

Indian BIRDS

VOL. 8 No. 5

Indian rarities-1
Lohit Valley
Black-browed Tit





Indian BIRDS

www.indianbirds.in

Vol. 8 No. 5

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 5 SEPTEMBER 2013

ISSN 0973-1407

EDITOR: Aasheesh Pittie
editor@indianbirds.in

ASSOCIATE EDITORS: V. Santharam, Praveen J.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Maan Barua, Anwaruddin Choudhury
Bill Harvey, Farah Ishtiaq, Rajah Jayapal
Madhusudan Katti, R. Suresh Kumar
Taej Mundkur, Rishad Naoroji, Suhel Quader
Harkirat Singh Sangha, C. Sashikumar
S. Subramanya, K. S. Gopi Sundar

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Ragupathy Kannan, Lavkumar Khachar

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Clement Francis, Ramki Sreenivasan

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Sharada Annamaraju

LAYOUT & COVER DESIGN: K. Jayaram

OFFICE: P. Rambabu

NEW ORNIS FOUNDATION

Registration No. 314/2004

TRUSTEES

Aasheesh Pittie
V. Santharam, Rishad Naoroji
Taej Mundkur, S. Subramanya,
Suhel Quader, Praveen J.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- To publish a newsletter that will provide a platform to birdwatchers for publishing notes and observations primarily on birds of South Asia.
- To promote awareness of birdwatching amongst the general public.
- To establish and maintain links/liaison with other associations or organized bodies in India or abroad whose objectives are in keeping with the objectives of the Trust (i.e. to support amateur birdwatchers with cash / kind for projects in ornithology).

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Type	Annual	3-year
Individual	Rs. 300	Rs. 900
Student (up to 10th)	Rs. 200	Rs. 600
Institution	Rs. 800	Rs. 2,400
Foreign Individual	\$30	\$90
Foreign Institution	\$85	\$225

Please make payments favouring

NEW ORNIS FOUNDATION

Add Rs. 75/- for outstation cheques.

For online payment:

www.indianbirds.in/Subscribe.html

Send subscriptions to:

New Ornith Foundation, 2nd Flr, BBR Forum, Rd. No. 2,
Banjara Hills, Hyderabad 500034, India.

CONTENTS

113

Notes on Indian rarities—1: Seabirds
Praveen J., Rajah Jayapal & Aasheesh Pittie

126

Birding in Lohit Valley, Arunachal Pradesh
Neeta Gode

128

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus*
off the north-western coast of India
Abhishek Jamalabad

129

Mascarene Petrel *Pseudobulweria aterrima* from Mumbai:
A correction
Praveen J., & Lim Kok Peng Kelvin

130

Elliot's Laughingthrush *Trochalopteron elliotii* and
Black-headed Greenfinch *Chloris ambigua* from Anini,
Arunachal Pradesh, India
Shashank Dalvi

131

Short-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna tenuirostris* from
Namkhana, West Bengal: A first record for India
Paritosh Giri, Ajanta Dey & Sumit K. Sen

132

Sighting of Mongolian Gull *Larus [vegae / smithsonianus]* mongolicus at Chilka, Odisha
Srimonti Dutta

133

Lord Derby's Parakeet *Psittacula derbiana*, and Black-headed
Greenfinch *Carduelis ambigua* in Arunachal Pradesh, India
Arun P. Singh

134

First record of Tristram's Bunting *Emberiza tristrami* from India
Rohit Naniwadekar, Ashwin Viswanathan, Raman Kumar &
Shashank Dalvi

135

First record of Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris*
from Bangladesh
Paul M. Thompson, C. M. Reza & Enam Ul Haque

136

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*: A first record for Ladakh
Martin Kelsey

137

The Black-browed Tit *Aegithalos bonvaloti* in Arunachal
Pradesh: A new species for the Indian Subcontinent
Harkirat Singh Sangha, Manoj Sharma & Atul Jain

139

Letter to the Editor

140

Snapshot Sightings

FRONT COVER: Jouanin's Petrel *Bulweria fallax*.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Shantanu Prasad.

BACK COVER: South Polar Skua *Stercorarius maccormicki*.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Mohanram Kemparaju.

Notes on Indian rarities–1: Seabirds

Praveen J., Rajah Jayapal & Aasheesh Pittie

Praveen J., Jayapal, R., Pittie, A., 2013. Notes on Indian rarities–1: Seabirds. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (5): 113–125.

Praveen J., B303, Shriram Spurthi, ITPL Main Road, Brookefields, Bangalore, Karnataka 560037, India. Email: paintdstork@gmail.com

Rajah Jayapal, Sálím Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Anaikatty (Post), Coimbatore 641108, Tamil Nadu, India. Email: rajah.jp@gmail.com

Aasheesh Pittie, 2nd Floor BBR Forum, Road No. 2, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad 500034, Andhra Pradesh, India. Email: aasheesh.pittie@gmail.com

Dedication: We dedicate this project to the memory of Padmashri Zafar Futehally (1920–2013), a doyen of the birding fraternity in India.

Introduction

In common parlance, a bird checklist simply means a list of birds found in an area. But, in its strictest sense, it refers to a systematic and comprehensive list of bird species that have been recorded reliably from an area in the past (Campbell & Lack 1985). It then follows that a checklist ought to be based on indubitable records backed by verifiable evidences. As such, a definitive checklist of birds for India does not exist. The only regional work that came close to it was the *Synopsis* (Ripley 1961, 1982), which was, however, less exacting on the merit of the records as its focus was primarily on taxonomy and distribution. Manakadan & Pittie (2001) was another notable attempt to create a working list, but their main aim was standardisation of nomenclature. Regional bird-guides (e.g., Ali & Ripley 1983; Grimmett *et al.* 1998; Kazmierczak 2000), have an ostensibly limited scope in this regard, as field-guides, per se, have a much larger mandate in terms of geographical and species coverage. Still, lists are commonly drawn from these field-guides. An unfortunate fallout is that several contentious species, with dubious provenance, have crept into such lists virtually unchallenged, often abetted by the professional standing of the observers and/or the periodicals they are published in. The biggest lacuna in the present system is the absence of a dedicated group such as an Indian Bird Records / Rarities Committee to undertake independent in-depth assessment of each rarity report and maintain an 'official' bird list for the country.

Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) was probably the first contemporary work on Indian birds to have reviewed nearly all the species records independently and to have classified them as 'established,' 'hypothetical,' and 'possible' for South Asia. Though their work provides the most comprehensive checklist for South Asia to date, it cannot be adopted for India, without further scrutiny, primarily because the authors' decision to include a species in the list is evidently based on the veracity of its record(s) for South Asia and not necessarily from within the political boundaries of India. Moreover, their criteria of specimen-based evidence for acceptability of records excluded a few species for which well-documented records, other than specimens, exist. There have also been a couple of species recorded as new to both, South Asia and India, since the publication of the second edition of their work (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012).

Therefore, we decided to evaluate all the species of birds that have been reported from India in the past, and prepare an objective bird list that only includes species with definite provenance, arrived through extensive consultations with various authorities and reviewers (see Acknowledgements). In the course of our review process, it became clear that we must first draw up annotated notes on the rationale for including or excluding every

contentious species, before a final list is published. We present these annotated notes here, as a series of parts, at the end of which a systematic checklist of Indian birds (hereafter India Checklist) will be published.

Geographical Limits

All records from within the political boundaries of India, as defined by the Government of India, are considered for this exercise. For oceanic birds, a distance of 200 nautical miles (370.4 km) from the nearest Indian coast, including the islands, is considered as the limit. If this overlaps with the same distance from a neighbouring country, the median between the coasts of the two countries is considered as the maritime boundary. In case of a record for which no absolute coordinates are given, but which was purportedly obtained between two countries, it is treated as valid for both the countries. This, we believe, is pragmatic, rather than treating such a record as invalid for either of the countries or for both.

Methodology

To begin with, we researched the ornithological literature of the Indian Subcontinent, using Pittie (2011) to draw up a list of bird species whose records from India were either tentative or suspect, and which required review through consultation with a wide spectrum of field ornithologists. Admittedly, a majority of birds in the Indian list have verifiable specimen records in various museums of the world thanks largely to the legacy of British naturalists and explorers [see Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) for information on museums with significant holdings of specimens of Indian birds]. Still, a large number of species had to be flagged for a re-evaluation of their records.

Typically, we documented all historical records of a species along with our preliminary appraisal based on the merit of each case. We then tried to contact, wherever possible, the original observer, or the author who published an observation, to elicit additional information. Simultaneously, we referred the matter to our expert reviewers for an independent assessment. Reviewers were chosen considering their expertise with pertinent taxa.

Specimens, and published photographs (print or online), followed by documented instances of birds in the hand, are given the highest priority in terms of reliability. In the absence of such robust proof, detailed published notes are given preference over published / unpublished information that is found wanting in detail. Please refer to Table 1 for different assessment criteria in the order of precedence for accepting a record. Species that do not conform to these criteria have been summarily excluded from the India Checklist.

If the original observer, or a subsequent reviewer, had expressed reservations over the veracity of identification, we treat the record as doubtful, even if it were uncritically accepted in popular works—unless we obtain fresh evidence. Sight records of species that are difficult to identify in the field, and would otherwise demand accurate and detailed documentation are treated as tentative. Even when a species is easily identified in the field, and its report is a first for the country, the record will not be considered if the description does not discuss the identification in detail. Mutually substantiating observations are treated with caution, as any error of judgment in the first instance is likely to be perpetuated in subsequent observations.

During the literature survey, we attempted to chase down every primary publication on the region's rarities; this was complemented by information sourced from select grey literature—unpublished trip reports, e-group messages, web blogs, and sometimes, personal communications. The RNBWS database, for example, was used to list all the records of pelagic birds from the Indian seas, but each record was cross-checked with its published source, i.e., the Society's journal, *Sea Swallow*. Any record that did not match was either rejected or classified as suspect.

We did not, however, visit any of the museums to verify specimens. We have largely depended on published museum catalogues, though we did contact the respective museum curators, on a case by case basis, to ascertain the existence of a certain specimen in their collections.

For this project, i.e., the planned series of annotations, culminating in the India Checklist, we follow the taxonomic listing of Dickinson & Remsen (2013).

In this series, we intend to provide concise accounts of rarities—species that do not have more than ten independently confirmed records, from India until 15 August 2013. These may sometimes include species not reported from India but listed in some checklists on the basis of reports from neighbouring countries. Wherever it is required to discuss the status of a species in other parts of South Asia, we have done so. For species with more than three confirmed records, a table is provided, and for species with more than five confirmed records, a distribution map is provided with keys as defined in Table 1.

Table 1. Criteria for inclusion of a species in the India Checklist
Criteria

Evidence available as a validated specimen in a museum
Evidence available as a validated photograph in a publication and/or in an open-access website
Evidence available as a validated call recording in publication and/or in an open-access website
Evidence available as a well-documented specimen, alive or dead, that is not preserved but handled and identified
Evidence available as well-documented observational sight record

Table 2. Abbreviations used in the text
Reference

Abbreviations	Reference
AMNH	American Museum of Natural History (www.amnh.org)
BMNH	Natural History Museum, London (www.nhm.ac.uk)
BNHS	Bombay Natural History Society
BSA	Rasmussen & Anderton (2005)
BSA2	Rasmussen & Anderton (2012)
FMNH	Field Museum of Natural History (http://fieldmuseum.org)
Hbk	Ali & Ripley (2001)
OBI	Oriental Bird Images (www.orientalbirdimages.org)
RNBWS	Royal Naval Birdwatching Society (www.rnbws.org)
UMMZ	University of Michigan—Museum of Zoology (http://www.lsa.umich.edu/umzm)
ZSI	Zoological Survey of India

In this first part, we present annotated notes on 30 species of seabirds, from the following families:

- Phaethontidae (Tropicbirds)
- Oceanitidae (Austral/Southern storm-petrels)
- Hydrobatidae (Northern storm-petrels)
- Procellariidae (Petrels and Shearwaters)
- Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)
- Sulidae (Boobies)
- Stercorariidae (Skuas and Jaegers)

Species accounts

Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda* Boddaert, 1783: Hbk includes it based on 'vagrants' reported from the Bay of Bengal. BSA states, "Said to breed [in] Chagos and possibly Nicobars...specimens long ago taken from 'Bay of Bengal' and/or 'Nicobars' and one handled between Nicobars and Sumatra..."

The breeding population in Chagos Archipelago is well known (Bruner 1995) and breeding records from Diego Garcia have been documented at least till March 2002 (Guzman 2003). Gibson-Hill (1950), the only treatise on tropicbirds of the Indian Ocean that formed the basis for all subsequent regional works, indicates that the nominate race breeds around Mascarenes in the western Indian Ocean, and *westralis* breeds in Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands in the eastern Indian Ocean. Hbk lists the species under the nominate race, though it admits in the text that the regional birds may belong to *westralis*. Most reports of juveniles from north of the equator have been of misidentified White-tailed Tropicbirds *P. lepturus* (Gibson-Hill 1950). The reference to 'Bay of Bengal' and/or 'Nicobar' has its origins in Hume (1874), wherein, "Blyth mentions the receipt of a specimen of this species which he calls *aethereus* from the Nicobars. We neither obtained nor saw this species, but it occurs I know in the Bay of Bengal, although despite what Blyth says I believe that it is less common in our Indian waters than either of the other two species." Interestingly, Hume (*ibid.*) went on to describe a specimen in the same account as follows: "...a very fine male killed in the Bay of Bengal differs *toto caelo* in measurements and description from those given in Dr. Jerdon." Gibson-Hill (1950) wondered if the latter was the same specimen obtained by Blyth or an additional one from the Bay of Bengal (and this ambiguity has been carried forward till the BSA). However, a close perusal of the account would clearly reveal that it was a different specimen though its details were not given by Hume. Jerdon's remark (Baker & Inglis 1930) that it had been obtained from Bay of Bengal was replete with confusion as in the same sentence he mentioned a Cachar record of this species. However the Cachar record was reported as *P. lepturus* (vide Baker 1899). F. G. H. Allen collected an immature male that came on board a ship between the Nicobars and the northern point of Sumatra, and which was examined at the Raffles Museum, Singapore (Gibson-Hill 1949). The specimen was captured nearly 2000 km from the nearest breeding ground of *westralis* and nearly 5000 kms from the Mascarene Island (2500 km from Chagos) where the nominate race breeds. This prompted Gibson-Hill (1950) to suggest that there might be an undiscovered breeding site near the Nicobars from where the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea specimens would have originated. However, 60 years hence no fresh evidence has sprung up and therefore that theory has little standing. The whereabouts of the Nicobar specimen are not known and hence that record should be treated as provisional.

Though Hume's description of the specimen is succinct, it is not clear whether its location is within Indian waters or beyond. However, the well-documented specimen (ZRC #3.00081) in the Raffles Museum (Morioka & Yang 1996) should be treated as a record for both the Nicobars and Sumatra, and is here considered as conclusive evidence for the species' entry into the India Checklist. As presumed by Gibson-Hill (1950), the regional occurring race is probably *westralis*.

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus* Daudin, 1802: Hbk and BSA include it based on specimens from the Andamans. Hbk additionally states it breeds there. BSA mentions of an inland specimen from Cachar, Assam. The only record from the Andaman Islands is described by Hume as, "Colonel Tytler himself shot a fine specimen at Ross Island that for some days had constantly hovered about in the neighbourhood of this dove-cot apparently attracted by the white pigeons he had in it," (Hume 1874). However, it is unclear on what basis Hbk indicates it breeds there. A set



Fig. 1. White-tailed Tropicbird. Map: S. Subramanya.

of ten June–August sight records of this species reported from Chennai during 1984–1986 (Sridhar & Sriram 1986; Sridhar 1987; Sriram & Sridhar 1985) are not considered here as no other observer has reported this species, before or after, from that area, and all Indian records are from January–April. Other records of the species from Indian limits are shown in Fig. 1, and listed in Table 3 and its occurrence in the country is confirmed by two specimens, one preserved tail, and two recent photographs. Therefore, the species is included in the India Checklist.

White-faced Storm-petrel *Pelagodroma marina* (Latham, 1790): Not included in Hbk. BSA indicates, "recent sight reports only," but does not mention any specific record. BSA's statement, "...Regular northward (mostly May–Jul) migrant from seas between Nicobars and S. Sri Lanka to Lakshadweep, Maldives and Chagos. Seasonally frequent..." is presumably from Robertson (1995), and/or Voous (1965). However, Mörzer Bruyns *et al.* (1964) point to a specimen collected on 16 May 1958 from

near Sri Lanka (06°00'N, 83°00'E) and deposited in AMNH, now in California Academy of Sciences (#62032, labelled 15 May). There are only four known records from Indian waters (Table 4), of which three are in the RNBWS database; all four are listed by Robertson (1995). All of them fall between 1960 and 1965, which is generally the case with most records from South Asia. There are 17 records, prior to 1965, from the north-western Indian Ocean in an area north of the equator and west of 80°E, all falling between 18 May and 24 July, indicating a summer dispersal (Voous 1965). Current status of this species is uncertain though the species is easily identifiable, and its presence is well-documented from the Arabian Sea. We believe the reported rarity of the species reflects paucity of information rather than a scarce population because of inadequate pelagic surveys in Indian waters. At least two birds from Indian waters were collected (or seen) on board and one bird was well-photographed by N. Bailey but not published anywhere (W. R. P. Bourne *pers. comm.*, July 2013). Considering all these facts, we accept this species in the India Checklist. Specimens from other parts of the Indian Ocean, including the one from Sri Lanka, all belong to the western Australian race *dulciae* (Voous 1965), which is assumed for the Indian records as well.

White-bellied Storm-petrel *Fregetta grallaria* (Vieillot, 1818): Not in Hbk. Hypothetical in BSA, indicating recent sight reports. BSA lists it from Lakshadweep; the Andamans report (Ferrar 1931) is likely Swinhoe's Storm-petrel *Hydrobates monorhis* (see below). Two records from Indian waters in the RNBWS database. The first record was of two birds sighted 100 km west of Kasargod, Kerala (12°21'N, 74°05'E) on 27 July 1967 (Anonymous 1970), but the field description was equivocal and could not completely rule out Black-bellied Storm-petrel *Fregetta tropica* (Praveen 2011). This is the same record included in the Lakshadweep checklist (Robertson 1995; Pande *et al.* 2007). The second record was of two birds reported 300 km west of Malvan, south-western Maharashtra (15°04'N, 70°56'E; indicated as 250 miles west of Goa) on 27 August 1967 with no further details (Anonymous 1970). Identification is complex (see under Black-bellied Storm-petrel) and hence in the absence of a specimen or photograph, all the reports of this species from the northern Indian Ocean are to be treated as inconclusive. Not included in the India Checklist.

Black-bellied Storm-petrel *Fregetta tropica* (Gould, 1844): Included in Hbk based on one 19th century specimen in the BMNH collected from the Bay of Bengal; but original label

Table 3. White-tailed Tropicbird records

Date	Location	Coordinates	Remarks	Reference
Undated	Ross Is., Andamans	11°40'N, 92°45'E	A male shot. Whereabouts of the specimen unknown.	Hume (1874); Butler (1900)
9 April 1877	On river Barrak[=Barak], Cachar, Assam	25°04'N, 92°57'E	A juvenile male bird caught alive; specimen now in BMNH.	Hume (1877)
January 1976	Off Battye Malve, S. of Car Nicobar	08°49'N, 92°50'E	Tail feathers in BNHS. Collected from the staff of the ship, of a bird that took refuge in the ship.	Abdulali 1980, 1981
21 March 1976	N. Cinque Is., Nicobar	11°16'N, 92°41'E	Sight record - probably this species.	Abdulali 1981
1 April 1989	Rameshwaram, Tamil Nadu	09°16'N, 79°18'E	A pair of birds in flight.	Balachandran (1992)
2 March 2006	Kovalam, Kerala	08°23'N, 76°58'E	A bird flying close to beach seen by Lindsay J McDougall	Sashikumar <i>et al.</i> (2011)
18 January 2010	Palavayal, 84 km inland from Kannur, Kerala	12°31'N, 75°41'E	An immature bird recovered, photographed and released next day.	Palot (2011)
18 February 2013	120 km W. of Mithbav, S. Maharashtra.	16°04'N, 72°16'E	A bird photographed and a probable seen in the same area a few days later.	Jamalabad (2013); see elsewhere in this issue.

Table 4. White-faced Storm-petrel records

Date	Location	Coordinates	Remarks	References
24 May 1960	18 km SW. of Minicoy Is.	08°05'N, 73°00'E	Bird on board of ship; photographed	Bourne (1960); Bailey & Bourne (1963)
26 June 1960	105 km W. of Chavakkad	10°30'N, 75°00'E	One bird.	Bourne & Radford (1961), Praveen (2011)
16 September 1961	c. 330 km W-NW. of Sueli Par, Lakshadweep	12°40'N, 68°47'E	One observed	Voous (1965)
12 July 1964	149 km W. of Mangalore	13°00'N, 74°00'E	Bird on board of ship. Location too coarse	Bourne (1966)

lost. BSA states, "Perhaps regular in regional waters," without providing any additional information. The provenance of the BMNH specimen is doubtful, as the label dated 1895 was apparently handwritten by the Ninth Marquis of Tweeddale, who died in 1878 (Gibson-Hill 1948; Robertson 1995). But a clear description and morphometric data exist (Bailey & Bourne 1963) for a bird, which was caught c. 30 km south-west of Minicoy (08°03'N, 72°50'E; indicated as 14 miles south-east of Minicoy) on 9 September 1960 (RNBWS database date 28 May seems erroneous). There was another well-documented sight record of three birds from 250 km west-south-west of North Island, Lakshadweep (08°48'N, 70°17'E) on 20 June 1984 (van den Berg *et al.* 1991). These two records have allowed this species to be listed under Lakshadweep checklist (Pande *et al.* 2007). A sight record of, "a dark storm petrel with white underparts," on 12 April 1977 off Battye Malve, south of Car Nicobar, "may have been this species," (Abdulali 1981). Apart from this, there are a few records from Sri Lanka which also include a sight record of two birds seen south-east of Sri Lanka (van den Berg *et al.* 1991) on the same voyage on which the Lakshadweep bird was sighted, and a more recent sight record off the south-western coast on 7 October 2007 (Pepper & Hettige 2008). The species is accepted into the India Checklist based on the bird examined in hand in 1960, corroborated by the 1984 sight record. The racial status of birds occurring in Indian waters is unknown, but is probably the nominate, as the other race *F. t. melanoleuca* is found mainly in the South Atlantic.

