show a pale-yellow bill and rather thickset legs, unlike my bird. Hence, all visible features are indicative of a Band-bellied Crake, eliminating other similar crakes.

In its regular range, the Band-bellied Crake prefers wet grass and paddyfields as well as grassy hummocks with bushes or small trees, in meadows and swamps (Taylor & Bonan 2020). Considering this is an April record, this particular bird might have been on its return migration to its breeding grounds in northeastern Asia. Overall, a scarce bird, very little information is available on its migratory habits. There are very few observation records from its wintering range in Southeast Asia (eBird 2024); in fact, except for a long-staying bird in Singapore in 2018, there are only two other April records of this species in the 21st century from the entire world! This makes our record of this little-known species, rather special.

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Grey-streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa greseisticta* from South Andaman, Andaman and Nicobar Islands: An addition to the avifauna of South Asia

The Grey-streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa greseisticta* (hereinafter, GSFC) is a migratory old-world flycatcher that breeds in parts of north-eastern China, eastern Mongolia, North Korea, and south-eastern Russia (Clement 2020). Its non-breeding range primarily extends from Taiwan and Philippines through North Borneo, Sulawesi, and western Papua, up till the Lesser Sunda islands. There exist a few records from beyond the western edge of its main non-breeding range from Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and Cocos (Keeling) islands, where it is considered a vagrant (eBird 2024).

On 08 November, 2024, starting at 1515 h, we were birding on the path to the top of Mount Harriet (Mount Manipur) in South Andaman, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Upon reaching the highest point of the peak (11.720°N, 92.733°E, *c.*365 m) at 1630 h, we spotted a flycatcher atop an 8–10 m tall tree **[9]**. Being at an elevated position, we observed the bird almost at eye-level. It was almost dusk, and light was fading. The bird was observed sallying periodically from the same perch for about 5–7 minutes, after which it took off to a neighboring tree but returning to its earlier perch ten minutes later. It remained on its perch but occasionally sallied. After another 5–7 minutes, it flew away, not to be seen again. The most distinct feature observed through binoculars was bold and well-defined streaking on clean whitish flanks, breast and to some extent on the belly. There was no brownish wash or buff coloration on the underparts which appeared clean white.

We discussed the oddity of the streaked plumage as we compared to other Muscicapid flycatchers that we were familiar with and were possible in the region. At first, we considered the Dark-sided Flycatcher *Muscicapa sibrica* (hereinafter, DSFC) and the Asian Brown Flycatcher *M. dauurica* (hereinafter, ABFC). These two flycatchers are known from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and we had already seen three ABFCs during the past one week on the islands; however, none of them had shown any prominent streaking on the underparts. We noted later that the Brown-streaked Flycatcher *M. williamsoni* (hereinafter, BSFC), a recent split from the ABFC, also needs to be taken into account. The bird we observed looked quite different compared to the DSFC subspecies (*gulmergi* & *cacabata*) of the Himalaya; which we are familiar with. These birds (both first-year and adults) tend to have very dark underparts with a brown wash and darker ill-defined streaking, if not blotches, on the flanks and the breast, with a prominent white band running from the lower breast to the belly. However, the bird that we observed did not show any of these features. The ABFC never shows very strong, well-defined streaking as in the bird that we observed. The Spotted Flycatcher *M. striata* can show thin distinct streaking on the underparts. However, being familiar with that species, and absence of distinctive features of that species like streaky forehead and crown, concolorous lores with rest of face, long tail extending much beyond the tip of the folded primaries, and slim and elongated overall appearance helped us easily eliminate that species.

Adithi Muralidhar

9. Grey-streaked Flycatcher as sighted atop a tree.

After a literature search, we realized that the bird must be a GSFC (Robson 2000). Below, we compare the plumage and structural characteristics of the observed bird with two other 'streaked' Muscicapidae flycatchers, and argue that ours is a GSFC. Our comparisons are based on a thorough inspection of the photographic database on eBird along with relevant literature (Alström & Hirschfeld 1991; Bradshaw et al. 1991) and personal communications (Dave Bakewell, in litt., e-mail dated 11 November 2024; Craig Robson, in litt., e-mail dated 12 November 2024; James Eaton, in litt., e-mail dated 24 November 2024). The flycatchers considered are BSFC, GSFC, and the nominate subspecies of DSFC (hereinafter, just DSFC); all known to winter in Southeast Asia.

