

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON FAUNA OF WEST BENGAL (AVES)

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INTRODUCTION

Majumdar *et al.*, (1992) in the State Fauna Series, 3 : Fauna of West Bengal (Aves) recorded 540 species and subspecies under 210 genera and 60 families. But subsequently it was found that nine species and subspecies, and three genera were omitted in their work.

It was felt necessary to incorporate these taxa to the Avifauna of West Bengal for a fuller record.

Taxonomic treatment has been followed after Ali & Ripley (1969-74, 78). Distribution mentioned are quoted from Ripley's Synopsis (1961).

LIST OF BIRDS REPORTED

1. **Botaurus stellaris stellaris* (Linnaeus)
2. **Cacomantis passerinus* (Vahl)
3. *Picoides darjellensis darjellensis* (Blyth)
4. *Hirundo daurica erythropygia* Sykes
5. **Pnoepyga albiventer albiventer* (Hodgson)
6. *Rhipidura albicollis albicollis* (Vieillot)
7. **Erithacus chrysaeus chrysaeus* (Hodgson)
8. **Phoenicurus caeruleocephalus* (Vigors)
9. *Nectarinia zeylonica sola* (Vieillot)
10. **Aethopyga gouldiae gouldiae* (Vigors)
11. *Aethopyga ignicauda ignicauda* (Hodgson)
12. **Callacanthus burtoni* (Gould)
13. **Carpodacus pulcherrimus pulcherrimus* (Moore)
14. **Pyrrhoptes epauletta* (Hodgson)

* Denotes addition to the list of birds of Majumdar *et al.*, (1992)

SYSTEMATIC ACCOUNT

Order : CICONIIFORMES

Family : ARDEIDAE

Genus *Botaurus* Stephens, 18191. *Botaurus stellaris stellaris* (Linnaeus)1758. *Ardea stellaris* Linnaeus, *Syst. Nat.*, ed. 10, 1 : 144 (Europe, restricted to Sweden).

1978. Ali and Ripley, Vol. 1, p. 89.

Common name : Bittern (English).*Material examined* : Medinipur district : 1 ♀, Contai, coll. J. M. Dasgupta, 31. iii. 1978.

Diagnostic characters : Size that of the smaller Egret. Crown and nape black, extending to upper back; Crest bushy, drooping; a black line below eyes; upper back buffy brown, streaked barred and mottled with darkbrown and black; lower back, rump and tail yellowish buff profusely barred and mottled with black; chin and throat white with a prominent central buff and black line running from chin to breast; underparts yellowish buff streaked with brown and buff; sides of breast narrowly barred with brown and dark buff. Iris yellow; bill greenish yellow; legs and feet pale green. Sexes similar.

Measurements : 1 ♀ : Wing 320; tail 115; bill 75.

Distribution : "A migratory species found in winter in West Pakistan and India, straggling as far south and east as Bombay, Madras and Bengal." (Ripley, 1961).

Remarks : Majumdar, *et al.*, (1992) did not list this nominate species.

Order : CUCULIFORMES

Family : CUCULIDAE

Genus *Cacomantis* S. Muller, 18432. *Cacomantis passerinus* (Vahl)1797. *Cuculus passerinus* Vahl, *Skriv. Naturhist-Selsk., Kjobenhavn*, 4(1) : 57 (Tranquebar).

1969. Ali and Ripley, Vol. 3, p. 218.

Common name : Indian Plaintive Cuckoo (English).

Material examined : Medinipur district : 1 ♂, Gope College compound, coll. D. K. Ghosal, 30.iii.1978.

Diagnostic characters : Size that of the Myna but with a much longer tail. Upper plumage dark grey and brown; chin, throat and breast grey; rest of lower plumage whitish; tail blackish

with white tip and with the outer rectrices barred white; a white patch at base of primaries prominent in flight. Iris brown; bill horny brown, paler at lower mandible; legs and feet brownish yellow. Sexes similar, but hepatic variety in female not uncommon which is chestnut above crossbarred with black on back and with blackbarred white underparts, closely resembles the plumage of the Baybanded Cuckoo.

Measurements : 1 ♂ : Wing 120; tail 113; bill 23.

Distribution : Throughout the subcontinent. Absent in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Remarks : Majumdar, *et al.*, (1992) did not list this bird.

Order : PICIFORMES

Family : PICIDAE

Genus *Picoides* Lacepede, 1799

3. *Picoides darjellensis darjellensis* (Blyth)

1845. *Picus (Dendrocopus) darjellensis* Blyth, *J. Asiat. Soc. Beng.*, 14 (1) : 196 (Darjeeling = Darjiling, West Bengal, India, and Nepal).

