



41. Willow Warbler.



Both: Amit Adhikari

42. Willow Warbler photographed in Middle Andaman.

From the photographs, the bird was greenish brown on the back and off-white to yellowish below; the wings were plain greenish-brown with no wing bars, and it had a yellow supercilium. It differed from a Chiffchaff *P. collybita* in different ways: it had dull olive-green upperparts, off-white underparts, a primary projection that reached only half the length of the tertials, and it constantly flicked its tail. Further, the colour of its legs was not as dark as a Chiffchaff's. The only regular wintering leaf warbler in the wetland habitats of the Andaman Islands is the Dusky Warbler *P. fuscatus* but that species lacks yellow tones as seen in our bird. The lack of a wing bar eliminated other *Phylloscopus* warblers found in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, including Yellow-browed Warbler *P. inornatus*, Arctic Leaf Warbler *P. borealis*, Greenish Warbler *P. trochiloides*, and Large-billed Leaf-Warbler *P. magnirostris*. Both, Pale-legged Leaf Warbler *P. tenellipes*, and Sakhalin Leaf Warbler *P. borealoides* have very pale legs unlike this species. More subtle features like emarginations on the primaries, or ratio of primary projection, cannot be made out from these photographs. However, the combination of a yellowish hue, a somewhat longer primary projection, and olive brown (vs olive green) upperparts eliminate all other possibilities.

The Willow Warbler is a recent addition to the India Checklist, with two individuals being reported from the Punchakkari Wetlands of Vellayani Lake, Kerala, southern India during November 2020 (George et al. 2021), and later from Alappuzha (see footnote in George et al. 2021). While Willow Warblers are rare in South-east Asia, they have been reported

from Borneo on 23 October 2015 (Bakewell 2015). Our record, five days after the Borneo date, and 16 days ahead of the Kerala record, matches with the general timing of migration of Willow Warblers through South and South-east Asia. Retrospectively, this would be the first record for South Asia as it predates all the Kerala birds. With this, we have four records of Willow Warbler from the country in October–November 2020. Care must be taken by visitors to the Andaman & Nicobar Islands to check out every *Phylloscopus* in wetland habitats, particularly during autumn migration.

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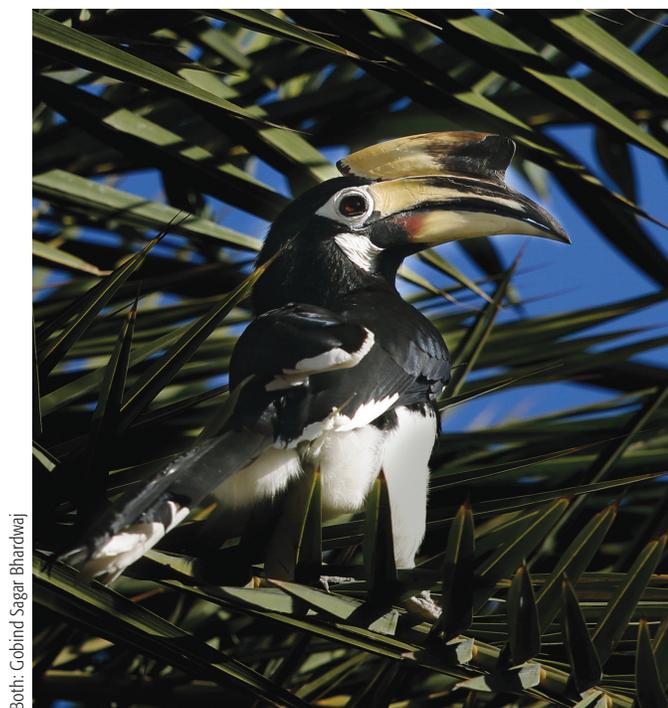
Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris* in Sariska Tiger Reserve: a new species for Rajasthan

The Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros albirostris* is a widespread resident hornbill ranging from northern India (from Haryana) till South-east Asia. The species occurs in forest edges, open, moist deciduous and evergreen forests, riverine forests, and secondary, logged forests, and even in gardens and agricultural fields, usually below 700 m. The species shows a preference for secondary growth and river-margin forests (Datta 1998) and may be temporarily observed in urban India with large tracts of green cover, like Chandigarh and Delhi (A. Datta *in litt.*, 2020).

