concolor on a rock by the Marble Lake (23.20°N, 86.08°E, *c.* 855 m asl). Adult birds were feeding them on 04 August 2018. Rufous edges to the feathers of upperparts, and a conspicuous gape, indicated they were juveniles. There were fifteen adults in the vicinity, apart from the juveniles. The parents were hawking dragonflies for their chicks, particularly from where water was percolating through the rocks. The heated cliff faces generated thermals, which concentrated the insects near vertical areas.

Next day, in the same area, we found three juveniles **[224–226]** that the adults were feeding. Sometimes the juveniles were trying to hunt the dragonflies by themselves, like their parents, but they were perhaps not physically strong enough, and would alight from time to time, to rest, on the edge of the rock.

All: Santanu Manna

224–226. Dusky Crag Martin juveniles begging, and being fed by parents.

Though the Dusky Crag Martin is widespread in India (Ali & Ripley 1987; Grimmett *et al.* 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012), it is virtually absent in eastern India. Birds are known only from the extreme western part of West Bengal. Within the state, it has been reported from Darjeeling in 1914 (Mackintosh 1986), and in May 2015 (Burman 2015). Other records are from Panchet Dam, Purulia, from near the border of Jharkhand state, in July 2011 (Ray 2011; Samanta 2011); Dhekiya, Purulia, in February 2018 (Mahato 2018); an undated record from Bankura (Home 1992); and from the Durgapur area in February 1970 (Gauntlett 1986). The above observation appears to be the first breeding record of the species from eastern India.

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– Santanu Manna, Abhijit Das, Abhishek Das & Sommouli Sarkar

Santanu Manna*, Abhijit Das, Abhishek Das, Sommouli Sarkar: 9 Nalin Sarkar Street, Flat No-7C, Block-B, Kolkata 700004, West Bengal, India.
*Corresponding author. E-mail: santanuq@gmail.com

On the elevational range of the Streak-throated Woodpecker *Picus xanthopygaeus*

The Streak-throated Woodpecker *Picus xanthopygaeus* is not generally described as a high-altitude species in any standard works of reference. It is described as being found up to 1700 m in the Himalayas, and 'from plains level to c. 1800m in the peninsular and Ceylon hills' (Ali & Ripley 1983). Its upper elevational limit is documented as *c.* 1700 m in the Himalayas (Ali & Ripley 1983; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; Winkler & Christie 2018), and *c.* 1500 m (Winkler & Christie 2018), or *c.* 1600 m (Rasmussen and Anderton 2012). Kazmierczak (2000) describes the species as being found commonly up to 900 m, and up to 1800 m in exceptional cases. The range maps for the species in Winkler & Christie (2018), and BirdLife International (2016) exclude the highest elevations of the Western Ghats.

We observed a single female Streak-throated Woodpecker in a small valley directly east of the Meeshapulimala Peak on 23 May 2017. The elevation of that point (10.0981°N, 77.1917°E) was 2450 ± 10 m asl (measured via a Garmin eTrex 30x handheld GPS system). The bird was seen on a wooded slope surrounding a marsh **[227]**; the woods were dominated by *Acacia mearnsii*, among which the bird was first seen. Although no photograph was obtained, the bird was in view for a lengthy period at not more than 50 m, allowing us to observe the black crown, white moustachial stripe, and olive-green back, and to identify the species beyond doubt. We also heard its characteristic, slightly nasal, flute-like whistle.

C. K. Vishnudas

227. The Meeshapulimala landscape; the woods in which the streak-throated woodpecker was sighted can be seen to the right of the picture.

This observation prompted us to investigate the distribution of this bird further using citizen science data (eBird 2017). As of November 2017, eBird contained 4184 records of the Streak-throated Woodpecker. Of these, 3058 records were from peninsular India, and Sri Lanka, to which region we confined our analysis. We added elevation data to each of these 3058 records using SRTM data from the GPS Visualizer online tool. 76 records had an elevation greater than 1500 m, and for 42 it was greater than 1800 m. Though the location data associated with records from eBird are known to have an associated inaccuracy (Praveen 2017), we believe that the large number of records in the database does accurately reflect the presence of this species up to the highest elevations of the hills of the southern Indian Subcontinent.

This conclusion is supported by other studies, both historical, and contemporary. A sighting was recorded by Praveen & Nameer (2015) on a transect above 1900 m on Rajamala Hill in Eravikulam National Park: given the distribution of vegetation on this outcrop, it is likely that this sighting occurred below 2000 m. Zarri & Rahmani (2005) reported that the Streak-throated Woodpecker was a 'common resident' in Ooty, and the areas surrounding it, and added that the species 'Presumably…does not go higher than 2,200 m.' They quoted Betts (1934), who also found the species common in the region, besides provided their own record from the Thiashola Estate (> *c.* 1700 m). Sathasivam listed seven sightings from the Palani Hills between 1984 and 1991. The general areas surveyed by him included points as high as 2500 m (Sathasivam 2006). In each case, though precise locational information is unavailable, many sightings are likely to have been above 1800 m.

These data are supported by additional records from our own observations, and those of colleagues from our institute (Table 1) where we systematically recorded the exact altitude for each sighting. During the period between 23 May 2017 and February 2018, we recorded seven observations of 13 individuals, all between 1750 m and 2100 m (sighting at 2050 m **[228]**), during approximately 70 days of opportunistic sampling that largely occurred in grassland areas above 1600 m.

