

not clearly visible in photo), and the hazy tail without white tips clarify it was not a Rusty-rumped Warbler *L. certhiola*. The bird was later confirmed as Grasshopper Warbler *L. naevia*.

The Grasshopper Warbler winters in India around lakes and marsh edges, in thick grass, rice paddies, and also in the Western Ghats, where it is found up to an elevation of 1800m. Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) include the entire eastern peninsula under its migration path, without citing any records. Grimmett *et al.* (2011) map three records from the northern part of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh.

The first time the bird was recorded from erstwhile Andhra Pradesh was by Sálím Ali and Richard Meinertzhagen in February 1927, when they collected specimens in Warangal District, Telangana (Ali 1938). Subsequently, four birds were trapped during a ringing study at Lambasingi [=Lammasinghi], Vishakapatnam District in 1976–1977 (Price 1980); which would constitute the first record of the species from the present-day Andhra Pradesh. The third record, from somewhere near Hyderabad, could not be traced. In recent years, it has been observed multiple times around the Hyderabad area (eBird 2019) in Telangana. Further northwards, Chattisgarh has only one report (eBird 2019), while there are no confirmed records from Odisha (Inskipp 2015; eBird 2019).

I thank Viral Joshi, Harshakumar, Senan D'Souza, and Jobin Varghese for guidance and support. I also thank V. V. Robin and Nandini Rajamani for encouragement and guidance.

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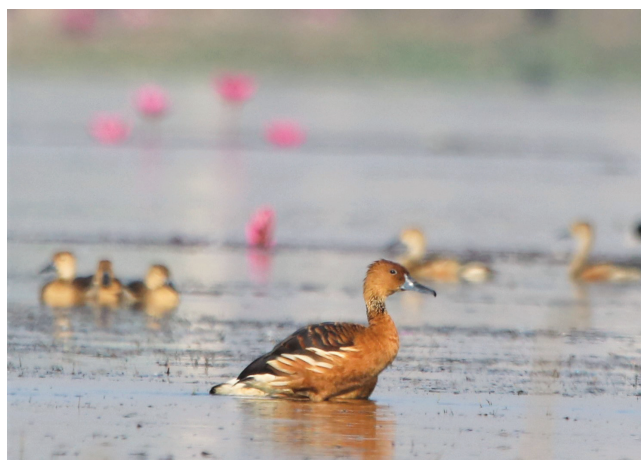
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Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor* in Gujarat, with a note on its historical status

The Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor* is a resident of north-eastern and eastern India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka (Ali & Ripley 1978; Grimmett *et al.* 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012), and is has a large geographic range extending across both the hemispheres. In Gujarat it is a vagrant, and historical records exist from Kachchh (Parasharya *et al.* 2004; Ganpule 2016); but there are no recent reports. We report a sighting of the species in the Timbi Irrigation Reservoir (22.31°N, 73.29°E) on the outskirts of Vadodara, Gujarat.

On 23 April 2019, when the weather was partly sunny, we were birding at Timbi Irrigation Reservoir (22.31°N, 73.29°E) near Vadodara City, Gujarat. At 0747 h we observed some waders and waterfowl and a good number of Lesser Whistling Duck *D. javanica* foraging in the open area of the reservoir. At 0814

h, a pair of ducks grabbed our attention; they were similar to Lesser Whistling Ducks, but were slightly larger in size. They had prominent white tails, which separated them from the flock of Lesser Whistling Ducks. We could take their photographs easily, which helped us in identifying the pair as Fulvous Whistling Ducks [66] with the help of Grimmett *et al.* (2011), and Rasmussen & Anderton (2012), who list the basic distinguishing features: tawny-coloured, dark cinnamon crown, dark rear neck-stripe, and prominent white flanks. We observed the pair for an hour until they flew away when disturbed by a villager; when the white patch on the tail was clearly visible [67].



66. Fulvous Whistling Duck in its habitat.



67. Fulvous Whistling Duck and Lesser Whistling Duck (centre) in flight.

While foraging, the pair stayed together. They foraged in association with other birds such as Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*, Purple Swampphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*, Garganey *Spatula querquedula*, Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*, and the flock of Lesser Whistling Ducks. Later, the pair came to the periphery of the reservoir. All the identifying characters could be easily noted during preening. Like other ducks, during preening, they cleaned their abdomen feathers and wings. After that they drank some water and swam towards the open waters to forage.

