

speculating if it was wintering in this habitat. Further explorations of similar and suitable habitats in Odisha (and eastern India) in the winter months would help in further understanding the distribution, behaviour and ecology of this species.



270. Lanceolated Warbler from Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary.



271. Lanceolated Warbler from Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary.



272. Lanceolated Warbler from Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary.

All photos: Bhubaneswar Patra

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## The Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor*: an addition to the avifauna of Goa

The Great Frigatebird is a large, widespread seabird that rarely lands on water and roosts on trees (Grimmett et al. 2011). In flight, it can perform deft maneuvers and soar for extended periods of time, making just sporadic deep wingbeats (Grimmett et al. 2011). They occasionally scavenge around boats and are known to aggressively pursue other seabirds, such as boobies, to force them to regurgitate or release food, like fish, and then catch the food mid-air. They also capture their own prey by plunging steeply into the water (Grimmett et al. 2011; Gauger & Schreiber 2020). The Great Frigatebird exhibits remarkable variation in its post-breeding migratory patterns. Birds from Europa Island, located between Mozambique and Madagascar, undertake long-distance journeys to roosting sites across the Indian Ocean, and population numbers at any given site can fluctuate depending on oceanic conditions and the availability of suitable roosting islands (Weimerskirch et al. 2017).

On 28 July 2024, SF organized a bird-watching trip to Fort Aguada, situated in Bardez Taluka of North Goa District (15.490°N, 73.760°E) (Fig. 1). Standing on Sinquerim Beach, with a view of the Arabian Sea, Fort Aguada is a well-preserved 17th-century Portuguese fort that also features a lighthouse. It is designated as a Monument of National Importance by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). A small group of enthusiastic birdwatchers assembled on the lower ramparts of Fort Aguada at 0800 h and began bird watching. Expected species such as Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*, Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus*, Great Crested Tern *Thalasseus bergii*, White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Ichthyophaga leucogaster*, and Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* were observed. Suddenly, a Pterodactyl-like silhouette was observed in flight. It was entirely black with a reddish throat pouch, suggesting the bird was a male. It had a deeply forked tail, which appeared pointed when folded, narrow, curved wings, and a distinct crooked beak. Photographs were immediately taken, and it was identified as a Great Frigatebird [273].

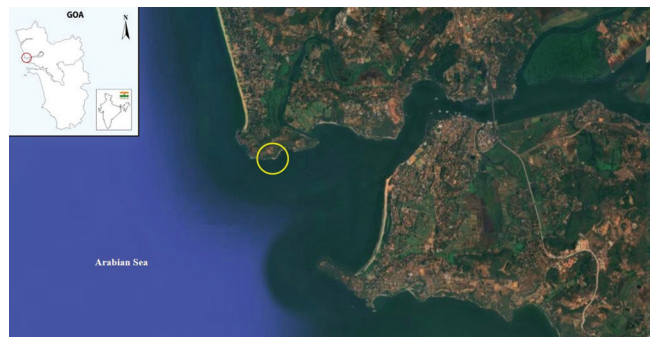


Fig 1. Location of record (Aguada Fort).



273. A male Great Frigatebird from Aguada Fort.

Each year, during the southwest monsoon, sight records of small numbers of Lesser Frigatebird *F. ariel* and Great Frigatebird are reported from the shores of India (Karuthedathu et al. 2015). Strong monsoon wind blowing towards land is thought to be responsible for most of these accounts (Sashikumar et al. 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). According to eBird (2025), the Great Frigatebird has been recorded in recent years from only three states in India other than Goa: Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal. The most records (nine) occurred in Kerala, followed by two in Tamil Nadu. West Bengal has one record. Most sightings were in June and July (four in each month), followed by May, August, October, November, and December (with one each). Historical records from Maharashtra are listed in Prasad (2003, 2006).

From Goa, there have been two sight records close to land with no photographs: a female by Heinz Lainer at Anjuna on 16 September 1990 and a juvenile by David Stanton over Anjuna-Baga on 21 August 2008 (Lainer & Alvares 2013). Additionally, a juvenile frigatebird (probably a Great Frigatebird) was reported by Prasad (2004) near Aguada Fort during a sea-watching trip on 27 October 2003. This species was added as a seabird of Goa by Baidya et al. (2017) but was excluded from the checklist of birds of Goa (Baidya & Bhagat 2018, 2024) due to a lack of confirmed documentation. Hence, the present sighting, with photographic evidence, qualifies as the first confirmed record in Goa.

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## The Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis*: Rediscovery and a case study of a lost pipit from West Bengal

A large pipit with pale brown colouring, a relatively long bill, and an extended tail was first observed on 21 December 2023 at the Dholburu Hills (23.255°N, 86.231°E; c.981 m asl) of Purulia district, West Bengal by SP and four others during a bird watching trip. The pipit was seen among Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*, Tree Pipit *A. trivialis*, and Blyth's Pipit *A. godlewskii*. It was identified as a Long-billed Pipit *A. similis* based on its pale rufous underparts, long narrow buff supercilium, longer tail, and minimal upper part streaking. The last recorded sighting of this individual occurred on 11 March 2024 (Mukhopadhyay 2024) at Gojaburu Hills near Tenyasi. It was noted foraging with other pipits, primarily consuming insects and small arthropods. Sightings in the area took place regularly between 0800 hrs in the morning and 1645 hrs in the evening.

The species was observed again on 29 November 2024 at 1230 h in the same area. It was identified as a Long-billed Pipit by its similar physical traits, though this individual had heavier streaking on the upper parts. It was seen with Indian Bushlark *Plocealauda erythroptera*, Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark *Eremopterix grisea*, and Indian Robin *Copsychus fulicatus*. The individual was sighted only once for a few hours.

The individual observed on 21 December 2023 displayed upperparts largely grey and free of significant streaking, while the underparts showed uniform rufous tones. Overall, the bird appeared pale brown, with a lightly streaked head and an unstreaked back [276]. A narrow, elongated buff supercilium and a distinct black loreal stripe were evident [274]. The throat appeared faintly white, and the ear-coverts were more rufous than the surrounding plumage. Rufous fringes were also visible on the undertail coverts and tertials. The hind claw was distinctly decurved [275]. These features collectively indicated that the bird was likely of the *jerdoni* subspecies, giving it a notably thrush-like appearance.

In contrast, the individual recorded on 29 November 2024 exhibited even stronger diagnostic features of the *jerdoni* subspecies. Its underparts were markedly more rufous than those of the 2023 bird, and the breast showed more pronounced streaking. The whitish throat was clearer, and both the buff supercilium and black loreal stripe were more prominent [277]. This bird also possessed rufous ear-coverts and a faint but visible malar stripe.