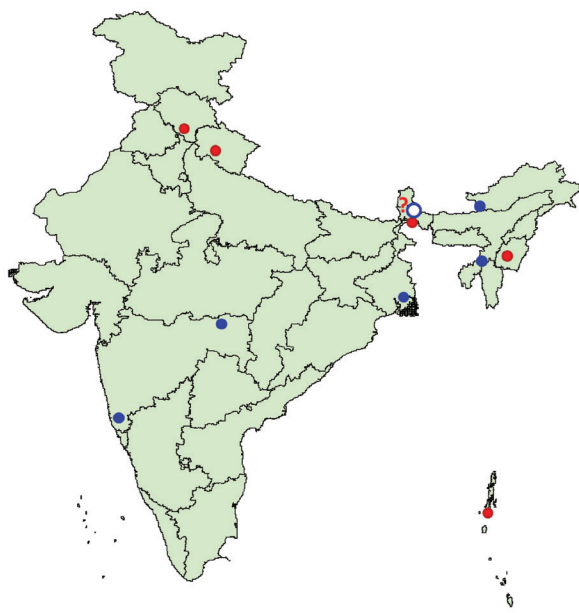


locations in Maharashtra and West Bengal but surprisingly, not from northeast India. Online sites such as OBI, eBird, Xeno-canto, and IBC, and Facebook groups such as “Ask IDs of Indian Birds” “Birds of Eastern India”, and “Indian Birds” were searched and previously documented records of observations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

coasts of the Caspian Sea and north-eastern Iran, eastwards to central, and southern Mongolia and north-western China. Until recently, it was considered conspecific with the African Desert Warbler *S. deserti*. The Asian Desert Warbler is a long-distance migrant, with a non-breeding range extending from north-eastern Africa and southern Israel, eastwards to southern and eastern Iran and north-western India (Aymi & Gargalio 2018). 'On passage and in winter, found in flat semi-desert or mudflat regions with dwarf saline-loving bushes, broad sandy or boulder-strewn desert and sandy hillsides ... Solitary in winter' (Baker 1997).

The Asian Desert Warbler has a handful of records from Uttarakhand. On 22 January 2017 at c.1315 h, MS photographed a drab looking bird with a prominent yellow eye and rufous colouration to its rump and tail at Tumaria Reservoir (29.30°N, 78.91°E; c.259m asl). The bird was seen for upto five minutes. It was feeding on the boulders of the slope of the reservoir, frequently disappearing behind them and the short dry vegetation. On 10 October 2008, SS had recorded a bird in a shrubbery and foraging on the ground in Lansdowne Reserve Forest about two kilometers from Saneh Forest Resthouse (29.69°N, 78.53°E; c.320m asl), towards Kohlu Chaur.

The status of this species is unclear, from Uttarakhand, in the older literature. Ali & Ripley (1981) stated that it is a winter visitor, listing its range as 'northwestern India in Haryana, Rajasthan and Kutch', with no mention of Uttarakhand. Baker (1997) included 'northwestern India' in its distribution. Grimmett et al. (2011) showed a spot record from Uttarakhand while Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) stated the same distribution as mentioned by Ali & Ripley (1981). Mohan & Sondhi (2017) included the species in their Uttarakhand bird checklist, based on some of the records that we have included in Table 1.

The first record of the species from Uttarakhand is held by Seb Buckton, who saw a bird on the scrubby slopes at Budyakot (=Budyakot, Bageshwar District, Uttarakhand; 30.11°N, 79.85°E; c.1980 m asl; Buckton 1995; Tim Inskipp *pers comm.*, e-mail dated 29 March 2019). This shows up as a dot in the maps of Grimmett et al. (2011). Thereafter, there have been five records between 2008 and 2017 (Table 1, Fig. 1).

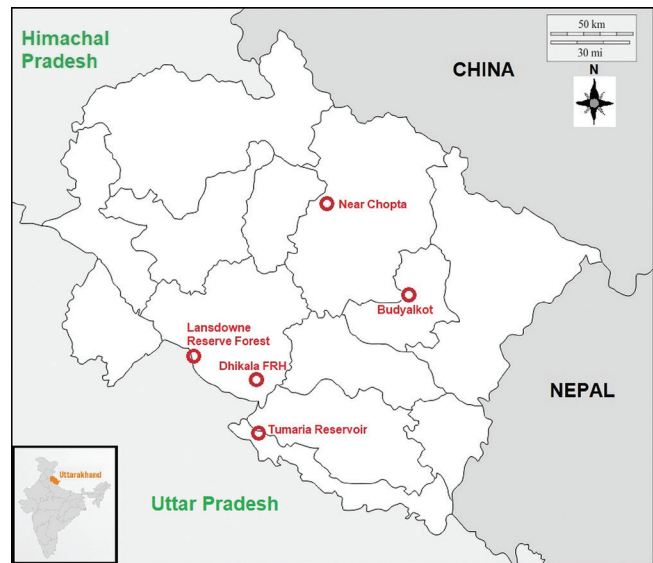


Fig. 1. Asian Desert Warbler records from Uttarakhand, India.

The species appears to be a vagrant in Uttarakhand, or probably an autumn passage migrant in very small numbers, as most of the records from the state are from October–November. It is possible that the bird seen on 22 January 2017 at Tumaria Reservoir was either lost, wintering in the area, or an early individual on return migration.

