

White-rumped Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda taczanowskii* One bird above the slopes of Thadsang Karu Lake.

Plain-backed Snowfinch *Pyrgilauda blanfordi* Occasional to quite common amongst the sandy slopes of Startsapuk-Tso (feeding into nest or fledged chicks).

Plain Mountain-Finch *Leucosticte nemoricola* Three birds after Rumbak gorge (3,900m) but common around / above Yurutse (to 4,500m); occasional in the Wanla area.

Brandt's Mountain-Finch *Leucosticte brandti* Common towards Kardung-La around South Pulu; common at Yoye-Tso, around Sumdo-Puga, Tsomoriri and Tso-Kar.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* Occasional in Shey-Tikse marshes, mainly along willow-scrub near moist areas (on inward migration); occasional around Zinchan but common around Wanla area, and a pair at Sumdo.

Red-mantled Rosefinch *Carpodacus rhodochlamys* One male and five females on barren sandy slope south of the Wanla area.

Streaked Rosefinch *Carpodacus rubicilloides* Common around Rumbak (4,000m) but less so around Yurutse (up to 4,500m); one male, three females at Chumatang; occasional around Puga-Sumdo. The species favours Caragana bushes.

Great Rosefinch *Carpodacus rubicilla* One territorial male towards Kardung-La at South Pulu; four pairs (4km before Likche, 3,650m) towards Chumatang. The species favours dryer boulder strewn slopes.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris* Encountered mainly above 4,000m. Occasional around Rumbak; common at Yoye-Tso, Puga-Sumdo, Tsomoriri (with fledged chicks), or Tso-Kar plains.

Fire-fronted Serin *Serinus pusillus* Common

at Shey-Tikse marshes – favours blooming willow trees and feeding on its seeds; occasional above Leh town; common in Rumbak Valley, feeding at blooming willow; occasional towards Yurutse (4,500m); common at Hemis Shukpachan (a pair observed: female alone is constructing nest while male followed her on material collection and perched in vicinity singing); common in Wanla area but occasional in Chumatang.

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia* Occasional in the Rumbak region, in Hemis Shukpachan and one record in the Wanla area.

Mammals

Nubra Pika *Ochotona nubrica* Common amongst caragana in Upper Sumdo.

Royle's Pika *Ochotona roylei* Few animals in Rumbak gorge; occasional to fairly common (probably this species) amongst caragana above Rumbak; one at Hemis Shukpachan.

Woolly Hare *Lepus oiostolus* One above Rumbak; one at Upper Sumdo and one dead animal south of Startsapuk-Tso.

Himalayan Marmot *Marmota himalayana* Occasional around South Pulu towards Kardung-La; three animals at Saspotse near Hemis Shukpachan; common at Yoye-Tso, Upper Sumdo, Tsomoriri and common at Tso-Kar.

Stoliczka's Mountain Vole *Alticola stoliczkanus* Common at Tsomoriri and the Tso-Kar plains.

Snow Leopard *Uncia uncia* Fresh tracks and two calls (5.vi) in Hussing Nullah Rumbak region.

Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes* One adult with three growing pups in grassland at Startsapuk-Tso.

Mountain Weasel *Mustela altaica* One below Rumbak gorge.

Tibetan Argali *Ovis ammon hodgsoni* A

group of seven above Yurutse; a group of six males on the southern ridge above Startsapuk-Tso; two females in slope at southern end of Startsapuk-Tso.

Ladakh Urial *Ovis vignei* Two females and one 'fresh' lamb in the plains after Lama Guru Sikh temple before Zanskar-Indus junction; two sub-adult males in Wanla area.

Bharal (Blue Sheep) *Pseudois nayaur* A group of 30 (mixed females with yearlings and younger males) just after Rumbak gorge; common above Yurutse; occasional above Rumbak; two females before Likche; a group of 14 juveniles and sub-adults on north-facing rock-wall between Upper Sumdo – Sumdo.

Kiang *Equus kiang* Common (120 animals) in the Tso-Kar plain.

Reptiles

Himalayan Agama *Laudakia himalayana* Occasional around Leh; common towards Hemis Shukpachan and in the Wanla area.

Theobald's Toad-headed Agama *Phrynocephalus theobaldi* Common on arid slopes towards Yoye-Tso (to 4,800m); above Thadsang Karu and around Tso-Kar basin.

Ladakhi Rock Skink *Asymblepharus ladacensis* Occasional amongst boulders or below low bushes in the Rumbak valley up to above Yurutse (4,500m).

One unidentified small Lizard (about 7cm long including tail, dark, blackish dark-grey over back with small pale spots) in rocks, scree at 4,300m in Hussing nullah.

Reference

Pfister, O. 1999. Owls in Ladakh. *O. B. C. Bull.* 29: 22-28.