Though it has been reported as a rare monsoon visitor from Sindh, Pakistan (Butler 1879; Hume & Marshall 1881; Blanford 1898; Ticehurst 1923), its presence in Gujarat has not been properly documented. Hugh Palin was the only person to have provided some information about this species in Kachchh, 'says it occurs, but is not common' quoted Hume & Marshall (1881);

and later published included in his checklist (Palin 1904). Murray (1889) included Kutch [=Kachchh] and Guzerat [=Gujarat] in its range without any further details; his source from Kachchh might have been Palin's work. Ticehurst (1923), without details, noted that it was less common than Lesser Whistling Duck in Kachchh. Sálím Ali did not record it in Kachchh (Ali 1945).

While Ali & Ripley (1978) indicated all of Gujarat in its range map, contemporary field guides (Grimmett *et al.* 1998; Kazmierczak 2000; Grimmett *et al.* 2011) do not show its distribution in the state. However, Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) shades some parts of extreme southern Gujarat in its range. Khacher (1996) did not list the species, but Parasharya *et al.* (2004), and Ganpule (2016) included it as a vagrant to the state—based on historical records from Kachchh. There are no recent records in online forums either (eBird 2019; Oriental Bird Images 2019). Hence, our observation from central Gujarat is the first photographic record from the western part of India.

This species migrates long distances in search of suitable habitat, indicating that it exhibits irregular local movements within Africa, with periodic appearances of huge numbers in some areas (Scott & Rose 1996). Roberts (1991) stated that the species was a seasonal migrant to Pakistan but had not been authentically recorded northwards of Sindh Province; and there too could be considered only an occasional visitor. Roberts stated 'K. Eates definitely encountered it in 1921 on Khinjar Lake, Thatta district'; on 26 June Roberts also observed the species on Haleji Lake (Roberts 1991). Since the region is adjoining Kachchh, its occurrence in there is likely and Palin's statement may have been correct. Its presence might be getting overlooked in flocks of Lesser Whistling Ducks and our record should alert other birdwatchers of Gujarat to look for this species amongst such flocks.

We used Pittie (2005) and Pittie (2019) for obtaining relevant references for this manuscript.

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Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* at Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, Assam

On 14 December 2018, at 1415 h, we observed an Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* at Dibru-Saikhowa National Park (*henceforth*, DSNP) in Assam, India [68]. A single bird was seen perched for over half an hour on top of a tree (27.75°N, 95.41°E), and we were able to photograph the bird. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (BirdLife International 2017) has listed it as globally Vulnerable. Though it is seen in other parts of Assam (Barua & Sharma 1999), it has never been reported from DSNP (Allen 2002; Choudhury 2006; Joshi *et al.* 2014).

In a literature review by Rahmani (2012), and Rahmani & Choudhury (2012), the Eastern Imperial Eagle is only listed as being found in Kaziranga, and Nameri National Parks. The records on eBird, from north-eastern India, are restricted to Assam, with a majority of the sightings from Kaziranga National Park and a few from Darrang District (Brahmaputra River), Deepor Beel Sanctuary, Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, and Nameri National Park (eBird 2018). Other published annotated checklists from north-eastern India, namely, Manipur (Choudhury 2009), Nagaland (Choudhury 2001), Tripura (Choudhury 2010), and select parts of other north-eastern Indian states (Birand & Pawar 2004), all, do not include the Eastern Imperial Eagle. Accessible literature, and eBird data from Assam suggest that our record of the Eastern Imperial Eagle could be the eastern-most for India, though not unexpected, as it is found in South-east Asia.

We thank Rohit Naniwadekar and Shashank Dalvi for confirming the identification. We are grateful to the Wildlife Conservation Trust-India, the Ravi Sankaran Foundation, and the Rufford Small Grants for Nature Conservation for financial and logistical support. We are grateful to the Assam Forest Department for permitting us to work in this region. We thank Jaganath Agarwal for his assistance in DSNP.