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Table 1. Asian Desert Warbler *Sylvia n. nana* records from Uttarakhand, India

Date	Location	Observation	Observer	Reference
16 October 1995	Budyakot	One bird observed on scrubby slopes was the first record for the state of Uttarakhand	Seb Buckton	See text
10 October 2008	Lansdowne Reserve Forest	One bird observed in shrubbery, and foraging on the ground	Sanjay Sondhi	
17 November 2010	Dhikala Forest Resthouse, Corbett Tiger Reserve (29.59°N, 78.86°E; c.375m asl)	One bird photographed in the grounds of the Forest Resthouse campus, near the grassland was the first record for Corbett Tiger Reserve	Peter Jones	Jones 2010; Peter Jones <i>pers. comm.</i> , message dated 07 June 2013
19-20 November 2015	Near Chopta (30.35°N, 79.04°E; c.1550m asl)	Virag Sharma photographed a single bird near Chopta on 19 November 2015 Yashpal Negi saw the same bird on 20 November 2015, in the same area (Yashpal Negi, <i>pers comm.</i> , message dated 19 January 2019)	Virag Sharma & Yashpal Negi	Sharma 2015a; Sharma 2015b
October/November 2016	Tumaria Reservoir (29.31°N, 78.93°E; c.257m asl)	A bird observed at Tumaria Reservoir, located on the southern boundary of Corbett Tiger Reserve, and described as 'having overall drab coloration, small size, yellow iris, bill and legs and rufous in the tail', by an experienced bird guide from Corbett Tiger Reserve	Devender Singh Negi	Devinder Singh Negi, <i>verbally</i> , dated 15 December 2016
22 January 2017	Tumaria Reservoir	One bird photographed	Manoj Sharma	

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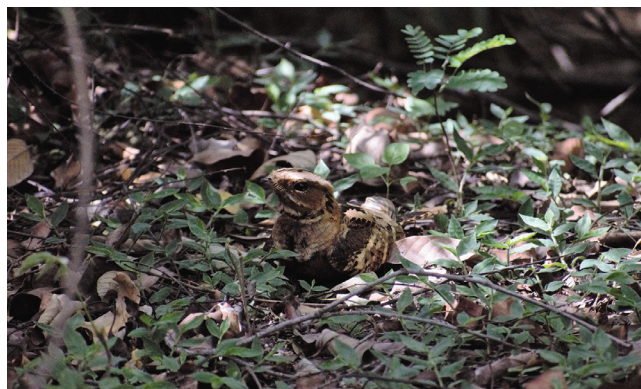
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Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus* from Jammu & Kashmir, India

On 28 April 2019, at 1330 h, two of us (PC and AK) went to Chowki-Choura (32.94°N, 74.60°E), 52 kms north-westwards of Jammu, in Jammu & Kashmir, for bird photography. We were searching for birds along the banks of a small stream. The area had big rocks, dense mixed vegetation with coniferous as well as deciduous trees, some shrubs, and epiphytes. Suddenly two birds flushed from the litter of leaves and one of them provided me an opportunity to click a photograph [175]. Later we identified it as a Large-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus macrurus* after finding characters like, long tail, black and gold scapular stripes, white throat patches, barred breast, and pale bars on wing coverts (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; Grimmett et al. 2011). On 30 April 2019 PC and AK, along with Parmil Kumar and Parvez Shagoo, again visited the same spot at 0600 h and once again found a pair of nightjars. This time the birds' vocalizations confirmed their identity.

There is a paucity of information on the status of all nightjar species in Jammu & Kashmir with very few confirmed records within the region. According to Stoliczka (1868), the *Grey Nightjar C. jotaka* was often observed on the road from Simla towards Suket near Kotegurh (the village at the base of Kalkaand, the military posts of Kasauli), in company with the smaller Common Indian Nightjar *C. asiaticus*; whose specimen had been procured from Kishtwar and its extreme boundaries (Ward 1907). As per Ward (1907), Sykes's Nightjar *C. mahattensis* was expected in the plains below the Pir Panjal range, but he provided no evidence. Specimens of the European Nightjar *C. europaeus* from Gilgit had been deposited in the Natural History Museum, London, however, there were no sightings from the Kashmir Valley (Ward 1907). The Jungle Nightjar *C. indicus* was expected to be confined to Poonch, and Jammu, according to Ward (1907), while Grimmett



175. Large-tailed Nightjar.

et al. (2011) map a small, isolated area on the south-eastern border with Pakistan as its summer migration range. The Savanna Nightjar *C. affinis* is a possible species in Jammu & Kashmir with its occurrence close to the borders with Pakistan, Himachal Pradesh, and Punjab (Grimmett et al. 2011). The mythical Vaurie's Nightjar *C. centralasicus* was collected just north of Jammu & Kashmir (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012).

As far as the Large-tailed Nightjar is concerned, Bates (1936) mentioned its presence in the Kishenganga Valley. He recorded four individuals at Pateka Forest Reserve in erstwhile, undivided Jammu & Kashmir (presently, Pakistan occupied Kashmir). Hugh Whistler suggested (*in* Bates 1936) that Bates' records were of the Jungle Nightjar; however, Grimmett et al. (2011) seem to accept the Bates record. Our present photographic record establishes its presence within Jammu & Kashmir.

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White-bellied Sholakili *Sholicola albiventris* feeding on a shieldtail snake *Uropeltidae* sp.

On 28 June 2018, at 0711 h, while birding at the IISER Tirupati-Kodaikanal International School field station campus (10.23°N, 77.49°E) near Bombay Shola, Kodaikanal, we made a curious observation. We would usually see a White-bellied Sholakili *Sholicola albiventris* near a thicket. On that day it was perched on a small bush, and all of a sudden it came down onto the ground