This species is complex in terms of identification and taxonomy as the very similar White-bellied Storm-petrel has also been reported from the northern Indian Ocean. There are several records of *Fregetta* species from the northern Indian Ocean, assigned to either *F. tropica* or *grallaria*. Both the birds are known to have two morphs, one deceptively like the other, and past records with poor descriptions are hard to evaluate. However, in the absence of any well-documented records of *grallaria*, it is believed that all observations of light morph birds are perhaps *tropica* rather than *grallaria*. [Hence the general statement in BSA that it is "regular" in regional waters.] The true status of *tropica* and *grallaria* in Indian waters is still not resolved but birds belonging to either of these species have occurred regularly in the northern Indian Ocean (Cheke 1966).

Band-rumped Storm-petrel *Hydrobates castro* (Harcourt, 1851): Neither in Hbk nor in BSA. BSA2 includes it based on a sight record off the Maldives by Hadoram Shirihai and others in November 2004 (Anderson 2007). Not recorded from India and hence not included.

Matsudaira's Storm-petrel *Hydrobates matsudairae* (Kuroda, Sr., 1922): Not in Hbk. Though well-documented records exist west of Maldives (Bailey *et al.* 1968), it is considered hypothetical in BSA as the records were barely along the political boundaries that define the region. A storm-petrel caught between Lakshadweep and Sri Lanka on 10 June 1923 by H. M. Tomlinson was later identified as a Swinhoe's Storm-petrel by him after he inspected specimens of that species in the Raffles Museum. Tomlinson's bird had not been preserved, allowing W. R. P. Bourne to speculate whether it could have been *matsudairae* (Bourne 1999). Tomlinson described the storm-petrel as, "about the size of a blackbird, and of a uniform chocolate colour." Measurements in BSA, particularly of the 'length' of a Common Blackbird (230–250 mm) are closer to *matsudairae* (195–220 mm) than to Swinhoe's (165–175 mm). About 15 birds were seen 120 km west of Perumal Par, Lakshadweep (11°24'N,

70°48'E) on 1 October 1987 (Bourne 1989). More recently it was photographed from Chagos Islands in November–December 2012 during a pelagic expedition that resulted in 74 sightings, indicating a healthy population (Meeuwig *et al.* 2013). In the absence of any definite sightings from within Indian limits, this species will have to await better documentation to be included in the India Checklist.

Leach's Storm-petrel *Hydrobates leucorhous* (Vieillot, 1818): Neither in Hbk nor in BSA. A single sight record off Maldives exists from April 1998 (Anderson & Baldock 2001). Not recorded from India and hence not included.

Swinhoe's Storm-petrel *Hydrobates monorhis* (Swinhoe, 1867): Hbk and BSA include it based on a specimen from Sri Lanka. BSA indicates that its presence in Lakshadweep

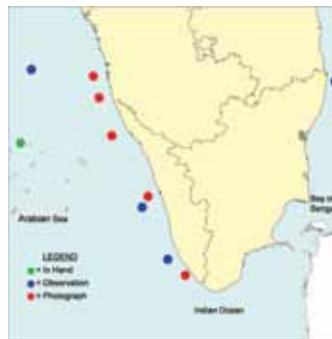


Fig. 2. Swinhoe's Storm Petrel. Map: S. Subramanya.

requires confirmation while the Andaman specimen (Ferrar 1931) of *F. grallaria* is possibly this species; Bailey *et al.* (1968) summarise all Indian Ocean records. Of late, there have been several records (Fig. 2; Table 5), including photographs, from the south-western coast of India (Vivek Chandran *et al.* 2011; Karuthedathu *et al.* 2013b; Praveen *et al.* 2013); the species is, therefore,

admitted to the India Checklist.

Cape Petrel *Daption capense* (Linnaeus, 1758): Included in Hbk and BSA on the basis of a single specimen from Hume's collection, collected before 1870, and now in BMNH. ["... through Mr. H. R. P. Carter, Deputy Chief Engineer of the Madras Railway, I received a specimen from Mr. Theobald, killed in the Gulf of Mannar between Ceylon and the mainland..." (Hume 1870).] Given the very narrow stretch of sea waters that separate Sri Lanka from India, we imply that this record is common to both the countries and hence should be included in the India Checklist. BSA also mentions one other report from Sri Lanka; it was probably Layard's from November 1866 at c. 03°N, south of Sri Lanka (Legge 1983; Robertson 1995). The species is considered a vagrant in the northern Indian Ocean (north of the equator), and it is most likely to be the nominate race for which the nearest breeding grounds are the sub-Antarctic islands south of Indian Ocean.

Trindade Petrel *Pterodroma arminjoniana* (Giglioli & Salvadori, 1869): Not in Hbk but considered hypothetical in BSA based on a 'recent unpublished report.' Kazmierczak (2000) indicates that the first record for the Indian Subcontinent was of a, "...storm-blown bird found in South India in 1996, unpublished at the time of writing." This may also be the BSA's source. However, this record was never published and the same could not be tracked as the purported photo and the email are not traceable (Krys Kazmierczak *pers. comm.*, August 2012). It is often thought to comprise two species *P. arminjoniana* ('Trindade Petrel') and *P. heraldica* ('Herald Petrel'); long considered to be strictly allopatric, a recent study on intergrades from Round Island, Mauritius has established extensive hybridization among the *Pterodroma* petrels in the island despite significant genetic divergences between the taxa (Brown *et al.* 2011). We follow Dickinson & Remsen (2013) in treating these two forms as conspecific given the degree of hybridization and uncertain taxonomy. In

Table 5. Swinhoe's Storm-petrel records

Date	Location	Coordinates	Remarks	Reference
10 June 1923	c. 200 km SW. of Kanyakumari	07°00'N, 76°00'E	One bird reported but see under Matsudaira's Storm-petrel. Location too coarse	Bourne (1999); Bailey <i>et al.</i> (1968)
24 December 1930 (?)	Port Blair, Andamans	11°37'N, 92°45'E	A bird took refuge during SE winds at night and was identified as <i>F. grallaria</i> but the description matches this species, "...it has no white markings whatsoever, barring the extreme bases of certain feathers being white."	Ferrar (1931); Bailey <i>et al.</i> (1968)
8 October 1960	c. 130 km S-SW. of Kanyakumari	07°00'N, 77°00'E	6 birds reported. Location too coarse but likely this species based on recent observations during the same month	Bourne (1965); Bailey <i>et al.</i> (1968)
6 May 1962	c. 80 km W. of Kayankulam, Kerala	09°07'N, 75°39'E	3 dark storm petrels, similar in size to <i>O. leucorhoa</i> , probably this species	Bailey <i>et al.</i> (1968)
20 October 1963	Between Chetlat and Bitra, Lakshadweep	11°40'N, 72°25'E	Caught on a ship, well-described, released with a band	Mathew & Ambedkar (1964a, b)
20 May 1964	c. 30 km W-SW. of Kalpeni, Lakshadweep	09°58'N, 73°22'E	1 probable	Bailey <i>et al.</i> (1968)
14 March 1965	c. 40 km N-NE. of Kavaratti, Lakshadweep	10°53'N, 72°45'E	50–60 small all dark storm petrels most likely this species	Bailey <i>et al.</i> (1968)
15 March 1965	c. 200 km W. of Bhatkal, Karnataka	13°32'N, 72°44'E	One positive, 35 other dark-rumped storm petrels, probably this species	Pocklington (1967); Bailey <i>et al.</i> (1968)
January–April 1987	Islands in Lakshadweep viz., Agatti, Bangram, Tinnakara-Parli, Bitra, & Kadmat	NA	Small numbers – more details unavailable but could have been this species. Coordinates too coarse for listing	Mohan (1989)
31 July 2011	c. 40 km W. of Chettuva, Chavakkad, Kerala	10°25'N, 75°44'E	1 bird photographed along with Wilson's Storm-petrel	Vivek Chandran <i>et al.</i> (2011)
24–25 September 2011	Between c. 22–90 km W. of Azheekkal estuary, Kannur	11°54'N, 74°48'E	4 single bird sightings on first day and 5 on second—some of them photographed. Coordinates taken as a median of extreme points	Karuthedathu <i>et al.</i> (2013b)
15–16 October 2011	Between c. 9–70 km W. of Udupi coast, Karnataka	13°22'N, 74°20'E	29 on each day—several photographed. Largest flock till date (6 birds) recorded during this trip. Coordinates taken as a median of extreme points	Karuthedathu <i>et al.</i> (2013b)
3 March 2012	40 km W. of Mangalore coast, Karnataka	12°51'N, 74°29'E	1 bird photographed	Shivashankar (2012)
30 September 2012	Between 20–50 km W. of Neendakara, Kollam, Kerala	08°54'N, 76°15'E	5 single bird sightings	Praveen (2012)
1 October 2012	c. 10 km W. between Neendakara & Vizhinjam, Kerala	08°30'N, 76°42'E	67 birds recorded, several photographed. Coordinates taken as a median of extreme points.	Praveen (2012); Praveen <i>et al.</i> (2013)
28 April 2013	Around 60 km W. off Kochi, Kerala.	10°10'N, 75°60'E	3 sightings (6 birds) observed	Kartha (2013)
Undated	Andamans Is. Precise location unknown.	NA	A bird in hand identified as probably this species from photographs by Mr. Jijo	Raju Kasambe, <i>pers. comm.</i> , February 2012
3 August 2013	c. 30 km NE. of Chennai	13°14'N, 80°29'E	One bird photographed	Manivannan & Mohan 2013; see elsewhere in this issue

the absence of any published evidence or documentation, this species is not considered for the India Checklist.

Barau's Petrel *Pterodroma barau* (Jouanin, 1964): Not in Hbk. BSA states, "Summer visitor (probably regular) off SW coasts. No regional specimens traced. Scarce (or overlooked)..."

There seem to be no published records from the south-western coast of India, nor are there any records in the RNBWS database. Robertson (1995) lists 14 records from Sri Lankan waters and the northern Indian Ocean including two well-documented independent sightings from the Nine Degree Channel between Maldives and Lakshadweep on 27 June 1985 by the Dutch research ship *Tyro* (van den Berg *et al.* 1991). However, the coordinates of these two records (08°58'N, 73°15'E and 09°02'N, 73°01'E), as given in the original reference (*ibid.*) indicate that these spots are well within Lakshadweep, between Kavaratti and Minicoy Islands. In total, 21 Barau's Petrels were recorded by the survey during June–July in 1984 and 1985, roughly between 63°E in the Arabian Sea and 100°30'E off south-western Sumatra; besides, there were also records from north of the equator, as far as 11°N (van den Berg *et al.* 1991). Though there exist no photographs of the birds seen in Indian waters (Chris Smeenk, *pers. comm.*, July 2013), this species was photographed at several other points in northern Indian Ocean in the same voyage. Since there appears to be no reason to doubt the veracity of the Lakshadweep records, we include the species in the India Checklist. It is likely that this bird has been overlooked in Indian waters as forays into the deep sea during summer are

normally hampered by strong monsoon winds and rough seas.

Soft-plumaged Petrel *Pterodroma mollis* (Gould 1844): Not in Hbk. BSA considers it hypothetical. The only report from South Asia is of a bird seen on four occasions during 7–10 September 1988 from Wellawatte beach, Colombo (06°51'N, 79°51'E), Sri Lanka (De Silva 1989, 2011; Gretton 1990). Since the species is known to winter in temperate waters of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans (Dickinson & Remsen 2013), and there is only one other record from the northern Indian Ocean (Shirihai 1999), its report from South Asian waters needs confirmation (Robertson 1995). The record is also being treated with considerable doubt by the Ceylon Bird Club Rarities & Records Committee (Ceylon Bird Club 2013); hence, the species is not included in the India Checklist.

White-headed Petrel *Pterodroma lessonii* (Garnot, 1826): Not in Hbk. BSA considers it hypothetical. The only report from South Asia is of a bird seen on three occasions (probably the same bird) on 1 September 1990 from Wellawatte beach, Colombo (06°51'N, 79°51'E), Sri Lanka (De Silva 1992, 2011). Robertson (1995) treats the identification as tentative and its presence in the northern Indian Ocean and South Asian waters requires confirmation, given its affinity to temperate and sub-Antarctic waters in winter (Dickinson & Remsen 2013). The record is also being treated with considerable doubt by the Ceylon Bird Club Rarities & Records Committee (CBCRRC; Ceylon Bird Club 2013); hence, the species is not included in the India Checklist.

Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna pacifica* (J.F. Gmelin, 1789): As per Hbk, all records are from Sri Lanka and the

Maldives, and the bird is considered a regular summer visitor to coastal Sri Lanka. BSA adds that it breeds in, "Chagos and present in adjacent waters year-round; regular migrant spring through fall in Maldives and around Sri Lanka, and reported Lakshadweep (May). Also reported off WC Indian coast (Jan). Fairly common." Curiously, these accounts, implying good numbers of the species in South Asian waters west and south-west of the mainland, are in stark contrast to some of the authentic survey reports on pelagic birds of the region (e.g. Bourne 1960; Bailey 1966; van den Berg 1991; Robertson 1995) though it is considered common in the Indian Ocean between south-eastern Sri Lanka and Sumatra. Pre-1955 records could also comprise misidentified Jouanin's Petrel (van den Berg 1991), while some of the records of dark morph birds could refer to the commoner Flesh-footed Shearwater *A. carneipes*. Notably, BSA does not consider the pale morph birds to occur in the northern Indian Ocean though there are three sight reports from Goa (Lainer 2004a, b); it is not clear if these pale birds were Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas*. There are three reports from the seas of Kerala in the RNBWS database, of which two are considered likely (Praveen 2011). Its inclusion into the Lakshadweep checklist is based on two records, one historical and another recent (Kurup & Zacharias 1995) but both records are probably of Flesh-footed Shearwaters. However, it has been photographed conclusively off the Kannur coast in May 2011 and its entry into the India Checklist is based on the same, as other records (Table 6) do not stand scrutiny.

Short-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna tenuirostris* (Temminck, 1836): Hbk and BSA include it for the region based on May specimen from south-eastern Pakistan and south-western Sri Lanka. The Pakistan specimen was taken in 1889 near Ormana, Mekran coast, Balochistan (Cumming 1899; misidentified as *A. pacifica*) and the Sri Lanka specimen in 1949 from the southern coast of Sri Lanka (Phillips 1951). Apparently both cases had birds that were 'wrecked on the beach at the

time of the northward migration in May. A clear example of movement north from the Southern Ocean into the wrong ocean,' (Bourne 1967; Robertson 1995). There are recent sight records from Sri Lanka (Karunaratne *et al.* 1994), and the Maldives, from November 2003 (Anderson 2007). Two recent reports of occurrences in northern Bay of Bengal exist, with photographic proof: one from Bangladesh in April 2008 (Thompson *et al.* 2013; see elsewhere in this issue), and the other from the mouth of the Ganges River, West Bengal, in April 2013 (Giri *et al.* 2013; see elsewhere in this issue). Apparently, it is considered a regular west-east spring passage migrant across the Straits of Singapore, and is being recorded with increasing frequency from the western coasts of Thailand and northern Malaysia (Frith 1978; Poole 2011). This species is included in the India Checklist based on the photographic record from West Bengal.

Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea* (J. F. Gmelin, 1789): Not included in Hbk. Hypothetical in BSA based on a recent unconfirmed sighting in November from northern Sri Lanka—perhaps referring to the sighting of 15 birds off the Trincomalee coast in October–November 1974, (Sinclair 1978; De Silva 1990). The CBCRRC has accepted this record and includes the species in the country checklist (Ceylon Bird Club 2013), despite possibility of confusion with other dark shearwaters of the region. Robertson (1995) calls for further records for verification though he does not doubt the identification and Sinclair's (1978) description, "...size, colour, mode of flight and silvery wing linings allowed positive identification," is hardly convincing. We believe that the birds could probably have been the commoner Flesh-footed- or Wedge-tailed- Shearwaters, as pointed out by Colston & Gallagher (1983). A more recent report off the south-western coast of Colombo, Sri Lanka in October 2007 (Pepper & Hettige 2008) is also wanting in details for an independent assessment. Hence, the stand of BSA as hypothetical for the region is valid and the species is not included in the India Checklist.

Table 6: Wedge-tailed Shearwater records

Date	Location	Coordinates	Remarks	Reference
February 1938	Between Malabar coast and Lakshadweep	NA	Attributed to this species by elimination of <i>P. bailloni persicus</i> . "During the passage from the Malabar coast, I encountered several shearwaters, all solitary ... All these had dark underparts and so could not have been <i>P. persicus</i> ." But, these birds could well have been <i>A. carneipes</i> which is missing a mention	Betts (1939)
19 March 1969	c. 290 km E. of Cuttack, Odisha	18°30'N, 87°45'E	Three birds recorded with no further details on identification—the only report from east coast	Bourne & Dixon (1975)
16-17 August 1972	55 km west of Chertala, Kerala	09°45'N, 75°45'E	A report of a 'many,' is questionable vis-à-vis the common <i>A. carneipes</i>	Bourne & Dixon (1975); Praveen (2011)
27 July 1973	c. 160 km SW. of Thiruvananthapuram coast	07°33'N, 75°32'E	51 birds (wrongly stated as 2 in Praveen 2011) reported.	Bourne (1984); Praveen (2011)
5 June 1977	Same as above	07°33'N, 75°32'E	Another group reported from the same location (07°30'N, 75°30'E in the RNBWS database). The two reports from same locality during similar time of the year should substantiate each other	Bourne (1984); Praveen (2011)
20 January 1984	c. 200 km W. of Goa	15°00'N, 72°00'E	Observation. Location very coarse	Chapman (1985); Robertson (1995); Prasad (2004)
April 1988	Lakshadweep	NA	Listed with no further details—while <i>A. carneipes</i> is not listed.	Daniels (1992)
20 September 1998	Anjuna, Goa	15°34'N, 73°44'E	A pale morph bird seen about one km off the coast.	Lainer (2004a, b)
21 September 1998	Anjuna, Goa	15°34'N, 73°44'E	Single birds observed; two pale morph and one dark morph	Lainer (2004a, b)
5 October 1998			seen between 300 and 1000 m from the coast, travelling south.	
12 July 2001				
16 August 2001				
7–12 September 2006	Puducherry	11°52'N 79°49'E	Presumed to be this species due to absence of pale morph birds. More likely <i>A. carneipes</i> not eliminated	Madsen (2007)
28 May 2011	c. 30 km W. of Kannur	11°51'N, 74°59'E	A single bird photographed and identification conclusive	Praveen <i>et al.</i> (2011)

Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas* (Temminck, 1836): Hbk includes this based on a specimen from Sri Lanka taken in 1884. BSA's comment, "...Visitor (Sep–Jun), evidently

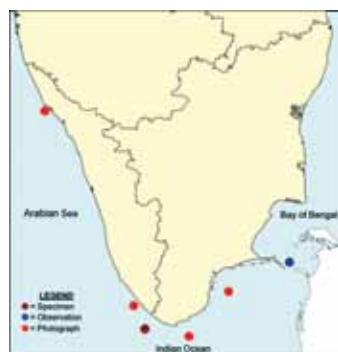


Fig. 3. Streaked Shearwater. Map: S. Subramanya.

regular off coasts of Sri Lanka and extreme S. India. Scarce ..." is probably based on Robertson (1995) who lists six regional records. Karuthedathu *et al.* (2013a) list eight South Asian records of which four are from Indian waters; since then two more sightings have been reported on email discussion groups. Except two records, most regional records for South Asia are during September–February, falling well within its north Pacific non-breeding season (Karuthedathu *et al.* 2013a); six records during September–October indicate an influx during autumn passage. Summer records probably relate to non-breeding over-summering birds. All the records of the species from Indian limits are well-documented (Fig. 3; Table 7). Besides the sub-adult male taken from Indian waters off Cape Comorin (Phillips 1967), the three recent sightings with photo documentation also give support to its inclusion in the India Checklist. We believe that the species is probably under reported from Indian seas as there are very few pelagic surveys conducted in the region.

Tropical Shearwater *Puffinus bailloni* Bonaparte, 1857: A contentious taxon. Conventionally regarded as a subspecies of *P. lherminieri* (Audubon's Shearwater); but found to be specifically

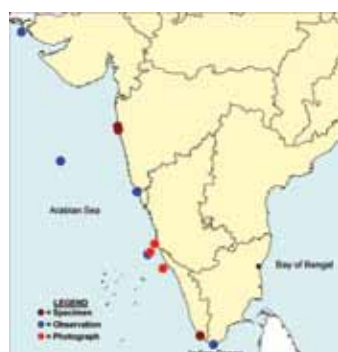


Fig. 4. Tropical Shearwater. Map: S. Subramanya.

distinct in a recent molecular study (Austin *et al.* 2004). However, monophyly of subspecific taxa within *P. bailloni*, *sensu stricto*, is not yet fully resolved; believed to comprise three distinct clades ('*bailloni*', '*persicus*', and '*bannermani*') sometimes elevated as distinct species (e.g. Shirihi *et al.* 1995). We follow Dickinson & Remsen (2013) in treating them as conspecific under *P. bailloni*. Two races are possible in the Indian Subcontinent: *nicolae* (occasionally synonymised with *dichrous* under the clade '*bailloni*' - e.g., Austin *et al.* 2004), and *persicus*. [Note that BSA treats *nicolae* under *P. lherminieri* but *persicus* as a distinct species.] Taxonomical uncertainty and problems of racial identification in the field mean that the records from the Indian Subcontinent are difficult to appraise and are often inconclusive.

We evaluate, here, both the races independently to assess their status in Indian waters to avoid confusion that may arise during a future split.