Pune birds, with special reference to distribution updates

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From 1992-1996 I spent over a thousand hours birding in winter around Pune, mostly near the Mula-Mutha River to the west of Koregaon Park, Sinhadgad and Mahabaleshwar, with single visits to Valvan-Lonavla for three days and single day visits to Ujani (Bhigwan) and Veer. When the recent field guides (Grimmett et. al. 1998;

Kazmierczak 2000) were published I was very impressed by the distribution maps, but noticed a few discrepancies when I compared these with the observations of some Pune-based birdwatchers and my own notes. Many species that were mapped as rare or absent were so common that notes had not been kept, which made me want to

return and gather indisputable evidence in the form of detailed notes and if possible photographs. Most of these discrepancies are also supported by published material, which I collected when researching a paper on the birds of western Maharashtra (Prasad 2003). This winter I had the opportunity of returning for five days' birding (29.i.—

7.ii.2005) and I managed to verify many of my previous observations. I was also lucky to see three rarely observed species for this locality (Prasad 2005).

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* is a fairly common winter visitor around Pune and in many areas I visited this winter it was the only pipit species observed. This was presumably due to the locations which I chose to cover: very dry habitats. At Saswat-Dive Ghat (Pune District) on 29.i.2005, Rahul Purandare and I saw at least six and I took photographs; the only other pipit we saw was a solitary Paddyfield *A. rufulus* at a lower elevation near the stud farm. At the same locality, on 5.ii.2005, Tawny Pipit was also common and was the only pipit seen, and photographed, during a full days' visit. At Bopdeo Ghat (Pune District) on 6.ii.2005, again Tawny Pipit was the only pipit observed with two individuals noted.

I had previously noted this species as fairly common around Pune and so had not kept detailed notes. Observations recorded included: Saswat-Dive Ghat, one on 14.xi.1994 (AP pers. obs.); Mula-Mutha, singles on 11.xi.1994, 20.xi.1994, 8.xii.1994, 27.xii.1994 (AP pers. obs.).

Recorded by others in Pune District: Rajgurunagar Sahyadri School, two between 29.i-4.ii.2001, VS (Prasad 2003); Ujani (Bhigwan) (Kalpavriksh 2001); Kasurdi one on 5.ii.1989. Veer, one on 7.ii.1989 (Addition to Bradbeer 1987). Further records from other Districts: Gangapur Dam (Nasik District), six on 13.iii.1999, BR / SG / SR / DU / NB (Pittie 1999e); Ratnagiri District, 'common on rocky open tops of hills' between 7-19 January, when no other pipits were listed (Soman 1963); Bombay, 'uncommon, overlooked' (Monga 2001); Bombay and neighbouring area, 'occasional, migrant' (Abdulali 1981a); Bassein, Thane District (one), Bombay (five), Satara (one), specimens in BNHS collection (Unnithan 1995, Ali and Abdulali 1938); Buldana, isolated record (Grimmett et al. 1998); Deccan, common (Fairbank 1876); Deccan, "Jerdon remarks, 'most abundant in the Deccan,'" (Butler 1881), Dhule, Dhule District, a few in October (Davidson 1882).

This species is recorded very regularly in Goa and this is correctly illustrated in the distribution maps of Kazmierczak (2000).

Butler (1881) failed to record this species at Belgaum, the area to the east of Goa, and

noted correctly that it was not included in Vidal's (1880) south Konkan list, or in Davidson and Wenden's (1878) paper on the Deccan. However the species was recorded in North Kanara, near Belgaum, Karnataka 'on bare hills of Kumta and Honawar talukas' by Davidson (1898) and also at Londa near Belgaum, Koelz (1942) saw 'only on the pasture plain at Jagalbed, where a flock of perhaps 20 arrived on 9/3/38.' Ali and Ripley (1983) give the distribution as, 'Greater part of Indian Peninsula south to Londa near Belgaum'. The lack of observations by Vidal (1880) in the south Konkan is contrary to the records of this species in Ratnagiri District by Soman (1963) and perhaps this and the other differences in opinion on its distribution in the Deccan are due to the sporadic appearance or local distribution of this species. It is also possible that Wenden and Davidson (1878) simply omitted (accidentally?) this species from their list as Butler (1881) suspected they did for two other species White-eyed Buzzard *Butastur teesa* and Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus*; Eurasian Crag Martin *Hirundo rupestris* was also omitted from their list but was recorded as 'not uncommon' by Butler (1881) at Satara, the area covered by Davidson and Wenden.

In Goa, Lainer (2004) records this species as scarce and cites various sources. Further records from Goa include: Chapora, two on 9.xii.1994 (Martin and Martin 1995); Goa, 'the most reliable site is Dona Paula Ridge, with occasional records from Baga', (Hill 1997); Dona Paula, three in November 1994; 'May also occur in other suitable habitats throughout Goa,' (Willoughby 1996); 'Fairly common at times,' (Harris 1996); Dona Paula 3+ on 6.ii.1996, PH (Holt 2000); Dona Paula 3+ on 4.xii.1997, five on 15.xii.1996, two on 7.xi.1997, nine on 28.xi.1997, two on 9.ii.1998, PH (Holt 2000); Aguada one on 8.xi.1997, PH (Holt 2000); Baga Goa, one on 15.xi.1997, one on 5.xii.1997, PH (Holt 2000); Baga not uncommon, ones and twos on several dates (AP pers. obs.); Carambolim, Baga, Molem in February 2000 (Aelvoet 2000); Arambol Plateau, Goa, one on 22.i.2001 (AP pers. obs.).

