

the Bund Garden of Pune, Maharashtra, India, we came across a Painted Stork feeding on carrion from a plastic bag. The bird was trying to remove a chunk of meat from within the bag. We watched the stork for approximately 45 min of which, for about 21 min the individual was trying to feed on the contents of the bag. A few photographs and videos of the observations were taken using a Nikon P900 digital camera [62]. We also observed a few House Crows *Corvus splendens* and a Black Kite *Milvus migrans* attempting to steal the carrion from the Painted Stork. After thorough inspection, the carrion appeared to be a goat offal. After a few days of this incident, we visited the place twice, but no carrion feeding by Painted Storks was recorded, although four Painted Storks were observed feeding in the shallow water in the area.

Previously published studies have shown that among Indian storks, Adjutant Storks *Leptoptilos* sp. (Greater Adjutant *L. javanicus* and Lesser Adjutant *L. dubius*) are well-known scavengers and carrion feeders (Winkler et al. 2020). The Woolly-necked Storks *Ciconia episcopus* have also been observed to scavenge on carcasses (Sivakumar et al. 2011). Previously, Painted Storks have been reported to pick up floating dead fish from the water surface in the Bhindawas Bird Sanctuary (Urfi 2011b). However, members of the tribe Mycteriini (which Painted Storks belong to) predominantly feed on fish, and the birds have never been reported to feed on carrion or carcasses, making our observation noteworthy.

The authors are grateful to the faculty of the Department of Environmental Studies, Vishwanath Karad MIT World Peace University, for their encouragement.

## References

- Ali, S., & Ripley, S. D., 1987. *Compact Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan*. Oxford University Press, Delhi, India, 1–841.
- BirdLife International. 2023. *Mycteria leucocephala*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2023:e.T22697658A228020407. doi:10.2305/IUCN.UK.2023-1.RLTS.T22697658A228020407.en [Accessed on 10 January 2024]
- Kalam, A., & Urfi, A. J., 2008. Foraging behaviour and prey size of the painted stork. *Journal of Zoology* 274 (2):198–204.
- Sivakumar, C., Anoop, V., Ramesh, B., Veeramani, S., & Silpa, V., 2021. Some scavenger birds from Periyar Tiger Reserve, Kerala. *Indian BIRDS* 17 (4):124
- Somaweera, R., Brien, M., & Shine, R., 2013. The role of predation in shaping crocodylian natural history. *Herpetological Monographs* 27 (1):23–51.
- Urfi, A. J., 1988. Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* (Pennant) swallowing a snake. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 86: 96.
- Urfi, A. J., 2011a. Foraging ecology of the painted stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*): a review. *Waterbirds* 34 (4):448–456.
- Urfi, A. J., 2011b. The Painted Stork: ecology and conservation. New York: Springer 1–163.
- Winkler, D. W., Billerman, S. M., & Lovette, I. J., 2020. Storks (Ciconiidae), version 1.0. In *Birds of the World* (S. M. Billerman, B. K. Keeney, P. G. Rodewald, and T. S. Schulenberg, Editors). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.ciconi2.01> [Accessed on 10 January 2024.]
- Amey Paranjape, Shubhankar Khangar & Arajush Payra  
All authors: Department of Environmental Studies, Dr. Vishwanath Karad MIT World Peace University, Kothrud, Pune, Maharashtra, India  
Arajush Payra Email: [arapayra@gmail.com](mailto:arapayra@gmail.com) [Corresponding Author]

## Status of the Chinese Bush Warbler *Locustella tacsanowskia* in the Indian subcontinent with a recent song recording from eastern Assam

The Chinese Bush Warbler *Locustella tacsanowskia* is a winter migrant to the lowland grasslands of southern Nepal, Bhutan, north-eastern India, Vietnam, and south-western China. This species breeds from eastern Russia and adjacent northern

Mongolia and in parts of China. During the breeding season, it prefers grassy upland meadows and open areas within larch forests, including wide clearings with a variety of shrubby thickets, tall grasses, and herbs; typically, these areas are between 2,800 and 3,600 m asl. In the non-breeding season, it mainly occurs at the edge of plains in lowland grasslands (elephant grasses), reedbeds, paddy fields, and scrubby edges of lowland cultivation (Madge 2020).

