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The Pin-tailed Parrotfinch *Erythrura prasina* in Namdapha National Park, Arunachal Pradesh, India

The Pin-tailed Parrotfinch *Erythrura prasina* is a small estrildid finch distinguished by its striking plumage. The male has a blue forehead, face, and throat, black lores, and green upperparts. The rump, uppertail-coverts, and tail are red. The breast, flanks, and undertail-coverts are buffish, with a red median stripe along the belly. The tail is long and pointed, giving the species its characteristic appearance. The female has a more faded blue face, lacks the red belly, and has a shorter tail (Payne 2020). The species is resident in Thailand, southern Myanmar, Peninsular Malaysia, southern Cambodia, northern and central Laos, Vietnam, Sumatra, and Java (Payne 2020). It has been described as a ghostlike bird that materializes in large numbers during rice harvest and bamboo seeding events, and promptly vanishes afterwards (eBird 2025).

Namdapha National Park (1,985 km²) along with the adjoining community forests, is situated in Changlang and Lohit Districts of south-eastern Arunachal Pradesh, along India's border with northern Myanmar. Owing to its wide elevational range (200–4,571 m asl), the park encompasses multiple vegetation zones, ranging from tropical wet evergreen and moist deciduous forests at lower elevations to temperate broadleaved and coniferous forests, and alpine vegetation at higher elevations (Srinivasan et al. 2010). At lower elevations, tropical wet evergreen forests are characterised by tall multi-layered canopies and extensive bamboo thickets, wild bananas, and occasional stretches of tall grass, particularly along roadsides and riverine tracts. The undergrowth is often thick and intertwined, comprising canes, bamboos and a diverse assemblage of shrubs and herbs, resulting in structurally complex habitats that support astonishingly high avian diversity.

BH led a birding group comprising of VG, MB and BKG to Namdapha during early January 2026 to explore its avifauna. On our return from Vijoyanagar area of Changlang District on 06 January, we were birding along the Miao-Vijoyanagar Road, which is a dirt track along the Noa-Dihing River. At the 62 milestone on the Miao-Vijoyanagar Road, we stopped to look for the White-bellied Heron *Ardea insignis* in the Noa-Dihing River (27.460°N, 96.649°E; c.650 m asl). It was a mixed forest patch with dense

undergrowth and ample proportion of bamboo, only a few of which were flowering. BH pointed towards a flock of about 20 White-rumped Munias *Lonchura striata* feeding on a branch of bamboo flowers overhanging the road. BKG looked up and found two reddish-orange birds towards the end of the branch, feeding exactly like the munias. BKG immediately pointed out these unusual birds to our guide BH and wondered whether they were some sort of minivets [47, 48]. BH looked carefully through his binoculars and confirmed that these unfamiliar birds might be a new species for this region. The identification of the bird pictures as Pin-tailed Parrotfinch was achieved on the spot through Merlin app. Further observation revealed that there were two male and two female parrotfinches feeding aggressively on the bamboo seeds. They stayed there for about 30 minutes and then disappeared. The munias had left around 10 minutes before them. It was subsequently recorded at the same bamboo flowering branch and another one 100 m away on multiple occasions by different birding groups of BH, with the most recent sighting occurring on 15 February 2026 by BH.



47. A male Pin-tailed Parrotfinch showing its characteristic pin tail and blue face.



48. Male and female Pin-tailed Parrotfinches while they were feeding on bamboo seeds along with White-rumped Munias.

The Pin-tailed Parrotfinch is a recent addition to the avifauna of India, following multiple records from Mizoram (Sailo et al. 2025). Several dead individuals were recovered from hunters in November 2020 from the Tuichhuahen area of Kolasib District, and a dead male was recovered following a window collision at the Vaivakawn locality in Aizawl City. Subsequently, a live male was photographed on 04 April 2025 at the Tuisen-Tlabung forest near Reiek Village, Mamit District. Based on these records, and information obtained from local inhabitants, the species was considered resident in Mizoram by Sailo et al. (2025). Elsewhere in the neighbouring region, the species was reported from the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden in southern Yunnan Province on 19 December 2013 and 04 January 2014, constituting the first records for China (Sreekar et al. 2014). It is also a relatively recent addition to Bhutan's avifauna, following its sighting in Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary on 16 July 2018 (Wagdi & Tenzin 2021).

