

which was clearly demanding and receiving nourishment. During a span of about two hours, the young cuckoo was fed 18 times.

On the very next day, I saw the same birds at the site, with the young cuckoo perched on a bamboo stick above the bushes. I watched the Hill Prinias feeding the young cuckoo for about half an hour. After that, I decided not to disturb the birds though I could hear Hill Prinias singing from a distance as well as the begging calls of the cuckoo on subsequent days as well.



212. Adult Hill Prinia feeding a spider to the juvenile Plaintive Cuckoo at Gandhigram.



213. Adult Hill Prinia having fed a grasshopper to the juvenile Plaintive Cuckoo at Gandhigram.

Both: Yolisa Yobin

Plaintive Cuckoo has been known to parasitise on prinias and tailorbirds in South Asia (Praveen & Lowther 2020) but there has not been any instance of parasitism of Hill Prinias. Though Payne & Kirwan (2020) includes Hill Prinia as a host of Plaintive Cuckoo, it is evident from the scientific name *P. atrogularis* that they were referring to the Black-throated Prinia, when both prinias were considered conspecific. Hence, this is probably the first instance of this brood parasitism pair from the world (Payne 2005; Payne & Kirwan 2020). It is yet another instance that demonstrates that Plaintive Cuckoos will choose any locally common *Prinia sp.* as its host, and almost all parts of its range have some resident *Prinia sp.* to parasitize on.

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– Yolisa Yobin

Yolisa Yobin, Hazolo village, Po/ps Vijoyanagar, District Changlang 792055, Arunachal Pradesh, India. Email: yolisayobin@gmail.com

Reports of the Black-crested Bulbul *Rubigula flaviventris* from Palamau Tiger Reserve, Jharkhand, India

The Palamau Tiger Reserve (hereinafter, PTR) is located in the western part of the Chota Nagpur Plateau, spanning the districts of Latehar and Garhwa in Jharkhand, India. Covering an area of 1,129 sq. km (Shahid et al. 2023), the PTR serves as the core area of the Chota Nagpur region (Rawat 2013). The PTR has been designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA) and 210 bird species have been documented from the reserve (Rawat 2013; BirdLife International 2024). However, this region has historically lacked proper documentation of its avian diversity (Rawat 2013), primarily due to disturbances caused by political extremism since the 1980s (Iqbal & Ilyas 2023).

During our bird survey period (05 April to 27 June 2024), the Black-crested Bulbul *Rubigula flaviventris* was observed on, at least, two occasions. The first sighting, reported by SKG, was on 16 June 2024, at 0700 h, in the Baresanr forest range of the PTR (23.604°N, 84.082°E; 454m asl). The bird, characterized by an erect black crest, olive green upper parts, and yellow underparts, was perched on a bush c.4 m above the ground. On the same day, at 1600 h, SI observed the species again, c.300 m away from the initial sighting, possibly the same individual, perched on a toothbrush tree *Salvadora persica* c.5 m above the ground. The species has not been spotted again at PTR since these sightings.

The species is resident in the Himalaya, from Himachal Pradesh to Arunachal Pradesh, hills of north-east India south of the Brahmaputra River, eastern Bangladesh (Sylhet and Chittagong Hill Tracts), and also disjunctly distributed in the Eastern Ghats from Odisha to Andhra Pradesh and hills of Madhya Pradesh; from foothills up to c.1,500 m asl (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; Fishpool & Tobias 2020). The species is mostly found singly or in pairs, and occasionally in groups (Grimmett et al. 2011). In PTR, both sightings were of a solitary individual and it is possible that it was the same individual that was sighted twice. The species is known to prefer the lower forest storey and bushes (Ali & Ripley 1987; Grimmett et al. 2011), which aligns with our observations.

