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An observational note on Mongolian Short-toed Lark *Calandrella dukhensis* from a *char* in Lakeshwar, Kamrup (Rural), Assam

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During a birding session in Charne Hali, a non-cadastral area near Palasbari of Kamrup (Rural) district, I came across a small flock (17 individuals) of lark very close to the river. My initial impression was that these were Sand Larks which are often found all along the river stretches of the Brahmaputra. On closer observation, it was noticed that the bill structure and overall warmer tone to the plumage was different from that of Sand Lark. The birds were observed for a while and photographed to be confirmed as Mongolian Short-toed Lark.

Map showing the location of sighting





Image 1 -MSTL foraging in a grassland of newly emerging *Saccharum spontaneum*



Image 2- Another individual from the same flock

The Mongolian Short-toed Lark is a migratory species of lark which breeds in certain parts of Mongolia and during winters in South India. This species is often spotted as a passage migrant in the Tibetan Valley, where it was earlier assumed to be a resident (Alström *et al.*, 2013). This species was split from the Greater Short-toed Lark, which is a winter visitor to the Northwest India (Stervander *et al.*, 2016). Recent molecular studies confirmed that this species is much closely related to Hume's Lark, which is a wintering species in much of North India (Alström *et al.*, 2013).

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