

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).



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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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