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 for 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

from "the Kaveri River belt and elsewhere" in southern India. Over the years, sightings of European Bee-eaters have become rather common in the region between Mysuru and Bengaluru in Karnataka and Salem and Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu, with large flocks occasionally reported (Praveen 2025).

European Bee-eaters migrate using both active flapping flight and soaring/gliding on thermals (Fry & Fry 1992). Sapir et al (2010) emphasized their preference for soaring flight. However, the magnitude, timing, seasonal duration or daily pattern of their passage migration in the Indian Subcontinent, both in spring (February–April) and autumn (August–December), remain poorly documented. In this note we report, and briefly discuss the two recent sightings of the species in Rajasthan during spring migration and four other recent passage records of the species from Punjab, Delhi, Maharashtra, and Karnataka.

On 26 March 2024 at 1030 h, a flock of 13–14 bee-eaters was observed hawking insects over crop fields near Fatehpur (27.979°N, 74.950°E), Sikar District, Rajasthan (Sangha 2024). The flock was detected due to their incessant musical calls and a careful observation through binoculars confirmed them as European Bee-eaters rather than Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters *M. persicus*, a common summer breeding visitor to western Rajasthan. The birds were observed for *c.*10 minutes. On 02 April 2025, about 8–10 European Bee-eaters were observed and photographed from Harsh (27.488°N, 75.180°E) by DM while they were flying towards Revasa Lake, Sikar District (Maharshi 2025). The images were shared with HSS who confirmed the birds as European Bee-eaters **[49]**.

Photo: Dipendra Maharshi

49. European Bee-eater photographed from Harsh, Sikar District, Rajasthan on 02 April 2025.

These observations confirm that European Bee-eaters undertake spring passage migration through Rajasthan. The timing of these records strongly suggest that the birds had wintered in southern India or further south in Sri Lanka (Fig. 1) and were returning to their breeding areas in Kashmir or further north.

It is worth noting that HSS has been residing and actively birding in Rajasthan for more than four decades and spent one year (1983–84) in Sikar District but never sighted the species. DM has been birding in Sikar since 2019 but never recorded the species earlier. Quite possibly the species is an uncommon or scarce passage migrant in north-western India. Its tendency to migrate at high altitudes (Fry & Fry 1992; Tippett 2024), possibly accounting for the scarcity of records. We could not find any other published records of the species from Rajasthan, nor are there eBird records from the state.

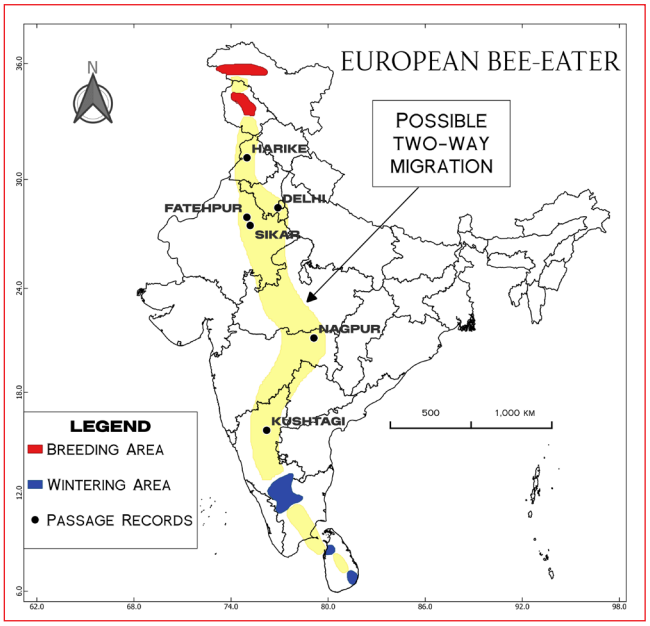

Fig. 1. Map depicting a possible two-way migration route of European Bee-eaters between their wintering and breeding grounds in India and Sri Lanka.

The nearest passage record of the species to Sikar is from Najafgarh Jheel near Delhi where seven birds were recorded on 03 April 2022 (Sharma 2022). There is one record from Central India, from Telhara reservoir, Nagpur, Maharashtra on 28 March 2013 (Kulkarni 2013). A flock of 12 birds was observed on 08 March 2015 in northern Karnataka (Ashrit 2015). A juvenile bird was seen on 01 September 1996, east of the Harike Bird Sanctuary at Rababsar in Punjab (Per Undeland, in litt., email dated 02 June 2025; Robson 1997). Due to paucity of passage records from India, possible migration times and routes are still not known for birds wintering in southern India and Sri Lanka. However, these few available observations nevertheless support the Central Asian-Indian Flyway hypothesis, although no observations were made in Delhi in the 1940s (Hutson 1947). It can be presumed that there is a two-way migration between the wintering areas in southern India and Sri Lanka and breeding areas of Kashmir or areas further north. A complete story is expected to unravel soon, as more birders record them during passage in India.

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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 *Charadridae 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.

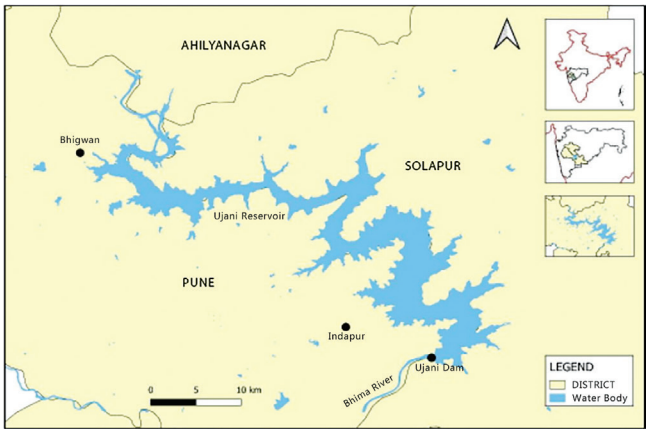

Fig. 1. Map showing the location of Ujani Reservoir in Maharashtra, India.

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.

Photo: Swapnil Jarad

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