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The Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* from the Mishmi Hills: An addition to the avifauna of Arunachal Pradesh, India

The Mishmi Hills, located in eastern Arunachal Pradesh, India are well known for their high avian diversity. The region encompasses parts of Upper and Lower Dibang Valley, Lohit, and Anjaw Districts.

On 24 November 2025, during a birdwatching tour organized by Mrugaya Xpeditions, a bunting-like bird was observed at 1300 h, while travelling from Mayodia towards Tiwarigaon, Arunachal Pradesh. The bird was seen in open habitat comprising rocky hillsides with grasses and sparse tree cover, feeding on grass seeds along the roadside. The bird was observed for approximately five minutes during which photographs were obtained to confirm its identification. It was bold but frequently flew short distances and disappeared into dense grasses before reappearing. We finally lost the sight of the bird when a heavy vehicle passed by. At first sight, the bird looked like one of the yellow-coloured buntings but much larger than the similar looking Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola* and Chestnut Bunting *E. rutila*.

The bird showed a chestnut rump and upper tail coverts, as well as prominent white outer tail feathers visible in flight. Based on these characters, together with its large size and overall

structure, the bird was identified as a Yellowhammer *E. citrinella* [208].



Omkar Dharwadkar

208. Yellowhammer photographed on 24 November 2025 from Arunachal Pradesh, India.

In India, the Yellowhammer has been recorded from the Western Himalaya from Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal, and Uttarakhand (Praveen 2025). The nearest known record to the present observation is from Lubra village in Nepal, approximately 1,180 km west of the Mishmi Hills (Ghimire, 2025). This observation therefore represents the easternmost record of the species in the Indian Subcontinent and the first record for Arunachal Pradesh (Singh 1995; Choudhury 2006; Singh et al. 2013).

Populations breeding from eastern Europe eastwards to south-central Siberia and north-central Mongolia are believed to winter in South Asia (Copete 2020). The observed individual may therefore belong to the subspecies *E. c. erythrogenys*, the expected subspecies in India, although subspecific assignment is difficult on the basis of the available evidence.

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