

a few photographs [129] were taken, from which it can clearly be identified as an Eyebrowed Thrush. Pale tips to greater wing coverts indicate it to be a first winter bird.



Photo: Aditi Sridhar & Shubha Bhat

129. Eyebrowed Thrush *Turdus obscurus* in Bengaluru, India.

At 0840 hrs, it was spotted again near the big pond in Jubilee Garden. Perhaps this time, it was successful in getting some water to drink. A video was recorded, while it was perching on a branch over the water pond ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8RO7wC7nKo&feature=em-share\\_video\\_user](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8RO7wC7nKo&feature=em-share_video_user)). The bird disappeared after about three minutes.

The next day, it was spotted again at 0830 hrs at a slightly different location near the Jubilee Garden. This time, it was wandering in the bushes, presumably searching for food. A female Tickell's Thrush *T. unicolor* first appeared on the scene near the bushes, eating berries of *Ziziphus oenoplia* that had fallen on the ground. As soon as it disappeared, the Eyebrowed

Thrush entered the scene. It started feeding on the *Ziziphus* berries and spent about five minutes in the area (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qw5b1OXtIT4&feature=youtu.be>).

Then after a gap of about 12 days, the Eyebrowed Thrush was spotted again, very briefly, on 03 March at 1600 hrs. The bird was in flight. The fifth sighting was on 06 March at 1800 hrs, in the same area where it was first spotted.

The distribution map of the species in Grimmett *et al.* (2011) shows that it winters in the Eastern Himalayas, and north-eastern India, with several isolated sightings from the Indian Peninsula. Thus, due to the absence of previous records of the species in Bengaluru (Krishna *et al.*, 1994; Wikipedia 2016), this IISc sighting is considered the first-ever sighting from the city. The nearest records in southern India are from Chennai (Santharam 1985), and Belgaum (Baker 1924). The bird is probably a vagrant during spring migration, and must have spent a few days at IISc.

### Acknowledgements

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## First photographic record of the Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata* from India

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On 26 December 2015 I visited Vijaydurga Fort (16.55°N, 73.33°E), in Sindhudurg District, Maharashtra. The fort is situated at the tip of a sandbar that separates the Arabian Sea from a 40 km creek formed by the Vaghotan River. This landmass, jutting into the sea, provides an ideal vantage point for sea watching. A single bird floating quietly in the sea, about 120–150 m away from the shore, attracted my attention. From a distance, it looked like a grebe (Podicipedidae). The bird remained on the surface of the water for more than ten minutes. Initially the bird was quite far away for photography, but slowly it floated closer, and I was able to take photographs when it was

about 50–70 m from me [130, 131]. The bird never flew while I was there, and was still floating when I left.

After checking my field guide (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012), it was clear that the water bird was not a grebe. Overall, the bird seemed to have a dark grey-brown upper side, white on its throat, greyish-white on sides of throat, and sullied white under parts. It had a sharply pointed bill that it held slightly raised, white in front of the eye, sloping forehead, and a short tail that eliminated the equally rare Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*, but confirmed this to be a Red-throated Diver *G. stellata* in non-breeding plumage. Since field guides indicated this bird to be a vagrant along the



Photos: Abhijit Avalaskar

130, 131. Red-throated Diver off Sindhudurg District, Arabian Sea.

western coast of India, I posted the photographs on social media; several people confirmed my identification.

Prasad (2005) did not include this species in the list of birds of western Maharashtra. There are only two reports from South Asia till date (Praveen *et al.* 2014). One was a dead bird obtained on 17 November 1901 from Ormara in Balochistan, Pakistan, while the other was a more recent record from Koshi Barrage, Nepal between 15 and 25 February 2002. There have been no reports from India till date (Praveen *et al.* 2014).

Hence, this photographic evidence is a country first for India, and a third record for the Indian Subcontinent, and South Asia.

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## Sighting of Swinhoe's Minivet *Pericrocotus cantonensis* at Berbera, Odisha

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The Swinhoe's Minivet (Brown-rumped Minivet) *Pericrocotus cantonensis* is a black, grey, and white minivet with a distinctive white forecrown. It has been previously considered a race of the Rosy Minivet *P. roseus*, with which it hybridises in parts of southern China, having created a limited, but stable, population of hybrids often treated as *P. roseus stanfordi*. Swinhoe's-, Rosy, and Ashy *P. divaricatus* minivets form a superspecies (Taylor 2016). Swinhoe's Minivets breed in China and winter further down in South-east Asia. Its presence in the Indian Subcontinent is still unclear as recent works (Grimmett *et al.* 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012) treat it as hypothetical, though it has been reported as 'definite' from Bangladesh. A few photographs, from different parts of India, exist on *Oriental Bird Images* ([www.orientalbirdimages.org](http://www.orientalbirdimages.org)), and *eBird* ([www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)). However a more comprehensive review vis-à-vis the similar Ashy Minivet is required. Here we put on record our photographs of a male Swinhoe's Minivet from Odisha.

On 27 February 2016, at 0700 hrs, Achyut Patro, Chitta Ranjan Mohapatra and SR noticed a greyish-brown minivet in the area

just before Salia Dam (19.79°N, 85.07°E) on the fringes of the Berbera-Dhunali Reserve Forest (Puri Forest Division, Khordha District, Odisha, India). This area comprises undulating foothills with dry deciduous, interspersed with evergreen, vegetation, and mostly dry undergrowth, which is not as dense as in the core forest which is about 15 km away from the point of sighting. The bird was observed to be solitary, silently flitting in the upper canopies of tall trees. We did not hear its call. There were no other minivets around and the only other bird seen close by was a Black-winged Cuckooshrike *Coracina melaschistos*, though other woodland birds could be heard. We were able to click a few photographs [132-134] before it moved away. It was not sighted again in that area after that day in spite of several attempts by SR on subsequent days.

These images were shared in different forums and most experts opined that the bird in question was a Swinhoe's Minivet, however, this can be confused with an Ashy Minivet; the latter has not yet been definitely recorded from Odisha, though there are several claims to its presence there (Inskipp 2015). The