1970. Ali and Ripley, Vol. 4, p. 218.

Common name : Darjeeling Pied Woodpecker (English).

Material examined : Darjeeling district : 1 ♂, 1 ♀, Selimbong, (alt. c. 2286 m), coll. R. K. Ghose, 2. xii. 1997.

Diagnostic characters : Size that of the Common Myna. Back entirely black; middle tail-feathers black, outer feathers barred with white. Hind crown crimson in male, black in female; breast and belly yellowish fulvous streaked with black; vent crimson. Iris crimson; bill plumbeous, blackish on upper mandible; legs and feet dull green.

<i>Measurements</i> :	1 ♂	1 ♀
Wing	130	126
Tail	80	76
Bill	23	22

Distribution : From West central Nepal eastward through Bhutan to northern Myanmar to northern Vietnam and Western China to Sikang and Yunnan from 1524 to 3048 m.

Remarks : Majumdar, *et al.*, (1992 : 297) listed this bird but did not examine the specimens.

Order : PASSERIFORMES

Family : HIRUNDINIDAE

Genus *Hirundo* Linnaeus, 1758

4. *Hirundo daurica erythropygia* Sykes

1832. *Hirundo erythropygia* Sykes, *Proc. Zool. Soc. London* : 83 (Dukhun = Poona = Pune, India).

1972. Ali and Ripley, Vol. 5, p. 70.

Common name : Indian striated Swallow (English).

Material examined : Darjiling district : 1 ♂, Selimbong (alt. c. 2286 m.) coll. R. K. Ghose, 23. iii. 1973.

Diagnostic characters : Size that of the House Sparrow minus the tail. Glossy steel blue-black above; fulvous white below, finely streaked with brown; a dark chestnut line over the eye; a chestnut collar round the nape; rump chestnut; tail dark brown and forked. Iris brown; bill brownish black; legs and feet black. Sexes similar.

Measurements : 1 ♂ : Wing 118; tail, central 44, outer 83, bill 9.

Distribution : "Indian plains from the Terai all over the peninsula to the Nilgiri Hills and the ranges of Kerala, and east to West Bengal up to 1524 m, in open country. In the rains may wander West to drier areas such as Rajasthan. In Winter stragglers have been taken in Ceylon." (Ripley, 1961).

Remarks : Majumdar, *et. al.*, (1992 : 307) remarked "We have observed this bird in Kochbehar and Malda district."

Family : MUSCICAPIDAE

Genus *Pnoepyga* Hodgson, 1844

5. *Pnoepyga albiventer albiventer* (Hodgson)

1837. *Tesia albiventer* Hodgson, *J. Asiat. Soc. Beng.*, 6 : 102 (Nepal, restricted by Ripley (synopsis : 357) to Ilam dist., eastern Nepal, re-restricted to Chandragiri above Thankot by Biswas, *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.*, 59 : 204-5).

1971. Ali and Ripley, Vol. 6 : 156.

Common name : Scalybreasted Wren-Babbler (English).

Material examined : Darjeeling district : 1 ♀, Sandakphu, (alt. c. 3657 m), coll. R. K. Ghose, 22. vi. 1974.

Diagnostic characters : Size, smaller than the House Sparrow. A tailless, squamated little Wren-Babbler in two colour phases. *White phase* : upper plumage olive-brown with a fulvous tip on each feather; throat nearly white; lower plumage white, scalypatterned breast; flanks squamated olive-brown.

Fulvous phase : Similar to the white phase but with the whole lower plumage fulvous instead of white. Sexes similar in both phases. Iris brown; bill, upper mandible horny brown, lower brownish flesh; legs, feet and claws horny brown.

Measurements : 1 ♀ : Wing 61; tail 19; bill 13.

Distribution : “Eastern Nepal, Darjeeling, Sikkim, Bhutan, southeast Tibet, Assam, and Burma in the Chin Hills and the hills of northeast Burma, from about 610 m in winter upto 3658 m; in tropical wet evergreen, semi-evergreen, subtropical wet, and wet temperate forest” (Ripley, 1961).

Remarks : Majumdar, *et. al.*, (1992) did not list this bird.

Genus *Rhipidura* Vigors & Horsfield, 1827

6. *Rhipidura albicollis albicollis* (Vieillot)

1818. *Platyrrhynchus albicollis* Vieillot, *Nouv. Dict. d' Hist. Nat.*, 27 : 13 (Bengale).