10. Grey-streaked Flycatcher showing a distinct and pale wing-bar and well-separated streaking on uniformly whitish underparts.

Both: S. Krishnan

11. Grey-streaked Flycatcher showing pale loral and sub-moustachial regions.

Aging: The first-winter individuals of these three flycatchers show clear pale tips to the greater coverts giving the appearance of a distinct wing-bar. Since our sighting is in late autumn and it is expected that only the greater coverts are retained after the post-juvenile molt, the observed individual showing a very distinct wing-bar is a first-winter bird **[10]**.

Underparts' streaking: A crucial diagnostic feature for the GSFC is the nature of the streaking on the underparts. The streaking is well-defined and distinct (with clear separation between individual streaks) on uniformly whitish underparts, as opposed to inconspicuous, weak, smudged streaking on light brown underparts in the BSFC. For the DSFC, the streaking is typically more conspicuous than the BSFC, but the nature of the streaking is again unlike the GSFC. The DSFC also shows a browner wash on the sides of the breast and flanks with some diffuse but broad streaks. Some nominate DSFC can show more distinct and bolder streaks near the breast, but the flanks always have a brownish wash and the streaking smudges out. This gives the appearance of a whitish band on a brown background running from the breast to the belly and the vent. The individual observed by us had strong, very distinct, and finer streaking throughout the flanks and breast, on otherwise fairly uniform whitish underparts, pointing towards it being GSFC **[10, 11]**. It is interesting to note that there is evidence of unusually distinctly streaked DSFC and such birds can be very difficult to separate from GSFC (Alström & Hirschfeld 1991). However, Bradshaw et al. (1991) mentions, even in such birds, the streaking is never so distinct or extensive as on GSFC; the streaking on DSFC being against a brown background as opposed to a white background on GSFC; like in our case.

Loral and sub-moustachial region: Existing photographs of the BSFC seem to show very little or no pale colouration in the loral and sub-moustachial regions. However, the loral and sub-moustachial regions of GSFC are much paler, as in our bird. Such pale colouration can also be seen in DSFC, but it typically shows buff lores as opposed to more whitish lores in the GSFC; a feature captured well in our photographs **[3].** Note that this feature seems to be somewhat dependent on the angle of viewing. Also, the loral spot and sub-moustachial stripe are very distinct in our bird **[3]**.

Length of tail and folded primaries: The BSFC seems to have relatively long tail feathers, judged by how much they extend beyond the tip of the undertail coverts and the tip of the folded primaries. The bird that we observed, however, showed a comparatively shorter tail, fitting GSFC. The above feature also seems to give the impression of longer wings that reaches of the tips of the folded primaries for a perched GSFC compared to a BSFC. The tips of the folded primaries reach closer to the tip of the tail in a GSFC as evident in the given photograph **[10, 11]**, pointing towards the bird being either a GSFC or a DSFC. There is a good amount of overlap for this feature between GSFC and DSFC and hence it is only useful to eliminate BSFC.

Tips of greater coverts (wing-bar): The extent of white or brown colouration of the tips of the greater coverts seems to be different in the first-cycle birds of the three species. However, this feature seems to depend more strongly on the brightness level of the surroundings. If the light is bright and falling on the bird, the colouration of the tips of the greater coverts invariably appears whitish in all species. However, in more diffused light conditions, like in our observation, the colour tones of the greater coverts can appear buff. Typically, both BSFC and DSFC seem to show buffish tips to the greater coverts, whereas the GSFC tends to show whitish tips. One of the photographs **[10]** captures this feature well. It is unlikely that buffish tips will seem whitish in low light or in a grazing angle of view. However, the quality of the photograph precludes a more definitive statement in this regard, and can at best be treated as supportive.

It must be noted that other features like the extent of white in the eye-ring, and the extent of streaking in the sub-moustachial stripe, which have been pointed out in literature (Alström & Hirschfeld 1991), are not discussed here as there seems to exist much variability in those features based on our analysis of photographs on eBird. In addition, our photographs have failed to capture such finer details. Also, the DSFC and the BSFC, at times, tend to show dark centers to some of the undertail coverts, which are often concealed in the field. For the GSFC, it is claimed that the undertail coverts do not show dark centers, but basal half may be dark tinged (Alström & Hirschfeld 1991). However, this feature is therefore not useful in our case.

In summary, underpart streaking and the ground colour of the underparts along with the colours of the loral and sub-moustachial region should establish our bird as a GSFC with other visible features not contradicting what is expected in a GSFC.