In contrast, Sálim Ali (Ali & Whistler 1936), who spent 28 days in the Munnar landscape in 1933, had no record of the Streak-throated Woodpecker above 1500 m; the two records in his notes are from Marayoor (1000 m), and Santhanpara (1200 m) His notes are comparable to the sampling effort that resulted in the 14 records described above, and include observations from

Table 1.

Location	Elevation in m asl	Date	Coordinates
Meeshapulimala	2450	May 2017	10.0981°N, 77.1917E
Kodaikanal	~2000	December 2017	N/A
Kodaikanal	~2000	December 2017	N/A
Vala Kattu Odai	1890	January 2018	10.2808°N, 77.4657°E
Perumalmalai	1800	January 2018	10.2904°N, 77.5619°E
Kilavarai	2050	February 2018	10.2075°N, 77.3097°E
Kilavarai	1892	February 2018	10.2075°N, 77.3097°E
Chinnacoonoor	1758	February 2018	11.4872°N, 76.7225°E

Abhimanyu Lele

228. A female Streak-throated Woodpecker *Picus xanthopygaeus* photographed at 2050 m asl.

the regions surveyed by us in Meeshapulimala, and by Praveen and Nameer in Eravikulam.

Woodpeckers have specific habitat requirements (Kumar *et al.* 2014). The Streak-throated Woodpecker frequents open deciduous and semi-evergreen forest, as well as secondary growth. Ali & Ripley (1987) describe its habitat as, 'semi-evergreen and moist-deciduous biotope', saying that it remains within open forests and plantations. Grimmett *et al.* (2011) describe its habitat as, 'forest, secondary growth, and plantations', while Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) describe its habitat as, 'broadleaved, usually open-deciduous forests.'

The Meesapulimala Plateau (east of the town of Munnar, in the Annamalai Hills of the southern Western Ghats) has, historically, been covered in native shola-grassland. More generally, the highest altitude areas of the Nilgiris, Annamalais, and Palani hills were historically covered in shola-grassland. However, all the areas, in which we observed the Streak-throated Woodpecker, were wooded areas dominated by invasive flora such as black wattle *Acacia mearnsii*, and *Eucalyptus* species. The record from Eravikulam (Praveen & Nameer 2015) also occured in an area with widespread *Eucalyptus*.

This phenomenon can be explained in two ways. The ecological niche of the Streak-throated Woodpecker could include parkland and grassland in high altitude regions: this hypothesis is consistent with Betts' (1934) observations that the species was 'partial to park land and open country.' Alternatively, the spread of invasive woodland vegetation, which has occurred within the

last century in the Palani Hills (e.g., Arasumani *et al.* 2018) may have enabled an upward extension of the elevational range of *P. xanthopygaeus* following the establishment of a preferred habitat. This hypothesis is consistent with a 2009 reassessment of the avifauna in the areas sampled by Sálim Ali, which found a general trend of an increase in species' elevational ranges (Sashikumar *et al.* 2014).

In conclusion, based on our sightings, historical records, and citizen science records, we conclude that the elevational range of the Streak-throated Woodpecker definitely extends to 2100 m, and that the species may be found up to *c.* 2450 m in the southern Western Ghats.

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– Abhimanyu Lele & C. K. Vishnudas

Abhimanyu Lele & C. K. Vishnudas: Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, India
Abhimanyu Lele: University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, USA.
E-mail: abhimanyu.lele@gmail.com
C. K. Vishnudas: Hume's Centre for Ecology and Wildlife Biology, Kalpetta, Kerala, India.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* from Desert National Park, Rajasthan

A Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos,* generally found along the Himalayas (Naoroji 2006; Grimmett *et al.* 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; eBird 2018), was reported at the Sudasari enclosure (26.72°N, 70.60°E), Desert National Park, Rajasthan, on 05 December 2013. A forest guard and I saw it inside the enclosure, sitting near the inspection road at 1302 hrs. We observed it for over four minutes, when it started flying, and I took several photographs **[229]** for identification. The bird was almost entirely dark brown, with white bases to its outer secondaries, and its white inner primaries produced an oval white patch. It had a white tail with a broad, crisp, dark terminal band. This confirmed its identification as an immature Golden Eagle, and distinguished it from the White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* that also winters sporadically in the Thar. This appears to be the first report of the species from Rajasthan and the Thar Desert, and adds to the amazing raptor diversity of the Desert National Park.

D. K. Bhardwaj

229. Golden Eagle photographed in the Desert National Park, Rajasthan.

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– Devendra Kumar Bhardwaj

Deputy Conservator of forests,
Rajasthan Forestry and Wildlife Training Institute Jaipur, Rajasthan, India
136, Nemi Nagar Ext. Near vaishali Nagar, Jaipur 302021, Rajasthan, India
E-mail: Devendra_bhardwaj@yahoo.com

A leucistic Collared Kingfisher *Todiramphus chloris* in the Sundarbans, West Bengal

While birding, along with Soumyajit Nandy and other tourists, on 20 September 2018, Ashok Mondal spotted a colour-aberrant kingfisher near Dobanki Camp (22.01° N, 88.76° E), Sundarbans Tiger Reserve, West Bengal (Mukherjee 2018). Initially he was confused by it, but when he got a closer view, he thought it was a Collared Kingfisher *Todirhamphus chloris* based on its size and the colour of its upper and lower mandibles, rather than the