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### Karnataka checklist: Corrections and additions

Praveen *et al.* (2016) compiled a list of 531 species of birds for the state of Karnataka. The evidence presented by them has undergone a wider review since then. Simultaneously, birders have been actively documenting more bird species in the state. Below is an update of additions and corrections to that list.

**Common Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*: This species was conclusively photographed at Shettikeri Tank, Gadag District (Tamiliniyan *et al.* 2018).

**Lesser Flamingo** *Phoeniconaias minor*: It was added based on field notes provided in a sight record from 1996. However, more field notes available from other observers (Prasad 1996) have been uploaded on eBird. The eBird editors' team retained this record as unconfirmed as the notes do not conclusively eliminate a juvenile Greater Flamingo *P. roseus*. Hence, a record that is in review cannot stand as the only evidence for its occurrence in the state. Hence this species is deleted from the state checklist.

**Cinereous Vulture** *Aegypius monachus*: This species was included purely on sight records, but Biddappa P. A. has since photographed it conclusively in Nagarhole National Park in December 2016 (Biddappa 2017).

**Crab-Plover** *Dromas ardeola*: Roshan Kamath photographed a sub-adult in Chitrapu Estuary, Dakshin Kannada District on 14 December 2017 (Kamath 2017). Several other birders saw it subsequently in the same location. Birders reported another bird from the Kundapura-Gangoli Estuary in April–May 2018.

**Great Eared-Nightjar** *Lyncornis macrotis*: Included in the state checklist mainly based on aural evidence from the Western Ghats. However, this has been questioned, and rejected, as its vocalization could be confused with that of a Sri Lanka Frogmouth *Batrachostomus moniliger* (Praveen & Baidya 2018). This species stands deleted from the state checklist.

**Himalayan Cuckoo** *Cuculus optatus*: Included based on a photograph from Ganeshgudi by Niranjana Sant in Oriental Bird Images (Sant 2010), which has since been correctly identified, and relabeled, as a Eurasian Cuckoo *C. canorus*. Unbarred rump, visible in these photographs, is considered diagnostic for the latter, and strong evidence to eliminate a Himalayan Cuckoo. This species stands deleted from the state checklist.

**Pacific (Blyth's) Swift** *Apus pacificus leuconyx*: This species was included purely on sight records, but Harshith J. V., Vinay K. L., and Dwiref Oza, along with other Manipal birders photographed one on 05 February 2017 at Hegra, Udipi District (Harshith 2017).

**Common Swift** *Apus apus*: One of the two birds seen along with Little Swifts *A. affinis* that Ramit Singal, Ashwin Viswanathan, and Vrinda Lath photographed in Shantinagar, Udipi District on 02 December 2017 (Singal 2017).

**Blue-cheeked Bee-eater** *Merops persicus*: Vinay K L, Gururaj Moorching, and Vasudev Prasad photographed a flock of three birds on 26 May 2018 at Kenjar Wetlands, Mangalore (Vinay 2018); subsequently seen by others that evening.

**Red-naped Shaheen** *Falco peregrinus babylonicus*: This subspecies of Peregrine Falcon has been conclusively photo-documented in Belgaum (Sant & Shelke 2018).

**Chestnut-eared Bunting** *Emberiza fucata kuatunensis*: Bishan C. Monnappa and Santhosh Kumar P. A. photographed male in non-breeding plumage on 17 March 2018 in Virajpet, Kodagu (Monnappa & Kumar 2018). A prior record from Kerala (George 2015), earlier considered of unknown origin, is now accepted as supporting this observation, as both these southern Indian records are from March.

**Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla*: Adithya Bhat, Arun Prabhu, and Sahana M conclusively photo-documented this bird in the Barkur Wetlands, Udipi (Sahana 2018); now added to the state checklist.

**Yellow-headed Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava lutea*: Sivaguru Nupuran conclusively photo-documented this subspecies of the Western Yellow Wagtail in Hoskote, Bengaluru (Nupuran 2018).

**White-headed Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava leucocephala*: Mohit Aggarwal conclusively photo-documented this subspecies of the Western Yellow Wagtail in Hoskote, Bengaluru (Aggarwal 2017), as did several others later; now added to the checklist.

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*: Abhishek Maiya, G. Kanaka, Mohith Shenoy, and Vrinda Lath conclusively photographed this species in Manipal, Dakshin Kannada (Maiya 2017). Other birders also photographed it on subsequent days; it is now added to the state checklist.

With this update, three species have been deleted from the state checklist and seven added to it. This increases the total number of species in the Karnataka checklist to 535. Most of the documentation of the state's birds has moved to eBird, where 511 (496 in 2016) species have been reported, of which 503 (446 in 2016) have media documentation. The following three birds find a place in the state checklist purely based on sight records: Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*, Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*, and Grey-throated Martin *Riparia chinensis*. Though the taxonomic update of 2018 (Praveen *et al.* 2018) elevated a number of subspecies, found in the country, to species level, this does not impact the number of species found in Karnataka.

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## Letters to the Editor

### Red-tailed Wheatears in the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR)

In the ‘Snapshots’ column of *Indian BIRDS* (Vol. 14 No 3), Mohit Mehta and Piyush Dogra describe a recent sighting of a Red-tailed Wheatear *Oenanthe chrysopygia* from Jhanjharola village, Gurugaoon (Mehta & Dogra 2018)—although, for some reason, Sultanpur appears in the title. The note implies this is the first record, since the 1920s, for the National Capital Region (henceforth, NCR). Although Harvey *et al.* (2006) are quoted regarding the pre-1920s records, their preceding sentences state, ‘This local wheatear appears to be a rare winter visitor with recent mid-winter records from the dry, rocky country around Badhkal and Surajkund and also near Sultanpur and Bhindawas.’ These locations are all in the NCR, and the records were in the period 2000–2006, when the Red-tailed Wheatear was generally considered conspecific with the Rufous-tailed Wheatear *O. xanthopyrmyna*, and is so named in Harvey *et al.* (2006); a species now considered extralimital, occurring no closer to India than western Iran. There is one other published record of 1977, from Sultanpur (Sridharan & Bikhchandani 1981). During 2006–2017, there was at least one more photographic record of the Red-tailed Wheatear from the Sultanpur flats in April 2008 (Arya 2008).

For readers elsewhere, perhaps these terms need clarification. The “National Capital Region” or NCR is distinct from the “National Capital Territory”—as the former Union Territory of Delhi was renamed, under the Constitution (Sixty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1991—is the official term for a rather large area comprising up to 24 districts in the States of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Rajasthan: extending as far northward as Karnal; westward to Jind, Bhiwani, Rewari, and Mahendranagar (all in Haryana); eastward to Meerut, Hapur, and Bulandshahr in Uttar Pradesh; and southward to Alwar and Bharatpur in Rajasthan—a total of a little under 60,000 sq km and over 54 million people (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. National Capital Region. The red spot indicates the Jhanjharola location of the Red-tailed Wheatear.

NCR was originally conceived under the National Capital Region Planning Board Act, 1985, as an instrument for harmonised economic planning and infrastructure development for the region around the national capital. A NCR Planning Board oversees coordination on a regional scale (including matters relating to water, environment, and tourism).

To add to the confusion, there is also the concept of a “Central NCR” or “Delhi Metropolitan Area”, which is the largely urbanised conglomeration of Delhi itself and its adjacent satellite towns of Noida, Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Gurgaon, Bahadurgarh, and Sonapat, covering about 2000 sq km in addition to the 1483 sq km of Delhi State.