There is a record of a 'solitary nest found (of) tawny pipit' at Ujani (Bhigwan), Pune District (Bharucha and Gogte 1990) and in the checklist published in that article it is also listed as a common resident in 1986 and 1989. This was the only pipit species recorded by Bharucha and Gogte (1990) and

was most probably misidentified for Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis* or Paddyfield Pipit. [For picture of Tawny Pipit, Saswat-Dive Ghat (5.ii.2005) see contents on website.]

Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti* is a fairly uncommon winter visitor to the Pune area but certainly more common in the Deccan than the isolated records shown in Grimmett et al. (1998). Rahul Purandare and I observed an individual at Saswat-Dive Ghat on 29.i.2005, which I managed to photograph. I observed, perhaps the same individual, at the same locality on 5.ii.2005.

Recorded by others in Pune District at: Pashan (Ingalhalikar and Gole 1987); Mula-Mutha, in rocky areas with surface quarrying, one on 20.xi.1993, one on 28.xi.1994 (AP pers. obs., Kalpavriksh 2001); Pune between 1-7.iii.1979 (Gole 1980); Pune, uncommon (Mahabal and Lamba 1987); Khamgaon, undated (Purandare 1989); Varvand, undated (Kalpavriksh 2001); Patas one on 20.ii.1982 (Mundkur 1984); reservoirs around Pune, undated (Gole 1984).

Further records from other districts: Nanaj (Sholapur District), four on 1.xi.1986 (Bradbeer 1987); Karmala, Malshiras, Sangola, Sholapur, Akalkot talukas (Sholapur District) (Mahabal 1989); Ahmednagar, rare (Fairbank 1876); Dhule District, once or twice (Davidson 1882); Dativare Thane District, between November 1993 and June 1994 (Chandrasekharan et al. 1994); Kihim (Raigad District), 1 on 8.xi.1954 (Futehally 1995, Editors 1992); Vashi (Bombay), one on 20.i.2002, BA (Prasad 2003); Elephanta (Bombay), regular since 1982, KS (Prasad 2003); Manori Beach to Gorai Beach, undated, KS (Prasad 2003); Bombay Airport one on 24.xi.2001, SD (Prasad 2003); Sewri (Bombay), one on 21.x.2001, BA (Prasad 2003); Erangal Bombay, two in December 1985, SM (Prasad 2003); SGNP Bombay, a few on 28.i.1973 (Amladi 1973a); Erangel Bombay, one on 21/2/70, and two 'previously,' (Stairmand 1970g, 1970c); Bombay sea wall, 2-3 on 14.xi (Martin 1944); Worli Hill (Bombay), one undated (Acland 1942); Arnala Island (Bombay), a few on 8.i.1971 (Navarro 1971); Bombay specimens: 27.ii.1924 from Pali Hill Bandra; male 12.xi.1912 and male 14.ii.1913 from Santa Cruz; 3.i.1933 and 10.xi.1933 from Andheri. 'Sparse but regular visitor to our area,' (Ali and Abdulali 1937) Probably the five specimens in BNHS museum (Abdulali 1988); Bombay in 1990 (Anon. 1900). The

following record probably also refer to this species: Colaba Point (Bombay), 'Many Palaearctic migrants...mostly wheatears, (etc.),' on several days observing between 26-28.x.1974 and 17-20.x.1974 (Sinclair 1977); Phansad Wildlife Sanctuayr (Raigad District), February 2000 and / or February 2001, BK (Prasad 2003); Central Maharashtra, 'South to central Maharashtra (Poona. Ahmednagar),' (Ali and Ripley 1983).

There may have been a range expansion of this species over the years. In the 19th century it was apparently rare in western Maharashtra. Butler (1881) knew of only Fairbank's (1876) record, but it could be that the bare rocky areas inhabited by this species were rarely visited. [For picture of Desert Wheatear, Saswat-Dive Ghat (5.ii.2005) see contents on website.]

Rufous-tailed Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* is an uncommon winter visitor to western Maharashtra but certainly more common in the Deccan than the one isolated record at Bombay shown in Grimmett et al. (1998). Rahul Purandare and I observed an individual at Saswat-Dive Ghat on 29.i.2005 and I took some photographs. The photograph is clearly of the paler, less clearly marked taxon *Lanius isabellinus isabellinus*, which may become a separate species from *L. i. phoenicuroides*, if the latter is elevated to full species status, as is proposed by Harris and Franklin (2000).

