

Taxonomic updates to the checklists of birds of India and the South Asian region—2023

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Introduction

This is the eighth annual taxonomic update after Praveen et al. (2016). Since our last update (Praveen & Jayapal 2022), there were two revisions in IOC taxonomy (Gill et al. 2022, 2023) and one for eBird/Clements (Clements et al. 2022). 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 the 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, that have been accepted by the global authorities (Table 1, Table 2).

Table 1. 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	Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i> (Scopoli, 1786)	Moved from the genus <i>Streptopelia</i> following IOC and eBird/Clements, based on the recommendations from the Working Group for Avian Checklists (hereinafter, WGAC) after Johnson et al. (2001, 2010) and Fulton et al. (2012).	Genus change
2	Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i> (Linnaeus, 1766)	Moved from the genus <i>Streptopelia</i> following IOC and eBird/Clements, based on the recommendations from WGAC after Johnson et al. (2001, 2010) and Fulton et al. (2012).	Genus change
3	Madagascar Turtle Dove	<i>Nesoenas picturatus</i> (Temminck, 1813)	Moved from the genus <i>Streptopelia</i> following IOC and eBird/Clements, based on the recommendations from WGAC after Johnson et al. (2001, 2010) and Wolfenden et al. (2015).	Genus change
4	Malabar Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula cuprea</i> (Jerdon, 1840)	Split from Mountain Imperial Pigeon <i>Ducula badia</i> (Raffles, 1822) following IOC and eBird/Clements, based on the recommendations of Niranjana & Praveen (2021) and WGAC.	Species split
5	Corn Crane	<i>Crex crex</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	English name changed from Corncrake.	English name—Independent change
6	Dusky Eagle Owl	<i>Ketupa coromanda</i> (Latham, 1790)	Moved from the genus <i>Bubo</i> following IOC and eBird/Clements, based on the recommendations from WGAC after Salter et al. (2020).	Genus change
7	Spot-bellied Eagle Owl	<i>Ketupa nipalensis</i> (Hodgson, 1836)	Moved from the genus <i>Bubo</i> following IOC and eBird/Clements, based on the recommendations from WGAC after Salter et al. (2020).	Genus change
8	White-browed Shrike Babbler	<i>Pteruthius aeralatus</i> Blyth, 1855	Treated by H&M4 as two distinct species; <i>Pteruthius ripleyi</i> and <i>Pteruthius aeralatus</i> . <i>Pteruthius ripleyi</i> lumped with <i>Pteruthius aeralatus</i> here with a new English name White-browed Shrike Babbler, following consensus between eBird/Clements and IOC based on the recommendations from WGAC after Reddy (2008), Rheindt & Eaton (2009), and Boesman (2016a).	Species lump and English name change
9	Singing Bushlark	<i>Mirafra javanica</i> Horsfield, 1821	Treated by H&M4 as two distinct species; <i>Mirafra cantillans</i> and <i>Mirafra javanica</i> (Extralimital). <i>Mirafra cantillans</i> lumped with <i>Mirafra javanica</i> here, following consensus between eBird/Clements and IOC based on the recommendations from WGAC after Alström et al. (2013).	Species lump (with EL)
10	Mongolian Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella dukhunensis</i> (Sykes, 1832)	English name changed from Sykes's Short-toed Lark.	English name—Independent change
11	Rufous-crowned Prinia	<i>Prinia khasiana</i> (Godwin-Austen, 1876)	Treated by H&M4 as conspecific with <i>Prinia atrogularis</i> . Given species rank here, following consensus between eBird/Clements and IOC based on the recommendations of Groot (2021) and WGAC.	Species split
12	Black-crowned Scimitar Babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus ferruginosus</i> Blyth, 1845	English name changed from Coral-billed Scimitar Babbler following a species split (see next).	Species split—English name change
13	Brown-crowned Scimitar Babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus phayrei</i> Blyth, 1847	Treated by H&M4 as conspecific with <i>Pomatorhinus ferruginosus</i> . Given species rank here, following consensus between eBird/Clements and IOC based on the recommendations of Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) and WGAC.	Species split
14	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). Though this was proposed in Praveen & Jayapal (2022), it was overlooked in the online Checklist (Praveen et al. 2022).	Genus change

