

- Steiof, K., De Silva, C., Jayarathna, J., Madlow, W., Pohl, M., Puschel, W., & Zerning, M., 2017. Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* in Sri Lanka in February 2015: First record for the island and the Indian Subcontinent. *Indian Birds* 13 (4):108–111.
- Tanveer, M., 2021. A Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* from Leh, Ladakh: A new species for India. *Indian Birds* 17 (5):144–146.
- Topo, K., Naik, S., Rane, S., & Karapurkar, J., 2025. A presumed Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* x Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus* hybrid from Goa, India. *Indian BIRDS* 21 (4):117–119.
- Urquhart, E., & Bowley, A., 2010. *Stonechats*. London: Christopher Helm, A & C Black. Pp. 1–320.

– C. Abhinav, Dipender Othangba & Amir Jaspa

C. Abhinav, Village Ghurkari, Kangra District, 176001, Himachal Pradesh, India. E-mail: drabhinav.c@gmail.com [CA] [Corresponding author]
Dipender Othangba, Village & P.O. Jobrang, District Lahaul and Spiti, 175133, Himachal Pradesh, India. E-mail: othangba@gmail.com [DO]
Amir Jaspa, Village Jastrath, Lahaul & Spiti District, 175139, Himachal Pradesh, India. E-mail: spider00001@gmail.com [AJ]

The Fire-capped Tit *Cephalopyrus flammiceps* from Odisha: An addition to the state's avifauna

The Fire-capped Tit *Cephalopyrus flammiceps* is a small migratory passerine and the sole member of the monotypic genus *Cephalopyrus*. It breeds in the temperate forests along the Himalayas across Pakistan, Nepal, India, Bhutan and around the Myanmar-China border (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). In India, the nominate subspecies breeds between 2,000–3,500 m in the Western Himalayas from Gilgit, Ladakh, Kashmir, Jammu, Himachal, and Uttarakhand (Ali & Ripley 1973; Praveen 2025). During winter, it migrates southwards to the Gangetic plains of Haryana (historical), Uttar Pradesh, Bharatpur (historical), Central Indian highlands of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and north-eastern Maharashtra (Praveen 2025). The *olivaceus* subspecies, found in the Eastern Himalayas, ranges from eastern Nepal through northern Bengal, Sikkim, Arunachal, and Assam at altitudes between 300 and 2,300 m (Ali & Ripley 1973; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; Praveen 2025).

On 28 November 2023, at 0700 h, during a birdwatching survey at Soleguda Reserve Forest, Talabhali Beat, Soleguda Section, Sole Range (21.958°N, 84.598°E; 487 m asl), Bonai Forest Division, Odisha, we observed a mixed flock of small passerines, including Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*, White-bellied Drongo *Dicrurus caerulescens*, and Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*, foraging on an Indian Ash Tree *Lannea coromandelica* on a hill slope. Photographs of the birds were taken and the observations were uploaded on eBird (Pattnaik & Shukla 2023). Within the mixed flock, there was a small olive-yellow bird that resembled a tit or a warbler and remained visible for 5–6 minutes before disappearing into thick foliage. The species was identified as a female Fire-capped Tit [69] from

the photographs, showing narrow conical, pointed bill, olive-yellow plumage, and pale wingbars (Burton 1836). Searches through eBird, GBIF, and iNaturalist, along with a literature review confirmed this as the first record of the species from Odisha. The nearest observations from the present location include three records from Chhattisgarh—Raipur (Parmar 2022), Bilaspur (Tripathi 2022), and Kangar Valley National Park, Bastar (Bharos et al. 2019) and one from Sushunia, Bankura, West Bengal (Mukherjee et al. 2024).

This observation extends the species' migration range further east and suggests that forests of Odisha may serve as potential wintering or stopover habitat for individuals migrating southward. However, much of the Bonai Forest Division lies within a mining-influenced landscape, though the Sole Range itself is not affected. Forest fires, however, remain a recurrent threat to wintering habitat. Prompt enforcement and fire-control efforts by the local forest department help mitigate these risks.

This record represents the first evidence-based occurrence of Fire-capped Tit in Odisha. Further systematic surveys would help clarify the species' status and movement patterns in the state.

References

- Ali, S., & Ripley, S. D., 1973. *Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan together with those of Bangladesh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. Robins to Wagtails*, 1st edn. (Sponsored by the Bombay Natural History Society) Oxford University Press, Bombay. Vol. 9 of 10 vols. Pp. i–xvi, 1–306.
- Bharos, A. M. K., Mandavia, A., Bux, F., Naidu, R., & Bharos, A., 2019. Avian diversity and range extension records of eastern ghat, western ghat, [sic] and Himalayan species to Kanger Valley National Park and adjoining Machkote forest range, Bastar division, Chhattisgarh, India. *International Journal of Fauna and Biological Studies* 6 (3):33–47.
- Burton, E., 1836. Characters of several birds from the Himalayan mountains. *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London* 3 (34):152–154.
- Jones, A. E., 1919. Further notes on the birds of Ambala District, Punjab. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 26 (2):675–676.
- Mukherjee, S., Dawn, A. K., Mallick, A., Sadhu, B., Adhurya S., 2024. Webpage URL: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S202990936>, [Accessed on 02 September 2025.]
- Parmar, P. 2022. Webpage URL: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S103137412>, [Accessed on 02 September 2025.]
- Pattnaik, D. & Shukla, A., 2023. Webpage URL: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S210124026>, [Accessed on 02 September 2025.]
- Praveen, J., 2025. *Birds of India - The New Synopsis*. Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysuru. Pp. i–xlvii, 1–468.
- Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2012. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide: attributes and status*, 2nd edn. Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions, Washington, D.C. and Barcelona. Vol. 2 of 2 vols. Pp. 1–683.
- Singh, A. P., 2000. Birds of lower Garhwal Himalayas: Dehra Dun valley and neighbouring hills. *Forktail* 16 : 101–123.
- Sondhi, S., Sondhi, A., Singh, K., Soni, R., & Gupta, V. M., 2020. Passage records of the Fire-capped Tit *Cephalopyrus flammiceps* from Devalsari, Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, and an analysis of eBird records from India. *Indian Birds* 16 (1):28–30.
- Tripathi, C. 2022. Webpage URL: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S101011368>, [Accessed on 02 September 2025.]
- Vyas, S., 2019. The birds of the Delhi area: An annotated checklist. *Indian BIRDS Monograph* 1: 1–128.

– Digvijaya Pattnaik, Lalit Kumar Patra, Ashish Kumar Shukla & Ashis Kumar Das

Digvijaya Pattnaik, Office of the Divisional Forest officer cum wildlife warden, Bonai Forest Division, Sundargarh, Odisha 770038, India
& Salim Ali Center for Ornithology and Natural History, Anaikatti, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu 641108, India. E-mail: digvijaypattnaik86@gmail.com [DP] [Corresponding author]
Lalit Kumar Patra, Office of the Divisional Forest officer cum wildlife warden, Bonai Forest Division, Sundargarh, Odisha 770038, India. E-mail: lkp106@gmail.com

Ashish Kumar Shukla, Jharsuguda, Odisha 768201, India. E-mail: shukla64136@gmail.com
Ashis Kumar Das, IGNOU Regional Centre, Bhubaneswar, Odisha 751013, India. E-mail: wolfsnake463@gmail.com



Photo: Digvijaya Pattnaik

69. A female Fire-capped Tit photographed from Bonai Forest Division, Odisha on 28 November 2023.