1972. Ali and Ripley, Vol. 7, p. 213.

Common names : White throated Fantail Flycatcher (English) and Chak-dayal (Bengali).

Material examined : Darjiling district : 2 ♂ , 1 ♀ , Selimbong, (alt. c. 2286 m.), coll. R. K. Ghose, 19, 21. iii. 1975.

Diagnostic characters : Size between Sparrow and Bulbul. Entire crown, back, wing and underparts dark slaty brown with a distinct white band or semi-collar across the throat, short white supercilia, and broadly white-tipped tail. Iris brown; bill brownish black; legs and feet horny brown. Sexes similar.

<i>Measurements</i> :	2 ♂	1 ♀
Wing	79,82	75
Tail	98,105	100
Bill	13,15	14

Distribution : “From Western Nepal east along the Himalayas to Darjeeling and Sikkim, south to U. P., Bihar, and West Bengal to the vicinity of Calcutta, East Pakistan in the Sunderbans, from the lowlands to 1676 m.” (Ripley, 1961).

Remarks : Majumdar, *et. al.*, (1992, p. 356) listed this bird, based on observation data of Guntlet, 1985, at Durgapur and Damodar Valley of Bardhaman district. Specimens were not examined by them.

Genus *Erithacus* Cuvier, 18007. *Erithacus chrysaeus chrysaeus* (Hodgson)

1845. *Tarsiger chrysaeus* Hodgson, *Proc. Zool. Soc.* London : 28 (Nepal).

1973.. Ali and Ripley, Vol. 8, p. 234.

Common name : Golden Bush Robin (English).

Material examined : Darjiling district : 3 ♂ , 1 ♀ and 1 young, Sandakphu, (alt. c. 3657 m.), coll. R. K. Ghose, 20, 24, 25, 26. vi. 1974.

Diagnostic characters : Size of the House Sparrow. A shy robin like bird with the whole head and upper back olive-brown; cheeks, lores and ear coverts black; supercilium, sides of back, rump, upper tail-coverts and whole lower plumage bright orange; Wings olive-brown; tail orange, central rectrices and terminal band black. Female, olive above with an indistinct yellowish olive supercilium and buff eye-ring. Entire underparts ochre-yellow.

Young, speckled brown with yellow tail. Iris brown; bill dark brown, lower mandible yellow; legs and feet pale fleshy.

<i>Measurements</i> :	3 ♂	1 ♀
Wing	65,67 (2)	62
Tail	55,56 (2)	52
Bill	15,16 (2)	14

Distribution : Throughout the Himalayas to Western China and Yunnan.

Remarks : Majumdar, *et. al.*, (1992) did not list this bird.

Genus *Phoenicurus* Forster, 18178. *Phoenicurus caeruleocephalus* (Vigors)

1831. *Phoenicura caeruleocephala* Vigors, *Proc. Zool. Soc.* London : 35. (Himalaya, restricted to Simla-Almora district, India by Ticehurst and Whistler, 1924, *Ibis*, : 471).

1973. Ali and Ripley, Vol. 8, p. 251.

Common name : Blueheaded Redstart (English).

Material examined : Darjiling district : 2 ♀ , Tonglu, (alt. c 3048 m) and Sandakphu, (c 3657 m), coll. R. K. Ghose, 9,15. iii. 1975.

Diagnostic characters : Size that of the House Sparrow. Male. A black robin-like bird with bluish ashy crown and nape, a large white band on wing; abdomen and vent white. In winter the bluish and black parts get masked by pale brown fringes. Female is brown with pale eye-ring and diagnostic reddish brown rump. Iris dark brown; bill blackish brown; legs and feet black.

Measurements : 2 ♀ : Wing, 75,77; tail 56, 62; bill 15 (2).

Distribution : Breeds in Central Asian mountain range and Himalayas from NWFP east to Bhutan between 2400 and 3900 m. Winters down to the foothills.

Remarks : Majumdar *et al.*, (1992) have not listed this bird.

Family : NECTARINIIDAE

Genus *Nectarinia* Illiger, 1811

9. *Nectarinia zeylonica sola* (Vieillot)

1819. *Cinnyris sola* Vieillot, *Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat.*, 31 : 512 (Pondicherry, India).

1974. Ali and Ripley, Vol. 10, p. 22.

Common names : Indian Purplerumped Sunbird (English); chongi (Bengali).

Material examined : Medinipur district : 1 ♂, 1 ♀, Digha, coll. D. K. Ghosal, 3. iv. 1978.

