

help to better understand these charismatic birds and the dynamic stream-loving passerine community of the Himalaya.

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- Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* in Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh**
- The Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* is a winter migrant to eastern India, the Andaman Islands, and other Asian countries (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; Grimmett et al. 2011; SolB 2020). Arriving in the non-breeding season (August–April), the Dusky Warbler is known to occur in foothill habitats, skulking in low vegetation (scrub and open plains with low bushes, trees), and edges of cultivation, frequenting long grass near water, damp cultivation, and mangroves (Clement 2020). It is commonly seen in north-eastern India and the eastern state of Orissa (Inskipp 2015). There are, however, only a handful of confirmed records of the Dusky Warbler from southern India (Table 1).
- On Monday, 08 March 2021, at 0730 h, we visited Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary (17.81°N, 83.33°E), Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, to look for birds. The area has a small pond that was partially dried up, with damp patches of uneven mud interspersed with small grass, where we found a breeding pair of Little Ringed Plovers *Charadrius dubius* with two recently fledged chicks. Over the course of 1.5 h we were able to observe 37 species of birds here (Rajiv R. 2021). After birding in the area, at 0815 h we returned to the road where the car was parked and stopped to take a final peek at the pond. Suddenly, a bird appeared out of the low undergrowth to investigate its surroundings. The size and shape of the bird suggested that it was a warbler, but it was distinctly smaller and darker than the Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* that we saw in the area that morning. The bird sat on some leafless twigs and branches protruding over the waterbody, flicked its wings a few times, and hopped between adjacent branches. It was not disturbed by our presence and we managed to get a few photographs [133, 134] before it disappeared into the bushes. The bird did not call in the 4–5 min it was visible to us.

## Correspondence



133. Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

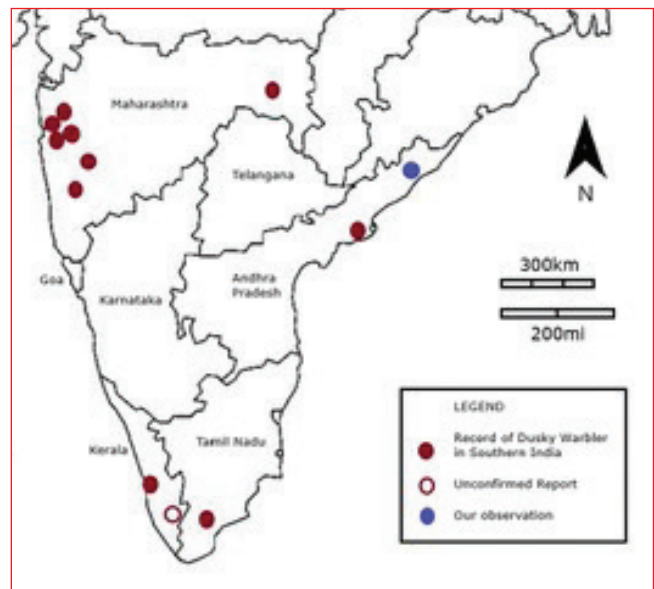
**Table 1.** Consolidated details of Dusky Warbler records from southern India

Date	Place	State	Reported by	Photo (Y/N)	Reference
18 March 1946	Pune, Pune District	Maharashtra	H.G. Alexander	N	Alexander 1948
1989	Periyar, Idukki District	Kerala	Arun K. Bose, Jon Curson, and Nigel Jarman	N	Unconfirmed sighting (Bose et al. 1989)
13–16 January 2001	Mahabaleshwar, Satara District	Maharashtra	Nick Dymond	N	Dymond 2003
20 January 2002	Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Mumbai County	Maharashtra	Shashank Dalvi	N	Pandya et al. 2016; Shashank Dalvi, <i>in litt.</i> , Facebook message dated 22 July 2021
14 March 2012	Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Chandrapur District	Maharashtra	Ameya Joshi	Y	Joshi 2012
15 December 2013	Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Mumbai County	Maharashtra	Parvish Pandya, Vikrant Choursiya, Jyoti James	Y	Pandya et al. 2016; Choursiya 2013
25 February 2014	Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Mumbai County	Maharashtra	Vikrant Choursiya	N	Choursiya 2014
01 March 2014	Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Mumbai County	Maharashtra	Yogesh Patel	N	Patel 2014
02 December 2018	Rajapalayam Water Reservoir, Virudunagar County	Tamil Nadu	Marina Sentis Vila, Aravind A. M., Bharath Kumar, Dipu Karuthedathu, Divya Subramani, Ganeshwar S. V., Josep Ramoneda, & S. Vishnusankar	Y	Vila et al. 2018
14 December 2019	Ernakulam County	Kerala	Chins Chandran	Y	Chandran 2019
08 December 2020	West Godavari County	Andhra Pradesh	Kunaparaju Shanmukha Varma	Y	Varma 2020
08 March 2021	Visakhapatnam County	Andhra Pradesh	Rajiv Ramaswamy, Sumiti Saharan, & Suvarnalata Xanthate Duggirala	Y	Rajiv R. 2021

**134.** Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

The bird was a medium-sized warbler with a dark brown back, pale underparts with light brown flanks, prominent supercilium projecting over the ear-coverts and contrasting with a broad dark eye-stripe, and a dark bill with a pale base to the lower mandible (Rajiv R. 2021). All these features helped us identify it as a Dusky Warbler.

