

the site. Unfortunately, the site does not have the protected status. The KTDC is not taking care to protect the land and often clears the pure stands of *Phragmites karka*, where most of the Purple Herons, Median Egrets and Black-crowned Night-Herons used to nest, to get better view of birds in the name of tourism. In 1989 the Wildlife Advisory Board of Kerala, recommended the Government to declare the Baker Estate as a Bird Sanctuary. However, against the scientific advice, 13 hectares of the land was given to a venture company. The company cleared the mangrove and converted it into a lawn and constructed a tourist jetty. With this, a species of mangrove called *Kandelia candel* was totally wiped out (Ramachandran and Mohanan 1990). Considering these problems at the site, we strongly recommend that this heronry must be protected as a bird sanctuary.

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New site record of the Yellow-throated Bulbul *Pycnonotus xantholaemus* from the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu (India)

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The southern Indian endemic Yellow-throated Bulbul *Pycnonotus xantholaemus* (Ali & Ripley 1987; BirdLife International 2001) was recorded at the Anuvavi Subramaniam temple (11°03.5'N 76°50.9'E; 690 m a.s.l.), in the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu (India). The species is included in the Vulnerable (Vu) category of the *Red Data Book* (BirdLife International 2006). The locality where the species was sighted is a small village called Peiyathadakam, which is situated 22 km southwest of Coimbatore city. This area is a junction of an offshoot of the Western Ghats and the plains of Coimbatore. These plains are a mosaic of cultivation and comprise small and large-scale brick factories. Anuvavi Subramaniam temple is situated on the northern slope of the above mentioned offshoot, found about 3 km south of the Coimbatore–Anaikatty road. Thorny bushes and exotic

Prosopis juliflora shrubs dominate lower areas of the hill, but the vicinity of the temple has a degrading patch of evergreen and semi-evergreen trees, which includes *Ficus* spp. Habitat above the temple is rocky with scrub vegetation, a 'typical' habitat of Yellow-throated Bulbul. This species also frequents a variety of other habitats ranging from open, sparse thorn-scrub and dense scrub jungle to mixed dry and moist-deciduous forest with dense undergrowth, generally on boulder-strewn hillsides, around rocky outcrops or on isolated hillocks, from 600 m to 1,200 m (Subramanya 2004; Subramanya et al. in press; BirdLife International 2006).

We visited the temple on Tamil New Year (14.iv.2005). Two medium-sized banyan trees *Ficus bengalensis* grow along the boundary of the temple. These were fruiting, attracting many birds and even though it was not a bird watching trip, we did

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some casual bird watching near these trees at 16:00 hrs. Species sighted included Small Green Barbet *Megalaima viridis*, Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*, Oriental Magpie Robin *Copsychus saularis*, three species of bulbuls, namely Red-whiskered *Pycnonotus jocosus*, Red-vented *P. cafer* and White-browed *P. luteolus*. House Crows *Corvus splendens* were the majority species. All the species were observed foraging actively on the fruits and the insects found on the banyan tree. We noted a single bird, perched on a branch in the middle of the banyan's canopy, with a yellow throat and under-tail coverts, grey breast, pale greyish under parts, and devoid of eyebrows. We identified it through a 300 mm camera lens as a Yellow-throated Bulbul *Pycnonotus xantholaemus*. Meanwhile, one of us (A.B.) photographed the bird. We double-checked the pictures with field guides (Ali & Ripley 1987; Grimmett et al. 1999).

After a few minutes, the bulbul flew towards the scrubby rocky upper part of the hill slope. That day being a celebration, with huge crowds, we had to turn back. In all, we saw the bird twice on this occasion. First was an individual right above our heads, the second two birds in flight—they took off from a small evergreen patch dominated by a *Ficus* sp.

Two of us (A.B. and S.N.) visited the same place subsequently on 1.v.2005 and surveyed the area from 07:00 hrs to 11:30 hrs. We noticed an interesting feeding hierarchy among birds on the fruiting banyan tree. Yellow-throated Bulbuls visited it only twice, but other species immediately chased them away. House Crows were not common this time, unlike the previous occasion. Nevertheless, Red-whiskered and Red-vented Bulbuls chased away the White-browed and Yellow-throated Bulbuls.