On 05 February 2023 at 0749 h, we were birding in the Maguri grassland (27.583°N, 95.352°E), eastern Assam, a lowland area that has *Auundo donax* and *Phragmites karka* grasses [63]. We were attempting to photograph the Grey-sided Bush Warbler *Cettia brunnifrons* that was expected there. After photographing that species, we explored further with the intention of documenting other warblers in that patch. We kept hearing a 'zack-zack-zack' call reminiscent of a Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola* as well as the typical song of Baikal Bush Warbler *Locustella davidi*. Along with those, an insect like 'treeeeeeeep' call was also heard that we initially assumed to be just an insect. We started recording the vocalization of the presumed Paddyfield Warbler. Luckily, the same raspy, insect-like vocalisation was heard again, and our recorder picked it up (Fig. 1). It was then that we realised that a third bush/reed warbler was also present in the vicinity; its call obviously distinct from what we knew of the typical calls/songs of Paddyfield Warbler and Baikal Bush Warbler. We could not place it to any species then, and we started searching for it. For some time, we did not see the Paddyfield Warbler, and it created some confusion that the 'zack-zack-zack' call and the new vocalisation were being produced by the very same bird. We then played back the newly recorded vocalization in an attempt to lure the species out. The bird responded, and we were able to see the movement of the bird in the grasses—a small warbler producing a low 'truk' rasps with minimal pauses in between. We recorded this vocalisation as well (Fig. 2), and then the bird offered a glimpse. It was an overall dark Locustella-type warbler; dirt-brown above, with a white throat with some streaks across the upper chest, and flanks appeared dusky. After that, we also saw a Paddyfield Warbler in the vicinity there by making us believe that the 'zack-zack-zack' calls were, after all, from that bird. In summary, we obtained average views of a Locustella-type warbler and recorded two of its vocalizations.

Having not been able to nail down the species, we transmitted the vocalizations to Ashwin Viswanathan, who later confirmed it to be a Chinese Bush Warbler. We verified this ourselves and found the first insect-like 'treeeeeeeep' to be a part of its diagnostic song (e.g., Thomas 2017; Stork 2022), while the 'truk', perhaps also produced by other bush/reed warblers, was one of its calls.



63. *Arundo donax* and *Phragmites karka* grasses in the Maguri grassland, Tinsukia, Assam.

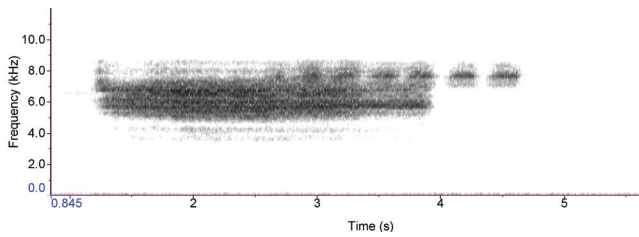


Figure 1. Spectrogram of the song recording of the Chinese Bush Warbler.

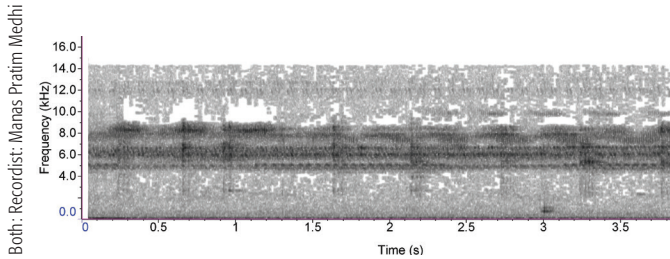


Figure 2. Spectrogram of the call recording of the Chinese Bush Warbler.

Both: Recorder: Manas Pratim Medhi

As a part of the literature survey, we were able to obtain 18 prior reports that included 12 specimen reports and eight observations (Table 1). All dated reports were during the northern winter, from November to April. In each case, we attempted to

track the original records to ensure that the same records were not listed twice. The specimen records collected from the same site on the same or adjacent dates were treated as a single record because they likely represented a population at that site.

