

of Udaisar Lake (24.57°N, 73.82°E; c.553 m asl) in Udaipur district of Rajasthan. The bird had a brown face with a broad and prominent white supercilium, yellowish chin, whitish underparts, olive-grey upperparts, and a yellowish vent [165]. The location was a popular tourist destination and pilgrimage site of the city.

A flock of 12 birds of the same species was re-sighted at the same site at 0820 h on 17 March 2023 by all authors. This flock was moving in the canopies of *Azadirachta indica*, *Vachellia nilotica*, *Diospyros cordifolia*, *Prosopis juliflora*, and *Holoptelea integrifolia*. The birds were foraging and were making loud and distinctive calls (Fig. 1). These birds were photographed and later identified as White-browed Bulbul *Pycnonotus luteolus* with the help of Grimmett et al. (2011), Rasmussen & Anderton (2012), Kazmierczak & Perlo (2015), and further confirmed by K. S. Gopi Sundar (pers. comm. on 14 March, 2023).



165. Pictures showing the sightings of White-browed Bulbul inside thickets of *Vachellia nilotica* (a) and in *Prosopis juliflora* (b, c).

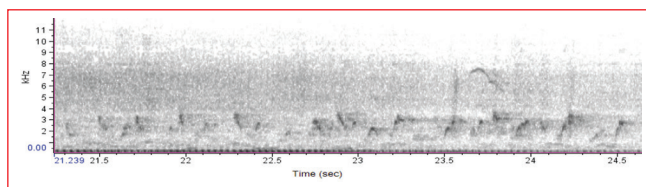


Fig 1. Spectrogram of White-browed Bulbul's calls

The White-browed Bulbul is found in cultivated lands, dry woodland edges, scrub lands, and dense thorny thickets of *Lantana* and *Euphorbia* (Vijayan 1978; Ali & Ripley 1996). The species is widely distributed and endemic to peninsular India (Jha 2023). Its northernmost limit is considered to be Gujarat (Ahmedabad), western West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh (Ali & Ripley 1996; Jha 2023). The present observation site is c.200 km away from Ahmedabad. Records from adjoining Madhya Pradesh district sites are far from the current location and appear to be a recently occupied range (Jha 2023). The species has also recently been reported from Jharkhand (see elsewhere in this issue), implying

that it may be expanding its range northward. It is also possible that birders are becoming more active in these areas. The species has never been observed in Rajasthan, India (Vyas 2014). Hence, the present observation is likely the first confirmed record of this species from Rajasthan. The current observation site of the species has a hilly terrain of Aravallis that extends from Gujarat with patchy vegetation. The species has been confirmed and is frequently seen in Gujarat (Ali & Ripley 1996; Bhatt & Trivedi 2016; Sitapara et al. 2019; Kumar 2022). However, as the present observations in Udaipur were made during winter and early summer, future intensive surveys in this hilly belt between Udaipur and Ahmedabad may identify additional populations of this species. Because the species is quite vocal, call playback may benefit instant surveys.

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A large flock of Slender-billed Gulls *Chroicocephalus genei* from Dhanushkodi, coastal Tamil Nadu

I report a large flock of 500 Slender-billed Gulls *Chroicocephalus genei* seen on the coast of Tamil Nadu. I have reviewed published literature and online references of similar large flocks and summarise my findings.

I was birding in Dhanushkodi in Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu, India on 26 February 2023. At 0900 h, I saw a large flock of Slender-billed Gulls in flight, and on the water in a shallow

lagoon along the coastal strip (9.23°N 79.34°E). I scrutinised the flock through binoculars for 20 min. They were medium sized gulls with a long neck, thin dark red bill, light grey upper-wings, and pale legs. The most striking feature was their pinkish breast and belly. They made harsh *kraaah-kraaah* calls. The flock was large, and I estimated more than 500 gulls by counting in blocks. At the same location there were few Brown-headed Gulls *C. brunnicephalus* for comparison apart from several Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta*.

