



53. A Grey-crowned Prinia in non-breeding plumage foraging in *Thysanolaena* understorey of the forest.



Both photos: Abhishek Sharma

54. A Grey-crowned Prinia almost turning into non-breeding plumage showing grey crown and white eyebrow

The Grey-crowned Prinia has not been reported from Valmiki Tiger Reserve or other parts of Bihar previously (Ali & Ripley 1987; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; Praveen 2025). However, Maheswaran et al. (2025) recently reported a few birds from Valmiki Tiger Reserve. However, its presence is hardly surprising as the species occur in the adjacent Chitwan (Gurung 1983; Baral 2001) and Parsa National Parks (Inskipp et al. 2016) in Nepal. However, it escalates the importance of trans-national parks such as Chitwan–Parsa (Nepal) and Valmiki Tiger Reserve (India) as just not vital for charismatic megafauna but also immensely important for bird conservation. These interconnected landscapes support a diverse avifauna, including migratory, endemic, and globally threatened bird species which move between these contiguous habitats. Governments from both countries should strengthen conservation in the Indo-Nepal border to sustain the habitats of such globally Vulnerable species.

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The Tibetan Partridge *Perdix hodgsoniae* in western Arunachal Pradesh, India

The Tibetan Partridge *Perdix hodgsoniae* is a high-altitude species endemic to the Tibetan Plateau and the adjoining Himalayan ranges. In India, the species has been reliably recorded from Ladakh and parts of Himachal Pradesh (Ali & Ripley 1983; Grimmett et al. 2011). Historical reports from Arunachal Pradesh exist, including a mention by Ludlow & Kinnear (1937) from the Mago area in the Goshu Chu valley. However, their published account does not indicate the collection of voucher specimens from that locality, and we have not been able to trace any such specimens in accessible collections. It remains possible that material exists in museum holdings that we have not examined. They also mentioned collecting *Perdix* specimens on the Bhutan side during this expedition, though it remains unclear whether any were obtained from the present day Indian side. Later references (Ali & Ripley 1983; Grimmett et al. 2011) cite the species' possible presence in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. While historical reports exist, our sighting constitutes the first substantiated photographic record of the Tibetan Partridge from Arunachal Pradesh. In this context, our observations from the Thembang-Bapu landscape in West Kameng district provide photographic documentation of the species' occurrence in Arunachal Pradesh and contribute to a more robust understanding of its distribution in the eastern Himalayas.

The Thembang-Bapu area is situated in the western part of Arunachal Pradesh, within the Eastern Himalayas, and lies between elevations of 3,000–5,500 m asl. The habitat comprises alpine grasslands, boulder-strewn slopes, and high-altitude shrublands. Field surveys were carried out during Snow Leopard *Panthera uncia* population estimation exercises conducted by the Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department between April–May and August–September 2021, and again in May–June and September–October 2022. Our base camp was established at Potok (c.4,200 m asl), a Brokpa herding settlement accessed via a three-day trek from Bishum Phudung.

During these surveys, we observed small groups of swift-moving partridges in open alpine scrub. Initially presumed to be Chukar Partridges *Alectoris chukar*, closer field observations and photographic evidence [55] revealed diagnostic characters consistent with Tibetan Partridge: slightly larger body, compact structure, and distinctive black-and-white barring on the flanks and underparts. Key sightings were made on 13 September 2022 near 27.621°N, 92.391°E.

The bird was recorded on rocky alpine slopes interspersed with dwarf rhododendron and dry grass patches. Individuals were skittish, preferring to run for cover rather than fly. Tibetan

Photo: Lobsang Serap



55. Tibetan Partridge.

Partridge is listed as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List (BirdLife International 2025), but in India it is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. This record confirms the species' presence in the easternmost extent of the Indian Himalayas and underscores the ornithological significance of the Thembang-Bapu landscape. Continued avifaunal surveys in this under-explored region may reveal additional range extensions of other high-altitude species. (Ali & Ripley 1983)

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Intraspecific aggression exhibited by adult Painted Storks *Mycteria leucocephala* towards an immature at Chawandiya Wetland, Bhilwara, Rajasthan, India

The Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* is a large wading bird belonging to the family Ciconiidae and is widely distributed across South Asia, including Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, and parts of Southeast Asia (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). The species typically inhabits wetlands, lakes, and shallow water bodies where it feeds mainly on fish but may also consume frogs, reptiles, crustaceans, and aquatic insects (Elliott et al. 2020). Painted Storks breed colonially, and usually nesting on medium-sized trees near wetlands and water bodies (Urfi 2011). Several breeding colonies of Painted Storks have been documented across India in both protected wetlands and human-dominated landscapes. In western India, the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan support several nesting colonies due to the presence of suitable wetlands and nesting trees. In this note, we document the behaviour and social interactions of the species showing intraspecific aggression between adults and an immature at a wetland in Bhilwara District, Rajasthan.

From August 2024 to January 2025, we conducted regular observations of a Painted Stork breeding colony at Chawandiya Mata Pond (25.331° N, 74.775° E; 420 m asl) in Bhilwara District, Rajasthan. The wetland is surrounded by *Vachellia nilotica* trees that provide suitable nesting sites for several colonial waterbirds. In addition to Painted Storks, other species, such as, Eurasian Spoonbills *Platalea leucorodia* and Little Cormorants *Microcarbo niger* were also observed using the site. The colony was visited once every week during the breeding season to document nesting behaviour. Observations were conducted using Vanguard FR-1650 binoculars, and photographs were taken using a Nikon D500 camera mounted on a tripod. During the survey period, several breeding activities were recorded, including nest construction, courtship behaviour, mating, egg incubation, feeding, and parental care.

On 22 December 2025, at 1030 h, during a routine observation of the breeding colony, an aggressive interaction involving adult Painted Storks and an immature individual was observed. The immature bird was perched on a branch of a *V. nilotica* tree within the nesting colony, close to an active nest. An adult Painted Stork was then observed approaching the immature individual and began pecking its head and neck. Shortly afterwards, a second adult joined the interaction. Both adults repeatedly pecked at the immature individual and attempted to displace it from the branch. The adults would also spread their wings, likely showing dominance or aggression, and struck the immature bird with their bills during the interaction. The immature bird attempted to avoid the attack by moving along the branch and lowering its body posture. However, the adults continued the aggressive interaction for c. 30–40 sec. During the encounter, the immature bird was also observed to briefly lose its balance while attempting to evade the attacking adults. The event was photographed, and images were obtained showing the adults attacking the immature bird [56, 57]. Following the interaction, the immature bird moved away from the immediate nesting branch, and was no longer



56. Close-up of the adult Painted Storks attacking an immature bird.



57. Adult Painted Storks attacking an immature bird.

Both photos: Farhat Zabi