

sighting from 2021, we are unable to trace any evidence of such a record. Such a record has not been listed in the latest bird checklist for Jammu & Kashmir (Kichloo et al. 2024). Another sighting listed by (Pop et al. 2022) from northern West Bengal has been treated as unconfirmed for the West Bengal state bird checklist (Manna et al. 2024). We follow these state assessments and do not list them in our table.

Considering the known breeding and wintering areas of the Eurasian Siskin, it can be considered a rare vagrant to the Himalaya. Some sightings, like the present from Jammu & Kashmir and that of Ladakh possibly are birds in their spring passage. Birds occurring in other Himalayan regions might be going unnoticed, or overlooked as Yellow-breasted Greenfinches, as was the situation in both records mentioned in this work.

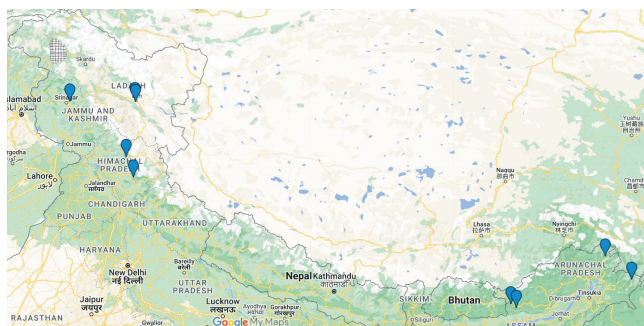


Fig 1: Map of Eurasian Siskin records from the Indian Himalaya.

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## Hill Prinias *Prinia superciliaris* feeding a juvenile Plaintive Cuckoo *Cacomantis merulinus*

On 20 August 2024, I started my birding session near my home in Gandhigram (27.278° N, 96.912° E; c. 1,070m), Changlang District, eastern Arunachal Pradesh, India at 0600 h, and I was surprised to see a Hill Prinia *Prinia superciliaris* feeding a young cuckoo that appeared to be a juvenile Plaintive Cuckoo *Cacomantis merulinus* [210–211]. The birds were in close proximity and I was able to watch them for the next couple of hours. I carefully observed their interactions without disturbing the birds. Identity of the chick as to a Plaintive Cuckoo is evident from its size and its hepatic plumage. Though Hill Prinia is absent in most of north-eastern India, it is a locally common species in Gandhigram.



210. An adult Hill Prinia with a caterpillar ready to feed the juvenile Plaintive Cuckoo at Gandhigram.



211. Adult Hill Prinia feeding the caterpillar to the juvenile Plaintive Cuckoo at Gandhigram.

This interaction was striking due to the significant size difference between the host bird and the cuckoo chick. The juvenile Cuckoo, notably larger and more robust than the Hill Prinia, was being consistently fed by both adult birds. The prinias brought an assortment of food items, including caterpillars [210], spiders [211], and grasshoppers [212], to the cuckoo chick,

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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## 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.

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