While the Slender-billed Gull is considered regular on the western coast of India, only a few birds are considered to occur on the east coast of India and Sri Lanka (Grimmett et al. 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012, Burger et al. 2020). Grimmett et al. (2011) mentions that this species is 'probably under-recorded in India'. Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) considers the species as 'rare; except in the north-west and straggling in winter along the western and south-eastern coast coasts of India. According to the State of India's Birds, Slender-billed Gull is a resident and within-India migrant, and its key states are Gujarat, Goa, and Daman & Diu; though the accompanying map does show its occurrence on the east coast as well (SolB 2023).

An online search revealed that such flocks have occurred on the south-eastern coast of India in recent years. Vinod Sadhasivan saw a 'huge flock' of Slender-billed Gulls in 'beautiful pink plumage' at Dhanushkodi in 2022, at the same location and the same month as this report (Vinod 2022). Ajay R has reported 300 from Odiyur lake, Tamil Nadu on 08 February 2018 (Ajay 2018). Geetha Mani has reported 150 from Siruthalai Kadu, Tamil Nadu in January 2022 (Mani 2022). Venugopal S. has reported 320 roosting in Kodiakkadu, Tamil Nadu in February 2019 (Venugopal 2019). A decade back, Mike Prince has reported a flock of 700 from Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu in November 2009 (Prince 2009). Based on this sighting, and others mentioned above, it may be concluded that good numbers of Slender-billed Gulls winter on the south-eastern coast of India.

I am grateful to the two young researchers from Pondicherry, who guided me to this site.

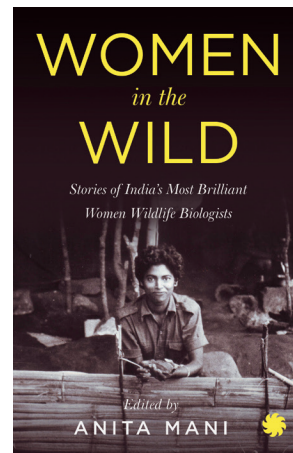
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Book review



*Women in the Wild.
Stories of India's
Most Brilliant Women
Wildlife Biologists*

Edited by Anita Mani.
2023.

Published by Juggernaut,
2023.

Pp. 1 –271

In February 2015, I watched with great intrigue a pair of Painted Spurflower *Galloperdix lunulata* synchronise a dance step of short backward shuffles as they foraged in Pant Wildlife Sanctuary in Rajgir, Bihar. My remit was to prepare a management plan for Rajgir, and I was trying to cobble together a wildlife history of the area. I remember thinking then that there was a dearth of information on the birds of Rajgir. Even species like the Orange-headed Thrush *Geokichla citrina*, appeared to be new records, at least according to the bird books and checklists of the day. I did eventually find an old British gazetteer that rather quaintly described the wildlife of the Rajgir hills, including its 'game birds.' But I was left wondering how this tiny, 36-square-kilometre sanctuary had come into being. Imagine my surprise to discover while reading *Women in the Wild*, an anthology of women ecologists, that it was a female ornithologist—Jamal Ara—who had a hand in its creation! If only I had known earlier, her name would have found pride of place in the management plan. After all, how many protected areas in India owe their existence to an Indian 'Birdwoman' who once went in search of the Pink-headed Duck? Perhaps I should have dug deep to ferret out this prized nugget of information. But my glossing over of her role is emblematic of the fate of many female wildlife biologists and ecologists—then, and perhaps even today.

As a child, I had seen Ara's booklet on *Watching Birds*, but it probably never dawned on me that this was a book by a woman—a rarity for the time. Perhaps we were conditioned into automatically assuming that most well-known ecologists and naturalists were male. The closest I had come to hearing about female ornithologists was the fabled Usha Ganguli, whose Guide to the Birds of the Delhi Area was a veritable bible for the Delhi birder of yesteryear. Much later, I came to know of Tara Gandhi and then, in college, about Usha Lachungpa, who also features in *Women in the Wild*. But while names like Salim Ali, Zafar Futehally, Lavkumar Khachar, et al. tripped off our tongues, Jamal Ara's name was lost in the mists of obscurity. Arguably, she had led one of the most interesting—and least privileged—lives amongst her peers. But it took Raza Kazmi, in a masterful piece of sleuthing, to resurrect Ara and ensure that her legacy