Diagnostic characters : Smaller than the House Sparrow. Male with lemon-yellow breast and abdomen; throat and rump metallic purple, the former provided with a deep chestnut band below the throat; crown metallic green; back deep chestnut. Female with brown back, more rufous on wing; throat and flanks greyish white; breast and centre of belly lemon-yellow. Iris orange-brown, or reddish brown; bill brownish black; legs, feet and claws black.

<i>Measurements</i> :	1 ♂	1 ♀
Wing	55	53
Tail	34	31
Bill	20	18

Distribution : "Peninsular India from Nasik in a line east to Jabalpur and east to East Pakistan at Dacca, south in Bombay, (sight record for Panchmahals dist., Gujarat, 1955, *J. B. N. H. S.* 52 : 787), M. P., Orissa, Andhra, Goa, Mysore, Madras and Kerala, from the plains to 457 m. [exceptionally to 914 m - 1067 m. (Nilgiris) and in Kerala (Maraiyur)]" (Ripley, 1961).

Remarks : Majumdar, *et. al.*, (1992 : 399) reported it from southern Bengal. Specimens were not examined by them.

Genus *Aethopyga* Cabanis, 1851

10. *Aethopyga gouldiae gouldiae* (Vigors)

1831. *Cinnyris gouldiae* Vigors, *Proc. Zool. Soc. London* : 44. (Himalayas restricted to Simla-Almora area, India, by Ticehurst & Whistler, 1924, *Ibis* : 471).

1974. Ali and Ripley, Vol. 10, p. 39.

Common name : Mrs. Gould's Sunbird (English).

Material examined : Darjiling district : 1 ♂ , and 1 ♀ , Tonglu (alt. 10,074 m), coll. R. K. Ghose, 8. iii. 1975.

Diagnostic characters : Smaller than the House Sparrow minus the long pointed tail. Male. Crimson above, yellow below. Forehead, crown, chin, throat, and a spot on either side of breast deep metallic purple-blue. Rump bright yellow. Upper tail-coverts and central tail metallic purple-blue. Female. Overall grey-green with a yellow band across the rump. Iris reddish brown to crimson; bill dark brown, lower mandible paler; legs and feet dark brown.

<i>Measurements</i> :	1 ♂	1 ♀
Wing	58	50
Tail	81	45
Bill	23	20

Distribution : Throughout the Himalayas, breeds between 1800 and 3600 m from Sutlej valley east to Arunachal Pradesh and thence to the higher hills of Myanmar. Winters below down to the foothills.

Remarks : Majumdar, *et. al.*, (1992) have not listed this bird.

11. *Aethopyga ignicauda ignicauda* (Hodgson)

1836. (*Cinnyris*) *Ignicauda* Hodgson, *India Review*, 1 (7) : 273 (Nepal).

1974. Ali and Ripley, Vol. 10, p. 50.

Common name : Firetailed Yellowbacked Sunbird (English).

Material examined : Darjiling district : 8 ♂ and 7 ♀ , Sandakphu, (alt. c. 3,657 m), coll. R. K. Ghose, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26. vi. 1974 and 1 ♀ , Selimbong (alt. c. 2,286 m.), coll. R. K. Ghose, 24. iii. 1975.

Diagnostic characters : Size smaller than the House Sparrow minus the long pointed bright crimson tail. Male. Upperparts crimson except forehead, crown and sides of chin and throat are metallic purple; wings olive; rump bright yellow; rest of underparts yellow, breast washed with orange. Female. Olive, above; rump fringed with yellow, but no distinct rump-band; tail blackish tinged with ashy green; central feathers golden brown; blackish ashy green below; abdomen greenish yellow. Iris dark brown; bill legs and feet blackish brown.

<i>Measurements</i> :	9 ♂	7 ♀
Wing	56, 57(2), 58(2), 59(3), 60	52, 53(2), 54(2), 55(2)
Tail	99, 101, 114, 116, 119, 121, 127 missing (2)	37, 38, 39, 40(4)
Bill	12 (tip broken), 20, 21(2), 22, 23(3), 25	18(tip broken), 19, 20(3), 22(2)

Distribution : Throughout the Himalayas breeding between 3,000 and 4,000 m. from Garhwal, east through Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh, and through the higher hills of Myanmar to Mt. Mulayit in Tenasserim. Winters below down to the foothills.

Remarks : Majumdar, *et. al.*, (1992 : 401) listed this bird but did not examine the specimens.