Table 1. 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
15	White-tailed Flycatcher	<i>Leucoptilon concretum</i> (S. Müller, 1836)	Ending of specific epithet changed from <i>concretus</i> for gender compatibility (Sangster et al. 2021). Though the change was proposed in Praveen & Jayapal (2022), it was overlooked in the online Checklist (Praveen et al. 2022).	Specific epithet change
16	Chinese Vivid Niltava	<i>Niltava oatesi</i> Salvadori, 1887	Split from Taiwan Vivid Niltava <i>Niltava vivida</i> (Swinhoe, 1864) following IOC and eBird/Clements based on the recommendations from WGAC after Boesman (2016b).	Specific epithet change–Extralimital split

Table 2. Summary of taxonomic rank

Region	South Asia	Indian Subcontinent	India
Order	26	26	26
Family	117	117	114
Genus	510	504	493
Species	1444	1426	1353

Results

This update has incorporated revisions in the Schedules of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, as amended through the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022, gazetted on 19 December 2022. All the bird species were earlier listed across three Schedules (I, IV, & V) in the Act; with the 2022 amendment, they have now been re-assigned to two Schedules (I & II), taking into cognizance the current conservation priorities. In contrast to the original Act, where bird taxa at the level of genus/family were indicated as a group in the Schedules, the amended Act lists only species-level taxa.

A major addition to this update is the inclusion of the Conservation Concern status from the State of India's Birds Report–2020 (SolB 2020; <https://www.stateofindiabirds.in/>) – the only regional conservation assessment available for India's birds. Of the 867 species assessed, 101 species are categorised as High Conservation Concern, 319 as Moderate, and 442 as Low (SolB 2020).

Our checklists in the past had always followed the Howard and Moore 4th edition (Dickinson & Remsen 2013; Dickinson & Christidis 2014) for species authority field and format. However, from this version onwards, we have commenced independently reviewing species authority and date of publication, particularly in cases where taxonomic authorities differ; this has resulted in a few changes, incorporated in this update. While we continue to review the priority of the scientific names, we shall also now follow eBird/Clements (Clements et al. 2022) for format of the authority field (e.g., titles, initials, placement of initials, etc.). However, our species authority field differs from that of eBird/Clements in 30 instances (Table 3).

We continue to abide by our guiding principle for English names to maintain a nomenclature that is largely stable, familiar to the local birding community, and aligned to current global usage and taxonomy. This year, we propose very few changes to the English names, some of which are forced by taxonomic choices, but a couple of them the result of global alignment.

In this update, one new species has been added to the Checklist following a split in the regionally occurring forms of a species. One change involved an extralimital split that resulted in a change in the specific epithet of the regional form. In addition, change of genus has been effected for six species, including one previous change that was inadvertently left out in the last update.

Table 3. Species for which authority, year, or addition of parentheses in the South Asia list is different from eBird/Clements (Clements et al. 2022)