Recent records indicate that the species has been reported from nearby regions (eBird 2024), with nearest records from Ramanujanj and Pavai Falls in Chhattisgarh, both locations c.45 km west of our PTR sightings. In Jharkhand, the species has been previously recorded in Thalkobad, Saranda (Gupta 2006), and as recently on 31 October 2023 (Roy 2023), at a location c.200 km from our study area. Additionally, it has been regularly reported in the neighbouring states of Chhattisgarh and Odisha (eBird 2024). Thus, our records from PTR are not unexpected, however,



214. Black-crested Bulbul in Palamau Tiger Reserve, Jharkhand, India.

Shera Kumar Gupta

it is not fully understood whether the occurrence of the species is seasonal as a result of seasonal dispersal or whether the species is resident in the region.

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- **Shahzada Iqbal, Rohan Desai, Shera Kumar Gupta & Hritik Dhami**
Shahzada Iqbal, Department of Wildlife Sciences, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, India; Wildlife Institute of India, Chandarabani, Dehradun, India. Email: shahzada90@yahoo.com [SI] [Corresponding author]
Rohan Desai, Wildlife Institute of India, Chandarabani, Dehradun, India. [RD]
Shera Kumar Gupta, Baresanr, Latehar, Jharkhand, India. [SKG]
Hritik Dhami, Palamau Tiger Reserve, Jharkhand, India. [HD]

The Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* from Siswan, Punjab, India

The Greater Scaup *Aythya marila* is a rare and irregular non-breeding visitor to the Indian Subcontinent (Ali & Ripley 1978; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012), with scattered records from all over the country, except for southern India (eBird 2024). On 05 February 2023, during a visit to Siswan Lake (30.870°N, 76.757°E) in Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar, Punjab, for birdwatching, PB saw a duck that looked like a Tufted Duck *A. fuligula*, from a distance. It was in a loose flock of about 18 waterfowl (six Tufted Ducks, four Common Pochards *Aythya ferina*, and eight Indian Spot-billed Ducks *Anas poecilorhyncha*) and was diving frequently. Upon examining the photographs, it seemed different from the Tufted Duck due to the greenish gloss on the head, greyish back, and total lack of crest. A discussion with other birders (Neerja V. & Rajive Das) confirmed its identity as a male Greater Scaup. Since the photos were not very good, another visit was made to the location on the same day. This time, the photographs were better [215]. The identification as male Greater Scaup was based on the lack of a crest, grey upper parts contrasting with black rear end, and green gloss to blackish head (Grimmett et al. 2011). This individual remained at the location for at least a week, and other birders also visited after seeing the present sighting on social media. It was

mostly seen with the same waterfowl mentioned previously and kept to the relatively shallower eastern part of the lake.



Pushkar Bai

215. Greater Scaup male, Siswan Lake, Punjab.

To locate previous records from Punjab, India, we searched the online 'Bibliography of South Asian Ornithology' (Pittie 2024). The earliest relevant mention of Greater Scaup in Punjab, India, is by Dhindsa et al. (1991). However, they only mention, "Recorded at Harike Bird Sanctuary on a few occasions; a winter visitor to Punjab." We asked the lead author, M.S. Dhindsa, on what basis it was included in the list. He informed (in litt. email dated 20 July 2024), "For some years between 1983 and 1986, researchers from the Bombay Natural History Society had set up bird ringing camps at Harike during winters. We visited them a few times and did bird watching together. That was when this duck was spotted." Robson (1997) attributes a sight record of two Greater Scaup to Per Undeland, from 02 March 1997. Most mentions of this species in Punjab are from Harike (Perennou et al. 1990; Prakash et al. 1997; Kazmierczak et al. 1998; Alfred et al. 2001). Singh (1993) included it in a checklist of birds of Punjab, but no primary source is indicated. Away from Harike, an occurrence has been reported from Ropar, now Roopnagar (Kumar et al. 2006). However, the record is ambiguous as no details are provided. Thus, we consider only three previous records from Punjab, all from Harike, as reliable: Perennou et al. (1990), Dhindsa et al. (1991), and the one attributed to Per Undeland (Robson 1997).

Therefore, the current record is significant being that it is far away from Harike (c.170 km) and because it is supported by photographic evidence. It underscores the importance of conserving all existing habitats where winter visitors can find an abode. This sighting is also a reminder for birdwatchers that they should always look for the presence of uncommon birds that may get overlooked due to similarities with their more common congeners.

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