

peninsular India (Grimmett et al. 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; eBird 2019). This species is a common winter visitor to Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Tonkin (Robson 2008).



171. Common Rosefinch.

Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea*

At 0745 h, on 12 January 2019, while surveying at Sippighat (11.6°N, 92.68°E), South Andaman, AS spotted one Pratincole. It showed greyish on its dorsal side, a pale buff grey breast, and black lores, which enabled us to identify it as a Small Pratincole [172]. This would be the first record of the species the Islands. Others also reported it this year, during the same month, from Sippighat (Balaji 2019).



Both: Gokulakrishnan G

172. Small Pratincole.

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Siberian Blue Robin *Larvivora cyane* from the Barak Valley of Assam with a status update for India

The Siberian Blue Robin *Larvivora cyane* is a migratory insectivorous Old-World Flycatcher, of the Muscicapidae family. This species breeds in north-eastern Asia, mainly Russia and Japan, and winters in South-east Asia, mainly Malaysia, Borneo, and Thailand. It is a rare vagrant to India.

On 06 February 2019, RG visited the Badsaitilla Reserve Forest, a two-hour walk from Dosdewa village in Karimganj District of Assam, to document its biodiversity, along with members of the Makunda Nature Club. At 1648 h he observed a small brown bird, with blue tinged brown wings, hopping on the ground near a pool of water. Two photographs were taken [173, 174] and posted to the Facebook group, 'Ask IDs of Indian Birds' and a suggestion obtained that the bird was a Siberian Blue Robin *Larvivora cyane*—it was presumed to be a first winter male. On the 21 February 2019, RG visited the same spot (24.33°N, 92.35°E) and waited for the birds in a hide created near the small pool of water. At 1653 h, two small birds arrived. One of them had slate-blue colour from crown to tail with black coloration extending from neck to flanks and white from chin to vent, black bill, pinkish lower mandible and pinkish feet and the other. The other bird was brown on the dorsum from crown to tail with prominent bluish tinge noted over the face, wings and dorsum of the tail – they were presumed to be adult and first winter male Siberian Blue Robins. At 1730, another bird with brown coloration from crown to rump and tail with white abdomen to vent and with some scaling in the chest, black beak and pinkish legs was noted and was presumed to be a female. All the birds exhibited similar behavior, hopping on the ground with rapid wagging of their tails and took dips in the pool of water. Several photographs were taken of the males (the female could not be photographed) till the light became too low for photography.

Although a rare winter vagrant to India, this species has been documented in the recent past (post 2010) only from