An Oriental Pied Hornbill was opportunistically sighted by GSB in Pandupol Temple's premises, Sariska Tiger Reserve, a part of the Aravalli Range, on 02 March 2021. Around 0800 h while watching pilgrims feeding *chuga* (grain) to troops of monkeys *Macaca mulatta*, Hanuman langur *Semnopithecus entellus*, wild pig *Sus scrofa*, and Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* in the temple premises (0.58 ha; 27.32°N, 76.43°E), he noticed two House Crows *Corvus splendens* chasing a large-sized bird. The bird moved continuously from tree to tree to avoid the crows. From Kazmierczak (2000) and Grimmett et al. (1999) it was identified



43.



Both: Gobind Sagar Bhardwaj

43, 44. Oriental Pied Hornbill in Sariska Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan, India.

as an Oriental Pied Hornbill. It had a black tail with white tip and white outer tail feathers, bluish gular skin, pattern of black on the base of casque (cylindrical with black patch at tip) were the main features noted. This was a female hornbill due to the smaller and rounded casque with dark colour towards the brownish-red bill-base. It was photographed [43, 44] perched on top of a Date Palm *Phoenix sylvestris* tree. Attempts were made to look for more birds, but we could not find any.

Although the species is sedentary in most areas, it is known to move locally, away from their main habitats, during non-breeding season, and in search of fruiting trees (Kemp & Boesman 2020). Rather than expanding their range they are known to switch to nomadic movements and frequently use forest patches within the agricultural landscape and residential areas (Lenz et al. 2015). The species has occurred at Chandigarh, Delhi (A. Datta *in litt.* 2020) and further westwards up to Mirpur in Poonch, presently in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (Roberts 2002). Frome (1948) recorded it in the gardens of Delhi between 1931 and 1945, between November and February. Gaston (1978) reported it as occasional, reiterating Frome's record, whereas Kalpavriksh (1991) mentioned this bird as vagrant and rare for Delhi. It is still considered vagrant in Delhi with most recent records in spring and summer and some of these main pertain to same individual (Vyas 2019).

The hornbills vary widely in their ability, or willingness, to cross unsuitable areas like agricultural fields or degraded areas, to track fruiting trees (Kinnaird & O'Brien 2007). Away from its distribution range along the Terai belt of the Himalayan foothills, the Oriental Pied Hornbill has occurred southwards and westwards in the remaining forest or woodland blocks scattered across the agricultural and degraded landscape of India. This stray bird that we report might have travelled 100–320 km from the Terai Arc, flying over agricultural fields or unsuitable areas (see Table 1).

Table 1. Records of the Oriental Pied Hornbill, away from the Terai region in northern India between 2016–2022

