

I matched my pictures with those of birds on the Internet, and in books available with me. I then discovered that it was a Forest Wagtail, a lifer for me. Being such an unmistakable bird, there were no further queries about its identification. I posted the photograph in Facebook's online forums, and it became clear that it was a very rare bird for the Delhi NCR region. Later, when I tried to locate earlier records, with the help of birding experts, I gathered that the last sighting from the entire region was also from Okhla Bird Sanctuary, in September 1949, by Horace Alexander (Ganguli 1975). However, there appears to be a certain uncertainty over this record as it does not figure in Harvey *et al.* (2006). This bird was perhaps an autumn vagrant, and appears to have eluded others who also were present at Okhla on that day, and birders who visited Okhla since then. These are perhaps the first photographs of this wagtail from the entire north-western India.

## Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*: A new record for Goa, India

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The Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* (Muscicapidae), has a wide distribution within Europe, western-central Asia, and Africa (Taylor 2016). It is listed as a passage migrant in north-western India, and Pakistan, and a breeding visitor to Afghanistan, Baluchistan, and the Himalayas between an altitudinal range of 1800–3300m (Grimmett *et al.* 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). Most records of this species from India, on eBird, are from Gujarat and, more specifically, from Kachchh, with a few scattered records from Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and New Delhi. The majority of records are from the months of September–October, with a few from March to May. On 10 December 2015, a single bird was observed and photographed in Pune, Maharashtra (Iyer 2015), and was the first report of this species from peninsular India, and is the only record between November–December. In this note, we report the sighting of a Spotted Flycatcher from Goa, India.

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I thank Delhi Bird Photography group on Facebook, specifically Pankaj Gupta, for indicating that the sighting is rare. I also thank Nikhil Devasar for indicating the historical records of this bird from the region. I extend my gratitude to Praveen J, for help in preparing this short note.

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'Ganguli (1975) includes H. Alexander's claimed record noting he "saw one with other wagtails at Okhla in September 1949" but with no other comments. In preparing the *Delhi and Haryana Atlas* I found rather a number of unique (and unrepeated) records from H. Alexander in Ganguli (1975), which I did not feel able to include in the *Atlas*. The fact that his wagtail was "with other wagtails" would be unprecedented anywhere in its range and I had no difficulty ignoring this claim.' – Bill Harvey



Pronoy Baidya

39. Spotted Flycatcher.



Omkar Dharwadkar

40. Spotted Flycatcher from Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary.

On 30 September 2016, one bird was spotted, and photographed by birdwatchers from the Goa Bird Conservation Network, on the outskirts of Dabel village in Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary (14.97°N, 74.13°E) (Baidya 2016) [39, 40]. The

bird was spotted perched out in the open, on an electric wire, next to Talpona River. The species was easily identified by the characteristic dark streaking on the breast, and the crown of the head. The individual was greyish-brown overall with a dark, longish beak with a pale bill base, and black legs, and seemed comparatively larger in size than the very similar looking first winter plumage of an Asian Brown Flycatcher *M. dauurica*. The bird was seen feeding on flying insects and, like all flycatchers, returning back to the same perch repeatedly.

Lainer & Alvares (2013) do not include this species in their work. However, Prasad lists this bird as a 'possible' autumn migrant to western Maharashtra (Prasad 2006). The nearest record of this species from peninsular India is from Pune, Maharashtra (Iyer 2016), which itself is c. 500 km away from its zone of regular passage in Gujarat. Our sighting, from Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary, which is 1000 km away from Gujarat, now stands as the southern-most record for this species in India. It is quite possible that this species is a scarce passage migrant through the southern Peninsula, and more observations in the future will clarify its status further.

## Letter to the Editor

### A Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* at Chashma Barrage, Pakistan

Large numbers of migratory birds come to Pakistan from Europe, and Central Asia each year using wetlands as wintering grounds and staging sites. Chashma Barrage, Mianwali District is one of the prominent wetlands in Pakistan. It was declared a wildlife sanctuary in January 1974, and is also a Ramsar site. It has a mixture of aquatic and terrestrial habitats, which provide safe refuge to a variety of migratory birds (Akbar *et al.* 2009).

We recorded three Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* at Chashma Barrage (32.42°N, 75.37°E) on 10 December 2014. At first glance we suspected it was a grebe (Podicipedidae), given that it was diving repeatedly in deep water; but it seemed considerably larger than one. Superficially it resembled a Tufted Duck *A. fuligula* but the white patch at the base of its bill, the lack of a crest, and a pale grey belly suggested a Greater Scaup. A photograph [41] confirmed our identification when we consulted Roberts (1991), and Ali (2002).



M. A. Brohi

41. Greater Scaup at Chashma Barrage.

Though many workers (Roberts 1991; Ali & Akhtar 2005; Ali *et al.* 2007; Azam *et al.* 2009) have studied the waterbirds of Chashma Barrage, none has reported this species, and hence it

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is a first record from this wetland. The bird was not observed on any subsequent mid-winter census of the wetlands of Pakistan. Several sightings of the Greater Scaup have been reported from Upper Punjab in Pakistan in the past (Roberts 1991; Grimmett *et al.* 2011) but the last time it was observed in the country, at Haleji Lake, Sindh, was in March 1982 (Robert 1991).

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