



168. Red-vented Bulbul feeding Indian Robin chicks.

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Black-eared Kite *Milvus migrans lineatus*, Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*, and Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea*: Additions to the Birds of Andaman & Nicobar Islands

The following birds were reported as additions to the birds of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands in 2018–2019.

Black-eared Kite *Milvus migrans lineatus*

On 04 November 2018, between 1334 h and 1343 h, GK spotted and photographed a Black Kite *Milvus migrans* [169] at the forest's edge at Shastri Nagar (06.78°N, 93.88°E), in Great Nicobar Island. On 07 November 2018, he again photographed the raptor, as it struggled with prey, at Laxmi Nagar (06°50'N, 93°53'E). The photograph with a dorsal view of the bird was taken at Magar Nallah (06°59'N, 93°54'E), on 29 November 2018 [170]. Once again, it was seen foraging on the side of the road at Gandhi Nagar (07°00'N, 93°54'E), on 02 December 2018. The bird had a conspicuous dark facial mask, white patches on the bases of under primaries, and a noticeably lighter (cream-coloured) vent than the darker breast/upper chest—all features of a Black-eared Kite *Milvus migrans lineatus*.



169. Black Kite at Shastri Nagar, Great Nicobar Island.



170. Black Kite at Magar Nallah, Great Nicobar Island.

Both: Gokulkrishnan G

However, one could confuse it with a juvenile Black Kite *M. m. govinda*—but the following features were unique to our bird.

- The vent was comparatively lighter than the breast.
- The whitish patch at the beginning of the retrices was larger than that on a Black Kite.
- The ventral streaky pattern had thicker streaks than those on a juvenile Black Kite.

The Black-eared Kite is, reportedly, a migratory race of the Black Kite, visiting South Asia during winter. It has been recurrently sighted migrating each October, flying southward of Thailand and also westward to Nepal, visiting Central- and East Asia, and southwards to the Himalayas and northern Indochina (Decandido et al. 2013). Ali & Ripley (1983), Grimmett et al. (2011), Rasmussen & Anderton (2012), and Sivaperuman et al. (2018) have not mentioned any sightings of this species from the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

On 18 January 2019, a Common Rosefinch was first seen feeding on a *Ficus* sp., tree at Hut Bay (10.58°N, 92.53°E) in Little Andaman. It had brownish upperparts with a whitish throat and underparts, visibly darker streaking on crown, mantle, lower throat, breast, upper belly, and flanks, and two narrow whitish wing-bars [171]. It is a regular winter migrant across much of

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