

The Smoky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuligiventer* from Mayurbhanj, Odisha: An addition to the avifauna of Odisha

The Smoky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuligiventer* is a small, dark-colored warbler that is characterized by its dark coloration and warbled song. This species breeds in the western Himalayas (northwestern India and small parts of northern Pakistan and western Nepal) and frequents temperate and subalpine forests and shrubby hillsides (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). Most of the records are from the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Haryana, Manipur, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand with one historical account from adjoining West Bengal (Fig. 1; eBird 2025).

On the morning of 20 January 2025, at 0715 h, SM made an impromptu visit to the wetland named Sarkari Dam (22.094°N, 86.555°E) to look for any warblers that may have wintered in the area, as well as other wetland species at the vegetated edges. The wetland is surrounded by large masses of *Typha* and almost unopened borders of creeping mats of *Ipomoea*, creating a thick lush margin of shallow edges. The reservoir is bordered by agricultural fields offering a mosaic of habitats that draw in a variety of insectivorous birds. SM was scanning a shaded patch of vegetation close to the bund when an unfamiliar call emanated from the east side of the *Ipomoea* Bush. A few minutes later, the bird flew from the bush and started foraging on the top of the bush. SM photographed [195] the species and later the bird was identified as Smoky Warbler by its overall dull plumage,

sooty-grey wash below using the field guide (Grimmett et al. 2011). The species was carefully distinguished from other dark *Phylloscopus* warblers that may occur in eastern India. Unlike Dusky Warbler *P. fuscatus*, the species did not have prominent superciliary stripes and ear-coverts. Tickell's Leaf Warbler *P. affinis* was ruled out due to its brighter greenish upperparts and clearer underparts. The consistently sombre coloration, structure, and behaviour supported the identification as *P. fuligiventer*.

Initially, it was presumed that the birds were just passage individuals on their way to more widespread or more suitable wintering sites. However, a series of subsequent visits over the next few weeks confirmed their ongoing presence at the site until the first week of February. The species was recorded in four eBird checklists between 20 January 2025 and 08 February 2025. The bird appeared to have temporarily settled in the same reed-dominated areas along the lake margins. Its absence after first week of February coincided with a discernible decrease in water levels, making portions of the reed beds available for livestock grazing, potentially resulting in habitat degradation or disturbance. This constitutes the first confirmed record of the species from Odisha. The nearest known record is from West Bengal, c.245 km north of the present site, highlighting the potential of under-surveyed wetland habitats in the region to host overlooked winter visitors.

References

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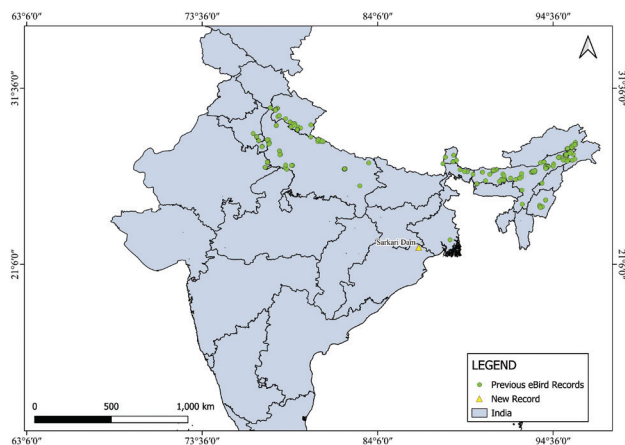


Fig 1. Map summarizing the records of Smoky Warbler in India (Source: eBird).



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195. Smoky Warbler at Sarkari Dam, Mayurbhanj, Odisha.

The Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana* in Himachal Pradesh, India

The Spotted Crane *Porzana porzana* is a small waterbird in the family Rallidae. It breeds across much of Europe and western Asia, and winters primarily in Africa and the Indian subcontinent (Taylor 2020). It can be distinguished from similar species by the profuse white spotting on the head, neck, and breast (Grimmett et al. 2011). The species is olive-brown above with dark and white streaks, and has a grey supercilium, throat, and breast. The underparts are pale, with brown and white barring on the flanks (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). In India, the Spotted Crane is a widespread but rare winter visitor (Grimmett et al. 1998), with records mainly from north-western Maharashtra, Gujarat, Kolkata, and the Delhi region, and sporadically from Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Assam, the eastern coast, central India, the southern Deccan, and the south-western coast, some of which may represent passage migrants (Praveen 2025; but see Grimmett et al. 2026). This note reports three records of Spotted Crane from Himachal Pradesh.

On 27 November 2016, CA visited marshes around the Shah Nehar Barrage near Sthana village, Kangra District, in the outflow area of Pong Dam (31.962°N, 75.906°E; c.325 m asl). While searching for Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, which was recorded on the previous day (Abhinav et al. 2018), a crane was observed feeding among reeds [196]. After some time, clear views were