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Breeding of the Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* at Ujani Reservoir, Maharashtra, India

The Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* is one of the three species of the genus *Glareola*, found in India. It is distributed across southern Europe, northern Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Central Asia (Maclean & Kirwan, 2020). In South Asia, the species is a breeding visitor to the Indus Valley in Pakistan (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012), whereas in India, it breeds in Gujarat while spreads thinly in peninsular India during non-breeding season. Inland reports from northern and central India, Deccan as well as Andamans are likely to be birds in migration (Praveen 2025). The species typically nests colonially in small groups of 10–20 in open, flat habitats near water and breeds from April–August (Maclean & Kirwan 2020).

Ujani Reservoir is located in the Solapur and Pune Districts of the Maharashtra State, with parts of it extending into Ahilyanagar District (Fig. 1). It supports a diverse range of habitats, including deep waters, shorelines, marshland, and riparian zones, which are essential for both resident and migratory bird species. During dry season, the water recedes, exposing the submerged land that transforms into large stretches of grassy meadows which attracts several ground-nesting waterbirds such as plovers *Charadriidae* sp., Black-winged Stilts *Himantopus himantopus*, pratincoles, and lapwings *Vanellus* sp..

We first recorded four Collared Pratincoles at Takali (18.255°N, 74.865°E) on 03 March 2024 and another four on 06 April at Kondhar Chincholi (18.280°N, 74.815°E). During its breeding season in the year 2024, we observed an adult bird carrying food, a behaviour suggesting parental care and presence of dependent young. Chicks were observed accompanying adults in May 2024 at Kalewadi (18.242°N, 74.862°E) [50], though no nest was located.

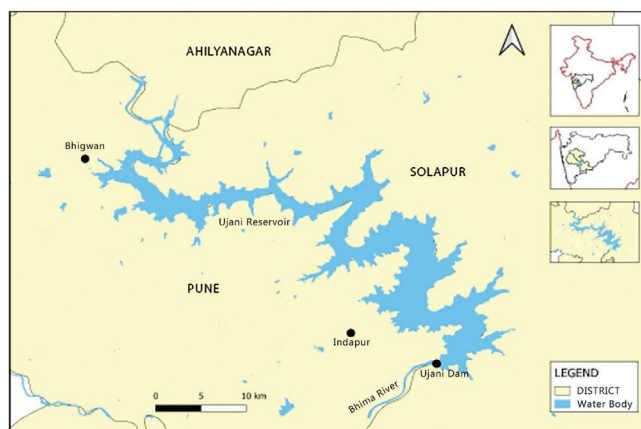


Fig. 1. Map showing the location of Ujani Reservoir in Maharashtra, India.

In the year 2025, the species was recorded much earlier than in 2024. Three individuals were seen at Vitthalwadi (18.322°N, 74.854°E) on 09 February 2025, and ten two days later at the same location. On 31 March 2025, 26 individuals were recorded from Takali. Since then, they were regularly observed at Takali and Kalewadi, both these locations being on opposite banks of the reservoir, mainly on freshly exposed grassy meadows formed by receding water.

On 25 April 2025, while surveying at Kalewadi, we came across a nest of an Oriental Pratincole *G. maldivarum* with two eggs, being incubated by an adult bird. After scanning the area further, we saw a shallow scrape nest on the ground with two similarly patterned eggs, but no adult bird was seen near the nest. However, an adult pair of Collared Pratincole was seen nearby along with Oriental Pratincoles. Continued observation from a safe distance following nesting biology guidelines (Barve et al. 2010) showed an adult Collared Pratincole returning to the scrape and incubating the eggs [51]. The nest of Collared Pratincole was only 31 m away from the nest of an Oriental Pratincole. This is the first direct evidence of nesting of the Collared Pratincole in India outside its known breeding range.

These repeated observations over two years suggest that Collared Pratincoles may be regular breeding visitors to Ujani, but overlooked due to their similarity with Oriental Pratincoles. This finding considerably extends the known breeding distribution of the species into the Deccan Plateau and highlights the ecological importance of large, seasonally fluctuating wetlands for supporting ground-nesting birds.



50. Adult Collared Pratincole with a chick photographed in May 2024 at Kalewadi, Ujani Reservoir, Maharashtra.



Photo: Ameya Deshpande

51. Collared Pratincole nest with two eggs and an adult bird incubating the eggs at Kalewadi, Maharashtra.

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The Jerdon's Bushlark *Plocealauda affinis* from Goa, India

Goa, though India's smallest state (0.12% of India's land area), supports a disproportionately rich avian diversity, with 489 species recorded (Baidya & Bhagat 2024). This figure represents approximately 35% of India's bird species and is likely attributable to Goa's varied landscapes, ranging from coastal wetlands and estuaries to inland forests and lateritic plateaus. The Socorro Plateau in North Goa is a notable birding site and this note reports the first confirmed sighting of Jerdon's Bushlark from the state of Goa.

Socorro Plateau (15.568°N, 73.838°E; 50–90 m asl), with an area of 3.5 sq. km., is located in North Goa District (TessaDEM 2024) (Fig. 1). It comprises a low-level Ferricretes (LLF) type of flat lateritic plateau (Watve 2013), dominated by grass species interspersed with sparse scrub vegetation, providing suitable habitat for various grassland-associated species. To the south, it is bordered by the Salvador do Mundo Plateau, characterized by dense shrub and tree cover. On 13 August 2024, during a reconnaissance visit to the habitat, three larks were observed flying over and settling in an open grassy patch of land at a spot (15.566°N, 73.840°E; 72 m asl). Two individuals were identified as Malabar Lark *Galerida malabarica*, a species frequently encountered in the region. However, the third bird displayed morphological differences that prompted closer scrutiny. A photograph was obtained [52]; however, the bird remained silent and was visible very briefly. Identification was based on the following morphological features: heavily streaked upperparts, buff underparts, short tail, prominent rufous colour on the wings, buffy lores, and a large, thickset bill with a dark upper and pale lower mandible (Grimmett et al. 2011). The photograph was later shared on Facebook and, subsequently, the identification was confirmed (Damle 2024).



Photo: Omkar Damle

52. Jerdon's Bushlark at Socorro Plateau, Goa, 13 August 2024.

The Jerdon's Bushlark occurs in southern and eastern India and Sri Lanka, and is a resident species that breeds from December to May, chiefly from March onwards, in India; and from March to August or September, mainly May, in Sri Lanka (Alström 2020). It is typically associated with drier regions, and inhabits a variety of open landscapes, including grasslands, scrublands, agricultural fields, rocky plains, and forest edges. While it is resident in peninsular India, it has also been documented from, as far north as, Bastar in Chhattisgarh, and Midnapore in West Bengal (Dinda & Das 2018; Bharos et al. 2019).

The Jerdon's Bushlark is not listed in the available checklists for Goa and citizen science databases (Baidya & Bhagat 2024; eBird 2025; iNaturalist 2025). Thus, our record of the species at Socorro Plateau represents an important addition to the avifauna of Goa. While this species is well documented in southern India, its prior absence from Goa is intriguing. In Maharashtra, there are only two confirmed records, both from the plains in the northern (Patil 2023) and north-eastern (Babre 2018) areas. From Karnataka, while there are sparse records close to the border between Goa and Karnataka (Prabhu 2021; Kalkura 2022; Bharathi 2024; Rai 2025), regular records are reported from the southern coastal plains (for e.g., in Udupi, Mangaluru etc.), and inland tablelands (for e.g., in Bengaluru, Mysuru,