This is the first report of a Dusky Warbler from Visakhapatnam, and only the second report from Andhra Pradesh (Pittie 2013) with the first sighting coming in December 2020 (Varma 2020) from Perupalem, West Godavari District, about 300 km away from our location. The authors traced other confirmed southern Indian records of the Dusky Warbler (Fig. 1) represented in field

**Fig. 1.** Distribution of the Dusky Warbler in southern India

guides (Grimmett et al. 2011; Kazmierczak 2000) and other existing literature and found multiple records from Maharashtra (Alexander 1948; Dymond 2003; Joshi 2012; Choursiya 2013; Choursiya 2014; Patel 2014; Pandya et al. 2016; Shashank Dalvi, *in litt.*, Facebook message dated 22 July 2021), along with individual records from Tamil Nadu (Vila et al. 2018) and Kerala (Chandran 2019). There were no reports from other southern states such as Karnataka, Telangana, or Goa. We found one

unconfirmed report from Kerala. As per our communication with Tim Inskipp (Tim Inskipp, *in litt.*, Facebook message dated 13 July 2021), the record from Kerala in 1989 refers to an unpublished report from Periyar between 30 December 1988 and 04 January 1989 (Bose et al. 1989). However, the online copy of this publication, available in the public collections of the Inskipp (see Bose et al. 1989), is incomplete and only has details of the Nepal section of the trip report. Although represented in the field guides mentioned earlier, this record was left out of the updated checklists of the birds of Kerala (Sashikumar et al. 2010; Praveen 2015) and so should be treated as unconfirmed.

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– **Rajiv Ramaswamy, Sumiti Saharan, Suvarnalata Xanthate Duggirala**

Rajiv Ramaswamy, Sector 46, Gurugram, Haryana 122003, India.

E-mail: [rajiv238@gmail.com](mailto:rajiv238@gmail.com) [Corresponding author]

Sumiti Saharan, Sector 46, Gurugram, Haryana 122003, India.

E-mail: [sumiti.saharan@gmail.com](mailto:sumiti.saharan@gmail.com)

Suvarnalata Xanthate Duggirala, Panorama Hills, Yendada, Visakhapatnam 530045, Andhra Pradesh, India. E-mail: [dsx2188@gmail.com](mailto:dsx2188@gmail.com)

## Nesting of the White-bellied Heron *Ardea insignis* in Anjaw District, Arunachal Pradesh, India

The White-bellied Heron *Ardea insignis* is an elusive and rare bird, with an estimated population of c.50–250 adult individuals (BirdLife International 2021a). The White-bellied Heron (hereinafter, WBH) is classified as Critically Endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (BirdLife International 2018), and is listed among the top 100 Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered species (EDGE 2021). Presently, its known distribution is in Bhutan, India, Myanmar, and China. It is presumed to be extinct in Nepal and Bangladesh (White-bellied Heron International Workshop 2015). According to the IUCN/SSC White-bellied Heron Working Group, there are less than 60 confirmed individuals throughout its range (Stanley Price & Goodman 2015). Owing to the limited population size, it has been rated as the rarest heron in the world and finds a mention in the Guinness Book of World Records (Price & Goodman 2015).

In India, recent sightings of the species come from Arunachal Pradesh and Assam (Stanley Price & Goodman 2015). Namdapha Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh, holds the only resident population in India (Maheswaran 2007; White-bellied Heron International Workshop 2015). Mondal & Maheswaran (2014) reported the existence of active nests in Namdapha. Subsequent studies carried out in Namdapha by Mondal (2018) showed a resident population of eight individuals. The remaining sightings were from Manas Tiger Reserve in Assam (Stanley Price & Goodman 2015), and Kamlang Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh.

The WBH's presumed range is covered by—three biodiversity hotspots: Eastern Himalayas, Indo-Burma, and South-West China (Myers et al. 2000); two Global 200 Eco-regions: Terai-Duar savannah and grasslands, and the Eastern Himalaya broadleaf and conifer forest (Olson & Dinerstein, 1998); 20 Important Bird Areas (BirdLife International 2021b); and the Himalaya global centre of plant biodiversity, possibly extending into the Indochina-China centre (Barthlott et al. 2005).

In this note we provide first-hand information about a recent sighting, and first photographic evidence, of the WBH from the fringes of the mountainous Ditchu Reserve Forest in Anjaw District, Arunachal Pradesh. This area lies in the eastern-most corner of India and forms a tri-junction with Myanmar and China. It is a designated Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (BirdLife International 2021b) with high species diversity.