

resident population but also receive a winter influx, and this likely from the Himalaya. The Western Ghats population appears mostly resident, though occasional southward movement of Himalayan individuals to Western Ghats cannot be ruled out, especially given scattered records from Central India and the Peninsular Plains. Compared to other regions, there are very few records from the large part of Central India and Peninsular plains. However, a small peak in February–March and an even smaller peak in October–November indicate that this region receives some influx during both spring and autumn passage. The Pune individual in November was probably on southward passage from the Himalaya, adding to the scarce records from western India outside the Western Ghats.

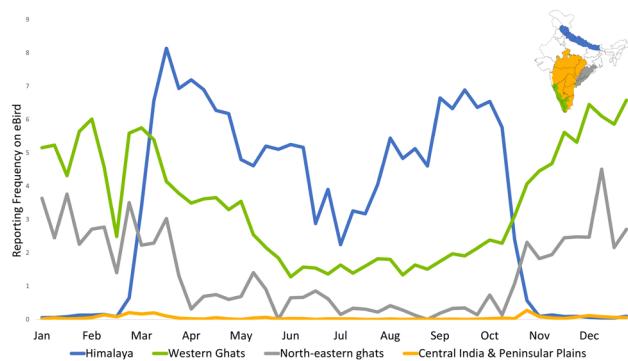


Fig. 1 Reporting frequency of Chestnut-headed Bee-eaters using eBird bar charts for India and Nepal in four regions (see inset map) in Indian subcontinent.

Together, these patterns suggest three breeding populations—Himalaya, Western Ghats, and a much smaller one in North-eastern Ghats—and a broad passage zone across central and southern India that are likely to be migrants from the Himalayan population. In fact, a substantial portion of the Himalayan population may likely be wintering in North-eastern Ghats. This needs further investigation through satellite telemetry.

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## The Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata* from Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary: An addition to the avifauna of Odisha, India

On 06 January 2025, at 0819 h, a warbler was photographed by BP near Launsara village on the fringes of Hirakud reservoir inside Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary (21.499°N, 83.771°E; 200 m asl). The bird was seen in reed beds at about 1 m above the ground and was extremely shy and skulking. BP managed to take a few photographs and videos before the bird flew back into the reed beds and did not emerge again despite waiting for about 20 min (Patra 2025). During this period the bird could not be seen moving inside in the reeds. From the photographs, it could be ascertained that the bird was a *Locustella* spp., and was later confirmed as Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata*, based on the following morphological features [270–272], such as, a lance-headed (tapering head, flattened forehead) shape of the head, and did not show a rounded head in any posture, unlike Grasshopper Warbler *L. naevia*, or Rusty-rumped Warbler *Helopsaltes certhiola*. The black stripes formed the visible 'braces' on the back, and also showed streaking on the underparts to the throat. A juvenile Rusty-rumped Warbler may have scattered streaking on the underparts, mostly restricted to its flanks. A lack of white-tipped tail rectrices differentiates it from Rusty-rumped Warbler, whose tail tips are always white (Grimmett et al. 2011).

The Lanceolated Warbler is the smallest and most extensively marked *Locustella* warbler. It breeds across a wide area from northeastern Russia eastward through the Palearctic to northern Japan. It is a long-distance migrant, with its non-breeding range extending from the north-eastern parts of the Indian Subcontinent, eastwards to Myanmar, Vietnam and northern Philippines, southwards to the Malayan Peninsula and Sumatra, North Borneo, and western Java in Indonesia (Pearson 2024). While records from Southeast Asia and from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in India are regular (eBird 2025), the Lanceolated Warbler has been reported very sporadically from mainland India in the last few years, with many gaps in the understanding of its distribution in South Asia. The species remains poorly documented, probably owing to its secretive and skulking behaviour, and the difficulty in correctly identifying it without high-quality photographs.

The nearest records of the species from Odisha are from Baruipur marshes, South 24 Paraganas District, West Bengal from February–March 2022, documented in a detailed account of various confirmed and unconfirmed historical records with specimens, such as, those from Meghalaya and Etawah, Uttar Pradesh, including some tentative records that were rejected (Chattopadhyay 2023). Subsequently, there have been many records of the species from multiple locations in Baruipur marshes every year since 2022, between November and March (eBird 2025), suggesting that it may likely be a regular wintering ground for the species. Outside of South 24 Paraganas District, the species has been reported in Birbhum District (Saha 2021). It has now been confirmed from Assam (see elsewhere in this issue). There are records from Bangladesh as well, from Dhaka (Titu 2022) and Sylhet (Rare Birds Bangladesh 2010). On the western coast of India, it has been reported in September from Nalsarovar in Ahmedabad District, Gujarat (Kshirsagar 2025). Baker (1924) stated it was rare beyond eastern Odisha and Bengal, however, there were no confirmed records from Odisha till now, making the record from Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary an addition to the avifauna of the State. The species was not reported in subsequent explorations of the same habitat, due to which we refrain from

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 *Icthyophaga 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).