

# Taxonomic updates to the checklists of birds of India, and the South Asian region—2022

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Aasheesh Pittie, who has been with this project since its inception, has decided to retire. As a co-author of the first systematic checklist of Indian birds (Manakadan & Pittie 2002) in the post-Ripley era, we benefitted immensely from his generous guidance marked by meticulousness to details, and we thank him for his valuable contributions to the series.

## Introduction

This is the seventh annual taxonomic update after Praveen et al. (2016). Since its last update (Praveen et al. 2021), there were two revisions in IOC taxonomy (Gill et al. 2021, 2022) and one for eBird/Clements (Clements et al. 2021). However, these revisions in global taxonomy have minimal impacts on Indian birds owing to increased alignment between the two authorities, whose consensus has been the basis for India Checklist taxonomy and nomenclature (see Praveen et al. 2020 for details). In this update, we implement a few taxonomic changes relevant to Indian birds, which have been accepted by the global authorities.

Our guiding principle for English names is to maintain a nomenclature that is largely stable, familiar to the local birding community, and aligned to current global usage and taxonomy. We are aware that these premises often tend to negate each other, and we give primacy to their relative strengths on a case-by-case basis so that changes are least disruptive. We regularly seek feedback to take the pulse of the region's birding community in matters of English nomenclature. In addition, we are committed to avoid adopting English names that may have pejorative overtones of race, caste, or religion. We also work towards gradually substituting the qualifier ‘Common’ from English names, as well as eponymous names, in line with global trends. This year, we propose a few changes to the English names, that were in consideration since 2021, to make them more aligned with these guidelines.

## Results

In this update, two new species has been added to the checklist following a split in the regionally occurring forms of a species (Table 1, Table 2). On the contrary, four changes involved extralimital splits of which three resulted in change in specific epithets of regional forms. In addition, change of genus has been effected for eleven species. One species had its species epithet altered. With regard to nomenclature, primary English names of nine species have been changed.

## Conclusion

The International Ornithologists’ Union, in 2020, created a

Working Group for Avian Checklists (hereinafter WGAC) that sought to align the different world avian taxonomies (<https://www.internationalornithology.org/working-group-avian-checklists>). The composition of WGAC included current or past leaders from all four world checklists, though Howard & Moore (<https://www.aviansystematics.org/future-editions>) is not formally participating in WGAC. The goal of the WGAC is to classify Aves to the level of subspecies with information on the original definitions of the taxa (species limits), type localities, sources for taxonomic nomenclature, synonyms, English names, geographic distribution, and other reference data. While the intent of the WGAC is to remain an open-access checklist, this is yet to be made public; nor have timelines been published. However, it is expected that the International Ornithological Congress will—in August 2022 at Durban, South Africa—see some status updates on the current progress of the Working Group. Until that happens, updates to the India Checklist, based on our ‘consensus model’ will continue.

**Table 1. Taxonomic rank summary**

	South Asia	Indian Subcontinent	India
Order	26	26	26
Family	116	116	113
Genus	507	502	491
Species	1439	1419	1348

## Acknowledgements

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**Table 2.** Annotated list of taxonomic updates and nomenclatural changes to the Checklist of the Birds of India, and the South Asian region