Puffinus bailloni nicolae Jouanin, 1971: "Breeds in Maldiv Islands...but strangely enough not yet obtained in coastal Ceylon or western India," (Hbk). BSA adds Chagos Archipelago to its breeding grounds and mentions, "...reported from Lakshadweep, where substantiation needed. Possibly vagrant Sri Lanka (this or Persian)." Kurup & Zacharias (1995) and later Pande *et al.* (2007) lists *lherminieri* and quote Ellis (1924) who actually listed *persicus* from Lakshadweep, as a resident species, but without any further information. However, Betts (1938) questions Ellis's birdlist and does not consider it sufficiently authentic. Feare (1984) considers *lherminieri* (= *P. bailloni*) as a questionable breeding species from the isles but the original source of information is unknown. The only other records of *P. bailloni* for Indian waters are published in *Sea Swallow*, but here *persicus* is subsumed under *lherminieri*. First: 40+ seen c. 340km west of Ratnagiri, Maharashtra (17°06'N, 70°00'E) by S. Gorton Green on 8 August 1958, mentioned "as approaching Bombay" (Cheshire 2003; Prasad 2004). It should be noted that the specimens of *persicus* collected from Mumbai were both from July (Prasad 2004) and hence this August record also could be of the same taxon. Second: Bourne & Dixon's (1975) record of one on 4 April 1969, 50km west of Kasargod, Kerala (12°30'N, 74°30'E), indicated as off Mangalore, is most likely *persicus* as the date of observation matches with its spring migration dates in south-western India (Praveen 2011). The inclusion of *lherminieri* in the Karnataka state bird checklist (Narasimhan 2004) could refer to this same record. Third: one seen on 21 July 1987 c. 87 km south-west of Mincoy Islands (07°42'N, 73°36'E) by Weitkowitz (Bourne 1989); however the location details indicate this was recorded from One and a Half Degree Channel (=Havadhu Kandu / Suvadiva Channel) which is much further south in the Maldives. Proximity of this sighting to the breeding colonies in the Maldives would imply *nicolae* but lack of diagnostic descriptions and confusion on the locality precludes any confirmation. Sighting records of Audubon's Shearwater, as listed in the RNBWS database from the Indian region, may refer to this taxon, though a few are listed under both *lherminieri* (= *nicolae*) and *persicus*.

There are only three sight records from Sri Lanka: from 1982 (De Silva 1990; Robertson 1995), from 1994 (Hoffmann 1996), and more recently, one specifically referring to *bailloni* (Pepper & Hettige 2008) from 6 October 2007. The older records could actually refer to *persicus*. Breeding from the Maldives has been well documented as *nicolae* (= *dichrous*) (Phillips & Sims 1958; Ash & Shafeeg 1995) though earlier authorities believed they were *persicus* (Gadgow & Gardiner 1907). As the bird breeds in close proximity to Indian waters, it is likely to turn up on Indian coasts or Lakshadweep. Field identification is tricky, the colour of the axillaries (white vs brown) being diagnostic. Absence of any substantiated records from Indian waters, therefore, would imply

Table 7. Streaked Shearwater records

Date	Location	Coordinates	Remarks	Reference
6 December 1956	35.5 km W–SW. of Muttum light house, Nagarcoil	08°01'N, 77°00'E	One sub adult male specimen collected by G. N. Grisenthwaite	Phillips (1967)
21 September 1978	Palk Bay between Talaimannar & Rameshwaram	09°13'N, 79°35'E	One bird flushed several times from the ferry between India & Sri Lanka.	van den Berg <i>et al.</i> (1982)
22 June 1984	c. 30 km SE. off Kanyakumari	07°53'N, 77°47'E	One bird photographed	van den Berg <i>et al.</i> (1991)
9 July 2012	9 km NW. of Azheekal estuary, Kannur	11°55'N, 75°12'E	One bird photographed	Karuthedathu <i>et al.</i> (2013a)
1 October 2012	c. 15 km W. of Thiruvananthapuram	08°26'N, 76°48'E	One + four birds. Photographed	Praveen (2012)
21 October 2012	c. 30 km E. of Tuticorin	08°41'N, 78°30'E	One bird photographed	Muthunayanan (2012); Keshav (2012)

that this taxon is not considered for the India Checklist, though we believe it is very much possible.

Puffinus bailloni persicus Hume, 1872: Included in Hbk and BSA based on two Mumbai specimens. Hbk additionally mentions a record from southern Kerala but its racial identity is unconfirmed. BSA rightly observes that, "...its range is confounded with Audubon's," and sight records or unpreserved specimens (Table 6) evidently require corroboration. However, it has been recently photographed from south-western India (Karuthedathu *et al.* 2013b) and Sri Lanka (De Silva 2011). The presence of two validated specimens and three photographic records allow entry of this species into the India Checklist; all other records (Fig. 4; Table 8) are open to doubt and could refer to *Puffinus bailloni nicolae*.

Mascarene Petrel *Pseudobulweria aterrima* (Bonaparte, 1857): Both Hbk, and BSA include the single record of a live specimen (storm blown?) taken by fishermen from Colaba light house (18°53'N, 72°48'E), Mumbai, 15 June 1940, identified at Colombo Museum by G. M. Henry (Abdulali & Ali 1940). Since the specimen was not traceable for re-examination, Hbk considered the record as tentative. BSA treats the species as hypothetical and adds that it could have been Jouanin's Petrel *Bulweria fallax*, which was not described then (Jouanin 1970; Robertson 1995; Prasad 2004). This 'lost' specimen has been recently traced to the Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, National University of Singapore (Morioka & Yang 1996), where it has recently been re-labelled as Jouanin's Petrel *B. fallax*; its identity as Jouanin's has been confirmed from photographs and biometrics (Praveen & Kelvin 2013; see elsewhere in this issue). Hence Mascarene Petrel is deleted from the India Checklist.

Tahiti Petrel *Pseudobulweria rostrata* (Peale, 1848): Neither included in Hbk, nor in BSA. Probably this species, or Atlantic [Schlegel's] Petrel *Pterodroma incerta* was seen c. 75 km south-west of Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala (08°10'N, 76°17'E; described as between Kanyakumari and the Maldives Ridge) on 26 June 1985 (van den Berg *et al.* 1991). The petrel was "rich warm dark brown when swimming," and, "...strikingly contrasting white

lower breast and belly were seen, sharply demarcated from the brown upper breast. It had a fairly long tail," (*ibid.*). More recently, one bird was photographed from Chagos Islands during a pelagic expedition in November–December 2012 (Meeuwig *et al.* 2013). Though this and similar petrels could occur in the northern Indian Ocean (Lambert 2004), the species is not considered for inclusion in the India Checklist in the absence of definite records.

Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii* (Jardine & Selby, 1828): Included in Hbk and BSA based on the specimen collected by W. A. A. Phillips from Addu Atoll, Maldives (Phillips 1959). Sight records, as mentioned by BSA, off southern India and south-western Sri Lanka probably refer to Bourne (1984) who mentioned a sight record by P. W. G. Chilman from 165 km south-west of Kanyakumari (07°11'N, 76°17'E) on 20 August 1973 (also see Robertson 1995). The RNBWS database has erroneously shown the Maldives specimen as from near Lakshadweep, probably a mistake repeated in Kazmierczak (2000); it also lists Chilman's record and another recent sight report by David Ballance on 7 January 2000, 120 km north-east of Minicoy Island (07°30'N, 73°48'E; Bourne 2000). Both these sight records are indicated as "possible" in the RNBWS database and hence cannot be considered definite (Praveen 2011). Following this, we exclude the species from the India Checklist.

Jouanin's Petrel *Bulweria fallax* Jouanin, 1955: Included in Hbk as possible in our region while BSA considers it as a regular visitor to the western coast, stating that all records of Mascarene Petrel, and some of Wedge-tailed Shearwater from the Indian Ocean are of this species (after Bourne 1960; also see van den Berg *et al.* 1991 for clarity of its status in northern Indian Ocean waters). There are at least ten reports (Rahmani 2012) from Indian waters (Table 9) and the specimen, which was collected from Mumbai in 1940 and was earlier misidentified as Mascarene Petrel (see Praveen & Kelvin 2013 for the correction) is probably the first confirmed record of the species from India. Sight records, if not well-documented, are to be treated with caution as the species is easily confused with Wedge-tailed

Table 8. Tropical Shearwater Records

Date	Location	Coordinates	Remarks	Reference
1 July 1885	Alibag, Raigad district, Maharashtra	18°38'N, 72°51'E	1 <i>persicus</i> obtained by W.F.Sinclair now in BNHS Coll.	Keswal (1886), Ali & Abdulali (1939); Abdulali (1968); Prasad (2004)
1903–1904	Veli, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala	08°30'N, 76°53'E	A specimen brought alive, probably not preserved. As per Hbk, the racial identity (<i>persicus</i> vs <i>nicolae</i>) of this specimen is uncertain	Fergusson & Bourdillon (1904); Ali (1969); Sashikumar <i>et al.</i> (2011)
3 July 1940	Colaba Light house, Mumbai	18°53'N, 72°48'E	One <i>persicus</i> female found alive and now in BNHS Coll. Note, the "one female wing from Bombay" (Prasad 2004), is in fact this entire bird!	Abdulali & Ali (1940); Abdulali (1968); Prasad (2004)
8 August 1958	340 km W. of Ratnagiri, Maharashtra	17°06'N, 70°00'E	About 40+ seen "as approaching Bombay" – reported as <i>P. lherminieri</i> , is probably this species	Cheshire (2003); Prasad (2004)
4 April 1969	50 km W. of Kasargod, Kerala, indicated as off Mangalore, Karnataka	12°30'N, 74°30'E	One recorded as <i>P. lherminieri</i> – very likely this species	Bourne & Dixon (1975); Praveen (2011); Chapman (1984)
7 November 1983	30 km W. of Akari, Kutch, Gujarat	23°23'N, 68°06'E	A small dark shearwater observed, probably <i>persicus</i> . Observer not confident and hence id doubtful	
19 June 1984	Anjuna, Goa	15°34'N, 73°44'E	One bird sailing along the coast towards south – not explicitly differentiated from <i>nicolae</i>	Lainer (2004b)
25 September 2011	Anjuna, Goa	15°34'N, 73°44'E	One bird travelling south at about 250m from the coast – not explicitly differentiated from <i>nicolae</i>	Lainer (2004b)
2 April 2011	c. 8–10 km W. of Mulki, Mangalore, Karnataka	13°01'N, 74°38'E	Two birds of <i>persicus</i> seen, one photographed. Some pictures of this bird wrongly labelled in OBI as <i>P. lherminieri</i>	Shivashankar <i>et al.</i> (2011)
2–3 April 2011	c. 15–30 km W. off Azheekkal, Kannur, Kerala	11°48'N, 75°02'E	About 40 birds of <i>persicus</i> seen on each day, a flock of 23 birds being the largest congregation	Praveen <i>et al.</i> (2011)
4 March 2012	c. 50 km W. off Mangalore, Karnataka	12°37'N, 74°25'E	A hazy photograph of a bird in flight showing the characteristic under wing coverts was identified as <i>persicus</i> .	Shivashankar (2012)
12 July 2013	Kanya kumari	08°04'N, 77°31'E	A sighting – considered <i>persicus</i> based on plumage of underwing	Narayanan (2013)

Table 9: Jouanin's Petrel records

Date	Location	Coordinates	Remarks	Reference
15 June 1940	Colaba Light House, Mumbai	18°53'N, 72°48'E	A specimen secured by fishermen, misidentified as Mascarene Petrel now in Raffles Museum, Singapore	Abdulali & Ali (1940); Praveen & Kelvin (2013)
26 June 1985	50–150 km SW. of Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala	08°14'N, 76°07'E	Nine bird sightings, all singles except one sighting of three birds. Coordinate taken as median of extreme records. Also photographed during the same trip, but from elsewhere, and published, hence these records are considered reliable.	van den Berg <i>et al.</i> (1991)
15 September 1986	190 km S. of Kanyakumari	06°22'N, 77°50'E	Singles. No further information.	Chapman & Cheshire (1987)
1 October 1987	120 km W. of Perumal Par, Lakshadweep	11°24'N, 70°48'E	"...outlying records ..." No further information.	Bourne (1989)
April 1988	Lakshadweep	NA	Location unspecified. Details unknown.	Daniels (1992)
13 July 1991	c. 50 km W. of Chavakkad, Kerala	10°30'N, 75°30'E	20 possible specimens (this or <i>B. bulwerii</i>)	Cheshire (1992); Praveen (2011)
23 September 1991	Anjuna, Goa	15°34'N, 73°44'E	342 birds within a span of 90 minutes seen from the coast; diagnostic details unavailable.	Lainer (2004b)
5 February 2008	Bangaram Is., Lakshadweep	10°56'N 72°17'E	One possible sighting.	Prince (2011)
13 February 2008	Between Agatti & Kavaratti, Lakshadweep	10°37'N, 72°22'E	One photographed, very likely this species.	Prince (2011)
July 2009	Marari beach, Alappuzha, Kerala	09°29'N 76°19'E	Photographs of a wind-blown bird recovered, likely this species.	Sashikumar <i>et al.</i> (2011)
24–25 September 2011	80–100 km W. of Azheekkal, Kannur, Kerala	11°49'N, 74°40'E	"About 10" (=13) birds seen and a few photographed conclusively; see Rahmani (2012) for photograph.	Karuthedathu <i>et al.</i> (2013b)
28 July 2013	Dobanki, Sundarbans, West Bengal	22°00'N, 88°45'E	One bird photographed and identified conclusively.	Prasad 2013, see elsewhere in this issue

Shearwater from a distance though the bird is quite likely on the western coast (van den Berg *et al.* 1991). A record cited in Robertson (1995) quotes Sinclair (1979), "W. of Gulf of Kutch"; which is probably not in India but somewhere close to Karachi, Pakistan. There are also two photographic records—one from Lakshadweep and another from Alappuzha in Kerala, but both records demonstrate the challenge in identification of the species from even seemingly conclusive photographs. However, recent photographs of a flock from Kannur in Kerala have been examined and identification confirmed as Jouanin's Petrel while another bird was well photographed from Sundarbans in West Bengal. In view of these photographic documentations and the old specimen record from Mumbai, we include the species in the India Checklist.

Christmas Island Frigatebird *Fregata andrewsi* Mathews, 1914: Hbk concludes that there is no authentic record from the Indian Subcontinent after two specimens—one from Kollam, Kerala (Prater 1929) and another from Sri Lanka, putatively identified as this species, were later reidentified as *F. minor* (Abdulali 1961; Phillips 1953). BSA includes it based on a sight record from Sri Lanka, supported by a sketch in direct comparison with a *F. minor*. A handful of sight records of this species exist from India but they are mostly untenable in the absence of satisfactory documentation. The sight record of a juvenile from the Andamans (Saxena 1994) probably refers to this species but confirmation is desirable as the reported photograph could not be traced. Other regional records include reports from Kerala (Prater 1929; Pillai 1964; Kumar & Kumar 1997), Tamil Nadu (Santharam 1982), and Karnataka (Dwarakanath 1981; Anonymous 1981) but these are largely unsubstantiated and are sometimes misreported Great or Lesser Frigatebirds (Abdulali 1961; Ali 1964; Sashikumar *et al.* 2011). The only reliable, yet unpublished, record is that of an individual recovered at Basirhat (22°38'N, 88°52'E), North 24 Parganas district, West Bengal on 31 May 2006; the specimen is now in the ZSI Kolkata collection, and has been identified as this species from photographs by David James (Sen 2011). A picture purported to be this species from Sri Lanka is available in OBI (Wijeyeratne 2008). Here, we include it in the India Checklist solely based on the Kolkata specimen, though storm-blown birds are very likely to occur in Indian waters, particularly in the Andaman Sea.

Red-footed Booby *Sula sula* (Linnaeus, 1766): Hbk and BSA include this species on the basis of reports from the Bay of Bengal and its breeding in Chagos and Maldives. Jerdon (1864) mentioned that it was occasionally seen in the Bay of Bengal while Blyth described it as "common" (Blyth 1852), and Sundevall (1837–1838) also saw one from the Bengal coast; but strangely enough, there exist no specimens from the Bay of Bengal barring one in BMNH according to Hbk (originally cited in Baker 1929). However, we could not locate any Bay of Bengal specimen in BMNH (Robert Prys-Jones, *pers. comm.*, July 2013) but there is a specimen (#5309) tagged "India" in AMNH with no further details. Blanford (1898) did not accept this species in his Indian list as anecdotal evidences of Jerdon and Sundevall were considered as misidentified Masked Booby *S. dactylatra*. Layard's specimen from the Maldives, identified by Blyth, was also considered unreliable. In the mean time, Hume described a large flock of white boobies seen at Lakshadweep (Hume 1876), but the birds were far away during the entire observation period of one hour, therefore species id considered uncertain (though it was not Masked Booby). Since this species breeds abundantly on the Chagos Islands further south (Symens 1999), it is possible that some birds disperse north but no other observer has recorded it there since Hume. An adult female was recovered alive and photographed from New Digha, West Bengal (21°37'N, 87°29'E) on 11 May 2011 but died later and is believed to have originated from the breeding population of Christmas Island (Karmakar *et al.* 2011). The species is admitted to the India Checklist based on this West Bengal record, though we could not trace provenance of the Bay of Bengal specimen.

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* (Boddaert, 1783): Hbk



mentions that it is uncommon in the Bay of Bengal, also in Lakshadweep, and one specimen taken on "Malabar Coast." BSA mentions it is a casual visitor to the western coast and may breed in Lakshadweep. The Bay of Bengal records must have come from Prepara- and

Fig. 5. Brown Booby. Map: S. Subramanya.

Table 10. Brown Booby records

Date	Location	Coordinates	Remarks	References
Undated	Malabar Coast	NA	T. C. Jerdon received a specimen whose whereabouts are presently unknown—hence not considered definite	Jerdon (1864); Sashikumar <i>et al.</i> (2011)
10 February 1875	Cherbaniani Is., Lakshadweep	12°20'N, 71°53'E	Sight record by A. O. Hume—could not be shot—likely this species as Hume shot it during the same trip	Hume (1876)
20 February 1875	Perumal Par Is., Lakshadweep	11°09'N, 72°03'E	A female shot by A. O. Hume—now in BMNH	Hume (1876)
1916	Karwar, Uttara Kannada, Karnataka	14°48'N, 74°05'E	A specimen in BNHS collection	Abdulali (1968)
22 August 1987	Mandvi, Kutch, Gujarat	22°49'N, 69°21'E	A bird sitting on a rock and photographed	Varu (1987); Varu (1988); Varu & Bapat (1990)
2 July 1997	Anjuna beach, Goa	15°34'N, 73°44'E	A bird settled just beyond the surf line of the beach	Lainer (1999); Lainer (2004b)
22 November 2012	c. 3 km W. off Nivati, Sindhudurg district, Maharashtra	15°55'N, 73°29'E	Immature photographed on a floating thermocol	Jamalabad (2013)

Coco- Islands, Myanmar, where Hume saw dusky boobies presumably belonging to this species (Hume 1874). Other records from the region are supported well either by specimens or photographs (Fig. 5; Table 10) on the basis of which we include the species in the India Checklist.

Blue-footed Booby *Sula nebouxii* A. Milne-Edwards, 1882: Not in Hbk or BSA. Apparently, a dead bird was obtained from the coast of Gujarat near Mahuva in July 2003, identified as this species at the BNHS and the specimen deposited in its collection (Dave *et al.* 2003; Dhadhal 2003; Dhadhal *et al.* 2004). But on re-examination, it appears to be a juvenile Masked Booby (Rahul Khot *in prep*). Another juvenile, which was recovered from the Mumbai coast in late June 2005 and was initially identified as Blue-footed Booby, was reidentified correctly as Masked Booby from photographs (Prasad 2005). Since the publication of the Gujarat record, there have been at least two other instances (from Kerala and Karnataka) where juvenile Masked Boobies were misidentified as Blue-footed Boobies. The species is typically Neotropical, found along the Pacific coast of South America and associated offshore islands, and therefore highly unlikely to occur in the Oriental region. Birdwatchers should exercise abundant caution in field identification as soft-part colours are always variable in boobies and Masked Booby can also show a bluish tint in its feet.

Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicaudus* Vieillot, 1819: Not in Hbk. BSA considers it a possible species. Included in BSA2 on the basis of recent records supported by photographs from the Maldives (Anderson 2007), and additional photographs from Sri Lanka (Wijeyeratne 2010; Rasmussen 2013). The only record from the Indian region was of three birds recorded by D. M. Simpson on 22 February 1987 off Lakshadweep (09°42'N, 72°18'E) described as, "...much more slender than Arctic / Pomarine, more tern-like flight greyer above with white shafts confined to outer webs of primaries. Some white in rump..." (Bourne 1989). This record was not accepted in any of the subsequent regional guides, including BSA. Though this species can potentially occur along the western coast in April during

spring migration, it is not included as yet in the India Checklist for want of definite reports.

South Polar Skua *Stercorarius maccormicki* H. Saunders, 1893: Hbk includes it based on a ringed specimen from Udupi, Karnataka (13°19'N, 74°42'E) collected on 7 August 1964. BSA apparently considers the same specimen as *S. antarcticus lonnbergi* and includes *S. maccormicki* in the South Asia list based on a Sri Lanka specimen (Udayakumara *et al.* 2007). The Udupi bird, a dark morph, was captured with a ring on 7 August 1964 (Editors 1966; Madhyastha 1999; Bhat 2004); it was ringed on 5 March 1961 at the Gonzales Videla base, Antarctic Peninsula (64.49° S, 62.51° W) by the US Antarctic Research Program (USARP) Bird Banding Project (Sladen *et al.* 1968). However, this specimen has been re-examined and its original identification as *S. maccormicki* confirmed from photographs (Praveen *et al.* 2013). Apart from this, a well-documented photographic record of a pair of pale and dark morph birds was made on 1 October 2012, 20 km west of Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala (08°30'N, 76°42'E; Praveen *et al.* 2013). There is also a sight report between Lakshadweep and Kerala in April 1988 (Daniels 1992) but the record is unverifiable in the absence of details on field-characters. More recently, another pale morph was photographed c. 25 km off the Chennai coast in Bay of Bengal on 3 August 2013 (Manivannan & Mohan 2013; see elsewhere in this issue). Based on the Udupi specimen in the BNHS collection and the recent photographs from off the south-western and south-eastern coasts, this species is included in the India Checklist. Identification of dark morph birds at sea is extremely difficult and abundant caution is warranted before they are positively identified.

