

collected by S. D. Ripley in Nagaland on 03 December 1950 (Yale Peabody Museum 2017), and the other (UMMZ birds #178643) collected by Walter Koelz in Karong, Manipur, on 23 November 1950 (University of Michigan Museum of Zoology 2019).

A search of images posted on [www.orientalbirdimages.org](http://www.orientalbirdimages.org) and specimens collected on [portal.vertnet.org](http://portal.vertnet.org) indicate that while *dabryii* has been recorded in China and Thailand, *isolata* has been recorded in Myanmar, and Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, and Mizoram in India. Therefore, it seems that during its winter/seasonal movements, the distribution of *dabryii* may be limited to an area where it meets *isolata*: south of the Brahmaputra in India on the west, and Myanmar to the east.

We could not trace any photographs of this race from India, and hence ours appears to be a first record after nearly 70 years from India.

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## Reference

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## Asian Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana* in Lava, West Bengal

On 25 October 2019, I visited Lava (27.01°N, 88.63°E; Kalimpong District, West Bengal) to photograph a few specific species of birds. Souvik Debnath, Rishov Pal, and I were busy on the Lava Ladam Road, photographing birds in a narrow creek, when I saw a movement on the ground and spotted a small bird. It was not at all shy and I took a single photograph [234]. It had a yellow iris and orbital ring, and a rufous rump and tail. At that time, we were not sure about the species and thought it was either a Desert Wheatear *Oenanthe deserti* or a Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*. Suddenly the bird landed right in front of us and I was able to take more pictures [235]. Later, with the help of Sandeep Chakroborty, Kanad Baidya, and Biswapriya Rahut we figured out that it was an Asian Desert Warbler *S. nana*. Identification is easy as there are no similar species with such a distinct white eye-ring, yellow iris, and rufous tail.



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234. Asian Desert Warbler in Lava, West Bengal.



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235. Asian Desert Warbler showing clearly the yellow iris.

The Asian Desert Warbler is a bird of the arid landscape, breeding through the northern and eastern regions of the Caspian Sea coasts, north-eastern Iran, much of Mongolia, and north-western China. Its non-breeding range extends from north-eastern Africa, mostly along the Red Sea coast, Arabia, and farther eastwards till north-western India (Aymí et al. 2019). It is a winter visitor to north-western India, mainly Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Haryana and, sparingly, in Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra (Grimmett et al. 2011; Rasmussen & Anderson 2012; eBird 2019): all records north-westwards of a line connecting Mumbai (Maharashtra), Indore (Madhya Pradesh), and Pithoragarh (Uttarakhand). The bird has not occurred further southwards or eastwards from this line, and, hence, is an addition to the avifauna of West Bengal and the eastern most record for the Indian Subcontinent.

## References

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## Common Merganser *Mergus merganser* specimen shot at Isarda Dam, Tonk District, Rajasthan, and its status in peninsular India

The Common Merganser *Mergus merganser* is a fish-eating diver and pursues prey with great agility. It is long-bodied and streamlined, with a long, narrow, hooked red bill that has tooth-like lamellae along its cutting edges, enabling a better grip of its main prey, fish (Mullarney et al. 1999). It obtains its food by diving from the water's surface, swimming with its head underwater until it detects prey, which it pursues underwater (Kear 2005). It is a partial migrant, with birds moving away from areas where rivers and major lakes freeze in the winter, but resident where waters remain open. Northern breeding populations are fully migratory (Snow & Perrins 1998) although breeders in temperate regions are sedentary or only travel short distances (del Hoyo et