S. No.	English name	Scientific name	Notes on taxonomy / nomenclature	Type of change
1	Marbled Duck	<i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i> (Ménétriés, 1832)	English name changed from Marbled Teal following IOC, Grimmett et al. (2011) and Rasmussen & Anderton (2012).	English name-Independent change
2	Grey Francolin	<i>Ortygornis pondicerianus</i> (J.F. Gmelin, 1789)	Moved from the genus <i>Francolinus</i> following IOC and eBird/Clements, based on the recommendations of Mandiwana-Neudani et al. (2019) and Kimball et al. (2021) <sup>1</sup> .	Genus Change
3	Swamp Francolin	<i>Ortygornis gularis</i> (Temminck, 1815)	Moved from the genus <i>Francolinus</i> following IOC and eBird/Clements, based on the recommendations of Mandiwana-Neudani et al. (2019) and Kimball et al. (2021).	Genus Change
4	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i> (J.E. Gray, 1830)	English name changed from Indian House Swift following IOC, eBird/Clements, Grimmett et al. (2011) and Rasmussen & Anderton (2012).	English name-Independent change
5	House Swift	<i>Apus nipalensis</i> (Hodgson, 1837)	English name changed from Nepal House Swift following IOC, eBird/Clements, Grimmett et al. (2011) and Rasmussen & Anderton (2012).	English name-Independent change
6	Swinhoe's Storm-petrel	<i>Hydrobates monorhis</i> (Swinhoe, 1867)	Moved from the genus <i>Oceanodroma</i> following IOC and eBird/Clements, based on the recommendations of NAAC 2019.	Genus Change
7	Band-rumped Storm-petrel	<i>Hydrobates castro</i> (Harcourt, 1851)	Moved from the genus <i>Oceanodroma</i> following IOC and eBird/Clements, based on the recommendations of NAAC 2019.	Genus Change
8	Matsudaira's Storm-petrel	<i>Hydrobates matsudairae</i> (N. Kuroda, Sr., 1922)	Moved from the genus <i>Oceanodroma</i> following IOC and eBird/Clements, based on the recommendations of NAAC 2019.	Genus Change
9	Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	English name changed from Northern Long-eared Owl following IOC, eBird/Clements, and Grimmett et al. (2011). The qualifier 'Northern' was dropped following change in English name of EL African Long-eared Owl to Abyssinian Owl.	English name-Independent change
10	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i> Linnaeus, 1758	English name changed from Common Hoopoe following IOC and eBird/Clements in line with the increasing global trend to avoid the qualifier 'Common' from English names.	English name-Independent change
11	Kashmir Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga multipunctata</i> Gould, 1849	English name changed from Large-spotted Nutcracker following IOC, eBird/Clements and Rasmussen & Anderton (2012).	English name-Independent change
12	Turkestan Short-toed Lark	<i>Alaudala heinei</i> (von Homeyer, 1873)	Split from Lesser [=now Mediterranean] Short-toed Lark <i>Alaudala rufescens</i> (Vieillot, 1819) following IOC and eBird/Clements, based on the recommendations of Alström et al. 2021a, with regional form persica placed under <i>A. heinei</i> that has been assigned a new English name.	English name & specific epithet change-Species split
13	Siberian House Martin	<i>Delichon lagopodum</i> (Pallas, 1811)	Split from Northern House Martin <i>Delichon urbicum</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) following IOC, based on recommendations of Leader et al. (2021). There is single photographic record from northern Arunachal Pradesh (Sangha et al. 2009, Leader et al. 2021).	Species split
14	Striated Bulbul	<i>Alcurus striatus</i> (Blyth, 1842)	Moved from the genus <i>Pycnonotus</i> following IOC, based on the recommendations of Shaky & Sheldon (2017), Fuchs et al. (2018), and Jha et al. (2021).	Genus change
15	Himalayan Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus leucogenys</i> (J.E. Gray, 1835)	Species epithet <i>leucogenis</i> , as adopted in H&M4, is emended to <i>leucogenys</i> here, following IOC and eBird/Clements.	Species epithet change
16	Himalayan Prinia	<i>Prinia crinigera</i> Hodgson, 1836	English name changed from Striated Prinia following IOC and eBird/Clements after an extralimital split of <i>P. crinigera</i> s.l. (Alström et al. 2020).	English name change-Extralimital split
17	Delicate Prinia	<i>Prinia lepida</i> Blyth, 1844	Split from Graceful Prinia <i>P. gracilis</i> (M.H.K. Lichtenstein, 1823) following IOC and eBird/Clements, based on the recommendations of Alström et al. (2021b), with regional forms <i>lepida</i> and <i>stevensi</i> placed under <i>P. lepida</i> that has been assigned a new English name.	English name & specific epithet change-Species split
18	Pale-billed Parrotbill	<i>Chleasasicus atrosuperciliaris</i> Godwin-Austen, 1877	English name changed from Lesser Rufous-headed Parrotbill following IOC, eBird/Clements and Rasmussen & Anderton (2012).	English name-Independent change
19	Himalayan Thrush	<i>Zoothera salimalii</i> Alström et al., 2016	English name changed from Himalayan Forest Thrush following IOC and eBird/Clements.	English name-Independent change
20	Chinese Thrush	<i>Turdus mupinensis</i> Laubmann, 1920	Moved from the genus <i>Otocichla</i> following IOC, based on the recommendations of Voelker et al. (2007) and Nylander et al. (2008).	Genus change

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S. No.	English name	Scientific name	Notes on taxonomy / nomenclature	Type of change
21	White-tailed Flycatcher	<i>Leucoptilon concretum</i> (S. Müller, 1836)	Moved from the genus <i>Cyornis</i> following IOC, based on the recommendations of Sangster et al. (2021); ending of specific epithet subsequently changed from <i>concretus</i> for gender compatibility. English name changed from White-tailed Blue Flycatcher following IOC and eBird/Clements to avoid name conflict with EL <i>Elminia albicauda</i> Bocage, 1877.	Genus change. English name-Independent change
22	Hill Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis whitei</i> Harington, 1908	Split from Javan Blue Flycatcher <i>C. banyumas</i> (Horsfield, 1821) following IOC and eBird/Clements, based on the recommendations of Zhang et al. (2016); English name retained for the regional form.	Extralimital split & specific epithet change
23	Amur Stonechat	<i>Saxicola stejnegeri</i> (Parrot, 1908)	Split from Siberian Stonechat <i>Saxicola maurus</i> (Pallas, 1773) following IOC and eBird/Clements, based on the recommendations of Zink et al. (2009), and Opaev et al. (2018). English name follows IOC. Specimens documented from Andaman Islands and north-eastern India.	Species split
24	Red Fody	<i>Foudia madagascariensis</i> (Linnaeus, 1766)	English name changed from Madagascar Fody following IOC and eBird/Clements.	English name-Independent change
25	Eurasian Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	English name changed from Common Linnet following IOC, eBird/Clements, and Grimmett et al. (2011) in line with the increasing global trend to avoid the qualifier 'Common' from English names.	English name-Independent change

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