Brown Skua *Stercorarius antarcticus* (Lesson, 1831): Hbk and BSA include it based on historical specimens, of the race *lonnbergi*, from Ratnagiri (Abdulali 1970) and Thiruvananthapuram (Ali 1969). BSA lists an Udupi specimen which has now been confirmed as a South Polar Skua as originally identified (Praveen *et al.* 2013). The only other definite record is a bird captured and photographed recently from Thiruvananthapuram (Elamon & Kunhikrishnan 2009). All the other records from India are sight

Table 11. Brown Skua records

Date	Location	Coordinates	Remarks	References
20 September 1933	Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala,	08°29'N, 76°58'E	Specimen identified in BMNH as <i>lonnbergi</i> race	Ali (1969)
5 August 1957	Malwan coast, Ratnagiri, Maharashtra	16°03'N, 73°27'E	Specimen in BNHS Coll., identified as <i>lonnbergi</i>	Abdulali (1970)
16–17 August 1972	55 km W. of Cherthala, Kerala, India	09°45'N, 75°45'E	Indicated as 50 miles W. of Kochi—sighting from a ship of two birds—it is either this species or <i>S. maccormicki</i>	Bourne & Dixon (1975); Praveen (2011)
30 January 2007	1 km W. of Kannur, Kerala, India	11°51'N, 75°20'E	Sighting from boat and identified as this species—could have been <i>S. maccormicki</i> also	Sashikumar <i>et al.</i> (2011)
4 Jul 2007	Sanghumukham, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India	08°28'N, 76°54'E	A captured bird photographed and identified as this species from photographs by experts—race unknown	Elamon & Kunhikrishnan (2009)

Table 12. Summary of decisions

Species	Status
Red-tailed Tropicbird	Included
White-tailed Tropicbird	Included
White-faced Storm-petrel	Included
White-bellied Storm-petrel	Excluded
Black-bellied Storm-petrel	Included
Band-rumped Storm-petrel	Excluded
Matsudaira's Storm-petrel	Excluded
Leach's Storm-petrel	Excluded
Swinhoe's Storm-petrel	Included
Cape Petrel	Included
Trindade Petrel	Excluded
Barau's Petrel	Included
Soft-plumaged Petrel	Excluded
White-headed Petrel	Excluded
Wedge-tailed Shearwater	Included
Short-tailed Shearwater	Included
Sooty Shearwater	Excluded
Streaked Shearwater	Included
Tropical Shearwater	Included
Mascarene Petrel	Excluded
Tahiti Petrel	Excluded
Bulwer's Petrel	Excluded
Jouanin's Petrel	Included
Christmas Island Frigatebird	Included
Red-footed Booby	Included
Brown Booby	Included
Blue-footed Booby	Excluded
Long-tailed Jaeger	Excluded
South Polar Skua	Included
Brown Skua	Included

reports which are extremely difficult to evaluate (see Table 11). This species is included in the India Checklist on the basis of the two old specimens and recent photographic reports.

Acknowledgements

There are about four dozen people who have been constantly helping us with various contentious species for India. The members of the editorial board of *IndianBIRDS* namely, Farah Ishtiaq, Madhusudan Katti, Taej Mundkar, Rishad Naoraji, Suhel Quader and K. S. Gopi Sundar have been most helpful with guidelines to create the checklist and maintain the same. Shashank Dalvi, Bikram Grewal, Prasad Ganpule, Tim Inskipp, Atul Jain, Taej Mundkur, Anand Prasad, Mike Prince, Harkirat Singh Sangha, Sumit K. Sen, and Manoj Sharma walked through the entire checklist and provided detailed inputs. Per Alström, Maan Barua, Anwaruddin Choudhury, James Eaton, Bill Harvey, Paul Holt, R Suresh Kumar, Abhijit Menon-Sen, Otto Pfister, Rishad Naoraji, Asad R Rahmani, Craig Robson, Pamela Rasmussen, Pratap Singh, and K. S. Gopi Sundar were involved in species identification and/or providing inputs on select species or species groups. S. Subramanya quite enthusiastically created all the maps. Vijay Cavale, Mark Cutts, Prasad Ganpule, Bikram Grewal, Bill Harvey, Tim Inskipp, Krys Kazmeirczak, Anand Prasad, Mike Prince, and Harkirat Singh Sangha were particularly helpful in tracking innumerable old and recent records and providing contacts of other people who may have had unpublished information. Online sources were of great help enabling data to be at fingertips – Oriental Bird Images, South Asia Bibliography, www.archive.org, back issues of *Forktail*, *IndianBIRDS*, *Newsletter for Birdwatchers*, *Journal of Threatened Taxa*, *Zoo's Print Journal*, *Current Science*, *Ardea*, *Cormorant*, etc., were heavily consulted and so was the CD-ROM of the BNHS Journal and the RNBWS database for pelagic bird records from *Sea Swallow*. For this first part in particular, Arnoud van den Berg, William Bourne, Rex De Silva, Raju Kasambe, Krys Kazmeirczak, Rahul Khot, Robert Prys-Jones, and Chris Smeenk provided unpublished information on select species. William Bourne, Bill Harvey, Tim Inskipp, Dipu Karuthedathu and Anand Prasad reviewed the near final version of the manuscript. Most of the articles published in this issue and a few issues in the near future are on Indian rarities and the authors have been particularly cooperative to submit their notes in short notice, we thank them too.

References

- Abdulali, H., 1961. The Christmas Island Frigate-Bird, *Fregata andrewsi* Mathews, in Indian waters - a correction. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 57 (3): 667–668.
- Abdulali, H., 1968. A catalogue of the birds in the collection of the Bombay Natural History

- Society-1. Gaviiformes to Ciconiiformes. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 65 (1): 182–199.
- Abdulali, H., 1970. A catalogue of the birds in the collection of the Bombay Natural History Society-7. Scolopacinae (part), Phalaropinae, Rostratulidae, Recurvirostridae, Dromadidae, Burhinidae, Glareolidae, Stercorariidae, Laridae. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 67 (2): 279–298.
- Abdulali, H., 1980. A catalogue of the birds in the collection of the Bombay Natural History Society. Parts 1-17 - non-Passeriformes. Errata. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 77 (1): 145–148.
- Abdulali, H., 1981. Additional notes on Andaman birds. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 78 (1): 46–49.
- Abdulali, H., & Ali, S., 1940. Additional notes on the birds of Bombay and Salsette. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 42 (1): 191–197.
- Aitken, E. H., [1903]. *The common birds of Bombay*. 2nd impression, 1st ed. Bombay; Calcutta; Madras: Thacker & Co.; Thacker, Spink & Co.; Higginbotham & Co. Pp. i-xiv, 1–195.
- Ali, S., 1964. Frigate Birds. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 4 (8): 10.
- Ali, S., 1969. *Birds of Kerala*. 2nd ed. Bombay: Oxford University Press. Pp. i-xxiii, 1–444.
- Ali, S., & Abdulali, H., 1939. The birds of Bombay and Salsette. Part VI. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 41 (4): 628–652.
- Ali, S., & Ripley, S. D., 1983. *A pictorial guide to the birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 1st ed. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pp. 2 pr. II, pp. 1–177+2.
- Anderson, R. C., 2007. New records of birds from the Maldives. *Forktail* 23 (August): 135–144.
- Anderson, R. C., & Badock, M., 2001. New records of birds from the Maldives, with notes on other species. *Forktail* 17: 67–73.
- Anonymous. 1970. White-bellied Storm-Petrels, *Fregata grallaria*, in north Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea in the summer. *Sea Swallow* 20: 41–42.
- Anonymous. 1981. The Christmas Island Frigate Bird. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 21 (8): 2–3.
- Anonymous. 1990. Recent reports: Sri Lanka. *Oriental Bird Club Bulletin* 11 (May): 47.
- Ash, J. S., & Shafeeg, A., 1995. The birds of the Maldives. *Forktail* 10: 3–31 (1994).
- Austin, J. J., Bretagnolle, V., & Pasquet, E., 2004. A global molecular phylogeny of the small *Puffinus* shearwaters and implications for systematics of the Little-Audubon's Shearwater complex. *Auk* 121 (3): 847–864.
- Bailey, N., & Bourne, W. R. P., 1963. Some records of Petrels handled in the northern Indian Ocean. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 60 (1): 256–259.
- Bailey, R., 1966. The sea-birds of the southeast coast of Arabia. *Ibis* 108 (2): 224–264.
- Bailey, R. S., Pocklington, R., & Willis, P. R., 1968. Storm-petrels *Oceanodroma* spp. in the Indian Ocean. *Ibis* 110: 27–34.
- Baker, E. C. S., 1899. The birds of North Cachar. Part X. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 12 (3): 486–510.
- Baker, E. C. S., 1929. *The fauna of British India, including Ceylon and Burma*. Birds. 2nd ed. London: Taylor and Francis. Vol. VI of 8 vols. Pp. i-xxxv+1, 1–499+1.
- Baker, H. R., & Inglis, C. M., 1930. *The birds of southern India including Madras, Malabar, Travancore, Cochin, Coorg and Mysore*. 1st ed. Madras: Government Press. Pp. i-xxxiii, 1–504.
- Balachandran, S., 1992. Occurrence of White or Longtailed Tropic-bird *Phaethon lepturus* on the South-East coast of India. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 88 (3): 441–442.
- Balachandran, S., Rajan, S. A., Balasubramanian, P., Natarajan, V., & Ali, S. Q., 1986. Some storm-blown pelagic birds in Point Calimere. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 83 (2): 436–438.
- Betts, F. N., 1938. The birds of the Laccadive Islands. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 40 (3): 382–387.
- Bhat, K. S. H., 2004. July 1964 - a strange visitor from Antarctica. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 44 (4): 60–61.
- Blanford, W. T., 1898. *The fauna of British India, including Ceylon and Burma (Birds)*. London: Taylor and Francis. Vol. IV of 4 vols. Pp. i-xxi, 1–500.
- Blyth, E., 1852. *Catalogue of the birds in the Museum Asiatic Society (sic)*. 1st ed. Calcutta The Asiatic Society. Pp. i-xxiv, 1–403.
- Bourne, W. R. P., 1960. The petrels of the Indian Ocean. *Sea Swallow* 13: 26–39.
- Bourne, W. R. P., 1965. Observations of sea birds. *Sea Swallow* 17: 10–39.
- Bourne, W. R. P., 1966. Observations of sea birds [and review of literature]. *Sea Swallow* 18: 9–39.
- Bourne, W. R. P., 1967. Observations of sea birds and review of literature. *Sea Swallow* 19: 51–76.
- Bourne, W. R. P., 1984. Reports of seabirds received in 1973-1977. Part I. *Sea Swallow* 33: 37–53?
- Bourne, W. R. P., 1989. Seabird reports received in 1987 and 1988. *Sea Swallow* 38: 7–30.
- Bourne, W. R. P., 1999. Early observation in the Indian Ocean: Reproduced from Tidemarks: some records of a journey to the beaches of the Moluccas and the forest [of] Malaya, in 1923 by H M Tomlinson, Cassell, London, 1924. *Sea Swallow* 48: 52–53.
- Bourne, W. R. P., 2000. Observations of seabirds. *Sea Swallow* 49: 6–26.

- Bourne, W. R. P., & Dixon, T. J., 1975. Observations of seabirds 1970-1972. *Sea Swallow* 24: 65-88.
- Bourne, W. R. P., & Radford, M. C., 1961. Notes on observations of sea-birds received during 1961. *Sea Swallow* 14: 7-27.
- Brown, R. M., Jordan, W. C., Faulkes, C. G., Jones, C. G., Bugoni, L., Tatayah, V., Palma, R. L., Nichols, R. A. 2011. Phylogenetic relationships in *Pterodroma* petrels are obscured by recent secondary contact and hybridization. *PLoS ONE* 6 (5): e20350. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0020350.
- Bruner, P. L., 1995. *Avifaunal and feral mammal survey of Diego Garcia, Chagos Archipelago, British Indian Ocean Territory*. Museum of Natural History Brigham Young University-Hawaii.
- Butler, A. L., 1900. The birds of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Part IV. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 13 (1): 144-154.
- Campbell, B., & Lack, E., 1985. *A dictionary of birds*. 1st ed. Calton, UK: British Ornithologists Union & T. & A.D. Poyser. Pp. i-xxx, 1-670.
- Ceylon Bird Club. 2013. <http://www.ceylonbirdclub.org>. [Accessed on 20 July 2013.]
- Chapman, S. E., 1984. Notes on seabird reports received 1983. *Sea Swallow* 33: 12-21.
- Chapman, S. E., 1985. Notes on seabird reports received 1984. *Sea Swallow* 34: 46-55.
- Chapman, S. E., & Cheshire, N. G., 1987. Notes on seabird reports received 1986. *Sea Swallow* 36: 32-46.
- Chatterjee, S., 2012. Black-legged Kittiwake in Oriental Bird Images. URL: http://orientalbirdimages.org/search.php?p=13&Bird_ID=966&Bird_Family_ID=&pagesize=1. [Accessed on 09 July 2013.]
- Cheke, A. S., 1966. Notes on sea-birds seen on a journey across the Indian Ocean. *Ibis* 108: 628-630.
- Cheshire, N. G., 1992. [Notes on seabird reports received in 1991.] *Sea Swallow* 41: 10-22.
- Cheshire, N. G., 2003. Notes on Seabird reports received in 2003/3. *Sea Swallow* 52: 6-20.
- Colston, P. R., & Gallagher, M. D., 1983. First record of the Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus* for Arabia. *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 103: 36-37.
- Cumming, W. D., 1899. Occurrence of the Green-billed Shear-water (*Puffinus chlororhynchus*) on the Mekran Coast. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 12 (4): 766.
- Daniels, R. J. R., 1992. Island biogeography and the birds of the Lakshadweep Archipelago, Indian Ocean. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 88 (3): 320-328.
- Dave, R., Dodiya, P., & Dhadhal, J., 2003. Bluefooted Booby on Mahuva coast: A first record for the Indian subcontinent. *Flamingo* 1 (3&4): 4-5.
- De Silva, R., 1992. First sight record of a Black Noddy *Anous minutus* from Sri Lanka. *Loris* 19 (5): 175-176.
- De Silva, R. I., 1989. Seabird notes from Sri Lanka 1988. *Sea Swallow* 38: 61-62.
- De Silva, R. I., 1990. The seabirds of Sri Lanka (an annotated check-list). *Ceylon Journal of Science (Biological Science)* 21 (1): 28-33.
- De Silva, R. I., 1992. Recent sightings of new species from Sri Lanka. *Malkoha* 1992: 4.
- De Silva, R. I., 2011. Observing oceanic birds in Sri Lanka. *Indian BIRDS* 7 (3): 58-62.
- Dhadhal, J., 2003. Blue-footed Booby in Gujarat. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 43 (5): 75.
- Dhadhal, J., Dodiya, P., Dave, R., & Flamingo Nature, C., 2004. Boobies in India. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 44 (1): 9.
- Dickinson, E. C., & Remsen, J. V. J., (eds.) 2013. *The Howard and Moore complete checklist of the birds of the world: 1. Non-passerines*. 4th ed. Eastbourne, U.K.: Aves Press. Vol. 1 of 2 vols. Pp. i-l, 1-461.
- Dwarakanath, A., 1981. Christmas Island Frigate Bird seen in Karnataka. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 21 (7): 16.
- Editors. 1966. Recovery of ringed birds. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 62 (3): 564-565.
- Elamou, S., & Kunhikrishnan, E., 2009. A record of the Brown Skua *Catharacta antarctica* from Thiruvananthapuram coast, Kerala. *Indian Birds* 4 (3): 109 (2008).
- Ellis, R. H., 1924. *A short account of the Laccadive Islands and Minicoy*. Madras: P.R. Madras Government Press.
- Feare, C. J., 1984. Seabird status and conservation in the tropical Indian Ocean. In: Croxall, J. P., Evans, P. G. H., & Schreiber, R. W., (eds.). *Status and conservation of the World's seabirds*. Cambridge, U.K.: International Council for Bird Preservation: Pp. 457-471.
- Fergusson, H. S., & Bourdillon, T. F., 1904. The birds of Travancore, with notes on their nomenclature. Part III. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 16 (1): 1-18.
- Ferrar, M. L., 1931. Bird migration notes from Port Blair. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 35 (2): 448-450.
- Frith, C. B., 1978. Short-tailed Shearwaters *Puffinus tenuirostris* in the Andaman Sea area, Indian Ocean. *Emu* 78: 95-97.
- Gadow, H., & Gardiner, J. S., 1907. *Aves*, with some notes on the distribution of the land-birds of the Seychelles. Rep. Percy Sladen Trust Exped. Indian Ocean in 1905. Vol. I. *Trans. Linn. Soc. Lond. (Zool.)* (2) 12: 103-110.
- Gibson-Hill, C. A., 1948. The Storm Petrels occurring in the Northern Indian Ocean, and adjacent seas. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 47 (3): 443-449.
- Gibson-Hill, C. A., 1949. An immature Redtailed Bo'sun-Bird. *Bulletin of Raffles Museum*. 19: 100-104.
- Gibson-Hill, C. A., 1950. The Tropic-birds occurring in the Indian Ocean and adjacent seas. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 49 (1): 67-80.
- Giri, P., Dey, A., & Sen, S. K., 2013. Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* from Namkhana, West Bengal: A first record for India. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (5): 131.
- Gretton, A., 1990. Recent reports: Sri Lanka. *Oriental Bird Club Bulletin* 11 (May): 47.
- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 1998. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 1st ed. London: Christopher Helm, A & C Black. Pp. 1-888.
- Guzman, N., 2003. Wildlife of Diego Garcia. *Chagos News* 22:5-7. <http://www.chagos-trust.org/sites/default/files/images/ChagosNews22.pdf>. [Accessed on 29 July 2003.]
- Hume, A. O., 1870. (Letter). *Ibis* 6: 435-438.
- Hume, A. O., 1874. Contributions to the ornithology of India. The Islands of the Bay of Bengal. *Stray Feathers* 2 (1,2&3): 29-324.
- Hume, A. O., 1876. The Laccadives and the west coast. *Stray Feathers* 4 (4,5&6): 413-483.
- Hume, A. O., 1877. Notes. *Stray Feathers* 5 (5&6): 495-502.
- Jamalabad, A., 2013. A record of a Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* off the Nivati coast, Maharashtra, India. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (3): 70.
- James, D. J., 2004. Identification of Christmas Island, Great and Lesser Frigatebirds. *BirdingASIA* 1: 22-38.
- Jerdon, T. C., 1864. *The birds of India: being a natural history of all the birds known to inhabit continental India; with descriptions of the species, genera, families, tribes, and orders, and a brief notice of such families as are not found in India, making it a manual of ornithology specially adapted for India*. 1st ed. Calcutta: Published by the author (Printed by George Wyman and Co.). Vol. II.-Part II. of 2 vols. Pp. i-iv, 2 ll., 441-876, i-xxii.
- Jouanin, C., 1970. Le Petrel noir de Bourbon *Pterodroma aterrima* Bonaparte. *Oiseau et R.F.O.* 40 (1): 48-68.
- Karmakar, S., Ghosh, S., Bhadra, A., & Sen, S., 2011. Birds of India: Red-footed Booby - a rare vagrant 2011. <http://www.kolkatabirds.com/redfootedbooby.htm>. Accessed on 20 July 2013.
- Kartha, V., 2013. Pelagic Birding Trip-28APR2013-Munambam. URL: <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/keralabirder/message/8721>. Accessed on 09 July 2013.
- Karunarathne, L., Wijemanne, A., Warakagoda, D., & Raheem, D., 1994. Negombo Fisheries Harbour to Colombo Harbour. *Ceylon Bird Club Notes* 1994 (July): 81-82.
- Karuthedathu, D., Palot, M. J., Praveen J., Sreenivasan, P. P., & Uthaman, K. V., 2013a. Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas* from Kannur coast, Kerala. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (2): 44-45.
- Karuthedathu, D., Praveen J., & Palot, M. J., 2013b. Recent trends in marine bird monitoring in India. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 109 (1&2): 53-59 (2012).
- Kazmierczak, K., 2000. *A field guide to the birds of India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and the Maldives*. 1st ed. New Delhi: Om Book Service. Pp. 1-352.
- Keshav, G., 2012. Re: [Tamilbirds] Pelagic birding trip from Tuticorin coast 20-10-12 a report & a rather long one. URL: <http://in.groups.yahoo.com/group/Tamilbirds/message/5734>. Accessed on 09 July 2013.
- Keswal (=Sindair, W.F.), 1886. The Waters of Western India. Part II. - Konkan and coast. By a member of the Society. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 1 (4): 153-175.
- Kumar P. M., & Kumar P. M., 1997. Occurrence of Christmas Frigate Bird. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 36 (6): 113-114.
- Kurup, D. N., & Zacharias, V. J., 1995. Birds of Lakshadweep Islands, India. *Forktail* 10: 49-64 (1994).
- Lainer, H., 1999. The birds of Goa. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 96 (2): 203-220.
- Lainer, H., 2004a. Additions to 'The birds of Goa' (Lainer 1999). *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 101 (1): 163-165.
- Lainer, H., 2004b. *Birds of Goa. A reference book*. Mapusa, Goa: The Goa Foundation. Pp. i-ii, 1-244.
- Lambert, K., 2004. Does the Tahiti Petrel *Pseudobulweria rostrata* visit the western Indian Ocean? *Marine Ornithology* 32: 183-184.
- Legge, W. V., 1983. *A history of the birds of Ceylon*. 2nd ed. Dehiwala, Sri Lanka: Tisara Prakashakaya Limited. Vol. 4 of 4 vols. Pp. 1178-1624.
- Madhyastha, N. A. A., 1999. Vagrants of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi Districts of Karnataka. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 39 (4): 66.
- Madsen, S. T., 2007. Mind the shearwaters. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 47 (1): 7-8.
- Magrath, H. A. F., 1910. Bird notes from a homeward bound steamer in November. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 20 (1): 222-224.
- Manakadan, R., & Pittie, A., 2001. Standardised common and scientific names of the birds of the Indian Subcontinent. *Buceros* 6 (1): i-ix, 1-37.
- Manivannan, P. K., & Mohan, M., 2013. Snapshot sightings: South Polar Skua from Chennai coast. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (5): 140.
- Mathew, D. N., & Ambedkar, V. C., 1964a. A bird study trip to the Laccadive Islands. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 61 (1): 185-190.
- Mathew, D., & Ambedkar, V., 1964b. A birdwatching trip to the Laccadive Islands. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 4 (7): 2-4.