Recorded by others in Pune District at: Rajgurunagar Sahyadri School, one seen once between 29.i.2001-4.ii.2001, VS (Prasad 2003); Pashan (Pune), twice, undated, RP (Prasad 2003); Kawadi one on 14.xii.1986 and Wurwund one on and 10.i.1987 and 26.i.1987 (Bradbeer 1987); Kasurdi 2-3 times 1987-1989, RP (Prasad 2003, Purandare 1989); Patas, once, undated, RP (Prasad 2003); Patas, undated, PG (Prasad 2003); Mula-Mutha Pune, one probable on 16.i.1994 (AP pers. obs.); Pune undated (Ingalhalikar et al. 2000-2001).

Further records from other districts: Gangapur Dam (Nasik District), 'Uncommon. Regular sighted every winter from Oct to March,' BR (Prasad 2003); Hippargaum (Sholapur District), one in January / February 1998 (Adelson 1998); SGNP Bombay, one on 28.i.1938 (Serrao 1973); Kihim (Raigad District), 'little brown shrike' between 20-30.xii.1988 (Futehally 1989); Bombay on 29.ix (Martin 1944); Rewas (Raigad District), male shot on 3.xii.1939 and another shot at Ghoti

(Nasik District) on 1.i.1940, where common, and Trombay Island (Bombay), one on 26.i.1940 (Abdulali and Ali 1940); Esplanade (Bombay), one shot on 14.xii.1999, Andheri (Bombay), one shot on 13.ii.1935, Bombay in 1899, the famine year (Ali and Abdulali 1937).

Specimens of *L. i. isabellinus*: Ghoti, Nasik District (2), Igatpuri, Nasik District (1), Thana (2), Bombay (3, probably same specimens mentioned in Ali and Abdulali 1937) and a hybrid *L. i. isabellinus / phoenicuroides*, Nandur-Madhmeshwar, Nasik (1) from 5.xii.1942 in BNHS collection (Abdulali 1977a). In Goa there are 12 records, since the first sighting by Paul Holt on 19.xii.1996 (Lainer 2004). [For picture of Rufous-tailed Shrike, Saswat-Dive Ghat (29.i.2005) see contents on website.]

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* is a fairly uncommon winter visitor to Pune District. On 6.ii.2005, at Bopdeo Ghat I saw what I presumed was a male Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*. I took some photographs at a range of about 300m. After returning to the United Kingdom and examining more photographs in various books I realised that the individual was actually a Eurasian Sparrowhawk with a particularly broad supercilium. The rufous neck, and on some photos, rufous throat, clinch the identification. The bars on the under-parts have a rufous tinge, which may be an optical illusion, but seem to be too broad for Northern Goshawk.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk is more common than the isolated records shown in Grimmett et al. (1998), which shows no records for Maharashtra. I had three definite records in the Pune / Satara Districts in the winter of 1993 / 1994 and seven in Pune District in the winter of 1994 / 1995 (AP pers. obs.). This species is listed as 'uncommon' in Pune District in 1987-1989 (Purandare 1989) and 'occasional' by Mahabal and Lamba (1987) and Ingalhalikar et al. (2000-2001), and 'common' in 1986 and 1989 at Ujani (Bhigwan) by Bharucha and Gogte (1990).

Recorded by others at Pune District: South Pune one female on 22.ii.1987 (Bradbeer 1987); Pune, one between 1-7.iii.1979 (Gole 1980); Pune, 'Not uncommon' (RP pers. comm. 2002); Pune, undated (Ingalhalikar 1988); Khamgaon, Kasurdi, Khutbav, 'uncommon' between 1987-1989 (Purandare 1989); Bhimashankar, undated (Gole 1998); Panshet, undated (Gole 1988); Rajgurunagar Sahyadri School,

one possible female / juvenile, seen once between 29.i.2001-4.ii.2001 (VS in litt. 24.xii.2003 and 16.xii.2003).

Near Bombay this species was unrecorded by Abdulali and Ali (1938a), but later listed as 'uncommon' by Abdulali (1981a) and more recently as 'occasional' by Monga (2001). There is a record of one from Bombay in 1972 (De 1972). At Elephanta, Bombay, Clark (1994) recorded this species in October 1990 and 'over a dozen times since then.' From 2000-2002 there were eight records from the Bombay area posted to the Internet-based mailing group <birdsofbombay@yahoo.com>.

Further records from other districts: Mahabaleshwar (Satara District), one on 14.xii.1994 (AP pers. obs.), Mahabaleshwar, undated (Gole 1998); Matheran (Satara District), one between 26-28.i.2001, AA (AA 29.i.2001 <birdsofbombay@yahoo.com>); Matheran, undated (Gole 1998); Ahmednagar city, 'uncommon' (Kurdade 1996); Sirur (probably 35km west of Bir), one female specimen from 28.xii.1894 (Field Museum 2004); Dhule District records from four sites and 'not very common' (Vyawahare 1992).

