

upperparts were brownish grey. Photographs were taken and later send to CA. The Siberian Rubythroat *Calliope calliope* was ruled out as the bird in the photographs had a black breast band and was considerably darker. The prominent white moustachial stripe ruled out the closely related Himalayan Rubythroat *C. pectoralis*. CA identified it as a male Chinese Rubythroat *C. tschebaiewi*, one of the three Rubythroat species found in the Indian Subcontinent.



Himanshu C.

76. Chinese Rubythroat in Uttarakhand, India.

The Chinese Rubythroat was earlier included under the White-tailed Rubythroat, along with three other subspecies: *C. p. pectoralis*, *C. p. bailloni*, and *C. p. confusa* (Ali & Ripley 1987; Grimmett et al. 1998; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). Now it is considered a separate species (Liu et al. 2016; Clements et al. 2019; del Hoyo et al. 2020). Breeding range of Chinese Rubythroat extends from extreme eastern Kashmir, through southern Tibetan Plateau to northern Bhutan, northern Arunachal Pradesh, eastern and north-eastern Tibetan Plateau, central China and extreme northern Myanmar (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; del Hoyo et al. 2020). Recently it was reported from Spiti during summer season, in the neighboring state of Himachal Pradesh (Abhinav & Kuriakose 2019). It breeds between 2,600 and 4,800 m asl, mostly above 4,000 m asl, and winters in the foothills of eastern Nepal, north-eastern India, north-eastern Bangladesh, northern Myanmar, and southern Yunnan (Ali & Ripley 1987; del Hoyo et al. 2020). It is rare in Nepal, but common in the Assam Valley and the South Assam Hills (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012).

New Forest and the Dehradun Valley are well-heeled birdwatching regions (Wright 1957; George 1962; Guha 1967; Mohan 1993, 1997; Singh 2000). There have been no records of the Chinese Rubythroat from Uttarakhand (Ali & Ripley 1987; Mohan & Sondhi 2017; eBird 2020) and the present record is the first for the state. This record is surprising as the species' wintering range starts from eastern Nepal (Ali & Ripley 1987; del Hoyo et al. 2020), which is c.800 km eastwards of this record, and 17 February is too early for spring migration. This single record should be considered as a vagrant record; however birders should remain vigilant for its presence in the foothills of Western Himalayas during winter season.

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On the occurrence of the Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* in Mizoram, India

The Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* is a winter visitor to India (Ali & Ripley 1987). In north-eastern India it is common in Assam (Choudhury 2000). It affects waterbodies including beels, marshes, and riverbanks. In Mizoram, it has not been reported (Choudhury 2005, 2006, 2016). Choudhury (2008) has not included it in the main bird list, but mentioned that it is likely to occur. Lalthanzara & Kasambe (2015) also did not mention anything about the species.

On 21 November 2016, I started a boat journey (country boat fitted with a small motor) along the Assam–Mizoram border, following the Pakwa or Teirei River, a tributary of the Dhaleswari. In its upper reaches this river marks the eastern boundary of the Dampa Tiger Reserve. The objective was to inspect a Border Police Out Post located at Gutguti, in Inner Line Reserved Forest, Assam. At 1035 h, a sandpiper was seen flying on and off (disturbed a bit by the boat), sometimes landing on the sand banks on the right, and sometimes on the left of the river. The right bank was in Mizoram's Mamit District, and the left, in

Assam's Hailakandi District. There were also Common Sandpipers *Actitis hypoleucos* and Little Ringed Plovers *Charadrius dubius* en route, and high up in the sky were several migrating Amur Falcons *Falco amurensis*. I did not make any attempt to identify the waders from the fast-moving boat, but took photographs. A few years later, while checking some photos, I came across this one, a very conspicuous Green Sandpiper, hitherto unreported from Mizoram [77]. The less distinct spots on its upperparts, shorter greenish legs, tail not projecting beyond closed wings, and somewhat larger size, eliminated both, the Wood Sandpiper *T. glareola*, and the Common Sandpiper.



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77. Green Sandpiper in Mizoram, India.

The species has been recorded across the border in Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Bangladesh, and Myanmar, but not near the border as the nearby areas of these countries and states are hilly and mountainous. The bird might be a regular, but scarce, passage migrant along the streams and rivers, which are not accessible to many birdwatchers in Mizoram.

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Black-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata* from Dibang Valley, Arunachal Pradesh, and its status in north-eastern India

The Black-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata* is known to predominantly inhabit coastal habitats. Vagrants have been found

inland upto c.1,600 m from the coast, landing there, presumably, due to unfavourable rainfall patterns—amongst other factors (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; Woodall & Kirwan 2020).

We encountered single birds on two separate days [78] whilst carrying out our routine bird survey (Mohanty 2018a,b; WII 2019). On both occasions, the bird was readily identified by its black cap (or head) and shoulders, purple-blue wings, and its other identifiable features that include a rufous underbelly, white collar and neck (Grimmett et al. 2011).



L: Sumit Aya, R: Arundhati Mohanti

78. Black-capped Kingfisher feeding in Dus Kilo, Arunachal Pradesh.

Our first sighting on the 13 May 2018, was at 0730h. The bird was perched in the lower canopy of a tree in Dus Kilo village (28.63°N, 95.94°E; 894 m asl) and was actively feeding at the time. The second sighting was at 1100h on the 15 May 2018 wherein the kingfisher was perched on a powerline near Atunli Village (28.66°N, 96.03°E; 1,127 m asl).

The aerial distance between the two locations is nine kilometers, and both are in close proximity to the Tangon River. Peak summer, when the birds were seen, is also their breeding season in India (Fry & Fry 2010).

The inland occurrence of this bird is sparsely recorded throughout the Indian Subcontinent with a majority of the records being from the central Indian states. We reviewed all its historical, and contemporary records from north-eastern India, primarily using the eBird range map, and subsequently delving into published records (Fig. 1). We found that it has been recorded as an occasional visitor/vagrant to the north-eastern states known as the seven-sisters (Table 1).

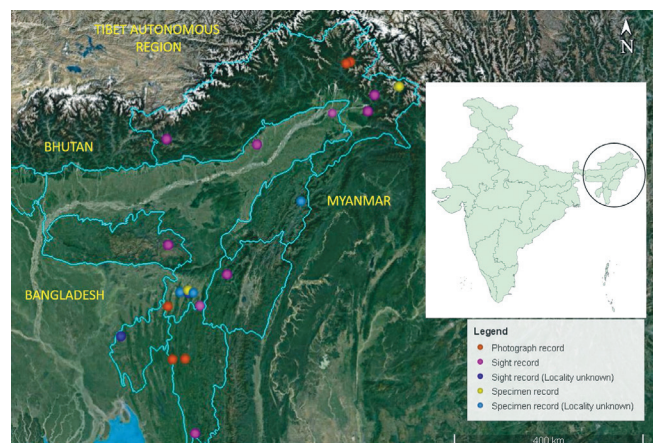


Fig. 1. Past and present records of the Black-capped Kingfisher from north-eastern India. [The boundaries depicted in the map are only for illustration, and may not be accurate.]