

**Table 4.** Records in Vertnet\*

S. No	Location	Number of specimens
1	Mawphlang	38
2	Cherrapunjee	3
3	Shillong	5
4	Pynursia	8
5	Laitlyngot	11
6	Nangkram	2
7	Unknown locality in W. Khasi Hills.	4
8	Probably in W. Khasi Hills*	12

\* Specimens from NHM, London in Vertnet have no district level locality details.

From the above data, it is clear that this species has been observed all year round, and therefore is a resident, only in the Khasi Hills. Hence, the present observation is the first evidence of its presence in the Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya. Although the nest and chicks were not observed, the behaviour of the birds strongly suggested that they were feeding chicks. The location described in this article is about 40–50 km from the nearest previously described location, which significantly increases the Extent of Occurrence (EoO) of this species. It is possible that this new information may lead to a modification in the IUCN status of this species. More observations from the Jaintia Hills are required to understand the true extent of its distribution.

## Acknowledgments

We wish to acknowledge with thanks permission given to RG for visiting the forest by Mrs Lato, DFO, Jaintia Hills. We also thank Pelevizo Meyase for accompanying him and the residents of Chyrmang village for local guidance. We also wish to acknowledge the provision of equipment (camera, GPS) by the Makunda Nature Club run by the Makunda Christian Leprosy and General Hospital.

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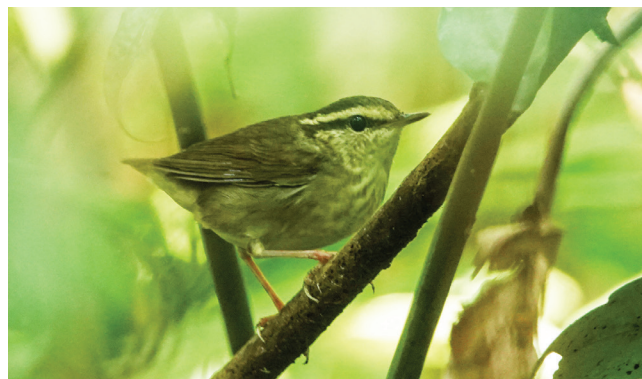
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## Asian Stubtail *Urosphena squameiceps* in the Karimganj District of Assam, and its status in the Indian Subcontinent

On 09 November 2018, RG visited the Badsaitilla Reserve Forest, a low-altitude dipterocarp forest, near Dosdewa village (24.35°N, 92.35°E) in the Lowairpoa Block of Karimganj District in Assam, as a participant of the biodiversity documentation work being done by the Makunda Nature Club. At 0710 h he noted a small bird, similar in appearance to a warbler, inside a bush.

Its tail was very short and it had a prominent white supercilium. The bird was perched on a twig and was preening itself. He took several photographs [38]. The bird also uttered several clear calls, which were recorded using a Sony Sound Recorder ICD UX560F (Fig. 1; <https://www.xeno-canto.org/443886>). Once the images were processed it was clear that the bird was an Asian Stubtail *Urosphena squameiceps*. On 13 November RG revisited a neighboring location of the same forest and once again observed the stubtail, which was foraging low inside a bush. He photographed it at 0839 h. Subsequently, RG and VA visited both locations, as well as the surrounding forest areas on the 02 December 2018, but could not locate the species.



38. Asian Stubtail photographed in Assam.

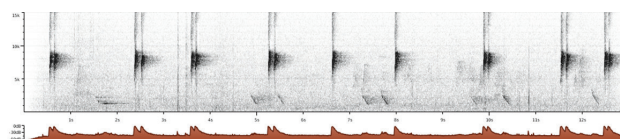


Fig. 1. Sonogram of the Asian Stubtail's vocalisations.

The Asian Stubtail is presumed to be a winter vagrant to the Indian Subcontinent with not more than ten photographic records till date (Table 1). However, repeated observations from the lowland woodlands of the eastern regions of the Indian Subcontinent indicate that this might be a rare but regular winter visitor.

We thank the Makunda Christian Hospital, which runs the Makunda Nature Club, for the provision of equipment (camera, sound recorder, and GPS) used during this documentation. We also acknowledge the assistance of Shameem Rizwan and Syed Shahnour Imam, from Bangladesh, who sent us exact details of their observations.

