

Pallas's Gull

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Pallas's Gull Latest News

The first confirmed record of Pallas's Gull (*Ichthyaeetus ichthyaeetus*) from the Spiti Valley was recently documented at Chandratat Lake, a Ramsar wetland, during a field visit.

About Pallas's Gull

- Pallas's Gull, also called the **Great Black-headed Gull**, is a **large bird species** belonging to the family Laridae.
- It is the **world's largest black-headed gull** and the **third-largest species of gull** in the world.
- Scientific Name: *Ichthyaeetus ichthyaeetus*.

Pallas's Gull Habitat and Distribution

- It **breeds in colonies in marshes and islands** from **southern Russia to Mongolia**.
- It is **migratory, wintering in warmer places**. These include the **eastern Mediterranean Sea**, the **Arabian Peninsula**, and **India**.

- It prefers **wetlands, salt lakes, lagoons**, and slow-flowing rivers.
- **Sometimes**, a Pallas's gull might **fly far off its usual path**. When this happens, it is called a "**vagrant**."
- These gulls are sometimes seen as **vagrants in Western Europe**. They also visit parts of the **Indian Ocean and the coasts of Africa**.

Pallas's Gull Features

- It measures 55–72 cm in length with a 142 to 170 cm wingspan.
- Summer adults are unmistakable, since **no other gull of this size has a black hood**.
- The adults have **grey wings and backs**, with **conspicuous white "mirrors" at the wing tips**.
- The **legs are yellow**, and the **bill is orangey-yellow with a red tip**.
- In all other plumages, a dark mask through the eye indicates the vestiges of the hood.
- The call is a deep aargh cry.
- These birds are **predatory**, taking fish, crustaceans, insects, and even small mammals.
- **Typical Lifespan: 12 to 24 years** in the wild.

Pallas's Gull Conservation Status

It is classified as '**Least Concern**' under the IUCN Red List

Key Facts about Chandratat Lake

- Chandra Taal (meaning the **Lake of the Moon**), or Chandra Tal, is a high-altitude lake situated in the **Spiti Valley of Himachal Pradesh**.
- This **crescent-shaped** lake is situated at an altitude of about **4,300 metres** (14,100 ft) in the Himalayas.
- It has a circumference of about 2-3 kms and is **one of the sources of the Chandra River**.
- It is beautifully **surrounded by snow-capped mountains** on one side and **cirques** on the other.
- The lake is famous for its **crystal-clear turquoise waters**, which often **change shades** from blue to green depending on sunlight and weather conditions.
- It is also celebrated in Hinduism for its **mention in the epic Mahabharata**.
- It is a designated **Ramsar site**.

Source: IE

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/pallass-gull/>

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