The first references to this species in the Indian literature were by Oates (1889) and Baker (1926) in their Fauna of the British India series; both listed only a single specimen from Bhutan Dooars (now in northern West Bengal) that was apparently with Seebohm. Ali & Ripley (2001) listed an old specimen by Louis Mandelli (1833–1880) from Bhutan Dooars, most likely the same one mentioned by Baker and Oates. However, Seebohm (1881) does not list such a specimen in his catalogue of warblers at the NHM, London. However, that is understandable, as Mandelli's collection was purchased by Hume, and they reached London only in 1885 (Pinn 1985). We did not have a chance to examine this collection. This specimen must certainly qualify as the first record for the Indian subcontinent. The year is dated as the same period when Mandelli collected specimens around Darjeeling; however, it is more likely closer to 1880.

Inskipp & Inskipp (1985) list a record by Bailey in 1938 as the first record for Nepal; probably that specimen is also in the NHM. Both Inskipp & Inskipp (1985) and Ali & Ripley (2001) list records from the Koshi Barrage area in Nepal, while Ali & Ripley

**Table 1.** Records of Chinese Bush Warbler from the Indian subcontinent

| Sl. No | Dates               | Type of Record | Observer     | Location   | Country | Reference(s)  | Notes   |
|--------|---------------------|----------------|--------------|--|---------|---|---|
| 1      | 1869–1880 (?)       | Specimen       | Mandelli (?) | Bhutan Dooars, West Bengal                             | India   | Oates (1889), Baker (1924), Ali & Ripley (2001)                         | Specimen in Seebohm's collection, but apparently obtained through Mandelli as mentioned in Ali & Ripley (2001).                                       |
| 2      | 15 February 1923    | Specimen       | H V O'Donel  | Bhutan Dooars, West Bengal                             | India   |   | YPM #043173   |
| 3      | 21 January 1932     | Specimen       | C M Inglis   | Haldibari [=Huldibari], West Bengal                    | India   | Inglis (1957)   | Presumably YPM #043174 is the same mentioned in Inglis (1957).  |
| 4      | 20 February 1938    | Specimen       | F M Bailey   | Hariancha, Koshi Province                              | Nepal   | Bailey (1938), Inskipp & Inskipp (1985)                                 | Presumably a specimen that is now in the NHM, London.   |
| 5      | 27 November 1949    | Specimen       | W Koelz      | Bamunigaon [=Bamanigaon], Kamrup Rural district, Assam | India   |   | UMMZ#230757   |
| 6      | 30–31 December 1949 | Specimens      | W Koelz      | Bamunigaon [=Bamanigaon], Kamrup Rural district, Assam | India   |   | UMMZ#230758–760.  |
| 7      | 06–07 January 1950  | Specimens      | W Koelz      | Hahim Bazar, Kamrup Rural district, Assam              | India   |   | UMMZ#230761–762   |
| 8      | 17 January 1950     | Specimen       | W Koelz      | Phulbari, West Garo Hills district, Meghalaya          | India   |   | UMMZ#230763   |
| 9      | 12 April 1950       | Specimen       | W Koelz      | Phulbari, West Garo Hills district, Meghalaya          | India   |   | UMMZ#230764   |
| 10     | 20 November 1951    | Specimen       | W Koelz      | Mawryngkneng, East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya              | India   |   | UMMZ#230765   |
| 11     | 02 April 1952       | Specimen       | W Koelz      | Agia, Goalpara district, Assam                         | India   |   | UMMZ#230766   |
| 12     | 25 February 1961    | Specimen       | R L Fleming  | Sunischare, Jhapa, Koshi Province                      | Nepal   | Fleming (1968), Inskipp & Inskipp (1985), Ali & Ripley (2001)           | Presumably FMNH#268296, as the dates match.   |
| 13     | 13 March 1981       | Observation    | Tim Inskipp  | Koshi Barrage, Koshi Province                          | Nepal   | Inskipp & Inskipp (1981), Inskipp & Inskipp (1985), Ali & Ripley (2001) | No further details. Observer assumed to be the first author.  |
| 14     | 16 February 1994    | Observation    | Per Alström  | Kaziranga National Park, Golaghat district, Assam      | India   | Alström et al. (1994), Robson (1994), Barua & Sharma (1999)             | Original reference is unpublished and hence could not be accessed. Observer assumed to be the lead author. No other details available for assessment. |