In the late 19th century Davidson and Wenden (1881) found it common in the Deccan although Butler (1881) who worked mostly around Belgaum, Karnataka, found it uncommon, occurring only as a straggler. Fairbank (1876) collected two specimens between Pune and Mahabaleshwar. In Dhule District, Davidson (1882) shot only one specimen and thought it rare but added, 'but doubtless had I been shooting small hawks as a rule, others would have turned up.'

From Goa there are nine records, since the first sighting on 28.x.1981 until 2000 (Lainer 2004). [For picture of Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Bopdeo Ghat (6.ii.2005) see contents on website.]

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* is a fairly uncommon winter visitor to the Pune area. In previous years I had found it fairly common near the Mula-Mutha, near Koregaon Park and at various other localities. On 6.ii.2005 I recorded one bird at Bopdeo Ghat. It is possibly scarcer to the south, with it being reported from only one taluka in Sholapur District (Mahabal 1989), but its range is certainly throughout the Deccan in western Maharashtra.

Previous records from Pune District: Katraj Ghat, undated (Ingalhalikar and Gole

1987); Koregaon Park (Pune), seen or heard occasionally in early summer of late 1980s, RM (RM *in litt.* 2002); Bopdeo Ghat one on 18.i.1996, one on 27.i.1996 (AP pers. obs.); Law College Hill (Pune), three or four times in 1980s, RP (RP *in litt.* 2002); Khamgaon, Kasurdi, Khutbav, occasional, 1987-1989 (Purandare 1989); Pune, undated (Ingalthalikar et al. 2000-2001, Kalpavriksh 2001); Pandharpur taluka (Sholapur District), undated (Mahabal 1989); Dhule city, Laling forest and Satpura hills Dhule District, undated (Vyawahare 1992); Gangapur Dam Nasik District, one on 4.i.1999, BR / SG / SR / NB (Pittie 1999c); Gangapur Dam Nasik District, one on 20.xii.1998, BR / SG / SR / DU (Pittie 1999a); Aurangabad, common (Ali and Whistler 1934); Bombay, occasional (Monga 2001, Abdulali 1981a, Ali and Abdulali 1938, Abdulali 1975).

In the 19th century, Davidson and Wenden (1878) found it moderately common in the Deccan and in Dhule District, Davidson (1882) found it common although Butler (1881) found the species rare further south at Belgaum and wrote 'occurs sparingly, in the northern portion of the region about Poona and Nagar (Ahmednagar), but it is decidedly uncommon.' The species is apparently rare in Goa, with ten records from 1986-2000 (Lainer 2004, 1999). Further records from the Goa-northern Karnataka region: Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary (Karnataka), undated (Stanton 2002); Baga (Goa), 'occasional singles recorded' (Hill 1997); Baga (Goa), one in iii.1993 (Willoughby 1996); Calangute / Baga (Goa), three reports, by Paul Willoughby, J. Hewitt, Ian Green (Harris 1996); Baga (Goa), one on 10.i.1996, PH (Holt 2000); Molem Goa, one in ii.2000 (Aelvoet 2000); N. Kanara, 'Seen on very few occasions, at Siddapur, Karwar and along the coast,' (Davidson 1898).

Ultramarine Flycatcher *Ficedula supercilialis* is apparently an uncommon winter visitor to western Maharashtra but is very regular and easy to locate at Sinhadgad, Pune. On 7.ii.2005 I located one male within minutes at the same locality as in almost all previous visits. The last time I visited this spot in January 1997, I pointed out a male to birding friend Amrit Laue as we entered the site! In fact I found this species so regular here that when I observed and sketched a male in Goa at Baga Hill on 8.xii.1995, I failed to realise until later, how rare it was in Goa; there being only one

earlier record, between 27.xi-12.xii.1972 (Grubh and Ali 1976).

Previous records from western Maharashtra: Sinhadgad (Pune District), one male on 26.ii.1995, one male in January 1997, and single males on several other winter occasions (AP pers. obs.); Sinhadgad, undated, RP (Prasad 2003); Khamgaon (Pune District), once from 1987-1989, RP (Prasad 2003, Purandare 1989); Bhimashankar (Pune District), one between 28-31.xii.2001, NJ (Prasad 2003); Moti Bagh near Wai (Satara District), one on 7.ii.1989 (Addition to Bradbeer 1987); Sahyadri, undated (Gole 1998); Pune, undated (Ingalthalikar et al. 2000-2001, Mahabal and Lamba 1987, etc.); Bombay, occasional (Monga 2001); Northern Maharashtra, undated (Ali and Ripley 1983); Ajanta 'Ajunta' (Aurangabad District), type specimen from 'after May 1840,' (Jerdon 1839-1840, Jerdon 1862-1864, Whistler and Kinnear 1930-37); Ahmednagar, undated (Fairbank 1876); Akran (Dhule District), one specimen shot in March 1881 (Davidson 1882).

Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis* is a fairly common winter visitor to the Ghats, Konkan and Dhule District of Maharashtra and much more common than shown in Grimmett et al. (1998). I recorded one individual on 7.ii.2005, immediately upon entering the same locality as that of Ultramarine Flycatcher (see above) at Sinhadgad (Pune District), where I have never failed to see this species on numerous visits in previous years.

It should be noted that this species is also found away from the Ghats and Dhule District and there have been the following records from the Deccan: Nasrapur (Pune District), December 1971 (Gay 1972); Jaikwadi Dam, Paithan (Aurangabad District), undated (Vyawahare and Kulkarni 1986); Ahmednagar, undated (Fairbank 1876).

Previous records from the Ghats and Konkan: Sinhadgad (Pune District), one on 10.xi.1994, one in January 1997 and on numerous other visits, common (AP pers. obs.); Valvan-Lonavla (Pune District), 1+ between 8-11.ii.1995 (Prasad 1995); Pune, 'Uncommon winter visitor' (Mahabal and Lamba 1987); Pune, 'common, winter migrant' (Ingalthalikar et al. 2000-2001); Bhimashankar (Pune District), 'common' (Gole 1998); Bhimashankar (Pune District), between 25-29.iii.1999, NJ (Pittie 1999e);

Bhimashankar (Pune District), remarkably the only record within Pune District by PB was one pair on 25.i.1987 (Bradbeer 1987); Bhimashankar (Pune District) in winter 2000/2001 (Pande and Pawashe 2001); Purandar (Pune District), two in early December 2000, two on 17.ii.2001 (Pande and Pawashe 2001); Mahabaleshwar (Satara District), 'common' (Gole 1998, Gole 1988); Mahabaleshwar (Satara District), undated (Gole 1988); Panshet (Pune District), undated (Gole 1988); Kalambushi (Ratnagiri District), in winter of 1999 / 2000 and 2000 / 2001, RMO (Pande and Pawashe 2001); Chiplun (Ratnagiri District), in January 2000, VJ (Pande and Pawashe 2001); Bombay, 'Occasional' (Monga 2001); Bombay and neighbouring area, 'occasional, migrant?' (Abdulali 1981a); Bombay area a few miles south of Kasa in Mahim, north of Wada, (Thane District), one shot by HA on 26.xii.1941 (Ali and Abdulali 1945); Kihim (Raigad District), one shot on same day in following year on 26.xii.1942, one noted on same day on following year 26.xii.1943 by SA! (Ali and Abdulali 1945); Mulund, Salsette, Bombay, one on 23.xii.1943, SA (Ali and Abdulali 1945); Deccan, 'Very common in Satara, and undoubtedly breeds there (sic),' (Davidson and Wenden 1878); Dhule District, 'common' (Vyawahare 1992, Davidson 1882).

Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher has apparently expanded its wintering range into south Konkan since the late 19th century when it was unrecorded by Vidal (1880). It was recently recorded in south Konkan at Ratnagiri District (see above).

The previously given range (Grimmett et al. 1998, Kazmierczak 2000) for this species is south of Goa and it is also uncommon in Goa.

The following records are from Goa and the surrounding area: Supa, North Kanara (Karnataka), 'One specimen at Supa on 23.ii.1896,' (Davidson 1898); Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary (Goa), one between 29.xi-9.xii.1995 (Santharam 2003a); Bondla (Goa), November 1995, PW (Hill 1997); Bondla (Goa), one on 29.xii.1998, GF (Lainer 2004); Aguada (Goa), March 1994, Forster (Hill 1997); Aguada (Goa), undated (AP pers. obs.); Cotigao (Goa), one between 26.ii-10.iii.1995 AH (Lainer 2004).

Rufous-fronted Prinia *Prinia buchanani* has not been well documented in the Pune area although I had heard from Rahul Purandare (*in litt.* 17.ix.2003; pers. comm.

i.2005) that he had seen this species recently at Saswat-Dive Ghat. We had decided to spend a long half-day on 29.i.2005 to try and gather photographic evidence of pipit species, with an outside chance of verifying claims of Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*, which have been claimed for this area. So I was pleasantly surprised when Rahul pointed out the song of the Rufous-fronted Prinia and we managed to get good views. There were at least two birds singing. Unfortunately this species is incredibly shy at this time of year and I found it impossible to get a photograph. I thought that I might succeed in a second attempt. So on 5.ii.2005 I spent a whole day in the area and quite some time trying to get a shot, but I had to make do with digital sound recordings through the camera. With two people, one to help locate the bird, and the other with a good tripod, it would definitely be possible to get shots. But it does not allow close approach, although it will sing for fairly long periods from the top of small bushes if you keep your distance. I heard at least six individuals singing on my second visit. The habitat at Dive Ghat is a semi-desert grassland valley and although I spent the day at Bopdeo Ghat, also hoping to hear the bird, it was not present. The habitat at Bopdeo is similar but not so dry, with more long-grass and less cactus. In late January-early February this species is unmistakable, especially when you are familiar with its song. Its tail has a clear white terminal band and the grey is much paler than Jungle Prinia *sylvatica* or Plain Prinia *P. inornata* and the rufous on the forehead is unmistakable. The song is sometimes introduced by a trill, but the main song is a fairly fast repetition (about 3 per second) of a two-toned double syllable "tuwee-tuwee-tuwee-tuwee" (the 'wee' higher toned than the 'tu'), which can be repeated for over a minute at a time.