- Meeuwig, J., Letessier, T. B., Groves, L., Tickler, D., Boersch-Supan, P., Cox, M., Fasolo, L., Carr, P., Pothin, R., Gollock, M., 2013. BIOT Pelagic Research Expedition Report: November 2012. <http://www.chagos-trust.org/>. Accessed on 30 June 2013.
- Mohan, R. S. L., 1989. Some observations on the marine mammals and marine birds. *CMFRI Bulletin* 43: 195–199.
- Mohapatra, K. K., & Rao, P., 1994. Further evidence on the occurrence of the Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* (Linnaeus) on India's eastern coast. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 90 (3): 511.
- Morioka, H., & Yang, C. M., 1996. A catalogue of the bird specimens in the Singapore zoological reference collection. *The Raffles Bulletin of Zoology Supplement* 4: 1–141.
- Mörzer Bruyns, W. F. J., & Voous, K. H., 1964. Notes on seabirds 7. White-faced Storm-Petrels (*Pelagodroma marina*) in the Indian Ocean. *Ardea* 52: 223–224.
- Muthunaryanan, K., 2012. Pelagic birding trip from Tuticorin coast 20-10-12 a report & a rather long one. URL: <http://in.groups.yahoo.com/group/Tamilbirds/message/5709>. Accessed on 09 July 2013.
- Narasimhan, S. V., 2004. *Feathered jewels of Coorg*. 1st ed. Madikeri, India: Coorg Wildlife Society. Pp. 1–192.
- Naryanan, P., 2013. Tropicbird and Shearwater at Kanyakumari Thirveni Sangamam. <http://in.groups.yahoo.com/group/Tamilbirds/message/6432>. [Accessed on 20 July 2013].
- Palot, M. J., 2011. White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus* from Kerala, south India. *Indian BIRDS* 7 (3): 75.
- Pande, S., Sant, N. R., Ranade, S. D., Pednekar, S. N., Mestry, P. G., Kharat, S. S., & Deshmukh, V., 2007. An ornithological expedition to the Lakshadweep archipelago: Assessment of threats to pelagic and other birds and recommendations. *Indian Birds* 3 (1): 2–12.
- Pepper, T., & Hettige, U., 2008. A first record of Black-bellied Storm-petrel *Fregetta tropica* in Sri Lankan waters. *BirdingASIA* 10: 92.
- Phillips, W. W. A., 1951. On the occurrence of the Slender-billed Shearwater (*Puffinus tenuirostris*) in Ceylon. *Spolia Zeylanica* 26 (2): 151–153.
- Phillips, W. W. A., 1953. A (1952) *Revised checklist of the birds of Ceylon*. Natural History Series (Zoology). The National Museums of Ceylon, Colombo. 132 pp.
- Phillips, W. W. A., 1959. Note on occurrence of Bulwer's Petrel (*Bulweria bulwerii*) in Indian Ocean. *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 79: 100–101.
- Phillips, W. W. A., 1967. Reoccurrence of the whitefronted shearwater (*Procellaria leucomelana* Temminck) in Indo-Ceylonese waters. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 64 (2): 365–366.
- Phillips, W. W. A., & Sims, R. W., 1958. Some observations on the fauna of the Maldives Islands. Part III - Birds. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 55 (2): 195–217.
- Pillai, N. G., 1964. Occurrence of the Christmas Island Frigate Bird *Fregata andrewsi* Mathews at Ernakulam. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 4 (7): 4.
- Pittie, A., 2011. Bibliography of South Asian Ornithology. <http://www.southasiornith.in>. [Accessed during June–July, 2013.]
- Pocklington, R., 1967. Observations by personnel of R.V. Atlantis II on islands in the Indian Ocean. *Sea Swallow* 19: 38–41.
- Poole, C., 2011. Singapore Straits May 14 URL: <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/indopacific-seabirds/message/53>. Accessed on 09 July 2013.
- Prasad, A., 2004. Annotated checklist of the birds of Western Maharashtra. *Buceros* 8 (2&3): i–ii, 1–174 (2003).
- Prasad, A., 2005. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/orientalbidding/message/7000>. [Accessed on 20 July 2013.]
- Prater, S. H., 1929. Occurrence of the Xmas Island Frigate-Bird *Fregata andrewsi* on the west coast of India. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 33 (2): 445–446.
- Praveen J., 2011. A review of pelagic bird records in *Sea Swallow* from the off-shore waters of Kerala. *Malabar Trogon* 9 (1&2): 7–10.
- Praveen J., 2012. South Kerala Pelagic: Quick Report URL: <http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/keralabirder/message/7815>. [Accessed on 09 July 2013.]
- Praveen J., Karuthedathu, D., Palot, M. J., Prince, M., & Meppayur, S., 2011. Significant pelagic bird sightings from off-shore waters of the Malabar coast, southern India. *Indian BIRDS* 7 (3): 66–69.
- Praveen, J., Karuthedathu, D., Prince, M., Palot, M. J., & Dalvi, S., 2013. Identification of South Polar Skuas *Catharacta maccormicki* in the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. *BirdingASIA* 19: 83–88.
- Praveen J., & Kelvin, L. K. P., 2013. Mascarene Petrel *Pseudobulweria aterrima* from Mumbai: a correction. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (5): 129–130.
- Prince, M., 2011. Some observations from Lakshadweep and the Laccadive Sea off Kerala. *Indian BIRDS* 7 (3): 63–65.
- Rahmani, A. R., 2012. *Threatened birds of India: their conservation requirements*. Mumbai: Indian Bird Conservation Network; Bombay Natural History Society; Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; BirdLife International; Oxford University Press. Pp. i–xvi, 1–864.
- Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2005. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. 1st ed. Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378; 1–683.
- Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2012. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378; 1–683.
- Rasmussen, P. C., 2013. Then and now: new developments in Indian systematic ornithology. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 109 (1&2): 3–16 (2012).
- Ripley, S. D., 1961. *A synopsis of the birds of India and Pakistan together with those of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Ceylon*. 1st ed. Bombay: Bombay Natural History Society. Pp. i–xxvi, 1–703.
- Ripley, S. D., 1982. *A synopsis of the birds of India and Pakistan together with those of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka*. 2nd ed. Bombay: Oxford: Bombay Natural History Society; Oxford University Press. Pp. i–xxvi, 1–653.
- Robertson, A. L. H., 1995. Occurrence of some pelagic seabirds (Procellariiformes) in waters off the Indian subcontinent. *Forktail* 10: 129–140 (1994).
- Santharam, V., 1982. Some rare encounters. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 22 (5-6): 5–8.
- Sashikumar, C., Praveen J., Palot, M. J., & Nameer, P. O., 2011. *Birds of Kerala: status and distribution*. 1st ed. Kottayam, Kerala: DC Books. Pp. 1–835.
- Saxena, A., 1994. Sighting of Christmas Island Frigate Bird (*Fregata andrewsi*) Mathews in the Andamans. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 91 (1): 138.
- Sen, S., 2011. Pelagic vagrants east coast of India. <http://www.kolkatabirds.com/pelagicstrays.htm>. Accessed on 20 July 2013.
- Shirihai, H., 1999. Fifty species new to Israel, 1979–1998: their discovery and documentation, with tips on identification. *Sandgrouse* 21 (1): 45–105.
- Shirihai, H., Sinclair, I. & Colston, P. R. 1995. A new species of *Puffinus* shearwater from the western Indian Ocean. *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 115: 75–87.
- Shivashankar, M., 2012. Pelagic birding off Mangalore coast (March 2012). URL: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bngbirds/message/21928>. Accessed on 09 July 2013.
- Shivashankar, M., Subramanya, S., Karuthedathu, D., & Shivaprakash, A., 2011. A note on pelagic bird sightings off the Mulki coast of southern India. *Indian BIRDS* 7 (3): 70–71.
- Sinclair, J. C., 1978. Three bird species seen for the first time in Sri Lanka. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 74 (2): 354 (1977).
- Sinclair, J. C., 1979. Birds observed at sea in the Indian Ocean. *Cormorant* 7: 7–10.
- Sladen, W. J. L., Wood, R. C., & Monaghan, E. P., 1968. The USARP bird banding program, 1958–1965. In: Austin, O. L., (ed) *Antarctic bird studies*. *Antarct. Res. Ser.* 12: 213–262. AGU, Washington, D. C.
- Sridhar, & Srimam. 1986. Additional sightings of the Tropic Birds in Madras. *Blackbuck* 2 (2): 29–31.
- Sridhar, T. R., 1987. Tropic Bird in Madras. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 27 (1-2): 10–12.
- Sriram, & Sridhar., 1985. Tropicbird in Madras. *Blackbuck* 1 (2): 35–36.
- Sundevall, C. J., 1837–1838. Foglar från Calcutta, samlade och beskrifne. *Physiographiska Sällskapets Tidskrift*. 1: 527–96, 161–222.
- Symens, P., 1999. Breeding seabirds of the Chagos Archipelago. Pp. 257–272. In: Sheppard, C. R. C., & Seward, M. R. D., (eds) *Ecology of the Chagos Archipelago*. Linnean Society. Occasional Publication 2, Westbury, West Yorkshire, U. K.
- Thompson, P. M., Reza, C. M., Haque, E. U., 2013. First record of Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* from Bangladesh. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (5): 135–136.
- Udayakumara, A. A. D. A., Karunarathna, D. M. S. S., Amarasinghe, A. A. T., & Ekanayake, E. M. K. B., 2007. First confirmed record of South Polar Skua *Catharacta maccormicki* from Western Province, Sri Lanka. *BirdingASIA* 8 (December): 77.
- van den Berg, A. B., Bosman, C. A. W., & Rozendaal, F. G., 1982. Notes on sea-birds 69. First sight-record of White-faced Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas* in Sri Lanka. *Ardea* 70 (1): 83.
- van den Berg, A. B., Smeenk, C., Bosman, C. A. W., Haase, B. J. M., van der Niet, A. M., & Cadée, G. C., 1991. Barau's Petrel *Pterodroma baraui*, Jouanin's Petrel *Bulweria fallax* and other seabirds in the northern Indian Ocean in June-July 1984 and 1985. *Ardea* 79 (1): 1–14.
- Varu, S. N., 1987. Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* in Kachchh Coast. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 27 (9-10): 15–16.
- Varu, S. N., 1988. Brown Booby in Kachchh coast. *Blackbuck* 3 (3&4): 31.
- Varu, S. N., 1991. Rare sightings in Kutch. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 30 (11-12): 10–11.
- Varu, S. N., & Bapat, N. N., 1990. Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* (Boddaert) on the western coast. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 86 (3): 443.
- Vivek Chandran A., Praveen J., Sreenivasan, P. P., Nameer, P. O., & Dilip K. G., 2011. Swinhoe's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma monorhis* and other pelagic birds from the Thrissur coast, Kerala. *Indian BIRDS* 7 (3): 73–74.
- Voous, K. H., 1965. Notes on sea-birds 14. White-faced Storm Petrels in the Indian Ocean: correction and additions. *Ardea* 53: 237.
- Wijeyeratne, G. d. S., 2008. Oriental Bird Images. URL: http://orientalbirdimages.org/search.php?p=39&Bird_ID=1175&Bird_Family_ID=&pagesize=1. [Accessed on 26 July 2013.]
- Wijeyeratne, G. d. S., 2010. Oriental Bird Images. URL: http://orientalbirdimages.org/search.php?p=12&Bird_ID=939&Bird_Family_ID=&pagesize=1. [Accessed on 23 August 2013.]

Birding in Lohit Valley, Arunachal Pradesh

Neeta Gode

Gode, N., 2013. Birding in Lohit Valley, Arunachal Pradesh. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (5): 126-127.

Neeta Gode, J-15 Salunke Vihar, Pune 411022, Maharashtra, India. Email: neetagode@hotmail.com



129. Godlewski's Bunting. Photo: N. Gode

In November 2011, I had the good fortune of spending fifteen days in Lohit Valley, Arunachal Pradesh, on a tour of duty. Though I had visited the area previously, I had been too preoccupied with work, then, to truly appreciate the beauty of the place.

We travelled in by road from Tinsukia district, Assam, to Walong (28°08'N, 97°01'E), in Arunachal's Anjaw district. Journeying from the flood plains of the Brahmaputra up the gentle slopes of the Eastern Himalayas, the landscape changes from the cultivated plains of Assam to a subtropical broadleaved forest interspersed with patches of grasslands where indiscriminate felling of trees has reduced tree cover drastically. Crossing the town of Chongkham (27°48'N, 96°02'E), Once a major producer of plywood, today hardly any trees remain in the area, I spotted and photographed a flock of 16 White-rumped Vultures *Gyps bengalensis*. Around Wakhro (28°08'N, 96°49'E) and Parshuramkund (27°52'N, 96°22'E), we ran across a variety of flycatchers, and several warblers whose identity evaded us. The area is replete with tiny bridges over 'nullahs' and many causeways. One feels a childish delight driving through the water. Past Parshuramkund, the road runs along the river running in a very narrow valley. The altitudes of the surrounding peaks compared to those in Kashmir, are not very high, and do not exceed 2800 m. Except for intermittent human habitations, much of the area is covered with broadleaved forest where birds abound. Further on from Hayuliang (28°04'N, 96°33'E), on all the three axes along the rivers Dau, Delai, and northwards along the Lohit, birdlife is plentiful. We spotted Golden-throated Barbets *Megalaima franklinii*, Maroon Orioles *Oriolus traillii*, three species of niltavas—*Niltava sundara*, *N. macgrigoriae*, and *N. grandis*, several yuhinas—*Yuhina castaniceps*, *Y. occipitalis*, *Y. gularis*, and *Y. flavicollis*, Laughingthrushes, and babblers. In the tall grass of the riverbank, I spied a Spot-breasted Parrotbill *Paradoxornis guttaticollis*, Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*, and a Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*.

On morning strolls, while we were camped in Walong, I spotted a Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophiota* by the road, males and females of the Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus aureus*, Striated Prinias *Prinia crinigera*, and Lemon-rumped Warblers *Phylloscopus chloronotus* in the shrubs flanking the road. I also photographed a solitary Plain-backed Thrush *Zoothera mollissima* in the same area. By the banks of the Lohit and its many tributaries, I came across several White-capped Water-Redstarts *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*, Plumbeous Water-Redstarts *Rhyacornis fuliginosa*, and a flock of Hodgson's Redstarts *P. hodgsoni* perched on electric lines. We saw Scarlet Minivets *Pericrocotus speciosus* flying in a formation above our campsite every day. Our car drivers and aides, who initially dismissed our obsession jocularly, saying there were no birds

around because the locals had eaten them all, were soon alert to bird activity! On various trips between Walong and Kibithu (27°48'N, 95°28'E.) one would come across young Meyor tribal boys hunting and shooting down birds for food.

On one excursion, the driver pointed out a bird on a rock face, which kept showing a flash of red; it was a Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*. I had never seen the bird on my previous three visits! The eastern Himalayas are relatively nascent mountains with large swathes of sandstone. If one travels into the area during the monsoons, one is most likely to be stranded as heavy downpours simply wash away parts of the mountain roads. Metalled roads go up mountainsides to Helmet Top and Tilam Top. We saw Rusty-fronted Barwings *Actinodura egeertoni* and a pair of Eurasian Jays *Garrulus glandarius* as we drove up the steep slopes. Below one waterfall, I came across a Chestnut-headed Tesia *Cettia castaneocoronata*. On 8 November I saw a flock of 10–12 birds that I could not easily identify, perched on a wire near Meshai Bridge. I trained my binoculars on them for a long while and upon consulting my trusty field guide, identified them as a flock of Black-headed Greenfinches *Chloris ambigua*. Most birds had a black head, black and white colouration on the primaries, but were otherwise uniformly yellowish green. My excitement knew no bounds, but I had to wait to share news of the sighting with my birding friends, as the area had no phone-network coverage. The failing evening light, and my autofocus point and shoot camera, with its limitations, rendered even a record shot impossible. When I returned from the field, a literature search revealed that there had been prior sightings from Walong (Singh 1995), but is considered 'hypothetical' in recent publications (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005, Grimmett *et al.* 2012). An image of the finches captured by Arun P. Singh on a trip undertaken after mine made me turn green with envy! I presume these recent, repeated sightings from Walong could serve for inclusion of the species into the South Asian checklist.

On 10 November, amidst the many lifers, a significant sighting was made. I repeatedly came across a bunting on the roadside, between Walong and Kibithu, which always occurred singly. I managed to get a few pictures but was unsure if it was indeed the Godlewski's Bunting *Emberiza godlewskii* [129]. Photographs were later shown to Shashank Dalvi, who confirmed the bird as that. Photographs were later sent to Praveen J., and Rajah Jayapal. Both confirmed my identification. Jayapal additionally wrote back that of the two subspecies possible in this region, the paler form *khamensis* could be a resident here, while the darker *yunnanensis*, a potential winter visitor. And since the birds seem to be heavily streaked on the mantle, these could be *khamensis* (Jayapal, *pers. comm.*, March 2013). However, my photographs are not of excellent quality to make a conclusive statement on the race. The bunting is another species that is considered

hypothetical in recent literature, but was previously recorded on a trek in Redding-Taking, and Kibitho by Singh (1995). This is perhaps the first photographic documentation of the species from South Asia, and the recurring sighting from the same area could bolster the provenance of prior sightings.

The far reaches of north-eastern India have much to offer in terms of rarities. Several species, which were considered hypothetical, are likely to turn up, as the Lord Derby's Parakeet *Psittacula derbiana* did at Lekhapani ([130]; 27°19'N, 95°54'E), north-eastern Assam—yet another species which was reported by Singh (1995), but treated as hypothetical by Rasmussen & Anderton (2012). Unfortunately I have not seen this area of Arunachal Pradesh on the birding map, in spite of adequate and reasonable accommodation available in Hayuliang, Walong, and Kibithu.

List of birds seen at Lohit Valley

Hill Partridge *Arborophila torqueola*
Black Kite *Milvus migrans*
White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*
Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*
Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis*
Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*
Spotted Dove *Spilopelia chinensis*
Common Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica*
Pin-tailed Green Pigeon *Treron apicauda*
Green Imperial Pigeon *Ducula aenea*
Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri*
Green-billed Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus tristis*
Banded Bay Cuckoo *Cacomantis sonneratii*
Plaintive Cuckoo *Cacomantis merulinus*
Asian Barred Owllet *Glaucidium cuculoides*
Himalayan Swiftlet *Aerodramus brevirostris*
Red-headed Trogon *Harpactes erythrocephalus*
Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*
Blue-bearded Bee-eater *Nyctornis athertoni*
Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*
Eurasian Hoopoe *Upupa epops*
Oriental Pied Hornbill *Anthraceroceros albirostris*
Great Barbet *Megalaima virens*
Lineated Barbet *Megalaima lineata*
Golden-throated Barbet *Megalaima franklinii*
Blue-throated Barbet *Megalaima asiatica*
Blue-eared Barbet *Megalaima australis*
Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemacephala*
Greater Yellownappe *Chrysophlegma flavinucha*
Lesser Yellownappe *Picus chlorolophus*
Rufous Woodpecker *Micropternus brachyurus*
Long-tailed Broadbill *Psisomus dalhousiae*
Black-winged Cuckooshrike *Coracina melaschistos*
Short-billed Minivet *Pericrocotus brevirostris*
Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus speciosus*
Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*
Grey-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus*
Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*
Maroon Oriole *Oriolus traillii*
Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius*
Common Green Magpie *Cissa chinensis*
Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda*
Grey Treepie *Dendrocitta formosae*
Collared Treepie *Dendrocitta frontalis*
Yellow-bellied Fantail *Chelidorhynch hypoxantha*
Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis*
Cinereous Tit *Parus cinereus*
Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus*
Yellow-cheeked Tit *Parus spilonotus*
Sultan Tit *Melanochlora sultanea*

Striated Bulbul *Pycnonotus striatus*
White-throated Bulbul *Allophoxus flaveolus*
Ashy Bulbul *Hemixos flava*
Black Bulbul *Hyppis leucocephalus*
Nepal House Martin *Delichon nipalense*
Striated Swallow *Cecropis striolata*
Mountain Tailorbird *Phyllergates cuculatus*
Chestnut-headed Tesia *Cettia castaneocoronata*
Tickell's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis*
Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus*
Striated Grassbird *Megalurus palustris*
Striated Prinia *Prinia cinerogera*
Hill Prinia *Prinia superciliosa*
Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*
Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*
Rufous-capped Babbler *Stachyridopsis ruficeps*
Golden Babbler *Stachyridopsis chrysaea*
White-crested Laughingthrush *Garrulax leucolophus*
Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush *Garrulax monileger*
Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush *Garrulax pectoralis*
Rufous-necked Laughingthrush *Garrulax ruficollis*
Striated Laughingthrush *Garrulax striatus*
Streaked Laughingthrush *Trochopteron lineatum*
Bar-throated Minla *Minla strigula*
Rusty-fronted Barwing *Actinodura egertoni*
Silver-eared Leiothrix *Leiothrix argentauris*
Red-billed Leiothrix *Leiothrix lutea*
Beautiful Sibia *Heterophasia pulchella*
Spot-breasted Parrotbill *Paradoxornis guttaticollis*
Striated Yuhina *Yuhina castaniceps*
Whiskered Yuhina *Yuhina flavicollis*
Stripe-throated Yuhina *Yuhina gularis*
Rufous-vented Yuhina *Yuhina occipitalis*
Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus*
Asian Fairy-bluebird *Irena puella*
Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch *Sitta cinnamoventris*
Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*
Hodgson's (?) Treecreeper *Certhia hodgsoni* (?)
Common Hill Myna *Gracula religiosa*
Chestnut-tailed Starling *Sturnia malabarica*
Blue Whistling Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus*
Plain-backed Thrush *Zoothera mollissima*
White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus*
Hodgson's Redstart *Phoenicurus hodgsoni*
Daurian Redstart *Phoenicurus aureoreus*
Plumbeous Water Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosa*
White-capped Redstart *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*
Slaty-backed Forktail *Enicurus schistaceus*
Spotted Forktail *Enicurus maculatus*
Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus*

Blue Rock Thrush *Monticola solitarius*
Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*
Rusty-tailed Flycatcher *Muscicapa ruficauda*
Ferruginous Flycatcher *Muscicapa ferruginea*
Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher *Ficedula strophliata*
Taiga Flycatcher *Ficedula albicilla*
Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassinus*
Rufous-bellied Niltava *Niltava sundara*
Large Niltava *Niltava grandis*
Small Niltava *Niltava macgrigoriae*
Blue-winged Leafbird *Chloropsis cochinchinensis*
Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons*
Orange-bellied Leafbird *Chloropsis hardwickii*
Yellow-vented Flowerpecker *Dicaeum chrysorrheum*
Black-throated Sunbird *Aethopyga saturata*
Crimson Sunbird *Aethopyga siparaja*
Streaked Spiderhunter *Arachnothera magna*
Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*
Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus*
Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*
Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophliata*
Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*
Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*
White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*
Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*
Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*
Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus*
Black-headed Greenfinch *Chloris ambigua*
Godlewski's Bunting *Emberiza godlewskii*
Chestnut-eared Bunting *Emberiza fucata*
Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Shashank Dalvi for helping me identify the Godlewski's Bunting. I am extremely thankful to Praveen J., for encouraging me to submit my photograph of the species for publication. I would also like to thank Rajah Jayapal of SACON for his help with the racial status of this species in north-eastern India.

