

# Summer observations of Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus* and Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus* in Armenia

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## LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser erythropus*

The species was first found in Armenia in 1984 (Adamian & Klem 1999). Later, the species was recorded in the country in 1986, 1991, and 1995; all of the records have been made in late autumn (November), winter (December and January), or early spring (March) indicating migratory or wintering birds. In 2018, two birds together were observed at Gull island, lake Sevan, in early summer: 5th June (Vahram Petrosyan, Plate 1), 7th June (Anush Khachatryan) and 11th June by the author. Those dates are late for migratory birds, as usually they arrive at breeding grounds early May (Snow & Perrins 1998) to late June (Madsen 1996). The area where the two were observed is located at the core zone of lake Sevan national park (with a strict protection regime). The place is an island with a conglomeration of boulders, partly covered by sea-buckthorn *Hippophae rhamnoides* bushes. Potentially, the site could be used by the Lesser White-fronted Goose as a breeding habitat, since it resembles some other breeding sites of the species with rocks or prominent hummocks and nests hidden amongst vegetation (Madsen 1996). There were no other indications of breeding. Further monitoring of the two should be undertaken.



Plate I. Two Lesser White-fronted Geese *Anser erythropus* at Gull island, lake Sevan, Armenia. © Vahram Petrosyan

## **SPUR-WINGED PLOVER** *Vanellus spinosus*

The species was first recorded in Armenia in 1995 (Adamian & Klem 1999). After, there have been several records. Starting from 2016 the number of records of the species has increased. In 2016 two birds were observed at Armash wetlands, Armenia, 18th April (Adrian Jordi). In 2017 the species was observed twice in Armash wetlands, one bird 23rd April (Han Blankert) and two 30th April (Hasmik Ter-Voskanyan). In 2018 the number of Spur-winged Plover records in Armash wetlands increased significantly: one bird 25th February (Vahram Petrosyan), one bird 14th April (group from Armenian Birdwatching Association), one bird 6th May (author, Plate 2), two birds together on 7th May (Artem Muradkhanyan), one bird 22nd May (group of British birdwatchers), one bird on 2nd and 3rd June (author). The records appear to be quite late for migratory birds, thus in nearby countries the beginning of breeding occurs April–June (Kirwan *et al* 2008, Wiersma & Kirwan 2018). Otherwise no breeding indications have been observed. Their appearance in Armenia could be the result of various reasons *eg* the species is dispersing from places where it has recently increased. In Cyprus there were 10 pairs estimated in 2003 but 61–68 pairs in 2009 (Charalambidou *et al* 2012). Whatever the reasons are, the species can obviously occur in Armenia in late spring and early summer.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This investigation would not have been possible without the help of members of the Armenian Birdwatching Association: Anush Khachatryan, Artem Muradkhanyan, Hasmik Ter-Voskanyan, Vahram Petrosyan, and number of others; as well as birdwatchers from Europe: Adrian Jordi, Han Blankert, Richard Price and various others. Also, the great help of Armash fish-farm and Lake Sevan National Park should be mentioned.



**Plate 2.** Spur-winged Lapwing *Vanellus spinosus* in Armash wetlands, Armenia, 6 May 2018. © Karen Aghababyan

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