

etc.) (eBird 2025). Based on its known habitat preferences and current distribution, it is apparent that the species typically avoids the hilly and forested terrains of the Western Ghats, but prefers flat, open plateaus. Based on this, the Western Ghats ranges of Goa may be hypothesised as a possible geographical distribution barrier for this non-migratory species. Specifically, the areas at the east-west projections of the Western Ghats, such as near Canaguinim (15.099°N, 73.988°E; 99 m asl) and Agonda (15.054°N, 74.017°E; 145 m asl) in Goa, as well as near Karwar (14.794°N, 74.313°E; 105 m asl) in Karnataka, which extend close to the coastline. These densely forested hill ranges may possibly restrict or obstruct the movement of dryland species like Jerdon's Bushlark, resulting in likely sporadic or isolated records from the coastal flats of Goa and adjacent regions. Alternatively, the apparent absence of records in these regions may probably stem from biases in coverage, resulting in this small and somewhat visually cryptic species being potentially unnoticed or misidentified. This highlights the importance of consistent, systematic, and targeted surveys to more accurately detect and document species presence and abundance. Furthermore, this record highlights the ecological significance of lateritic plateaus as important habitats for open-country birds, emphasizing the need for focused efforts to protect these unique ecosystems.

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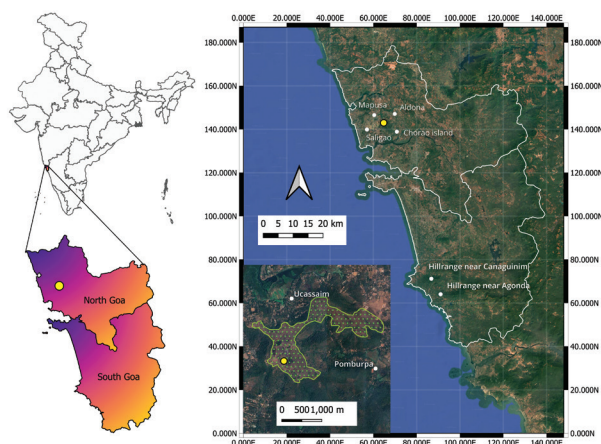


Fig. 1. Location map of the Socorro Plateau, showing the approximate site of the observation on 13 August 2024 (indicated by a solid yellow circle). Plateau boundaries are outlined in green. Map created using QGIS Desktop v3.34.12. Map by Omkar Damle

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– Omkar Damle & Abhinav Nair

Omkar Damle, Dombivali, 421201, Maharashtra, India.

E-mail: [osdamle@gmail.com](mailto:osdamle@gmail.com). [Corresponding author]

Abhinav Nair, Bombay Natural History Society, Mumbai, 400001, Maharashtra, India.

E-mail: [a.nair@bnhs.org](mailto:a.nair@bnhs.org)

## The Grey-crowned Prinia *Prinia cinereocapilla* from Valmiki Tiger Reserve, Bihar, India

The Grey-crowned Prinia *Prinia cinereocapilla* is endemic to the Indian Subcontinent, and found discontinuously from the Himalayan foothills of Uttarakhand to Bhutan (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). This species is listed as globally Vulnerable by the IUCN and only patchily occurs outside the protected areas, both in Nepal and India (Birdlife International 2025). Here, I record it from the Valmiki Tiger Reserve, Bihar.

On 27 December 2024, while birding in Gobardhana Range (27.351°N, 84.307°E) of the Valmiki Tiger Reserve, I heard several *tree-eei* calls from grassy hill slopes in forest. The overall habitat was broadleaved evergreen forest with hilly ravines and grassy hill slopes. Approaching closer, I found four rufous-brown prinias with slaty-grey caps calling and moving in *Thysanolaena* grasses that occur in the understorey of this forest. Prinias were very close to me, as they had a small rufous-brown patch above their bill and front of head, slaty-grey crown, and creamy white supercilium. With their unique calls, it was straightforward to identify them as Grey-crowned Prinias in non-breeding plumage. Unfortunately, I could not take any pictures that day.

On 29 March 2025, I again encountered Grey-crowned Prinias in same habitat in Gobardhana Range. In fact, their calls were being heard all over *Thysanolaena latifolia* grass in the understorey. This time, I photographed three different individuals [53, 54] and saw nearly 11 different individuals calling and foraging. Some prinias were acquiring their breeding plumages while others were yet to acquire the breeding plumage.

Since then, I have searched all habitats of Valmiki Tiger Reserve in past two years but have not come across the species in any other habitat. Hence, I presume that the supporting habitat of the Grey-crowned Prinia in Valmiki Tiger Reserve is limited to hilly slopes of Gobardhana Range or any other site within the tiger reserve where such a habitat occurs. No other prinias were encountered in this particular habitat.



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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– Abhishek Sharma

C/o Prem Prakash Sharma, Harinagar Sugar Mills Ltd., Distillery Division, P.O. Harinagar, West Champaran District 845103, Bihar, India. E-mail: [nitinsharmabvm19@gmail.com](mailto:nitinsharmabvm19@gmail.com)

## 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