The Pin-tailed Parrotfinch is a popular cage bird owing to its attractive plumage and ease of maintenance, and granivorous diet (Sreekar et al. 2014; Donald et al. 2024). Consequently, recent Indian records could be suspected to involve escapees. However, our sighting occurred in dense forest far from human habitation. Similarly, earlier records from Mizoram were from forested habitats and adjoining rice fields, with multiple birds recorded from Tuichhuahen (Sailo et al. 2025). The species was also reported as being familiar to local hunters, trappers, and farmers in Mizoram. These factors led to its acceptance as a wild species in India, and its inclusion in the Indian Checklist (Praveen & Jayapal 2026).

The species primarily inhabits forest edges, secondary growth, and bamboo-dominated landscapes, and frequently visits rice fields from the lowlands up to c. 1,500 m elevation (Payne 2020). The habitat in which the species was observed at Namdapha National Park closely matches this description, being dominated by bamboo with flowering. Notably, records from Mizoram, Bhutan, and China were all from habitats with a significant bamboo component. Although largely resident within its core range, the species is partially migratory and nomadic, wandering over large areas and moving seasonally in response to rice harvesting and bamboo seeding events (Payne 2020). It typically occurs in small flocks, consistent with our observation of multiple individuals. Taken together, these ecological and behavioural attributes strongly suggest that the present record involves wild birds rather than escapees.

This sighting constitutes the first record of the Pin-tailed Parrotfinch from Arunachal Pradesh. The recent records from Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram suggest a possible ongoing northward expansion in the distribution range of the species. The recent records from China, which also lie north of its previously known range, further support this hypothesis. With the increase in birding activity in India, both in frequency and geographic coverage, a growing number of observers are contributing to new discoveries. This has resulted in the steady addition of species to India's avifauna. It is also possible that the species has always been nomadic, occasionally straying into under-explored regions beyond its known distribution range, and may have gone undetected in the past. We anticipate that further sightings of this species will be made in India, particularly in states bordering Myanmar. Observers are encouraged to remain vigilant during periods of bamboo flowering, as the species shows a strong affinity towards it.

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Passage migration of European Bee-eaters *Merops apiaster* through Rajasthan and other parts of India

The European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* is the most widespread bee-eater of the family Meropidae. Its breeding range extends from Portugal in the west to Mongolia and western China in the east, and from Denmark in the north, to North Africa in the south. A disjunct breeding population also occurs in South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana (Bastian & Bastian 2024). The species winters predominantly in central, western, and southern Africa, with widely scattered migratory pathways that connect breeding and wintering areas (Bastian & Bastian 2024). In South Asia, a small breeding population of the species occurs in Kashmir at elevations of 900–2100 m asl (Bates & Lowther 1952; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012) in Budgam, Srinagar, and Pulwama Districts (Ansar Ahmad, in litt., email dated 29 June 2025). A small number winter in Sri Lanka and along the Kaveri River in southern Karnataka and northern Tamil Nadu in India (Praveen 2025).

Although all populations are migratory, their migration routes remain poorly understood, particularly of those populations breeding in the eastern range (e.g., China, Mongolia, and Kashmir). The presence of wintering birds in southern India and Sri Lanka suggests the use of Central Asian-Indian Flyway (Bastian & Bastian 2024). Ali & Ripley (1983) referred to only one sighting of the species in Salem District, Tamil Nadu in 1952 based on Roy (1969). Later, a small flock of 5–7 birds were reported from Kanakapuram District, Karnataka in early 1980s (Lott 1985). Shyamal (1998) noted the increasing regularity of their sightings