This species is obviously a fairly common resident of Dive Ghat, which is the southernmost limit of its known range. Records from western Maharashtra are sparse but include: Pune University Campus radio telescope near Narayangaon, Junnar taluka (Pune District), about 15 on 28.xii.2003, RA (Prasad 2003); Manchar-Bhimashankar road, 20km before Bhimashankar, Junnar taluka (Pune District), about 15 on 3.xii.2004, RA (Prasad 2003); Saswat-Dive Ghat (Pune District), two in August 2003, RP (Prasad 2003); Mula-Mutha (Pune), one on 27.xi.1993, one on 30.xi.1993 (AP pers. obs.); Khamgaon (Pune

District), 1987-1989, 'frequency?' (Purandar 1989); Pune, 'Occasional, resident' (Ingallhalikar et al. 2000-2001); Torangan (Nasik District) near Trimbak (Trimbakeshwar), about 15 on 25.i.2004, RA (Prasad 2003); Ellora Caves (Aurangabad District), two on 21.ii.1987 (Bradbeer 1987); Wadala near Belapur (Ahmednagar District), one specimen in BNHS collection (Abdulali 1986); Chembur (Bombay), one on 7.vi.1932 (Ali and Abdulali 1937a); Ahmednagar, undated (Fairbank 1876); Dhule District, very common, breeding June to October (Davidson 1882, Barnes 1890). Possibly declining. Un-recorded, but possibly overlooked by Vyawahare (1992) and Mahabal (1993).

Hume's Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* is more common than previously supposed and is probably a fairly common winter visitor throughout the Western Ghats of Maharashtra and Dhule District. There are also records from the Deccan at Nandur (?), Beed District and Ahmednagar (see below). I noted two at Sinhgad on 7.ii.2005. Recorded by others at: Bhimashankar (Pune District), undated, NJ (NJ 2.i.2002 <birdsofbombay@yahoo.com>); Rajgurunagar Sahyadri School, (Pune District), one possible seen on 21.x.2000, VS (Prasad 2003); Mahabaleshwar (Satara District), number unspecified but the third most common *Phylloscopus* sp., after Tytler's Leaf *P. tytleri* and Greenish *P. trochiloides*, in that order and more common than Sulphur-bellied *P. griseolus*, Dusky *P. fuscatus* and Western Crowned *P. occipitalis*, in that order, in a survey between 13-16.i.2001 (Dymond 2003); Mahabaleshwar 0.05 birds heard per minute in January and February (Price 1999); Karnala (Raigad District), 0.1 bird heard per minute in January and February (Price 1999); Sanjay Gandhi National Park (Bombay), one on 24.xi.2002, NJ (NJ 24.xi.2002); Suryamal (Thane District), one specimen in BNHS collection (Abdulali 1986a); Malegaon (Nasik District), two specimens from 27.ii.1948, one specimen from 28.ii.1948 'Common in the Surat Dangs in February 1948.' One specimen from 27.ii.1948 and one from 28.ii.1948 listed as *inornatus* in Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ database, Ali 1955); Nandur (?) (Beed District) and Ahmednagar, five specimens in the Natural History Museum, U. K., collected by Fairbank in 1874-6, who originally identified them as *inornatus* and

found them common (Mark Adams *in litt.* 26.ii.2003, Pamela Rasmussen *in litt.* 29.x.2002, Fairbank 1876); Dhule District, common (Davidson 1882).

The following records are unspecified Yellow-browed / Hume's Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus / humei* but are most probably *humei*, as *inornatus* is a vagrant to western India: Sinhgad (Pune District), one on 5.xii.1999, SS (SS *in litt.* 2002); Sinhgad one on 26.x.1986, one on 8.xi.1986 (Bradbeer 1987); Tamhini (Pune District), one on 21.xi.1999, SS (SS *in litt.* 2002); Bhimashankar (Pune District), one between 25-29.iii.1999, NJ (Pittie 1999e); Bhimashankar, undated (Gole 2000); Bhimashankar one between 28-31.xii.2001, NJ (NJ 2.i.2002 <birdsofbombay@yahoo.com>); Bhimashankar one on 24.i.1987, one on 25.i.1987 (Bradbeer 1987); Valvan-Lonavla (Pune District), one on 10.ii.2005, AP (Prasad 1995); Mahabaleshwar (Satara District), one on 16.xii.1993 (AP pers. obs.).