Name	Date	No.	Reference
Aravalli Biodiversity Park, Delhi	04.05.2013	1	Sultana 2013
Aravalli Biodiversity Park, Delhi	20.06.2019	1	Sharma 2019
Bah, Agra, Uttar Pradesh	28.12. 2008	3	Abwooli 2008
Bah, Agra, Uttar Pradesh	02.12.2016	2	Lu 2016
Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh	15.05.2021	1	Dasgupta 2021
Chhatbir outskirts, S.A.S. Nagar, Punjab	27.04. 2019	1	Waraich 2019
Delhi Cantonment, New Delhi	01.04.2019	1	Sachdeva 2019
Hauz Khas Forest, New Delhi	27.02.2018	1	Joshi 2018
IIT Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh	31.07.2016	1	Deepak 2016
JNU Campus, New Delhi	14.09.2019	1	Singh 2019
Mangar Bari, Gurgaon, Haryana	17.03.2018	1	Prakash 2018
Nagar Van, Chandigarh	24.06. 2018	1	Singh 2018
Nagar Van, Chandigarh	02.02. 2019	2	Chaudhary 2019a
Nagar Van, Chandigarh	12.08. 2019	1	Chaudhary 2019b
Nagar Van, Chandigarh	19.03. 2020	2	Boparai 2020
Nagar Van, Chandigarh	07.06. 2020	1	Grewal 2020
National Chambal Sanctuary, Jaitpur, Uttar Pradesh	02.12.2016	1	Purohit 2016
Okhla Bird Sanctuary, Uttar Pradesh	20.04.2016	1	Waraich 2016
Panna NP, Madhya Pradesh	28.02.2019	1	Roy 2019
Punjab University, Chandigarh	11.01.2016	1	Bansal 2016
Saraia Toria, Chhatarpur, Madhya Pradesh	02.04.2021	2	Datta 2021
Sector 64, Chandigarh	23.06.2017	1	Aravind 2017
SGPGI campus, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	16.09.2020	4	Lawrence 2020a
SGPGI campus, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	09.10.2020	1	Lawrence 2020b

Although the species has occurred in Chandigarh, Punjab, New Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh, hitherto it was not recorded in Rajasthan, making this record not only its first photographic record from Sariska Tiger Reserve, but also the first of the species from Rajasthan.

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Grey-crowned Prinia *Prinia cinereocapilla* in Majathal Wildlife Sanctuary: An addition to the avifauna of Himachal Pradesh

The Grey-crowned Prinia *Prinia cinereocapilla* is endemic to the Indian Subcontinent, and found discontinuously from the Himalayan foothills of Uttarakhand to Bhutan (Rasmussen &

Anderton 2012). In Uttarakhand, it is mainly found in Nanital District, however, relatively recently, it has also been recorded from several localities in Dehradun District (Singh 2000; Sondhi 2012; ebird 2021). It was also recorded at Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary, along the Haryana–Punjab state border in 2005 (Singh 2006). Further westwards, a small population was discovered in the Margalla Hills of Pakistan during May 1985 (Roberts 1992). However, the species has not been found in the area, despite considerable effort (Islam & Rahmani 2002). Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) and Grimmett et al. (2011) have asked for verification of this record, as confusion in identification is quite possible. However, Singh (2006) opined that the species might have been present there, but gone extinct later on, or it could possibly be a seasonal migrant to the Margalla Hills. In this note, we present the first record of the Grey-crowned Prinia in Majathal Wildlife Sanctuary, Himachal Pradesh, and the threats it faces.

VKB and RK surveyed the Majathal Wildlife Sanctuary, located in the border areas of Shimla and Solan Districts of Himachal Pradesh, for its faunal assessment from 20 February to 31 March 2021. The sanctuary is bounded in the northern side by the Sutlej River, and to the southern by a mountain ridge. It is an Important Birding Area (IBA Site Code- IN-HP-153) with an area of 3,086 ha (Rahmani et al. 2016).

On 16 March 2021, while returning to the sanctuary headquarters at Chandi, Shimla, after surveying the Matrech beat in the Solan District, VKB saw a small bird jumping in the branches of *Phoenix silvestris*, near Sakor village, Kunihar Tehsil, Solan District (32.31°N, 76.95°E; c. 1,332 m asl). VKB quickly took a record photograph before the bird flew away. The bird couldn't be identified in the field and after returning, its photographs were forwarded to CA and other friends. It was suspected to be a Grey-crowned Prinia, but it couldn't be confirmed as the photographs were not clear enough, and this species could be confused with its congeners. VKB and RK revisited that place on 21 March 2021 to confirm its identification. Six birds were recorded, and decent photographs were captured during this visit. A contrasting blue-grey crown, thin bill, prominent supercilium contrasting with dark eye-stripe and lores, and warm rufous upperparts were clearly seen, which confirmed it as Grey-crowned Prinia [45]. The Striated Prinia *P. crinigera* was also present at the same locality.



45. Grey-crowned Prinia in non-breeding plumage.