**Table 1.** Records of Chinese Bush Warbler from the Indian subcontinent

| Sl. No | Dates            | Type of Record  | Observer   | Location   | Country | Reference(s)          | Notes  |
|--------|------------------|-----------------|--|--|---------|-----------------------|--|
| 15     | 16 February 2006 | Observation     | Sanjib Acharya                                       | Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Koshi Province                             | Nepal   | Acharya (2006)        | No details available for assessment.   |
| 16     | 06 April 2008    | Observation     | Carol Inskipp  | Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Koshi Province                             | Nepal   | Inskipp (2008)        | One bird. No other details available for assessment.   |
| 17     | 13 April 2015    | Observation     | Alan Knue & James Eaton                              | Bhalukpong South at 26 <sup>th</sup> kilometre, Sonitpur district, Assam | India   | Knue (2015)           | One bird is seen singing. Description of the bird and of the song provided.  |
| 18     | Undated          | Observation     | Asad Rahmani   | Kaziranga National Park, Golaghat district, Assam                        | India   | Rahmani et al. (2023) | As per the authors, the bird was 'heard' in the central range. No other details of the sightings or dates provided. Observer assumed to be the first author. |
| 19     | 05 February 2023 | Audio recording | Tomal Gogoi, Manash Pratim Medhi & Runap Jyoti Gogoi | Maguri Beel, Tinsukia district, Assam                                    | India   | This work             | Both song and call recorded as well as a bird was seen.  |

(2001) mention additional records from Shuklaphanta that lies in western Nepal; the sources of those latter records were not traceable. Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) reviewed numerous specimens from East-central Nepal through Dooars (i.e., northern West Bengal), the central Assam valley, and the northern Meghalaya; their assessment revealed that it is a fairly common species in its range that includes the northern West Bengal and western Assam. We reviewed specimen records in the GBIF ([www.gbif.org](http://www.gbif.org)) and found approximately a dozen old specimens from India and Nepal, and the range provided by Rasmussen & Anderton included all these specimens. There are no specimens listed in the Bombay Natural History Society collection (Abdulali 1986), and none exist in the Zoological Survey of India (Praveen J, in litt. 09 May 2024).

In summary, traceable specimen-based records were obtained from the Koshi Province of Nepal, Jalpaiguri (or perhaps Alipurduar) and Cooch Behar districts in northern Bengal, the Goalpara and Kamrup Rural Districts of western Assam, and from the West Garo Hills and East Khasi Hills Districts of Meghalaya. Interestingly, there were no specimens from central or eastern Assam.

There were no records of the species between 1961 and 1981 until it was again reported from the Koshi Barrage (Inskipp & Inskipp 1981). Later, it was reported from the central Assam districts of Golaghat (Alström et al. 1994) and Sonitpur (Knue 2015). Observation-based records are difficult to assess, and none of them have any field notes, with the exception of Knue (2015). However, records from known sites such as the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve are likely to be correct. It is clear that ours is the first record of this species to be documented with media evidence as well as the first from eastern Assam.

We are thankful to Ashwin Viswanathan for identifying and helping us.