No	Species	Authority	eBird/Clements	Remarks
1	Jungle Bush Quail <i>Perdica asiatica</i>	(Latham, 1790)	Latham, 1790	Parenthesis needed. Protonym of genus <i>Perdix</i> .
2	White-throated Needletail <i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	(Latham, 1801)	(Latham, 1802)	Follow Dickinson & Remsen (2013) for dating as 1801. Also see Schodde et al. (2010), and Dickinson et al. (2011): 115 in support.
3	Pacific Swift <i>Apus pacificus</i>	(Latham, 1801)	(Latham, 1802)	Follow Dickinson & Remsen (2013) for dating as 1801. Also see Schodde et al. (2010), and Dickinson et al. (2011): 115 in support.
4	Grey-headed Swampphen <i>Porphyrio poliocephalus</i>	(Latham, 1801)	(Latham, 1802)	Follow Dickinson & Remsen (2013) for dating as 1801. Also see Schodde et al. (2010), and Dickinson et al. (2011): 115 in support.
5	Indian Thick-knee <i>Burhinus indicus</i>	(Salvadori, 1865)	(Salvadori, 1866)	Follow Dickinson & Remsen (2013) for dating as 1865; however see Aimassi (2022) in contrast.
6	Sooty Gull <i>Ichthyophaga hemprichii</i>	(Bruch, 1853)	(Bruch, 1855)	Follow Dickinson & Remsen (2013) for dating as 1853; however, see Dickinson et al. (2011): 115 and Zoonomen (2022) in contrast.
7	Tahiti Petrel <i>Pseudobulweria rostrata</i>	(Peale, 1848)	(Peale, 1849)	Follow Dickinson & Remsen (2013) for dating as 1848; however, see Bruce et al. (2016), and Bruce & Bahr (2020) in contrast.
8	Tropical Shearwater <i>Puffinus bailloni</i>	Bonaparte, 1857	Bonaparte, 1856	Follow Dickinson & Remsen (2013) for dating as 1857. Also see Dickinson et al. (2011): 115 in support.
9	Japanese Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter gularis</i>	(Temminck and Schlegel, 1844)	(Temminck and Schlegel, 1845)	Follow Dickinson & Remsen (2013) for dating as 1844; however see Mlikovsky (2012), and Dickinson et al. (2011): 156 in contrast.
10	Chestnut-backed Owlet <i>Glaucidium castanotum</i>	(Blyth, 1851)	(Blyth, 1850)	Follow Dickinson & Remsen (2013) for dating as 1850. Also see Dickinson et al. (2009) in support.
11	Green Bee-eater <i>Merops orientalis</i>	Latham, 1801	Latham, 1802	Follow Dickinson & Remsen (2013) for dating as 1801. Also see Schodde et al. (2010), and Dickinson et al. (2011): 115 in support.

Table 3. Species for which authority, year, or addition of parentheses in the South Asia list is different from eBird/Clements (Clements et al. 2022)