There are also the following records of *P. humei* from just south of western Maharashtra: Belgaum (Karnataka), one specimen undated. 'Probably, will be found hereafter to occur more or less abundantly throughout the region in suitable localities (*western Maharashtra and northern Karnataka*), as hitherto few collectors seem to have taken the trouble to collect specimens,' (Butler 1881); Baga (Goa), singles in iii.1993 (Willoughby 1996); Baga two heard on 12.i.1996, PH (Holt 2000); Agassaim (Goa), singles in xi.1994. 'Small numbers, probably overlooked,' (Willoughby 1996); Aguada (Goa), one on 15.i.1996, PH (Holt 2000); Bondla (Goa), one on 15.xii.1999 (Dennis and Dennis 1999).

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula nigropileus* is a fairly uncommon breeding visitor to Maharashtra in the Western Ghats and Konkan although it is rare in Dhule District where Davidson (1882 and 1886) had only one record. In recent literature, Grimmett et al. (1998) and Kazmierczak (2000) have given the Maharashtra population as breeding migrants presumably based on the following statement on *nigropileus* by Ali and Ripley (1983), 'Birds from the northernmost part of the range...are migratory, ranging in winter...through the Western Ghats, etc.' The northernmost part of the range is not clearly defined but is more probably southern Rajasthan, Eastern Gujarat, the Vindhya Range and the

Satpuras. Ali himself (Ali and Abdulali 1937) states that it is a 'regular non-breeding (i.e. October to March), visitor to Salsette, Bombay, which is supported by Monga (2001) and Abdulali (1981a, 1981b). In the 19th century Butler (1881) records it as a permanent resident in the Western Ghats and adjacent forests 'being most abundant in the rains,' and Vidal (1880) found it common in south Konkan which is not within the known breeding range, the birds were presumably winter visitors. He is supported by Soman (1963), see below. This species is definitely present in winter in moderate numbers in the Western Ghats and Konkan. In previous years I had seen Eurasian Blackbird on many visits to Sinhagad (Pune District) and had not taken notes as it was fairly common there. I quickly located an individual on my recent visit to Sinhagad (Pune) on 7.ii.2005.

There are also the following previous winter records: Malegaon (Nasik District), two specimens from 25.ii.1948, one specimen from 28.ii.1948 (Ali 1955); Bhimashankar (Pune District), between 28-31.xii.2001 and between 25-29.iii.1999, NJ (Prasad 2003, Pittie 1999e); Sinhagad (Pune District), one on 10.xi.1994 and on several other occasions in the winter (AP pers. obs.); Mahabaleshwar (Satara District) between 14-18.xii.1993 (AP pers. obs.); Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary (Satara District), between 15-19.xi.1995, VS (Prasad 2003); Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary (Raigad District), February 2000 and / or 2001, BK (Prasad 2003); Guhagar (Ratnagiri District), one on 1.iii.1987 (Bradbeer 1987); Ratnagiri District 'common' between 7-9.i.1963 (Soman 1963); Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary (Kolhapur District), on 21.xi.1995, VS (Prasad 2003); Panhala (Kolhapur), 'numerous' on 23.xii.2002, PJ (Prasad 2003).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* is probably a common winter visitor to western Maharashtra. Several Lesser Whitethroat / Hume's Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* / *althaea* individuals were observed on the recent visit to Pune, and all appeared to be the paler and less clearly marked Lesser Whitethroat but this needs further verification.

There are no specimens of *althaea* from Maharashtra in the BNHS collection, nor is *althaea* listed in Abdulali's Maharashtra list, although there are only four specimens of *curruca*, (Bombay 2, Nasik 2), in the BNHS collection (Abdulali 1981a, Abdulali

1986). The following works recorded both *curruca* and *althaea* and therefore should be reliable: Pune area both species common (Mahabal & Lamba 1987); Deccan both species common (Fairbank 1876); Dhule District *althaea* not as common as *curruca* (Davidson 1882).

Key to the Observers

AA-Anish Andheria, BA-Badrudin Ali, HA-Humayun Abdulali, RA-Rauf Ali, SA-Salim Ali, NB-N. Bhure, PB-Paul Bradbeer, SD-Shashank Dalvi, PG-Prakash Gole, SG-S. Gudsoorkar, AH-A.G. Hall, PH-Paul Holt, NJ-Nitin Jamdar, VJ-Vijay Joshi, BK-Bindu Kapadia, RM-Rashid Maxwell, RMO-Ram Mone, SM-Sunjoy Monga, AP-Anand Prasad, PJ-Praveen J., RP-Rahul Purandare, BR-Bishwarup Raha, SR-S. Ranade, SS-Sanjay Sondhi, KS-Kiran Srivastava, VS-Venkap Santharam, DU-D. Ugaonkar, PW-Paul Willoughby.

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