## References

- Abdulali, H., 1986. A catalogue of the birds in the collection of the Bombay Natural History Society-30. Muscicapidae (Sylviinae). *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 83(1): 130–163.
- Acharya, S. 2006. Website URL: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S65888486> [Accessed on 09 May 2024.]
- Ali, S., & Ripley, S. D. 2001. Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan together with those of Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. 8 (Warblers: 2 II., pp. i–xiv, 1–281, 2 II. (Sponsored by Bombay Natural History Society.) Oxford University Press [Oxford India Paperbacks]. Delhi
- Alström, P., Jirle, E., Jäderblad, M., Kjellén, N., Larsson, G., Paulsrud, A., Sællström, J., Smittberg, P., & Alind, P., 1994. Birds and mammals observed in Assam in February 1994 Unpublished manuscript.
- Bailey, F.M., 1938. Register of bird specimens collected in Nepal 1935–38, and presented to the British Museum (Natural History) Unpublished register.
- Baker, E.C.S., 1924. The fauna of British India, including Ceylon and Burma. Birds II. London: Taylor and Francis. Pp. i–xxiii+1, 1–561.
- Barua, M., & Sharma, P., 1999. Birds of Kaziranga National Park, India Forktail 15: 47–60.
- Fleming, R. L., 1968. Nepal birds: Supplement to Biswas' list *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 65(2): 326–334.
- Inglis, C. M., 1957. Birds of the Duars *Journal of the Bengal Natural History Society*, XXIX (1&2): 16–25.
- Inskipp, C. 2008. Website URL: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S78479801> [Accessed on 09 May 2024.]
- Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T., 1985. A Guide to the Birds of Nepal. London/New Delhi: Croom Helm/UBS Publishers' Distributors Ltd.
- Inskipp, T. P., & Inskipp, C., 1981. Notes on birds recorded in Nepal, February - March 1981. Unpublished manuscript. Website URL: [https://himalaya.socanath.cam.ac.uk/collections/inskip/1981\\_013.pdf](https://himalaya.socanath.cam.ac.uk/collections/inskip/1981_013.pdf) [Accessed on 09 May 2024.]
- Knue, A. 2016. Website URL: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S23012846> [Accessed on 09 May 2024.]
- Madge, S., 2020. Chinese Bush Warbler (*Locustella tacsanowskia*), version 1.0. In *Birds of the World* (J. del Hoyo, A. Elliott, J. Sargatal, D. A. Christie, and E. de Juana, Editors). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.chbwar1.01>
- Oates, E. W., 1889. The fauna of British India, including Ceylon and Burma (Birds). I. London: Taylor and Francis. Pp. i–xx, 1–556.
- Pinn, F., 1985. L. Mandelli (1833–1880). Darjeeling tea planter and ornithologist. 1st ed. London: Published by the author. Pp. 1–50
- Rahmani, A. R., Kasambe, R., Choudhury, A., Rahaman, A., Jha, A., Imran, M., Ali, R., & Surve, S., 2023. Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Kaziranga National Park and Surrounding Areas, Assam, with Taxonomic Changes Briefly Explained *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 120(1) DOI: [10.17087/jbnhs/2023/v120/166378](https://doi.org/10.17087/jbnhs/2023/v120/166378)
- Robson, C., 1994. From the field: India. *Oriental Bird Club Bulletin* 20: 57.
- Seebohm, H. 1881. Catalogue of the Passeriformes, or Perching Birds, in the collection of the British Museum. Cichlomorphæ: Part II. Containing the Family Turdidae (Warblers and Thrushes). *Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum. V. British Museum of Natural History*. London. Pp. i–xvi, 1–426.
- Stork, O. 2022. Website URL: <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/454353891> [Accessed on 09 May 2024.]
- Thomas, A. 2017. Website URL: <https://macaulaylibrary.org/asset/508778361> [Accessed on 09 May 2024.]

– **Tomal Gogoi, Manash Pratim Medhi, Runap Jyoti Gogoi**

Tomal Gogoi, Naharkatia, Dibrugarh, Assam, India. Email: [tomal1235gogoi@gmail.com](mailto:tomal1235gogoi@gmail.com)  
 Manash Pratim Medhi, Duliajan, Dibrugarh, Assam, India. Email: [manashjinga@gmail.com](mailto:manashjinga@gmail.com)  
 Runap Jyoti Gogoi, Tinsukia, Assam, India. Email: [runapjyotigogoi@gmail.com](mailto:runapjyotigogoi@gmail.com)