References

- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 2011. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press & Christopher Helm. Pp. 1–528.
Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2012. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378; 1–683.
Singh, P., 1995. Recent bird records from Arunachal Pradesh, India. *Forktail* 10: 65–104 (1994).



White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus* off the north-western coast of India

Abhishek Jamalabad

Jamalabad, A., 2013. White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus* off the north-western coast of India. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (5): 128.

Abhishek Jamalabad, 44, Kanara House, Mogul Lane, Mahim, Mumbai 400016, Maharashtra, India. Email: abhishek.jamalabad@gmail.com

Manuscript received on 11 July 2013.

This note presents the sighting of an adult White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus* in the pelagic waters off the north-western coast of India, during a scientific cruise in the northern Arabian Sea.

A solitary White-tailed Tropicbird was sighted on the morning of 18 February 2012, at 16°04'N, 72°16'E, a point 121 km west of the coast of Maharashtra (within Indian territorial waters). The bird was flying continuously at an elevation of c. 10 m over the sea, occasionally flying very low, and apparently making shallow dives or skimming the surface. Due to the great distance (which cannot be determined accurately) from which the observation was made, it was not possible to conclusively determine whether the bird was feeding. The bird was observed for at least three to four minutes, exhibiting the aforementioned behaviour, before it disappeared from view. Photographs of this individual were obtained [131, 132].

A second sighting occurred two days later in approximately the same region when a White-tailed Tropicbird flew directly overhead, but it cannot be determined whether this was the same individual; photographic evidence and exact geolocation information of this second sighting could not be obtained.

Phaethon lepturus is the smallest of the three tropicbirds recorded from Indian Subcontinental waters. The adult of this species is identifiable by its yellow bill [131] and black diagonal bands on the inner upper wing [132], which markedly distinguish it from other members of the genus occurring in the region. The white tail streamers, though not clearly discernible in the photographs, were visible through binoculars (during the first sighting), and the bird's identity was further confirmed when observed at close quarters during the second sighting. This bird is pelagic (unless breeding) and is often briefly attracted to ships (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005), as exhibited during the second sighting described above. This species is a known resident on the Maldives archipelago and has been recorded as a visitor to the coasts of India and Sri Lanka (Grimmett *et al.* 1999).

P. lepturus has been recorded on the western coast of India on two previous occasions (Palot 2011; Sashikumar *et al.* 2011). Other records from India include a specimen collected from Ross



131. White-tailed Tropicbird.



132. White-tailed Tropicbird.

A. Jamalabad

Island, Andamans, and another collected far inland from Cachar, Assam (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005). [See also p. 115 in this issue.]

Acknowledgements

I thank Shivakumar B. Haragi and Roshmon Thomas for their invaluable help as spotters and observers, and Jason Mendes for helping to compare notes on the description, behaviour, and distribution. Thanks to Praveen J., and Sabyasachi Patra for sharing additional data and literature for citation. I also express my gratitude to the expedition organisers—the National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research.

References

- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 1999. *Pocket guide to the birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pp. 1–384.
- Kazmierczak, K., 2000. *A field guide to the birds of India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and the Maldives*. 1st ed. New Delhi: Om Book Service. Pp. 1–352.
- Palot, M. J., 2011. White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus* from Kerala, south India. *Indian BIRDS* 7 (3): 75.
- Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2012. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378; 1–683.
- Sashikumar, C., Praveen J., Palot, M. J., & Nameer, P. O., 2011. *Birds of Kerala: status and distribution*. 1st ed. Kottayam, Kerala: DC Books. Pp. 1–835.

In memoriam
Zafar Futehally
1920 — 2013

Mascarene Petrel *Pseudobulweria aterrima* from Mumbai: A correction

Praveen J., & Lim Kok Peng Kelvin

Praveen, J., & Kelvin, L. K. P., 2013. Mascarene Petrel *Pseudobulweria aterrima* from Mumbai: A correction. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (5): 129–130.

Praveen J., B303, Shriram Spurthi, ITPL Main Road, Brookefields, Bangalore 560037, Karnataka, India. Email: paintedstork@gmail.com [PJ]

Lim Kok Peng Kelvin, Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, Department of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Science, National University of Singapore, Science Library Building (S6), Level 3, Science Drive 2, Singapore 117546. Email: kelvinlim@nus.edu.sg [LKPK]

Mascarene Petrel *Pseudobulweria aterrima* is a little-known seabird breeding only on Reunion Island in the Indian Ocean. It is frequently mis-identified in the field and there exist only a handful of specimens in the museums across the world—seven as per Attié *et al.* (1997), though recent additions in Muséum de La Réunion have occurred (Vincent Bretagnolle, *pers. comm.*, July 2013). A live bird was taken by fishermen near Colaba light house (18°53'N, 72°48'E), Mumbai, which was received on 15 June 1940 at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, and identified at Colombo Museum by G. M. Henry as this species (Abdulali & Ali 1940). However, the specimen was later termed as 'lost' and its identity doubted by later works (Ali & Ripley 2001; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). It was subsequently suggested that this specimen was probably a Jouanin's Petrel *Bulweria fallax*, a species, which was not described then (Jouanin 1970; Robertson 1995).

Tim Inskipp indicated to one of us (PJ) that this 'lost' specimen is now catalogued in Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, National University of Singapore (Tim Inskipp, *pers. comm.*, June 2013). PJ contacted LKPK who took several pho-



136. Upper wing of Jouanin's Petrel *B. fallax*.

tographs, and morphometric measurements of this specimen (#ZRC 3.22) in June–July 2013. At the time of re-examination, the specimen already had a second tag labelling it a Jouanin's Petrel [133] by

Ian MacAllen, dated 14 May 2009. Pictures show a dark petrel with a very long tail [133–136] which is quite uncharacteristic of Mascarene Petrel. The specimen being old and stiff, no attempt was made to spread its wings as that would destroy it. However, pictures of the dorsal side show the hints of a pale panel on the wings [134, 135], which is present in Jouanin's. The specimen also does not have the bicoloured feet of a Mascarene [133]. Morphometrics (Table 1; Attié *et al.* 1997) indicate that the bird has a much longer tail, and shorter tarsus, thus fitting those of a Jouanin's. Photographs and morphometrics were sent to Vincent Bretagnolle, and W. R. P. Bourne, who confirmed our identification.

The specimen is labelled, 'Kolaba light house (Bombay)', collected on 13 June 1940, perhaps correctly as Ali & Abdulali (1940) only indicated the date of reception of the specimen as 15 June 1940. Though there are no records to indicate how this specimen reached the collections of Raffles Museum, the museum records indicate that the original tag had the label from St. Xavier's College Bombay [137] and hence is convincing enough proof of its source and identity.

Hence, Mascarene Petrel should be deleted from the list of birds of mainland South Asia and the specimen in the Raffles Museum should be considered as the first record of Jouanin's Petrel from mainland South Asia.

Table 1. Comparison of biometrics of the 'Mumbai Petrel'

	<i>P. aterrima</i>	<i>B. fallax</i>	'Mumbai Petrel'
Wing	229–250	231–245	240
Tail	94–115	108–125	133
Culmen	25–30	27–31	26.6
Tarsus	33–42	28–31	31.1

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Vincent Bretagnolle, W. R. P. Bourne, Mathieu Le Corre, and Huw Roberts for discussions on the species ID, and Tim Inskipp for the valuable tip that set us on the trail of this specimen.

References

- Abdulali, H., & Ali, S., 1940. Additional notes on the birds of Bombay and Salsette. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 42 (1): 191–197.
- Ali, S., & Ripley, S. D., 2001. *Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan together with those of Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka*. 2nd ed. Delhi: (Spon-



133. Ventral view of Jouanin's Petrel *B. fallax*.

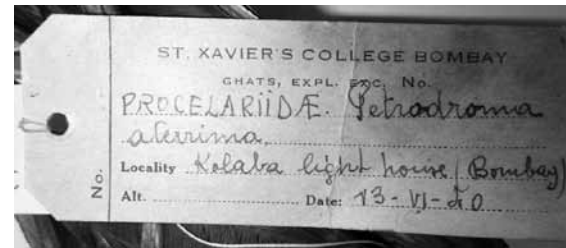


134. Lateral view of Jouanin's Petrel *B. fallax*.



135. Dorsal view of Jouanin's Petrel *B. fallax*.

137. The original tag from 'Kolaba light house (Bombay).'



sored by Bombay Natural History Society.) Oxford University Press [Oxford India Paperbacks.]. Vol. 1 of 10 vols. Pp. 2 ll., pp. i–lxiii, 1–384, 2 ll.

Attié, C., Stahl, J. C., Bretagnolle, V., 1997. New data on the endangered Mascarene Petrel *Pseudobulweria aterrima*: a third twentieth century specimen and distribution. *Colonial Waterbirds* 20 (3): 406–412.

Jouanin, C., 1970. Le Petrel noir de Bourbon *Pterodroma aterrima* Bonaparte.

L'Oiseau et la Revue Française d'Ornithologie 40 (1): 48–68.

Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2012. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378; 1–683.

Robertson, A. L. H., 1995. Occurrence of some pelagic seabirds (Procellariiformes) in waters off the Indian subcontinent. *Forktail* 10: 129–140 (1994).

Elliot's Laughingthrush *Trochalopteron elliotii* and Black-headed Greenfinch *Chloris ambigua* from Anini, Arunachal Pradesh, India

Shashank Dalvi

Dalvi, S., 2013. Elliot's Laughingthrush *Trochalopteron elliotii* and Black-headed Greenfinch *Chloris ambigua* from Anini, Arunachal Pradesh, India. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (5): 130.

Shashank Dalvi, Centre for Wildlife Studies, 224 Garden Apartments, Bangalore 560001, Karnataka, India. and Wildlife Conservation Society India Program, National Centre for Biological Sciences, GKV, Bangalore – 560065, Karnataka. Email: shashank.da@gmail.com

During my recently concluded master's study on the 'Role of Brahmaputra River as a biogeographical barrier,' I came across a couple of interesting species for the Indian Subcontinent. I visited Anini, which is the district headquarters of Upper Dibang district, between 23 and 25 April 2012. I birded mainly around Anini town and along the road towards Mipi village, which is located on the border of Dihang Dibang Biosphere Reserve (hereafter DDBR). Anini lies just south of DDBR (28°27'–29°03'N, 94°29'–95°49'E), which spans an area of 5111.5 km² (core: 4094.8 km², buffer: 1016.7 km²), and incorporates parts of West Siang, Upper Siang, and Dibang Valley districts, and the Mouling National Park, Mehao and Dibang Wildlife Sanctuaries. It shares its northern boundry with Tibet and eastern boundry with Myanmar. DDBR is located in the Eastern Himalaya Global Biodiversity Hotspot, recognised worldwide for its rich flora and fauna. Almost completely forested, DDBR encompasses a huge variety of habitats owing to its vast elevational range (500–6000 m asl), from lowland tropical evergreen forests to high alpine meadows.

On 24 April 2012 while birding en-route Mipi (28°50'N, 95°52'E; 1500 m asl) from Anini I glimpsed a pair of Elliot's Laughingthrushes *Trochalopteron elliotii* crossing the road. The birds responded well to song recordings from China (Xeno-canto recording XC68368). They circled around the speaker and gave several good views for over five minutes. However I did not come across this species during the rest of my stay at Anini.

Elliot's Laughingthrush is a common resident of China from eastern Qinghai and adjacent northern Gansu (south-eastern Qilian Shan) east to Southwest Nei Monggol (Helan Shan), south to south-eastern Xizang, central Tunnan, western Guizhou, southern Ningxia, southern Shaanxi and Whubei (Collar & Robson 2007). There has been only one earlier sighting of this species for India, from north-eastern Arunachal Pradesh close to Hotspring (extreme north-eastern of Arunachal Pradesh) where a flock of 20 individuals were sighted on 15 September 1994 (Singh 1995). This species is listed as hypothetical by Rasmussen & Anderton (2012), and considered doubtful by Grimmett *et al.* (2011) for the Indian Subcontinent.

I also found that Black-headed Greenfinch *Chloris ambigua* was very common on all three days of my stay there (28°47'N,

95°53'E; 1600 m asl). These birds were seen perched on overhead electric wires, and conifer trees, on multiple occasions. Black-headed Greenfinch has a very wide distribution in China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam (Robson 2001; IUCN 2013). However it is considered hypothetical for the Indian Subcontinent (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). However, Singh (1995) had earlier reported this species from Walong, Arunachal Pradesh. Atul Jain, Harkirath Singh Sangha, and Manoj Sharma also sighted the birds at Walong on 7 May 2013 (*pers. comm.*)

Hotspring and Walong are located in Anjaw district, Arunachal Pradesh, c. 130 kms south-east of Anini. The sightings of these hypothetical species are significant as there are several areas in Arunachal Pradesh whose ornithology is still unexplored. Such areas can still throw potential ornithological surprises.

Aknowledgements

I would like to thank Mr. Ringu (C.C.F., Arunachal Pradesh) for insiting that I visit Anini, and DDBR. I would like to thank Mr. Ayoto Miwu for accompanying me to Anini and beyond. Asit Biswas for lending me a bike to reach Anini. Mili, Nepali daju for providing me shelter during a stormy night enroute to Anini. Thanks to Praveen J., and Kulbhushansingh S., for sending me the reading material while I was in the field. Many thanks to Vishnupriya S., and another referee for editing the draft.

References

- Collar, N. J., & Robson, C., 2007. Family Timaliidae (Babblers). In: *Handbook of the birds of the world. Volume 12. Picathartes to tits and chickadees*. del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A., & Christie, D., (eds.). Barcelona: Lynx Edicions. 12 of 16 vols: Pp. 70–291.
- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 2011. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press & Christopher Helm. Pp. 1–528.
- IUCN. 2013. <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/10600881/0>.
- Singh, P., 1995. Recent bird records from Arunachal Pradesh, India. *Forktail* 10: 65–104 (1994).
- Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2012. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378; 1–683.
- Robson, C., 2005. *Birds of Southeast Asia*. New Holland, London: Princeton University Press. Pp. 1–304.
- Orientalbird Images, 2013. http://orientalbirdimages.org/search.php?p=4&Bird_ID=1984&Bird_Family_ID=&pagesize=1
- Xenocanto Asia, 2013. <http://www.xeno-canto.org/species/Trochalopteron-elliotii>.

Short-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna tenuirostris* from Namkhana, West Bengal: A first record for India

Paritosh Giri, Ajanta Dey & Sumit K. Sen

Giri, P., Dey, A., & Sen, S. K., 2013. Short-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna tenuirostris* from Namkhana, West Bengal: A first record for India. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (5): 131.

Paritosh Giri, c/o NEWS, 10, Chowringee Terrace, Kolkata 700020, West Bengal, India. Email: news_kolkata@yahoo.co.in [PG]

Ajanta Dey, c/o NEWS, 10, Chowringee Terrace, Kolkata 700020, West Bengal, India. Email: news_kolkata@yahoo.co.in [AD]

Sumit K. Sen, 508 Jodhpur Park, Kolkata 700068, West Bengal, India. Email: sumitsen@rediffmail.com [SKS]

Manuscript received on 18 July 2013.

Short-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna tenuirostris* is a pelagic migrant that breeds in Tasmania, and off the coast of southern Australia. It normally undertakes a trans-equatorial migration, wintering north of Japan, near the Aleutian Islands, with some birds moving north of the Bering Strait (BirdLife International 2013). However, vagrants are known to occur in the Indian Ocean, particularly during spring, as indicated by two May specimens collected from Pakistan and Sri Lanka (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005), and a recent record off the Bangladesh coast (see elsewhere in this issue).

On 27 April 2013, one of us (PG), along with Chandan Maity of Patharpratima, visited Muri Ganga River, a distributary of the Hooghly River in South 24 Parganas district, West Bengal. Weather was sunny but strong SE winds were blowing towards the mainland. While travelling upstream of the Hatania-Doania River (21°46'N, 88°12'E), PG observed two dark birds on the

river at 1130 hrs, and managed to capture a couple of images [138, 139]. The birds allowed close approach to about 6–7 m, and when flushed, flew towards Ghoramara Island, and settled on the water. The images were transmitted for identification to AD who further forwarded them to SKS, and the Bengalbird Google Group. Though the first photograph was not completely conclusive, the second photograph, showing both birds, was more helpful, and several birders familiar with this species identified it from the photograph.

Both pictures showed a blackish-brown shearwater with a small bill, and a compact body with wings extending beyond the tail tip. In Fig. 1 the bird in the foreground has an all dark beak, greyish throat with a blackish head, steep forehead and short neck. The dark beak eliminates all other dark shearwaters that occur in the region except the hypothetical Sooty Shearwater *P. griseus*. The shorter beak, steeper forehead and the colour tones of head and throat, which gives a helmeted appearance, are clear indications of a Short-tailed Shearwater. The birds show two generations of feathers and the wings are very worn, probably too worn for a first-year bird; it is more likely these are retained flight feathers from almost a year ago, which were perhaps moulted in the north Pacific wintering area (Jeff Davies, *pers. comm.*, July 2013). This worn plumage is a further confirmation of the identity, as Sooty Shearwater should show fresh feathers at this time of the year (David Bakewell, *pers. comm.*, July 2013).

This is a first record of the Short-tailed Shearwater from India. However, there are apparently regular sightings off the western coast of the Malayan peninsula, which makes sightings further north quite probable (Jeff Davies, *pers. comm.*, July 2013). There had not been any reports of tropical storms before the sighting date and hence these birds may not have reached here wind-blown from the southern latitudes. On the contrary, perhaps they occur regularly in this area during April–May, and more visits to the seas during spring might help in confirming the same.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Neil Cheshire, David Bakewell, Jeff Davies, Robert Flood, Greg Gillson, Nikolas Haass, David James, Tim Inskipp, Dipu Karuthedathu, Colin Poole, Praveen J., and Mike Prince for the extensive discussion on the identification of these birds.

References

- BirdLife International. 2013. Short-tailed Shearwater: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/speciesfactsheet.php?id=3934>. Accessed on 16 July 2013.
- Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2012. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378; 1–683.



138. Short-tailed Shearwater.



139. Short-tailed Shearwater.

Sighting of Mongolian Gull *Larus [vegae / smithsonianus] mongolicus* at Chilka, Odisha

Srimonti Dutta

Dutta, S., 2013. Sighting of Mongolian Gull *Larus [vegae / smithsonianus] mongolicus* at Chilka, Odisha. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (5): 132.

Srimonti Dutta, Department of Physics, Behala College, Parnasree Pally, Kolkata 700060, West Bengal, India. Email: srinantid@yahoo.co.in



142. Mongolian Gull *Larus mongolicus*.

Mongolian Gull *Larus [vegae / smithsonianus] mongolicus* is a member of the "Large White-headed Gull" complex whose taxonomy has been revised many times. Formerly considered a race of Caspian Gull *L. cachinnans*, it is now placed as a subspecies either under *L. vegae* (Gill & Donsker 2013) or *L. smithsonianus* (Collinson 2008; Dickinson & Remsen 2013). Species identification is complicated and never conclusive, and its presence in India has been open to doubt (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005).

This note describes the sighting of single adult Mongolian Gull from Chilka Lake in Rambha, Odisha, India (19°30'N, 85°05'E). The bird was sighted on a visit to Chilka Lake in Barkul, Rambha, Satapada, and Mangolajodi marshes during 23–29 January 2013. After a morning trip to the Nalban Sanctuary, and birding around Barkul, we headed towards Rambha. We took a boat ride in a country boat and came across huge flocks of Tufted Ducks *Aythya fuligula* and Brown-headed Gulls *L. brunnicephalus* apart from a few other common birds. We were taken to a place, which was probably the resting place of a flock of about 50 gulls, all of them Brown-headed, but for a larger solitary gull that appeared different. Several photographs



140



Photos: S. Dutta

140, 141. Mongolian Gull *Larus mongolicus*.

were taken [140–142] and they were posted on the Oriental Bird Images e-group. Its identity was suggested as this species based on jizz that included a large head, heavy bill, and very pale eyes, quite unlike *L. cachinnans*. Other probable races, *heuglini*, *barabensis*, and *taimyrensis* have much darker upper parts than this bird. These pictures were subsequently added to Oriental Bird Images as Mongolian Gull [http://orientalbirdimages.org/search.php?p=2&Bird_ID=941&Bird_Family_ID=&pagesize=1].

These images were also transmitted by Rajah Jayapal to Hans Larsson, who commented that these pictures are most likely a Mongolian Gull on account of the following field-characters:

1. More black in primaries compared with *vegae* (markings on 7 instead of 5–6 primaries).
2. Upper parts too pale for *barabensis* as well as *taimyrensis*.
3. All white head in mid-winter (in *vegae* and *taimyrensis* normally streaked in winter plumage).
4. Structure and bare parts colouration that matched well with this species.

Though the pictures resemble the 'Eastern' population of *L. cachinnans*, from which *mongolicus* is difficult to exclude, the significantly paler mantle of the Chilka individual points to its identification as *mongolicus* (Hans Larsson *pers. comm.*, July 2013).

The Mongolian Gull nests in Mongolia, neighbouring parts of Russia (such as Lake Baikal), north-east China, and possibly South Korea. It migrates south-east to winter in southern and eastern China, and Korea with small numbers reaching Japan (Wikipedia 2013). Though there are no confirmed reports from India, it is probably overlooked in the Bay of Bengal, which is believed to be its southern-most wintering range.

Acknowledgements

The author deeply acknowledges Rajah Jayapal, Hans Larsson, and Norman Deans van Swelm for helping with the identification of the gull and Praveen J., for helping with information for writing this article.

References

- Collinson, J. M., Parkin, D. T., Knox, A. G., Sangster, G., & Svensson, L., 2008. Species boundaries in the Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gull complex. *British Birds* 101 (7): 340–363.
- Dickinson, E. C., & Remsen, J. V. J., (eds.) 2013. *The Howard and Moore complete checklist of the birds of the world: 1. Non-passerines*. 4th ed. Eastbourne, U.K.: Aves Press. Vol. 1 of 2 vols.: Pp. i–l, 1–461.
- Gill, F., Donsker, D., (Eds.) 2013. IOC World Bird List v.3.4. Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>. [Accessed on 24 July 2013].
- Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2005. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. 1st ed. Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378; 1–683.
- Wikipedia. 2013. Vega Gull in Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vega_Gull. [Accessed on 25 July 2013].