Family : FRINGILLIDAE

Genus *Callacanthis* Bonaparte, 1850

12. *Callacanthis burtoni* (Gould)

1838. *Carduelis Burtoni* Gould, *Proc. Zool. Soc. London* (1837) : 90. (Himalayas, restricted to Srinagar, Kashmir, India, by Baker, 1921, *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.*, 27 : 729).

1974. Ali and Ripley, Vol. 10 : 145.

Common name : Redbrowed Finch (English).

Material examined : Darjiling district : 1 ♂, Sandakphu (alt. c. 3,657 m.), coll. R. K. Ghose, 16. iii. 1975.

Diagnostic characters : Larger than the House Sparrow. Male : forehead crimson; crown black; supercilium, and round eye crimson; back brown; Wings black, spotted with white; tail black, outer rectrices with white tip; chin and throat pinkish red; cheeks black, rest fulvous brown washed with pinkish red. Female : forehead, ochre-yellow; crown dark brown; supercilium and round eye ochre yellow, rest as in male; below, ochraceous brown. Iris hazel; bill dull yellow, with dark tip; legs and feet brownish flesh.

<i>Measurements</i> :	1 ♂	1 ♀
Wing	96	93
Tail	62	60
Bill	16 (tip broken)	17

Distribution : From Western Himalayas east to Sikkim through Nepal. Breeds from 2,400 m to timber line. Recorded in winter between 800 and 3000 m.

Remarks : Vaurie (1959) did not include its range in West Bengal. Ali and Ripley (1974) were of the same opinion.

Majumdar *et. el.*, (1992) have not listed this bird.

This is first record from West Bengal.

Genus *Carpodacus* Kaup, 182913. *Carpodacus pulcherrimus pulcherrimus* (Moore)

1855. *Propasser pulcherrimus* Moore, *Proc. Zool. Soc.* London : 216 (Nepal).

1974. Ali and Ripley, Vol. 10, p. 179.

Common name : Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch (English).

Material examined : Darjiling district : 1 ♂, 1 ♀, Sandakphu (alt. c. 3,657 m), coll. R. K. Ghose, 11. iii. 1975.

Diagnostic characters : Size that of the House Sparrow. Male. Upper plumage ashy brown streaked with blackish; forehead, rump and broad supercilium rosy red; wings marked with tow faint bars; lower plumage, entirely rosy red with blackish streaks on breast and abdomen. Female, fulvous brown broadly streaked with blackish above; a faint fulvous supercilium; fulvous white, streaked with dark brown below. Iris brown; bill dark horny brown, lower mandible paler; legs and feet pale fleshy brown.

<i>Measurements</i> :	1 ♂	1 ♀
Wing	78	75
Tail	64	62
Bill	12	12

Distribution : "The Himalayas from Bashahr east through Nepal, Darjeeling, Sikkim, probably Bhutan and the southern slopes of the main range in Southeast Tibet, from 3810 to 4267 m., descending in winter as low as 2591." (Ripley, 1961).

Remarks : Majumdar, *et. al.*, (1992) did not list this bird.

Genus *Pyrrhoptes* Hodgson, 184414. *Pyrrhoptes epauletta* (Hodgson)

1836. *Pyrrhula? epauletta* Hodgson, *Asiat. Res.* 19 : 156 (Northern and Central regions, Nepal).

1974. Ali and Ripley, Vol. 10, p. 195.

Common name : Goldheaded Black Finch (English).

Material examined : Darjiling district : 1 ♂, ♀, Sandakphu, (alt. c. 3,657 m.), coll. R. K. Ghose, 27. vi. 1974.

Diagnostic characters : Size that of the House Sparrow. Male. Entire plumage black except crown and nape which are shiny golden orange; secondaries marked with a diagnostic white line; abdomen orange-buff. In female crown grey tinged with yellow; rest of plumage chestnut-brown, paler on underparts. White line in wing as in male. Iris brown; bill horny brown, legs and feet brown.

<i>Measurements :</i>	1 ♂	1 ♀
Wing	78	76
Tail	62	59
Bill	14	12

Distribution : The Himalayas from Simla east through Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh to northern Myanmar and Western China in Yunna and Sikang. Breeds between 2800 and 3900 m, and descending down in winters between 1400 and 3600 m.

Remarks : Majumder, *et. al.* (1992) did not list this bird.

SUMMARY

Additional comprehensive information on the birds of West Bengal has been furnished based on collections present in the Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta. The list comprises 14 species and subspecies belonging to 13 genera, 7 families and 4 orders.

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