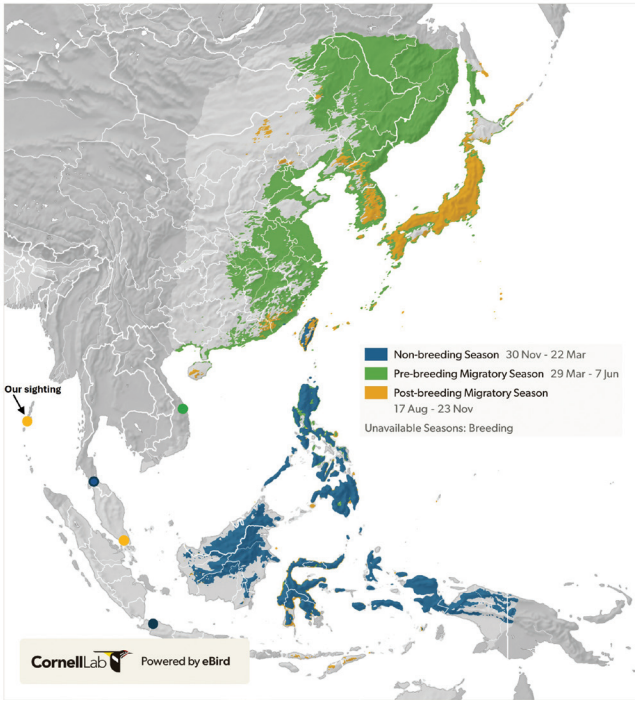

Figure 1: eBird range map (Fink et al. 2023) for the Grey-streaked Flycatcher showing areas where the species is estimated to occur within at least one week within each of three defined seasons. Out-of-range sightings, including ours, are marked.

There are no previous records of GSFC from India or South Asia. The nearest record of this bird is from southern Thailand, close to Malaysia, at an aerial distance of ***c.*** 1000 km westwards (95% of the distance being over sea) from our site of observation. Thus, our record is the first for India, and globally the westernmost for this species. Given its known range (Fig. 1), vagrancy in the eastern and north-eastern parts of South Asia is to be expected. Birdwatchers visiting these areas must also look out for other migratory vagrants which have a large wintering range in Southeast Asia.

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European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris* from Jammu & Kashmir: An addition to the avifauna of India

The European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris* is a medium sized broad-headed bird in the finch family Fringillidae. It is widespread across Europe, northern Africa, and parts of central and southwestern Asia (Clement & de Juana 2020). While primarily resident, some northern populations migrate south during the northern winter influenced by seasonal changes. In Asia, the European Greenfinch's range extends till about Central Asia to northern Iran, with rare passage migrants observed in western China (Xinjiang), western Mongolia to eastern Russia (eBird 2025).

On 10 February 2025, at 0930 h, while birding at Botanical Garden, Srinagar (34.091°N, 74.884°E; *c.* 1,600 m asl), Jammu & Kashmir, India, SR observed a flock of Yellow-breasted Greenfinch *C. spinoides* perched on a Chinar tree *Platanus* sp. One of the individuals appeared slightly bigger than the rest of the flock, so he took some photographs and shared them with AA and IJ, who identified the bird as a European Greenfinch based on its slightly larger size, with an overall greenish-yellow plumage, a stout conical pinkish bill, and distinct yellow patches on its primaries and tail **[12]**. Incidentally, on the same day and location, at 1650 h, UM, RC and BD saw a bird in flight which seemed like a Greenfinch but perceptibly bigger in size. They took some photographs **[13]** from a distance with the intention to identify the species. Since the bird was new to them, it could not be identified in the field. Eventually a few more photographs were taken but the bird flew away, chased by a Himalayan Bulbul *Pynonotus leucogenys*. It was later identified as an adult male European Greenfinch by its completely unstreaked appearance with bright colours and lack of obvious black on the base of primaries. These observations were followed by AA, IJ, and IM on the very next day, when the bird was again seen perching with a flock of Yellow-breasted Greenfinches establishing its presence and making it a first record for India (Praveen & Jayapal 2025) as well as Jammu & Kashmir (Kichloo et al. 2024). The bird was present for a few more days giving excellent opportunities to photograph **[14–15]** and several birders reported the species till 15 February 2025.

Sheikh Riyaz

12. European Greenfinch showing yellow on primaries.