Lord Derby's Parakeet *Psittacula derbiana*, and Black-headed Greenfinch *Carduelis ambigua* in Arunachal Pradesh, India

Arun P. Singh

Singh, A. P., 2013. Lord Derby's Parakeet *Psittacula derbiana*, and Black-headed Greenfinch *Carduelis ambigua* in Arunachal Pradesh, India. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (5): 133.

Arun P. Singh, Ecology & Biodiversity Conservation Division, Rain Forest Research Institute, P.O. Box #136, Jorhat, Assam, India. Email: ranoteaps@gmail.com
Manuscript received on 21 April 2013.

Rasmussen & Anderton (2005, 2012) treat the occurrence of both, the Lord Derby's Parakeet *Psittacula derbiana* (Near threatened; IUCN 2012), and the Black-headed Greenfinch *Carduelis ambigua* from Arunachal Pradesh, India, as hypothetical. Grimmett *et al.* (2011) too categorise both these species as 'doubtful,' from India.

Ali & Ripley (1987) presume the Lord Derby's Parakeet is a, "summer visitor to NEFA [North East Frontier Agency=Arunachal Pradesh] in the Siang and Subansiri Divisions, as in adjacent SE. Tibet (between c. 2700 and 3500 m.), where according to Ludlow it only arrives during the first half of May and departs about end September. Evidently does not occur west of about the 93rd meridian." They describe it as extralimital in, "SE. Tibet; SW. China in the provinces of Szechuan and Yunnan (Peters)," and further record that, "On arrival (in SE. Tibet), and before departure, seen in large flocks of 40 to 50 birds in cultivated valleys and conifer forest higher up. Noisy and very destructive to ripening crops." Grimmett *et al.* (1998) state that it was a common, local resident in Arunachal Pradesh, breeding between 2700 and 3500 m. This was probably based on Singh (1995), who observed many birds visiting a nesting hole in a tall dead tree at Hotspring (3399 m) during 25–29 September 1991, in a temperate mixed forest near Walong. Kazmierczak (2000) treats the parakeet as a resident.

Ali & Ripley (1987) describe Black-headed Greenfinch as "species extralimital" to India. Singh (1995) recorded it at Walong (1300 m). Grimmett *et al.* (1998) treat it as "possibly resident in NE Arunachal Pradesh; very locally fairly common; 1300 m, 2800–3110 m, subject to altitudinal movements. Kazmierczak (2000) treats it as a scarce or rare altitudinal migrant of uncertain status, in north-eastern Arunachal Pradesh.

I recorded both these species in early May 2012 in Walong, Anjaw district, Arunachal Pradesh, along the Lohit River catchment.

Two Lord Derby's Parakeets (possibly a pair) were recorded at Tilam (1315 m; 28°09'N, 97°01'E) on the Walong–Kibithu route on the afternoons of 2–3 May 2012. Birds were feeding on female cones of *Pinus merkusii* [143] in a temperate mixed forest dominated by *P. merkusii*, *Rhus chinensis*, and other *Rhus* species, *Alnus nepalensis*, *Quercus* species, *Saurauia nepalensis*, and *Morus laevigata*. A 'creeo, creo creo' call was uttered at intervals, and while flying.

A large flock (26+) of Black-headed Greenfinches [144] was recorded at the Walong PWD rest house (1124 m; 28°07'N, 97°01'E), feeding in open scrub, and perched on electric wires on 2 and 3 May 2012, both in the morning and evening.

My sighting of the Lord Derby's Parakeet was close to the riverside at 1315 m, while Singh (1995) reported it from primary and secondary mixed temperate forest at 3399 m in the same district during autumn in September. So the occurrence of this parakeet from May to September, by Ludlow, for NEFA, is true.

The sighting of Black-headed Greenfinch in Walong is from the same location as reported by Singh (1995) but he did not give the date of his record. These photographic records thus remove all apprehensions and doubts about the occurrence of these two species in Arunachal Pradesh, India.

References

- Ali, S., & Ripley, S. D., 1987. *Compact handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan together with those of Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka*. 2nd ed. Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pp. i–xlii, 1 l., 1–737, 52 ll.
- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 1998. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 1st ed. London: Christopher Helm, A & C Black. Pp. 1–888.
- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 2011. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press & Christopher Helm. Pp. 1–528.
- IUCN 2012. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2012.2. <www.iucnredlist.org>. Accessed on 18 April 2013.
- Kazmierczak, K., 2000. *A field guide to the birds of India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and the Maldives*. 1st ed. London: Pica Press / Christopher Helm. Pp. 1–352.
- Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2005. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. 1st ed. Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378; 1–683.
- Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2012. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378; 1–683.
- Singh, P., 1995. Recent bird records from Arunachal Pradesh, India. *Forktail* 10: 65–104 (1994).



First record of Tristram's Bunting *Emberiza tristrami* from India

Rohit Naniwadekar, Ashwin Viswanathan,
Raman Kumar & Shashank Dalvi



145, 146. Photograph of the Tristram's Bunting taken on 18.xii.2011 near Bom Nala in Namdapha Tiger Reserve. Photograph was taken with a Canon Powershot handheld camera.

Naniwadekar, R., Viswanathan, A., Kumar, R., & Dalvi, S., 2013. First record of Tristram's Bunting *Emberiza tristrami* from India. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (5): 134–135. Rohit Naniwadekar, Nature Conservation Foundation, 3076/5, IV Cross, Gokulam Park, Mysore 570002, Karnataka, India. Email: rohit@ncf-india.org

[Corresponding author] [RN]

Ashwin Viswanathan, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore 560002, Karnataka & WCS India Program, National Centre for Biological Sciences, GKVK, Bangalore 560065, Karnataka. Email: ashwinv2005@gmail.com [AV]

Raman Kumar, Nature Science Initiative, 36 Curzon Road, Dehradun 248001, Uttarakhand. Email: raman@naturescienceinitiative.org [RK]

Shashank Dalvi, Centre for Wildlife Studies, 224 Garden Apartments, Bangalore 560001, Karnataka, India & WCS India Program, National Centre for Biological Sciences, GKVK, Bangalore 560065, Karnataka. Email: shashank.da@gmail.com [SK]

Namdapha Tiger Reserve, in eastern Arunachal Pradesh, is known to be one of the most avifaunally diverse sites in the world, and along with Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary to its north, has been listed as an Important Bird Area (Islam & Rahmani 2004). A recent avian survey by Srinivasan *et al.* (2010) resulted in 62 new records for the area including globally threatened species such as the Black-necked Crane *Grus nigricollis* and Blyth's Tragopan *Tragopan blythii*.

During a recently concluded study on hornbills [Bucerotidae] in Namdapha, we (RN, RK, and AV) sighted a bunting [Emberizidae] at 1130 hrs on 18 December 2011 on the way to Ranijheel Plateau, before Bom Nala (27°32'N, 96°28'E). On sighting the bird, we took some photographs of the bunting. It had a broad, pale supercilium that did not appear two-coloured. The supercilium had a prominent black border on the upper side and on the lower side behind the eye. The lower black border curved downwards and joined the prominent pale moustachial stripe. The moustachial stripe and the supercilium were similar colored. This bunting seemed to lack a prominent crest. We could catch a glimpse of its small crest on only one occasion. This gave the head of the bird a pointy profile. The back of the bunting was heavily streaked. We did not get a clear view of its under parts as the bird mostly showed its back to us. The sides of the belly were not as heavily streaked as the back and were more buff than white in colour.

We saw a single individual on the trekking path [145, 146] that was c. 1.5 m wide, in the middle of evergreen forest at an elevation of c. 800 m asl. The forest is classified as sub-tropical broad-leaved evergreen forest (Datta *et al.* 2008). The understorey is dominated by bushes of the *Elatostema* species, the common understorey trees being *Baccaurea ramiflora* and *Saprosma ternatum*. The middle storey is dominated by *Castanopsis*, *Beilschmiedia assamicus*, *Dysoxylum*, and *Cinnamomum*, while *Altingia excelsa*, *Schima wallichii*, *Terminalia myriocarpa*, and *Shorea assamica* dominate the canopy layer in the area.

The bird remained on the trekking path while we observed it for c. 3–4 min. It was bold but it kept flying and settling on the ground ahead of us, when we tried to approach it. At one point we lost the bird, only to find it later behind us again on the trekking path. We did not see the bird later during our stay there.

The bird appeared similar to the Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica* that is described as hypothetical to the region by

Rasmussen & Anderton (2005). However, 'our' bird can be distinguished from that based on its supercilium that reaches up to the bill and the more prominent black borders above and below the supercilium. We also failed to notice any broad chestnut streaking on its flanks that are present in a Rustic Bunting (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005). With Rustic Bunting being ruled out, we narrowed down the identity to either Tristram's- *Emberiza tristrami* or Yellow-browed- *E. chrysophrys* Bunting. The Yellow-browed Bunting can be distinguished from Tristram's based on the lack of extensive streaking on its flanks and a bi-coloured supercilium (unicoloured in this bird as seen in field and in pictures). In addition, this individual was seen in the middle of evergreen forest as against open country in which the Yellow-browed Bunting is seen (Paul Leader, *pers. comm.*). Hence, by considering all the above evidence we concluded that the bird in question was a Tristram's Bunting.

Tristram's Bunting is currently reported to breed in south-eastern Siberia, Ussuriland, north-eastern China, and North Korea. It winters in southern China. However, it is a rare winter visitor to northern Myanmar, northern Laos, and western and eastern Tonkin (Robson 2000). This bird has been reported from the Pyepat Ridge (25°51'N, 96°48'E) in northern Myanmar, which is approximately 180 km (straight line distance) to the south of Namdapha Tiger Reserve (Pamela Rasmussen, *pers. comm.*).

Additional surveys are required to ascertain whether this sighting was just a one-off vagrant record, or whether eastern Arunachal Pradesh features in the wintering range of this bird. Given the recent spate of new records from Arunachal Pradesh it is important that comprehensive surveys are carried out across the different hill ranges in the state, across several seasons and years, to completely document the avian diversity of the area.

Acknowledgements

We thank Praveen J., who first indicated that this bird could be Tristram's Bunting. We are grateful to Per Alström, Paul J. Leader, and Jesper Hornskov, who helped ascertain the identity of this species, Pamela Rasmussen and Paul R Sweet for providing location of the Tristram's Bunting from Myanmar. We thank the Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department for giving us permits to conduct avian research in Namdapha Tiger Reserve. Special thanks to Aparajita Datta for her support and encouragement. The hornbill research was funded by Rufford Small Grants, U.K., and International Foundation for Science, Sweden.

References

- Datta, A., Anand, M. O., & Naniwadekar, R., 2008. Empty forests: Large carnivore and prey abundance in Namdapha National Park, north-east India. *Biological Conservation* 141: 1429–1435.
- Islam, Z.-u., & Rahmani, A. R., 2004. *Important Bird Areas in India. Priority sites for conservation*. 1st ed. Mumbai: Indian Bird Conservation Network: Bombay Natural History Society and BirdLife International (UK). Pp. i–xviii, 1–1133.
- Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2005. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. 1st ed. Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378; 1–683.
- Robson, C., 2005. *Birds of southeast Asia*. New Holland, London: Princeton University Press. Pp. 1–304.
- Srinivasan, U., Dalvi, S., Naniwadekar, R., Anand, M. O., & Datta, A., 2010. The birds of Namdapha National Park and surrounding areas: recent significant records and a checklist of the species. *Forktail* 26 (August): 92–116.

First record of Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* from Bangladesh

Paul M. Thompson, C. M. Reza & Enam Ul Haque

Thompson, P. M., Reza, C. M., & Ul Haque, E., 2013. First record of Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* from Bangladesh. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (5): 135–136.

Paul M. Thompson, House 32 Road 10, Banani, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Email: paul@agni.com

Enam Ul Haque, Apartment # 4B House # 11 (Primrose), Road # 4, Banani DOHS, Kakoli, Dhaka 1206, Bangladesh, Email: enamuh@gmail.com

Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* is an abundant, medium-sized, seabird that nests in southern and eastern Australia and spends the non-breeding season (northern summer) in the northern Pacific Ocean (Carboneras 1992). Its appearance is more or less uniformly dark brown, long winged, with a rounded head, slender dark bill, and greyish feet extending in flight beyond a short rounded tail (Grimmett *et al.* 1999). There are no previous records of the species from Bangladesh (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005; Siddiqui *et al.* 2008; Grimmett *et al.* 2011).

This note describes the first sighting of Short-tailed Shearwater for Bangladesh: a captured bird photographed at St. Martin's Island (20°34'–20°39'N, 92°18'–92°21'E). This is the only sedimentary coralline island of Bangladesh, with coral formations, and is located in the north-eastern part of the Bay of Bengal, c. 9 km south of the Cox's Bazar–Teknaf Peninsula tip, and c. 8 km west of the north-western coast of Myanmar at the mouth of the Naf River (Thompson & Islam 2009).

On 19 April 2008, while taking a walk with his family along the beach of St. Martin's Island (the most south-easterly point of Bangladesh) CMR saw a fisherman carrying an unfamiliar bird hanging from a wire suspended from his hand. CMR photographed the bird and asked the fisherman where he got it. The latter replied that while he was out fishing that day (within approximately one kilometre of the island) he had hit the bird with a pole and captured it when it landed on his boat. He also

said that many such birds were flying over the boat at the time. Since he did not distinguish it from terns and gulls, it is uncertain if more than one shearwater was actually present in the flock of birds he saw. The fisherman was carrying it home to eat for dinner, and after Reza took five photographs, continued on his way and the bird was presumably consumed.

Later Reza showed the photographs to Samiul Mohsanin, who referred them to EUH, who contacted PMT. While EUH and PMT were sure it was a shearwater species, both lacked adequate field experience of potentially confusing species. PMT therefore circulated photographs to a range of experienced birders and obtained their views. The photographs originally circulated had unbeknown to PMT been “photoshopped” with the wire edited out, leading to speculation about the photographs’ provenance, given the unnatural position of the bird. EUH subsequently obtained the original photographs showing the wire, and the story of how they were obtained. Fortunately, two of the photographs taken at close range show clearly the head of the shearwater [147, 148], while [149] shows the fisherman and context of the record.

The key comments and advice on identification given by experts consulted are summarised here. Killian Mullarney commented, “It is a shearwater and, on first glance, I would guess a Short-tailed.” David James, Mike Carter, and Jeff Davies, all from Australia with extensive experience of the species and potential confusion species in their normal range, clarified the key features



147. Short-tailed Shearwater from Bangladesh: side view showing legs, tail length, and rounded head.



148. Short-tailed Shearwater: front view showing bill and nostrils.



149. Short-tailed Shearwater: captured by fisherman on St. Martin's Island, Bangladesh.

and kindly confirmed after some debate the identification.

David James (*in litt.*) summarised the identification features that narrowed it down to Short-tailed or Christmas Shearwater, and supported identification as Short-tailed but lacked experience of Christmas, we quote:

1. The fusion of the nostrils in a single tube without a medial crease, and with a diagonal (not vertical) termination at the front openings is typical of shearwaters and wrong for *Bulweria*, *Pseudobulweria*, *Pterodroma*, and *Hydrobatidae*.
2. The dark plumage leaves several shearwaters (Short-tailed, Sooty, Heinroths(?), Christmas, Wedge-tailed, and Flesh-footed).
3. The fairly short but delicate and slender bill is typical of Short-tailed (also known as slender-billed) and too gracile for Wedge-tailed and Sooty and Flesh-footed (also the wrong colour for Flesh-footed).
4. Dark pinkish-grey legs and dark nails suits Short-tailed and Sooty (Wedge-tailed has pale nails; Christmas supposedly has uniformly dark grey-black feet; flesh-footed has pale feet).
5. The feet that would clearly trail the rather short tail suit Short-tailed but not Sooty, (Wedge-tailed or Flesh-footed).
6. The dark eye eliminates Heinroths, which has a blue eye.

This left the challenge of determining between Short-tailed and Christmas- Shearwaters (the latter being found in the central Pacific Ocean). There was some debate among experts over these two similar species, but with Short-tailed more likely to show a hooded appearance compared with uniform Christmas. Ultimately Jeff Davies (*in litt.*) made the following analysis: "This is based on a small sample size but four bill profiles of Short-tailed [Shearwater] show the nostril cavity length compared to bill length ratio as 0.62 to 0.65, a selection of three Christmas [Shearwater] on the other hand are 0.70 to 0.74, the Bangladesh bird measures at 0.65. In other words Short-tailed may have a proportionately longer nasal tube than Christmas when

compared to bill length. It may also be steeper/more abrupt at the opening than Christmas." Together with the other features discussed above and plumage and leg-foot colour we consider this is sufficient to confirm this bird as Short-tailed Shearwater.

This is the first record of this species for Bangladesh, no previous confirmed or claimed records having been traced when PMT and EUH compiled the latest national bird list published (Siddiqui *et al.* 2008), and one of only a small number of records from South Asia. Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) included it in the species of South Asia on the basis of only two May specimens from Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and Grimmett *et al.* (2011) relegate it to the appendix of vagrants. However, there have been sight records (summarised on p. 118 of this issue). This record from April is consistent with the May records listed in this summary, coming from the pre-monsoon season—a period when cyclones and storms, quite often, affect the Bangladesh coast. Few people interested in birds visit St. Martin's Island or other coastal waters of Bangladesh during that period, so it is impossible to say if the species might be anything other than a vagrant to Bangladesh.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank all of the seabird identification experts who advised on identification of the photographs, Nick Lethaby for circulating the photos on our behalf to some of the key experts, and to Praveen J., for sharing information on the recent Indian sighting and encouraging us to publish this record.

References

- Carboneras, C., 1992. Family Procellariidae (Petrels and Shearwaters). In: *Handbook of the birds of the world. Ostrich to ducks*. del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A., & Sargatal, J., (eds.). Barcelona: Lynx Edicions. 1: Pp. 216–257.
- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 1999. *A guide to the birds of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pp. 1–888.
- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 2011. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press & Christopher Helm. Pp. 1–528.
- Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2005. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. 1st ed. Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378; 1–683.
- Siddiqui, K. U., Islam, M. A., Kabir, S. M. H., Ahmad, M., Ahmed, A. T. A., Rahman, A. K. A., Haque, E. U., Ahmed, Z. U., Begum, Z. N. T., Hassan, M. A., Khondker, M., & Rahman, M. M., (eds.) 2008. *Encyclopedia of flora and fauna of Bangladesh: birds*. 1st ed. Dhaka, Bangladesh: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh. Vol. 26 of 28 vols. Pp. i–xl, 1–662.
- Thompson, P. M., & Islam, M. A., (eds.). 2009. *Environmental profile of St. Martin's Island*. Dhaka: Coastal and Wetlands Biodiversity Management Project, Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forest and UNDP-Bangladesh.

Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*: A first record for Ladakh

Martin Kelsey

Kelsey, M., 2013. Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*: A first record for Ladakh. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (5): 136–137.

Martin Kelsey, Apartado de Correos 28, 10200 Trujillo (Cáceres), Spain. Email: martinkelsey@hotmail.com

The Rock Sparrow *Petronia petronia*, as its English name suggests, is a bird of rocky terrain, occurring in mountainous and barren regions from the Iberian Peninsula in the west, the Mediterranean region, eastwards across Turkey, Central Asia, Iran, northern Afghanistan to Mongolia and northern China.

Several subspecies are recognised, although separation in the field is very difficult, since the differences are largely due to subtle features of plumage tone, based on examination of museum skins (Clement *et al.* 1993).

In the Indian Subcontinent, Baker (1926) described *P. p.*

intermedia as occurring in Baluchistan, Gilgit, Kashmir, and the North-West Provinces at between 3660 and 5180 m on bare, deserted plains and cliffs, considering it as only a winter visitor to the north-western Himalayas. Ali & Ripley (1987) describe the species as a common winter visitor to Gilgit. Grimmett *et al.* (1998) also cite this, adding that it is occasionally recorded in Baluchistan and the Indus Valley in Pakistan. There do not appear to be any documented records from the Indus Valley in Ladakh.

On 2 March 2003, I was being driven along a road to the south of the Indus River, near Stakna (25 kms east of Leh, c. 3000 m asl). There had been heavy snow during the previous few days, and light snow continued to fall that morning. However, in places the wind had blown the snow to create small patches of bare, snow-free, stony, and sandy ground. These patches attracted small groups of passerines such as Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris*, Tibetan Snowfinches *Montifringilla adamsi*, and Brandt's Mountain Finches *Leucosticte brandti*. We stopped the car at 1230 hrs and I got out to watch a male Great Rosefinch *Carpodacus rubicilla* on an area of gently sloping, dry rocky terrain, close to an agricultural station. I immediately noticed two smaller, very stocky birds on the ground, which then flew to the top of a dry-stone wall about 15 m away, affording good views, even though light snow was falling. They were clearly sparrow-like, dumpy, with short tails. What was most striking was the bold head pattern, namely a broad pale crown stripe, bordered on either side by a dull darker brown stripe, with a pale supercilium below that. Both extended in a downward curve behind the ear

coverts. The greyish brown mantle was boldly streaked, whilst the paler under parts were more lightly streaked. In flight the tail appeared distinctly rounded with a striking, bold whitish tip. There was also a white patch at the base of the primaries. No call was heard. I watched the birds for about five minutes.

The combination of the bold head pattern, white-tipped tail and overall stocky build is diagnostic for the Rock Sparrow, which could only possibly be confused with a female House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*, which lacks such a striking head pattern. I am familiar with the species in southern Europe and a winter record from Ladakh is not unexpected, given the records from Gilgit.

Acknowledgements

I thank Bikram Grewal for providing access to literature, and Saraswathy Unnithan (Bombay Natural History Society) for access to the BNHS collection. Bill Harvey, and Bikram Grewal gave helpful comments on an earlier draft of this note.

References

- Ali, S., & Ripley, S. D., 1987. *Compact handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan together with those of Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka*. 2nd ed. Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pp. i-xlii, 1 l., 1-737, 52 ll.
- Baker, E. C. S., 1926. *The fauna of British India, including Ceylon and Burma. Birds*. 2nd ed. London: Taylor and Francis. Vol. 3 of 8 vols. Pp. i-xx, 1-489.
- Clement, P., Harris, A., & Davis, J., 1993. *Finches and sparrows: an identification guide*. 1st ed. London: Christopher Helm. Pp. i-ix, 1-500.
- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 1998. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 1st ed. London: Christopher Helm, A & C Black. Pp. 1-888.