No	Species	Authority	eBird/Clements	Remarks
12	Blue-tailed Bee-eater <i>Merops philippinus</i>	Linnaeus, 1767	Linnaeus, 1766	Follow Dickinson & Remsen (2013) for dating as 1767. Also see Dickinson et al. (2011): 47 in support.
13	Yellow-crowned Woodpecker <i>Leiopicus mahrattensis</i>	(Latham, 1801)	(Latham, 1802)	Follow Dickinson & Remsen (2013) for dating as 1801. Also see Schodde et al. (2010), and Dickinson et al. (2011): 115 in support.
14	Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot <i>Loriculus beryllinus</i>	(Forster, JR, 1781)	(Pennant, T., 1781)	Follow Dickinson & Remsen (2013) for attributing to Forster.
15	Pied Triller <i>Lalage nigra</i>	(Forster, JR, 1781)	(Pennant, T., 1781)	Follow Dickinson & Christidis (2014) for attributing to Forster.
16	Spot-breasted Fantail <i>Rhipidura albogularis</i>	(Lesson, 1832)	(Lesson, 1831)	Follow Dickinson & Christidis (2014) for dating as 1831. Also see Dickinson (2008) and Dickinson et al. (2011): 120 in support.
17	Striated Grassbird <i>Megalurus palustris</i>	Horsfield, 1821	(Horsfield, 1821)	Parenthesis not needed as protonym of genus is <i>Megalurus</i> and eBird/Clements uses a different genus.
18	Wood Warbler <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	(Bechstein, 1793)	(Bechstein, 1792)	Follow Dickinson & Christidis (2014) for dating as 1793. But see Dickinson et al. (2011): 73 in contrast.
19	White-throated Tit <i>Aegithalos niveogularis</i>	(Gould, 1855)	(Moore, F, 1855)	Follow Dickinson & Jones (2012) and https://www.aviansystematics.org/4th-edition-checklist (contra Dickinson & Christidis 2014 & Dickinson et al. 2006) for attributing to Gould.
20	Fulvous Parrotbill <i>Suthora fulvifrons</i>	(Hodgson, 1845)	Hodgson, 1845	Parenthesis needed. Protonym of genus <i>T[emnoris]</i> .
21	Black-throated Parrotbill <i>Suthora nipalensis</i>	(Hodgson, 1837)	Hodgson, 1837	Parenthesis needed. Protonym of genus <i>[Parus]</i> .
22	Chestnut-cheeked Starling <i>Agropsar philippensis</i>	(Forster, JR, 1781)	(Pennant, T, 1781)	Follow Dickinson & Christidis (2014) for attributing to Forster.
23	Kessler's Thrush <i>Turdus kessleri</i>	(Przevalski, 1876)	Przevalski, 1876	Parenthesis needed. Protonym of genus <i>Merula</i> .
24	Taiga Flycatcher <i>Ficedula albicilla</i>	(Pallas, 1811)	Pallas, 1811	Parenthesis needed. Protonym of genus <i>Muscicapa</i> .
25	White-rumped Munia <i>Lonchura striata</i>	(Linnaeus, 1766)	Linnaeus, 1766	Parenthesis needed. Protonym of genus <i>Loxia</i> .
26	White-rumped Snowfinch <i>Onychostreus tacznowski</i>	(Przevalski, 1876)	Przevalski, 1876	Parenthesis needed as protonym of genus is <i>Montifringilla</i> and we use a different genus than eBird/Clements.
27	Rufous-necked Snowfinch <i>Pyrgilauda ruficollis</i>	(Blanford, 1871)	Blanford, 1871	Parenthesis needed as protonym of genus is <i>Montifringilla</i> and we use a different genus than eBird/Clements.
28	Blanford's Snowfinch <i>Pyrgilauda blanfordi</i>	(Hume, 1876)	Hume, 1876	Parenthesis needed as protonym of genus is <i>Montifringilla</i> and we use a different genus than eBird/Clements.
29	Afghan Snowfinch <i>Pyrgilauda theresae</i>	(Meinertzhagen, R, 1937)	Meinertzhagen, R, 1937	Parenthesis needed as protonym of genus is <i>Montifringilla</i> and we use a different genus than eBird/Clements.
30	Long-billed Pipit <i>Anthus similis</i>	(Jerdon, 1840)	Jerdon, 1840	Parenthesis needed. Protonym of genus <i>Agrodroma</i> .

We have also now made a change in the specific epithet of one taxon, that was to be effected in the last update. With regard to nomenclature, primary English names of three species have been changed in this update.

Conclusion

The International Ornithologists' Union (IOU), in 2020, created the WGAC, which sought to align the different world taxonomies of birds (<https://www.internationalornithology.org/working-group-avian-checklists>). During the International Ornithological Congress in August 2022 at Durban, South Africa, the team published the status of their progress in aligning checklists, but it appears that the first formal publication from WGAC is still a year or two away. Until that happens, updates to the India Checklist, based on our 'consensus model', shall continue. Recommendations from WGAC are already finding their way into IOC and eBird/Clements and four changes in our update also derive from this alignment.

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ERRATA



"In *Indian BIRDS* vol. 18 No. 4, on p.105, photograph 160 was inadvertently cropped, making the caption meaningless. We print the original photo here, with the caption."

160. A couple of possible hybrids and a Dusky Thrush on 3 March 2019 at Mandala Pass, West Kameng District, Arunachal Pradesh by Jonathan Taylor