anas penelope*), Northern shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), Green winged teal (*Anas crecca*), and Ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*), (Table 1).

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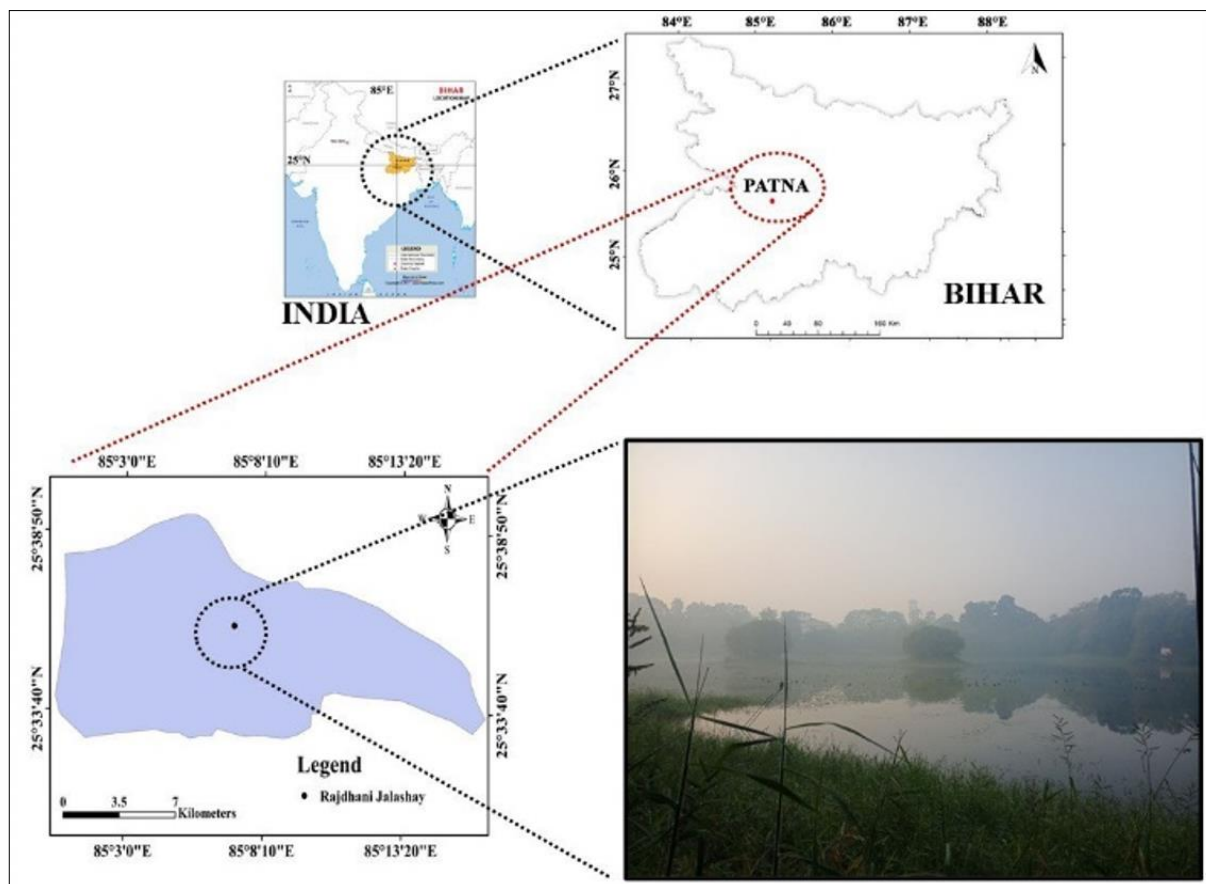