The Black-browed Tit *Aegithalos bonvaloti* in Arunachal Pradesh: A new species for the Indian Subcontinent

Harkirat Singh Sangha, Manoj Sharma & Atul Jain

Sangha, H. S., Sharma, M., & Jain, A., 2013. The Black-browed Tit *Aegithalos bonvaloti* in Arunachal Pradesh: A new species for the Indian Subcontinent. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (5): 137-139.

Harkirat Singh Sangha, B-27, Gautam Marg, Hanuman Nagar, Jaipur 302021, Rajasthan, India. Email: harkirat.sangha@gmail.com [HSS]

Manoj Sharma, Village Shankarpur, Ramnagar, District Nainital 244715, Uttarakhand, India. Email: treesswift@gmail.com [MS]

Atul Jain, D-127, Sarita Vihar, New Delhi 110076, India. Email: atuljain1258@yahoo.in [AJ]

Manuscript received on 12 June 2013.

On 7 May 2013, at 0721 hrs, while birding at Namti (28°11'N, 97°01'E, 1459 m asl) near Walong, Anjaw district (Arunachal Pradesh, India) we noticed six to seven *Aegithalos* tits in a dry bush along the Walong-Kibithu road. As the tits appeared unfamiliar to us we immediately took their photographs. Within a few seconds they disappeared and were elusive during our subsequent visits to the site. However, on 8 May 2013 at 0557 hrs MS shot another picture of an adult *Aegithalos* tit close to Walong (28°09'25"N, 97°01'13"E; 1428 m asl).

Our first reaction after watching the birds at Namti was that we had seen a new species for the area as the birds resembled none of the *Aegithalos* tits that are known to occur in north-eastern India. After a quick reference to Meyer de Schauensee (1984) and Rasmussen & Anderton (2012), and comparing pictures of the birds on our camera monitors with plates in these

books, the birds were identified as Black-browed Tit *Aegithalos bonvaloti*. Later, based on the description and plates in del Hoyo *et al.* (2008), and MacKinnon & Phillips (2000) we were able to confidently confirm the identity of the birds. The birds seen by us on 7 May were in a roving group of six to seven birds, restless and persistently calling softly like other tits, and maintaining group cohesion. They seemed uninterested in our presence and did not behave warily. The birds were in a fairly open area covered with fern, and scattered stands of pines [150].

Description

The main diagnostic features of a Black-browed Tit that can be discerned from the three accompanying photos are as following: The bird in [151] is most likely an adult in worn plumage with sides of head and markings on throat dull black, no cinnamon

on upper breast, but vestiges of dark grey feathers forming an uneven band, paler and buff ear-coverts, underparts buff with traces of grey. Iris pale yellow, bill black and legs yellow.

The bird in [152] prominently displays a rather broad white coronal stripe and hint of ochre on forehead. The center of throat is black forming inverted 'V'; white moustaches are connected to broad white breast band. The tail is dark grey, outermost pairs of feathers show white outer web.

The bird in [153] shows sides of crown, lores, and upper ear-coverts black, lower ear-coverts cinnamon buff, upper parts greyish, tail dark grey, lower throat and upper breast white, side of breast, upper flanks and band across lower breast cinnamon, belly white and vent cinnamon. Iris white, bill black and legs brownish.

Knowing that Black-browed Tit and Rufous-fronted Tit *A. iouschistos* resemble each other, we compared our pictures of Black-browed Tit with pictures of Rufous-fronted Tit in different sources. Compared to the Rufous-fronted Tit, the Walong birds had a more black and white pattern on throat, the rufous and the greyish breast band was well demarcated from breast and belly. Moreover, all birds in Walong displayed prominently white coronal and moustachial stripes.

We also circulated our photos of the tits to James Eaton, Tim Inskipp, Krys Kazmierczak, Peter Kennerly, Ben King, Hans Peters, Praveen J., Pamela Rasmussen, and Brian Small. Eaton (*in litt.*, email dated 14 May 2013 & 16 May 2013) said that these were Black-browed Tit based on his experience in Sichuan, China. Rasmussen (*in litt.*, email dated 26 May 2013) opined that the, "photos clearly show *Aegithalos bonvaloti*." Inskipp (*in litt.*, email dated 2 June 2013) stated that there was, "clearly no doubt about the identification." King (*in litt.*, email dated 24 July 2013) compared our photos with the specimens of *A. bonvaloti* from NW Burma [Myanmar] in the American Museum of Natural History (Michigan), and said that, "they are an excellent match."

Discussion

The Black-browed Tit is a poorly known species with unassessed status (del Hoyo *et al.* 2008), and for which taxonomic problems abound, and in many cases these are still open to question. Vaurie (1959), and Snow (1967) treated *bonvaloti* as a conspecific of *iouschistos* due to their overall similarity and largely continuous distribution along the Himalayas, continuing into south-western China. Inskipp *et al.* (1996) treated it as a species. Wunderlich (1991) treated these as separate species as they are morphologically distinct, and their ranges meet with no evidence of hybridisation. Dickinson (2003) felt unable to unite *iouschistos* and *bonvaloti* (made up of the three eastern and south-eastern representatives: *bonvaloti*, *obscuratus*, *sharpei*),

and listed three species. Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) mention possible range overlap in south-eastern Tibet between *iouschistos* and *bonvaloti*, "but the two are highly distinct morphologically and evidently at least parapatric." Eck & Martens (2006) reviewed and discussed the proposed taxonomic changes and their reliability in terms of Biological Species Concept with respect to secondary contacts, hybridisation, introgression, bioacoustics, and molecular genetics. They were of the view that in the detailed text of Harrap (1996), with the excellent plates by David Quinn, it becomes evident that present taxonomic listings are relatively superficial and these will certainly change when more is known about contact zones, acoustics, and molecular genetics.

The distribution of Black-browed Tit is given as resident in central Szechwan (Sichuan) from Tatsienlu south-west through south Szechwan to north-west Yunnan by Meyer de Schauensee (1984), as, "common resident in south-east Xizang (Tibet) and SW China," (MacKinnon & Phillips 2000), and extreme north-east Myanmar, east of River Irrawaddy and south to Myitkyina (del Hoyo *et al.* 2008; Harrap & Quinn 1996). Smythies (1986) mentions Yunnan and south-eastern Tibet for its distribution range.

Although the sighting of the species in the Walong area of Arunachal Pradesh constitutes a first record for the Indian Subcontinent, it is not difficult to explain its presence here. While Ali & Ripley (1998) did not record it, Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) mentioned that it is "possible in NE Arunachal Pradesh (*bonvaloti*)" as the species is resident in adjacent areas, i.e., north-east of Arunachal Pradesh. Vaurie (1972) states it breeds in "Southern Tibet" and "Southeastern Plateau" [of Tibet]; he examined 25 specimens. George Forrest collected 17 specimens from pine forests during May–July 1918 in Lichiang or Likiang Range in north-western Yunnan (27°12'N, 100°13'E; Rothschild 1921). King (1988) found the species very common during a brief survey in April 1989 in south-western Sichuan. Kinnear (1934) records it from Adung Valley in north-eastern Myanmar, an area not too far east from the Indo-Myanmar border in Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh. Cheng (1987) included in its range Sichuan (northern part–Barkam, western part–Kangding to Btang, south-western part Muli), Guizhou (western part Weining), Yunnan (north-western part), and Xizang [Tibet] (southern part – Bomi and Zayu).

During our brief stay of three days in the Walong area we encountered Black-browed Tit three times but did not get any Rufous-fronted Tit. Incidentally, we were probably less than 100 km south-west of Zayu (=Gyigang) which, according to Harrap (1996), is the western limit of *bonvaloti* although Cheng (1987) lists *bonvaloti* for Bomi, within the range of *iouschistos*, and



150. Adult Black-browed Tit *A. bonvaloti* were seen in scattered stands of pines at Namti.



151. Adult Black-browed Tit *A. bonvaloti* in worn plumage.



152. Adult Black-browed Tit *A. bonvaloti*
Photos: H. S. Sangha



153. Adult Black-browed Tit *A. bonvaloti*.
Photo: Manoj Sharma

Vaurie (1959) lists *bonvaloti* for Pendjama (=Penam Dzong).

Acknowledgements

We thank Col. (Dr.) Neeta Gode for supplying logistical information about Walong. While Phupla organized logistics, Biki was helpful in the field. Thanks are due to James Eaton, Tim Inskipp, Krys Kazmierczak, Peter Kennerly, Ben King, Hans Peters, Praveen J., Pamela Rasmussen, and Brian Small for their comments on our photos of Black-browed Tit, and Tim Inskipp for supplying references.

References

- Ali, S., & Ripley, S. D., 1998. *Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan together with those of Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. Robins to wagtails*. 2nd (Hardback) ed. Delhi: (Sponsored by Bombay Natural History Society.) Oxford University Press. Vol. 9 of 10 vols. Pp. i–xviii, 1–310, 10 ll.
- Cheng, T.-H., 1987. *A synopsis of the avifauna of China*. 1st ed. Beijing; Hamburg and Berlin: Science Press; Paul Parey Scientific Publishers. Pp. i–xvi, 1–1222.
- del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A., & Christie, D., 2008. *Handbook of the birds of the world. Volume 13. Penduline-Tits to Shrikes*. 1st ed. Barcelona: Lynx Edicions. Vol. 13 of 16 vols. Pp. 1–879.
- Dickinson, E. C., (ed.) 2003. *The Howard and Moore complete checklist of the birds of the World*. Revised and enlarged 3rd ed. London: Christopher Helm. Pp. 1–1039.
- Eck, S., & Martens, J., 2006. Systematic notes on Asian birds. 49. A preliminary review of the Aegithalidae, Remizidae and Paridae. *Zoologische Mededelingen, Leiden* 80–5 (1): 1–63.
- Harrap, S., 1996. *Tits, nuthatches and treecreepers*. London: Christopher Helm. Pp. 1–464.
- Inskipp, T., Lindsey, N., & Duckworth, W., 1996. *An annotated checklist of the birds of the Oriental Region*. Bedfordshire, U.K: Oriental Bird Club. Pp. 1–294.
- King, B., 1988. Some bird observations at Kangwu Liangsi, southwest Sichuan Province, China. *Hong Kong Bird Report* 1988: 102–110.
- Kinners, N. B., 1934. On the birds of the Adung Valley, north-east Burma. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 37 (2): 347–368.
- MacKinnon, J., & Phillips, K., 2000. *A field guide to the birds of China*. 1st ed. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. Pp. i–xiii, 1–586.
- Meyer de Schauensee, R., 1984. *The birds of China*. 1st ed. Oxford; Washington DC: Oxford University Press; Smithsonian Institution Press. Pp. 602.
- Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2012. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378; 1–683.
- Rothschild, L., 1921. On collection of birds from west-central and north-western Yunnan. *Novit. Zool.* 28:14–67.
- Smythies, B. E., 1986. *The birds of Burma*. Revised 3rd ed. England / Canada: Nimrod Press Ltd / Silvio Mattacchione & Co. Pp. i–xxxii+64, 61–432.
- Snow, D. W., 1967. Passeriformes: suborder Oscines, family Paridae. In: *Check-list of birds of the world. A continuation of the work of James L. Peters*. Paynter, R. A., Jr., (ed.). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Museum of Comparative Zoology. 12: Pp. 70–124.
- Vaurie, C., 1959. *The birds of the Palearctic fauna: a systematic reference: order Passeriformes*. London: H.F. & G. Witherby Limited. Vol. 1 of 2 vols. Pp. i–xii, 1–762.
- Vaurie, C., 1972. *Tibet and its birds*. 1st ed. London: H.F. & G. Witherby Ltd. Pp. i–xv, 1–407.
- Wunderlich, K., 1991. *Aegithalos iouschistos. Cephalopyrus flammiceps*. In: *Atlas der Verbreitung Palaearktischer Vögel*, 17. Dathe, H., & Loskot, W. M., (eds.). Berlin: Akademie Verlag.

With the compliments of
G.B.K. CHARITABLE TRUST

B-1/504, Marathon Innova, Ganapatrao Kadam Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai-400 013.

Letter to the Editor

Claimed sighting of Black Terns *Chlidonias nigra* in Gujarat, India

In a note in *Indian Birds* [6 (6): 165–166], Ketan Tatu reported sighting (and photographing) three or four Black Terns *Chlidonias nigra* at Bhaskarpura, Saurendranagar District, Gujarat, on 2 October 2009. I have only recently seen this, and other recent issues of *Indian Birds* (they were lost in the post), hence the delay in sending this letter.

The rather poor, and in two cases, very small, photographs accompanying the note show Whiskered Terns *C. hybrida* moulting from juvenile to first winter plumage. In spite of what the author says, the head pattern is typical for Whiskered in this plumage; Black Terns of the nominate (Eurasian) race always show solid, unstreaked, black caps contiguous with larger, solid black cheek patches extending well below the eyelines, in both immature and winter plumages. This feature is diagnostic when compared to the head patterns of both Whiskered, and White-winged *C. leucopterus* Terns. The breast smudges are not.

Rather faint breast patches are frequently present on sub-adult, and moulting adult, Whiskered, as reference to most good and relevant field guides would show. Such breast smudges also occasionally occur on moulting White-winged Terns. In Black Terns the patches are usually much more striking. In addition, at least one of the birds shows the slightly darker tail tips, which are a feature of Whiskered in this plumage. The classic tern identification guide by Olsen & Larsson (1995) describes and illustrates all the marsh tern plumages, and should be consulted when unusual tern sightings are suspected.

The author lists a series of past-published reports of Black Terns in India but omits to mention that Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) consider it hypothetical. The senior author found the sole skin was misidentified, as indeed were the birds ringed at Point Calimere in 1989–1991 as I saw the photographs of them. The *Handbook* (Ali & Ripley 2001) only mentions Alexander's 1949 record from Delhi, in spite of large-scale collection of bird specimens over the previous two centuries. Ganguli (1975), who knew Alexander better than the authors of the *Handbook*, considers that he may have misidentified a White-winged Tern. I remain unconvinced that Black Terns have ever occurred in India. I believe identification errors have occurred in the past because the full range of plumages of the two other marsh tern species has not been appreciated sufficiently widely among observers.

Asian migrants, such as Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis*, Lesser Kestrel *F. naumanni*, European Roller *Coracias garrulus*, European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*, etc., that cross north-western India, on migration to Africa, winter in the eastern and southern parts of that continent. A route across India is therefore expedient. However, the Eurasian race of the Black Tern only winters in the seas off West Africa. Its shortest, and safest, migration route for the Asian population is therefore, westwards through Asia into the Mediterranean, and then down the Atlantic coast of Africa. Indeed, Black Tern is an extreme rarity in Eastern Africa and the Rarities Committee there considers any claims. It is highly unlikely that any individuals would wander directly southwards into India, but unlikely things do happen with birds! All future claims should be supported by incontrovertible evidence, ideally with very good photographs.

References

- Ali, S., & Ripley, S. D., 2001. *Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan together with those of Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Ceylon [sic]*. 2nd ed. Delhi: (Sponsored by Bombay Natural History Society.) Oxford University Press [Oxford India Paperbacks]. Vol. 3 of 10 vols. Pp. 2 pr. ll., pp. i–xvii, 1–327.
- Ganguli, U., 1975. *A guide to the birds of the Delhi area*. New Delhi: Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Pp. i–xv, 1–301.
- Olsen, K. M., & Larsson, H., 1995. *Terns of Europe and North America*. 1st ed. London: Croom Helm. Pp. 1–176.
- Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2005. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. 1st ed. Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378; 1–683.

—Bill Harvey

Pound Farm, Blackham, TN3 9TY, UK
30 July 2013

Snapshot Sightings

Long-tailed Duck from Pangong Tso, Ladakh

Mayuresh Borse



A pair of Long-tailed Ducks *Clangula hyemalis* were photographed on 25 June 2013 from Pangong Tso (Lake) near Spangmik village (33°54'N, 78°27'E), eastern Ladakh. The nearest record of this 'Near Threatened' species is from Hokra Jheel in Kashmir in 1940 (Ludlow 1940) while the most recent record was a photograph from Gazaldoba, West Bengal early this year (Prasad 2013). It is interesting to note that this species has been recorded already twice this year while there have been only four records from India (Prasad 2013) prior to that during the past 150 years.

Mayuresh Borse, S.No1/3+4, 5 Borse Building, Nr Kothrud Post Office, Kothrud, Pune Maharashtra, India 411038. Email: msborse@gmail.com

Tickell's Thrush from Bangalore, Karnataka

Shubha Bhat



A confiding male Tickell's Thrush *Turdus unicolor* was photographed near our house inside the Indian Institute of Sciences Campus (13°01'N, 77°34'E), Bangalore on 8 February 2013. The bird was seen regularly for two days. Rasmussen & Anderton (2005) and Grimmet *et al.* 2011 maps their distribution only up to northwest Karnataka. It has been recorded on single occasions from Lalbagh gardens, Bangalore and Biligirirangan Hills (Srinivasan & Prashanth 2005) and these are the only southerly records from India.

Shubha Bhat, House No. E-35, New Housing Colony, IISc, Bangalore, India 560012. Email: shubhanava@gmail.com

South Polar Skua from Chennai coast

Praveen K. Manivannan & Murugan Mohan

A pale morph adult South Polar Skua *Stercorarius maccormicki* was photographed c.25 km off the coast of Chennai (13°11'N, 80°32'E) on 3 August 2013, 1148hrs during a pelagic boat trip. This is the first record of the species from the east coast of India and the third confirmed for the country (Praveen *et al.*



2013). During the same trip, a few other pelagic birds including a single Swinhoe's Storm-petrel *Hydrobates monorhis* (13°14'N, 80°29'E) were documented.

Praveen K Manivannan, 55 Poes Garden, Chennai, Tamilnadu, India 600086. Email: praveenmkumar@yahoo.com

Murugan Mohan, 18/d, 11th Street, Nandanam Extension, Chennai, Tamilnadu, India 600035. Email: themuruganmohan@gmail.com

Jouanin's Petrel from Sundarban, West Bengal

Shantanu Prasad



A single Jouanin's Petrel *Bulweria fallax* was recorded near Dobanki, Sundarban, West Bengal (22°00'N, 88°45'E) on 28 July 2013 1500hrs. There has been a cyclonic depression in the past two days and the conditions were quite windy. This is apparently the first record for the east coast (Rahmani 2012) of this Near-threatened species.

Shantanu Prasad, SN/A29/S-3, Sinchan Nagar, Taki Road, Barasat, Kolkata, India 700124. Email: shantanubiotech@gmail.com

References

- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, T., & Inskipp, C. 2011. *The Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 2nd Edition. Oxford University Press.
- Ludlow, F. 1940. The Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) in Kashmir. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*. XLI(3): 666
- Prasad, S.2013. Long-tailed Duck from Gazaldoba, West Bengal. *Indian Birds*. 8(3):82
- Praveen, J., Karuthedathu, D., Prince, M., Palot, M. J., & Dalvi, S., 2013. Identification of South Polar Skuas *Catharacta maccormicki* in the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. *BirdingASIA* 19: 83–88.
- Rahmani, A. R., 2012. *Threatened birds of India: their conservation requirements*. Mumbai: Indian Bird Conservation Network; Bombay Natural History Society; Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; BirdLife International; Oxford University Press. Pp. i–xvi, 1–864.
- Rasmussen, Pamela C.; Anderton, John C. 2005. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions, Washington, D.C. and Barcelona.
- Srinivasan, U.; Prashanth, N. S. 2005. Additions to the avifauna of the Biligirirangan Hills, Karnataka. *Indian Birds*. 1(5): 103–104.



WORLD WETLANDS DAY CELEBRATION AT KOLLERU WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, ATTAPAKA ON FEBRUARY 2, 2013

With an apt theme of 'Wetlands and Water Management' the World Wetland's Day -2013 was celebrated at Kolleru Wildlife Sanctuary on 2nd February, 2013 by WWF in association with the Eluru WLM. The key objective of World Wetlands Day-2013 is to raise people's awareness of the interdependence between water and wetlands, to highlight ways to ensure the equitable sharing of water between different stakeholder groups and to understand that without wetlands there will be no water. A total of 326 participants which includes students, teachers different schools of Eluru, Kaikalur & Bhimavaram and Forest Department staff from Eluru WLM division were participated in the celebration. Mrs. Farida Tampal, State Director WWF-India, AP State Office has welcomed the chief guest, the guests of honour, students, teachers and other participants for the celebration. Mr. Deepak.R, Field Research cum Education Officer, WWF-India, AP State Office introduced the World Wetland Day -2013 theme and with the activities planned for the day. Mr. P. Gracious (Retd. ACF, Wildlife Management Division, Eluru) and Mr. Shashi Preetam (Music Director) were invited as guest of honour. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Gracious shared his own experience with the Kolleru Lake and changes seen in the pelican population. He explained the nesting pattern of the Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis* on the artificial perches provided by the Forest Dept. Mr. Shashi Preetam said that wetlands form a unique abode for a variety of flora and fauna. He enlightened the crowd about various issues like carbon sequestration and Ramsar Convention which aims at protecting wetlands across the world. Mr. Rathnakumar, Forest Range Officer, Kaikalur Range was the chief guest. He spoke to the students on the importance of protecting the Kolleru Wildlife Sanctuary. He said that wetlands form a unique abode for a variety of flora and fauna. He said that AP has three major wetlands viz., Kolleru, Coringa and Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary and stressed on the importance of protecting these sites. Activities like bird watching, poster designing, wetland quiz, water race and migration headache games were conducted. Mrs. Farida Tampal congratulated the school students and the teachers for extending their support to the programme and to the speakers for their igniting the young budding minds and to Forest Range Officer, Kaikalur Range, Wildlife Management Division, Eluru for providing financial support. She also thanked Mr. P. Gracious and Mr. Shashi Preetam for their presence and enlightening speech during the celebration. The programme was extensively covered by the print and electronic media like Tv9, Eenadu newspaper, and Andhra Jyoti.



WWF-India, A.P. State Office, 818, Castle Hills, Rd.No. 2, Vijayanagar Colony, Hyderabad -500057
Andhra Pradesh. India.



PITTI LAMINATIONS LIMITED

Manufactures of electrical laminations & stampings

Phones: 040-2331 2774, 2331 2768, 2331 2770, Fax: 040-2339 3985, Grams: PITTILAM

Email: hyd2_pittilam@sancharnet.in, Website: www.pittielectricalam.com

