

Spotted Crake sighted at Harike Wildlife Sanctuary, Punjab



Spotted Crake at Harike, Punjab. © Amit Sharma & © Paramnoor Singh Antaal.

On the 25 December 2025, during a visit to Harike Wildlife Sanctuary, near Makhu-Lohian Khas-Sultanpur Lodhi Road (31.1164° N, 75.0136° E, 210 m), in Ferozepur District, Punjab, India, the first and second authors observed a bird at approximately 0950 h, while walking along a reedbed. The bird emerged from nearby agricultural fields and moved towards the adjoining reeds without vocalising. It remained calm and stayed for a while on the trail before moving into the thick reeds. The bird was photographed and pictures were clear enough for its identification as a Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*. Diagnostic features included heavy white speckling overall, an orange base of the bill, brown eye, and grey in the supercilium and sides of the neck (Ali & Ripley 2001; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012).

The Spotted Crake is rare and elusive, but it is a widespread passage migrant and winter visitor

to southern Asia, mainly to the northwestern, and northcentral plains, ranging from Sindh to Assam, with scattered records from the Indian Peninsula, up to Belgaum, in northern Karnataka (Ali & Ripley 2001; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). In India, it is normally found in shallow freshwater wetlands, such as seepages, marshes, reservoirs, and canals, with areas of dense reeds and grasses (Ali & Ripley 2001; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). Like most other crakes, it is a skulker, and easily overlooked. It is crepuscular, and occurs singly, or in pairs (Kumar et al. 2005; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012).

This species was previously reported from Punjab by Mukherjee (1995). The location shown in the map, though not named, corresponds to Harike. Kazmierczak et al. (1998) and Öberg (1998), also indicated the species from Harike but without photographic evidence. Subsequent references to the species from Punjab

in websites, field guides, checklists, and other secondary sources appear to be based on these earlier reports, as no additional primary records from Harike or elsewhere in Punjab could be traced. Therefore, the present photographic documentation constitutes a significant record for the state.

References

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