This is a first record of Yellow-throated Bulbul from this part of the Western Ghats. It is also the seventh species of bulbul (Pycnonotidae) recorded from the nearby Anaikatty and adjacent hilly areas (Nirmala 2002). Prior to these sightings, this species has been recorded from the Siruvani range and Monkey Falls (at Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary) in Coimbatore district (P. Balakrishnan, *verbally*; BirdLife International 2006). Earlier, the Yellow-throated Bulbul has been reported from 12 different locations in Tamil Nadu (Table 1). Subramanya et al. (in press) state that it is recorded from 73 localities of southern India, with all recent records from hills south of 16°N and east of 76°E. It appears to be locally common, but seems to be declining. Recent surveys of 18 localities found that it had completely disappeared from six historical sites (BirdLife International 2006). According to Subramanya (2004) and Subramanya et al. (in press) this species can be found wherever its typical, preferred habitat exists—hence it occurs on most inland hills of southern India, including parts of the Eastern Ghats, and inland hills of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. On the Western Ghats, Subramanya (2004)

mentions that it is present only on the drier eastern hill slopes, where it has been sighted at a couple of localities. Anuvavi Subramaniam temple is also situated in the eastern part of the Western Ghats. Kannan (1993), Subramanian (2001), Beisenherz (2004), Thejaswi (2004), Praveen & Namassivayan (2006) have reported its presence from different parts of the Western Ghats.

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Table 1. Records of Yellow-throated Bulbul *Pycnonotus xantholaemus* from Tamil Nadu (India)

Sl No.	Site	District	Location
1	Vallamalai Temple	Vellore	12°55'N 79°7'E
2	Gingi hills (Muttanadu Forest Range & Gingi Fort)	South Arcot	12°14'N 79°23'E
3	Chitteri Hills	Dharmapuri	11°49'N 78°28'E
4	Shevroy Hills (Yercaud)	Salem	11°47'N 78°12'E
5	Sankaridrug (Sankariurga)	Salem	11°00'N 76°58'E
6	Sirvani range (Siruvani)	Coimbatore	11°00'N 76°58'E
7	Monkey Falls (Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary)	Coimbatore	10°30'N 77°00'E
8	Mavinahalla (Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary)	Nilgiri	11°32'N 76°38'E
9	Pachamalai Hills (Manalodai Reserved Forest)	Tiruchirappalli	11° 15'N 78°30'E
10	Bodinayakanur	Theni	10°01'N 77°21'E
11	Lower Palani Hills	Madurai or Madura	09°49'N 77°49'E
12	Meghamalai Hills	Kambam	09°31'N–10°10'N 77°20'E–77°40'E

Source: <http://www.birdlife.org>. Extracted on 2006 [This work includes Mamandur forests and Penchalakona Hills of Andhra Pradesh state, within Tamil Nadu (p. 1970), which is an error and is therefore not included in the above table.]; Subramnian (2001); Rajaram (2005).

Notes on the breeding of Striolated Bunting *Emberiza striolata* near Pune, Maharashtra (India)

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Pande, S., Pawashe, A. & Joshi, V. 2006. Note on the breeding of Striolated Bunting *Emberiza striolata* near Pune, Maharashtra (India). *Indian Birds* 2 (6): 153–156.

Striolated Bunting *Emberiza striolata* is recorded in north-west India up to southern Uttar Pradesh (Etawah), central Madhya Pradesh (Sagar) and central Maharashtra (Daulatabad) (Ali & Ripley 1974). Pande et al. (2003) reported its occurrence in Maharashtra up to Sangli district. The darker upper mandible and yellow lower mandible of this bunting are diagnostic. Since the Striolated Buntings are distinctly dimorphic, the respective roles of both sexes in nidification can be correctly monitored. In this paper, we record the breeding of the Striolated Bunting in Maharashtra.

Status, occurrence and earlier nesting records from the study area

Striolated Buntings are resident in a small area in the Saswad environs near Pune (Maharashtra), inhabiting dry stony country where the vegetation is predominantly scrub, comprising of euphorbia and acacia species, intermingled with areas of cropland. They are present year round and are best seen at noon near water holes. Since 1991, we have recorded seven nests of these buntings near Saswad, Sonori, Dive and Bapdeo Ghat, all within 28 km of Pune and a few kilometers from one another.



Portrait of Striolated Bunting *Emberiza striolata*

Of the seven nests recorded, the birds abandoned three nests. The termites destroyed one, which was built on an active termite mound, even while the bunting was incubating and, red ants devoured the three eggs it contained. A Grey Shrike