Both: Rejoice Gassah



173. Adult Siberian Blue Robin.

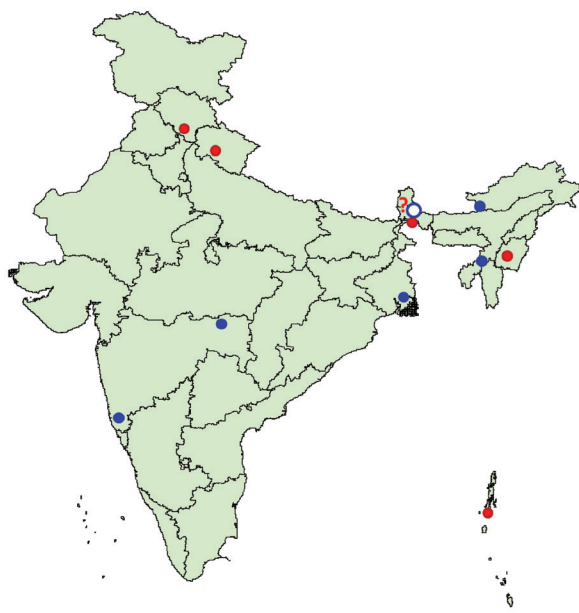


174. Siberian Blue Robin first winter male.

Table 1. Siberian Blue Robin reports from India

Month	Year	Observer	Location	State	Reference	Evidence	Remarks
Undated	< 1881	Capt Stackhouse Pinwill	Shimla	Himachal Pradesh	Seebohm (1881)	Specimen	Ali & Ripley (1987) felt this male was erroneously labelled as 'Simla', but Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) consider this of acceptable provenience
April	1881	A.O.Hume	Aimole	Manipur	Hume (1888)	Specimen	A male shot from a party of several birds. Specimen probably in NHM, London
February	1932	C M Inglis	Haldibari Dooars	West Bengal	Ali & Ripley (1987)	Specimen	In NHM London, probably the same is referred to as "W. Assam" in Rasmussen & Anderton (2012)
February	1980	Salim Ali	South Andaman	A & N Islands	Ali & Ripley (1987)	Specimen	A female in the Bombay Natural History Society Collection.
May	1996	Suchitra Ghosh	Pauri Garhwal	Uttarakhand	Ghosh (1998)	Observation	A male well-described; record accepted by Rasmussen & Anderton (2012)
October	1997	S. J. Ghosh	Kalimpong	West Bengal	Ghose (1999)	Observation	A male, but not described; and subsequently more (forty) seen. While the first record could have been correct, subsequent birds were most likely of another species
May	2000	Anwaruddin Chowdhury	Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary	Arunachal Pradesh	Choudhury (2003)	Observation	A male, well-described; record accepted by Rasmussen & Anderton (2012)
April–May	2008	Parag Deshmukh	Nagpur	Maharashtra	Deshmukh (2011)	Photograph	A male stayed at the same site for three weeks
February–March	2014	Banerjee AK, Anupam Mistry, Amitava Basu, HIRAK SARKAR, etc.	Gorumara-Chapramari	West Bengal	Mistry (2014)	Photograph	1st winter male reported by many birders
December	2014	Amitava Basu, Biswapriya Rahut	Gorumara-Chapramari	West Bengal	Basu (2014)	Photograph	Adult male
April	2016	Hirak Sarkar	Gorumara-Chapramari	West Bengal	Sarkar (2018)	Photograph	1st winter male
October	2016	Rajib Das, Amit Adak, Arnab Pal, etc.	Rabindra Sarovar, Kolkata	West Bengal	Pal (2016)	Photograph	1st winter male reported by many birders
January	2017	Satish Jadhav	Dajipur Wildlife Sanctuary, Kolhapur	Maharashtra	Jadhav (2017)	Photograph	Adult male
January–February	2017	Mousumi Dutta, Biswapriya Rahut, Jyotirmoy Deb, Amitava Basu, Arup Banerjee, Debapratim Saha, etc.	Gorumara-Chapramari	West Bengal	Dutta (2017)	Photograph	1st winter male reported by many birders. Assumed to be the same bird though, possibly, more individuals may have been involved
February–March	2018	Biswapriya Rahut	Gorumara-Chapramari	West Bengal	B. Rahut, <i>in litt.</i> , e-mail dated 18 August 2019	Observation	1st winter male reported twice from the same site
February	2019	Rejoice Gassah	Badsaitilla RF	Assam	This work	Photograph	An adult male, a first winter male, and, probably, a female

locations in Maharashtra and West Bengal but surprisingly, not from northeast India. Online sites such as OBI, eBird, Xeno-canto, and IBC, and Facebook groups such as “Ask IDs of Indian Birds” “Birds of Eastern India”, and “Indian Birds” were searched and previously documented records of observations from India are recorded in Table 1.



S. Subramanya

Fig. 1. Records of Siberian Blue Robin from India. Red dots indicate records before 2000, blue dots, after. Circle indicates Gorumara National Park-Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary complex with repeat records. Map prepared before 31 October 2019, after: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jammu_and_Kashmir_Reorganisation_Act,_2019.

As can be seen from the records (Table 1; Fig. 1), the species has been reported from the western Himalayas (twice), Maharashtra (twice), the Andaman Islands (once), north-eastern India (thrice), and West Bengal (seven times) – with repeat sightings in all years from Gorumara National Park-Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary complex between 2014–2015 and 2017–2018. The most favoured spot in this area is from a tiny waterhole formed by a drying monsoon stream in Murti Forest (Biswapriya Rahut *in litt.*, in e-mail dated 18 August 2019). Chats generally age within a year and hence repeated sightings of first winter birds in successive years would mean these are different individuals. Considering the historical report by Inglis was also from the same general area (Haldibari Dooars), this region in north Bengal might have more birds wintering every year. Our current record from Barak valley is also not surprising as recent records from the eastern Bangladesh have also been from the same landscape (Mohsanin et al. 2014). Hence, Siberian Blue Robin can be considered a scarce winter visitor to India - with most records clustered in February-March – and sporadic records in October, December-January and April-May.

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Status of the Asian Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana* in Uttarakhand, India

The Asian Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana* is a small warbler with ‘skulking habit, pale coloration, yellow legs, yellow iris, and yellow on bill’ (Parmentar & Byers 1991); a pale rufous rump and tail, white outer rectrices, and whitish underparts (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). The bird’s plumage, its horizontal carriage, and slow, hopping movements on the ground distinguish it from its congeners. The species breeds from the northern and eastern