Fig 1: Showing study area

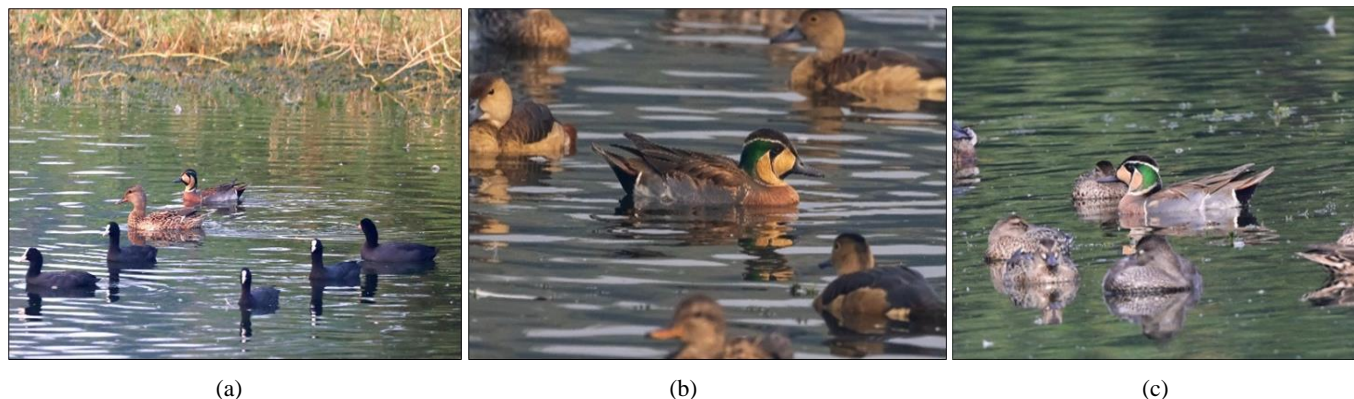
Table 1: Avifaunal species recorded at Rajdhani Jalashay during November 2022 to January 2023.

S. No.	Species	IUCN	Migratory Status
1	Baikal teal ( <i>Anas formosa</i> )	LC	V
2	Lesser whistling teal ( <i>Dendrocygna javanica</i> )	LC	R
3	Ferruginous duck ( <i>Aythya nyroca</i> )	NT	WM
4	Garganey ( <i>Anas querquedula</i> )	LC	WM
5	Northern Shoveler ( <i>Anas clypeata</i> )	LC	WM
6	Eurasian Wigeon ( <i>Anas penelope</i> )	LC	WM
7	Gadwall ( <i>Anas strepera</i> )	LC	WM
8	Cattle Egret ( <i>Bubulcus ibis</i> )	LC	R
9	Little Egret ( <i>Egretta garzetta</i> )	LC	R
10	Purple heron ( <i>Ardea purpurea</i> )	LC	R
11	Indian pond heron ( <i>Ardeola grayii</i> )	LC	R
12	Black-crowned night heron ( <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> )	LC	R
13	Red-wattled lapwing ( <i>Vanellus indicus</i> )	LC	R
14	Common sandpiper ( <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> )	LC	WM
15	Bronze-winged Jacana ( <i>Metopidius indicus</i> )	LC	R
16	Common moorhen ( <i>Gallinula chloropus</i> )	LC	R
17	White-breasted waterhen ( <i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i> )	LC	R
18	Eurasian coot ( <i>Fulica atra</i> )	LC	R
19	Little grebe ( <i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i> )	LC	R

NT=Near Threatened, R=Resident, WM= Winter Migratory, LC= Least Concern, V=Vagrant, IUCN=International Union for Conservation of Nature

Our study provides the first distributional record of Baikal teal in Rajdhani Jalashay, Patna, and Bihar, India. It might have deviated from its usual migration path either due to navigational error, weather conditions, or other factors.

Vagrancy of a Baikal Teal *Anas Formosa* has been reported earlier also (Harrop and McGowan 2009, Votier *et al.* 2009). The presence of this vulnerable species in Patna wetland highlights the importance of conserving wetlands in the region.



**Fig 2:** Baikal Teal at Rajdhani Jalashay, Patna, Bihar.

## Conclusion

The presence of a single male Baikal teal in Rajdhani Jalashay, Patna, Bihar, India, from December 28, 2022, to January 13, 2023, represents a noteworthy deviation from its typical migration path. This observation adds to the scarce distributional records of Baikal teal in India, emphasizing the importance of continuous monitoring and documentation of avian species in diverse habitats. Further research and collaborative efforts are warranted to better understand the factors influencing the migratory behavior of Baikal teal and its potential impact on its population dynamics.

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