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**Table 1.** Records of the Asian Stubtail from the Indian Subcontinent

S. No	Observer	Month	Year	Location	Country	Reference
1	Tom Tarrant	January	1993	Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve	Nepal	Lewis (1994)
2	Nick Dymond	January	1997	Lowacherra National Park	Bangladesh	Thompson & Johnson (2003)
3	Paul Thompson	December	1999	Lowacherra National Park	Bangladesh	Thompson & Johnson (2003)
4	Sayam Choudhury	January	2011	Moulvi Bazar	Bangladesh	Chowdhury (2014)*
5	Sandip Das	November	2013	Rabindra Sarovar, Kolkata, West Bengal	India	Das (2014)*
6	Tania Khan	December	2013	Satchori National Park	Bangladesh	Khan (2013) *
7	Munir Ahmed Khan	August	2014	Satchori National Park	Bangladesh	Khan (2014) *
8	Pritam Baruah	March	2015	Jatinga, Assam	India	Baruah P (2015)
9	Syed Shahnoor Imam	December	2015	Lowacherra National Park	Bangladesh	Imam (2015)*
10	Jainy Kuriakose	December	2015	Jeypore Reserve Forest, Assam	India	Kuriakose (2016)*
11	Shameem Rizwan	February	2018	Satchori National Park	Bangladesh	Rizwan (2018) *
12	Rejoice Gassah	November	2018	Near Dosedewa village, Karimganj District, Assam	India	This work*

\* Photographs supporting the observations were verified by the authors.

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### Does the Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* keep a larder?

At 0730 h on 28 October 2010, Chirag Solanki and I were birding at Vibhapar wetlands (22.5°N, 70.07°E) which is situated southwards of the salt pans of the Century Salt Works and on the western side of Khijadia Bird Sanctuary (Gujarat, India). Vibhapar is a monsoon-dependent wetland. A 2.5 m high, 'salt-ingression-prevention', bund separated this waterbody and the salt pans. The three kilometers long bund mostly had *Prosopis juliflora* trees on both sides of its single lane metal road, with a few peelu *Salvadora persica*, and a couple of toddy palms *Borassus*

*flabellifera*, with reeds in some patches. It was a single lane metal road.

CS had earlier located a large nest of a Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*, upon a tall tree standing in the water; the nest was 4.6 m above the water. From the road, the nest was at eye-level and, using YB's as a hide, we could observe it without disturbing the birds. The sun had not yet risen, and the female stork was sitting in the nest; only her head was visible to us. She stood up after a few minutes and started preening. Even at 0800 h the light was low, due to mist. All of a sudden CS urgently whispered 'look at the bird'. She was swallowing a snake. As we watched, she swallowed two more snakes (all were, probably, checkered keelbacks), all within four minutes. We could not comprehend how all the three reptiles were *in* her nest! The bird had not left the nest since we began watching it that morning.

For the next fifteen minutes, or so, she did not do anything else but preen herself. In a seven minute video that YB shot from 0820 h onwards, we observed that she ate two morsels of unidentified items, fiddled with twigs to realign the nest to her satisfaction, and then settled on it. She again stood up at 0840 h and consumed one more snake at 0844 h. A fifth snake was swallowed at 0852 h [39]. She took her time to swallow this last individual. It was larger than the ones she had consumed earlier. As she started swallowing it, the snake wrapped itself around the stork's bill, and she took a few seconds to untangle it. All the five reptiles were picked up from the floor of the nest.

For the next 22 min she preened and rested. At 0914 h she took-off from the nest and landed a few meters away, on the left side of the tree. She was vigilant and constantly watching the nest. Thrice she drank water by tilting up her head. A couple of House Crows *Corvus splendens* flew slowly past the nest, while she was still on the ground. Noticing them she abruptly flew back to the nest.

On her nest, at 0917 h, she ate a sixth snake, and at 0926 h the stork swallowed a seventh snake. This seemed like a stupendous breakfast! We stayed there for another 30 min, but nothing further happened, except she settled on the nest.