

patterned, each with a darker brown shaft and pale fringe. There was a noticeably paler greater covert panel, the tertials were contrastingly dark brown and neatly fringed with white, this fringe being broadest around the tips of these feathers. The folded primaries were even darker brown than the tertials and appeared similar in shade to the tail band.

The legs were dull pink, as was the bill base. The distal third of the bill was neatly tipped black, and the eyes were dark.

The bird appeared indistinguishable from the nominate western *Larus canus canus*, which we see abundantly in Britain, but on range is most likely to have been the very similar *Larus canus heinei*. These two subspecies are not safely distinguishable in the field.

Status

This is perhaps only the fourth of the five sightings in India, and is currently probably the southernmost anywhere in Asia. Kazmierczak and van Perlo (2000) map four records for India, while Grimmett *et al.* (1998) map the three earliest sightings, and there is an additional, more recent record. In date order these are:-

A first-winter visitor on the River Yamuna at Okhla, Delhi (28° 34' N; 77° 17' E) on January 19, 1992 (Alström 1994).

A second-winter on the Ganges at Garhmuktesar, Uttar Pradesh (28° 48' N; 78° 06' E) on March 05, 1993 (Robson 1993).

A first-winter visitor seen by Per Underland at the Harike Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, Punjab (31° 10' N; 74° 57' E) on January 9-15, 1994 (Robson 1994).

The River Chapora at Morjim, Pernem, Goa (15° 37' N; 73° 44' E) on December 14, 1996.

An adult at Pong Wetland, Kangra district, Himachal Pradesh (32° 05' N; 76° 00' E) on February 06, 2004 (Jan Willem den Besten in litt. December 2004 Unpublished data).

Elsewhere in the region, the species is considered to be a vagrant to Nepal, where Inskipp and Inskipp (1985) list three records, all in January-February between 1979 and 1983. The Mew Gull is rare in Pakistan, where Roberts (1991) noted five records, involving six birds, including a probably exceptionally sighting as late in the season as April 04, 1984.

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7. WINTERING RANGE EXTENSION OF WHITE-THROATED BUSHCHAT *SAXICOLA INSIGNIS* GRAY IN INDIA¹

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The wintering range of the globally Vulnerable White-throated Bushchat *Saxicola insignis* Gray in India was known to be from Haryana to Jalpaiguri, north West Bengal (Ali and Ripley 1987) before two records in Assam extended its wintering range further east to Manas National Park (26° 40'-50' N; 90° 50'-91° 25' E) (Narayan and Rosalind 1997), and later to Kaziranga National Park (26° 30'- 45' N; 93° 5'-40' E) (Sarma *et al.* 1997). Recent observation of this bird in eastern Assam has further extended its wintering eastern range to Dibru-Saikhowa National Park (27° 35'-50' N; 95° 10-

40' E) and Merbil (27° 19' N; 95° 18' E) near Naharkatia. The White-throated Bushchat has also been observed in other areas of Assam other than these two places.

In the afternoon of January 25, 2004, a male was observed in Merbil near Naharkatia, foraging on an *Alpinia allughas* grove and calling "tsek ... tsek ... tsek". The bird was observed at about 4 m height from the water level.

A female bird was observed on the northern edge of Deepar Beel Bird Sanctuary (26° 05' N; 91° 40' E) on February 02, 2003 by the first author. It was foraging among short

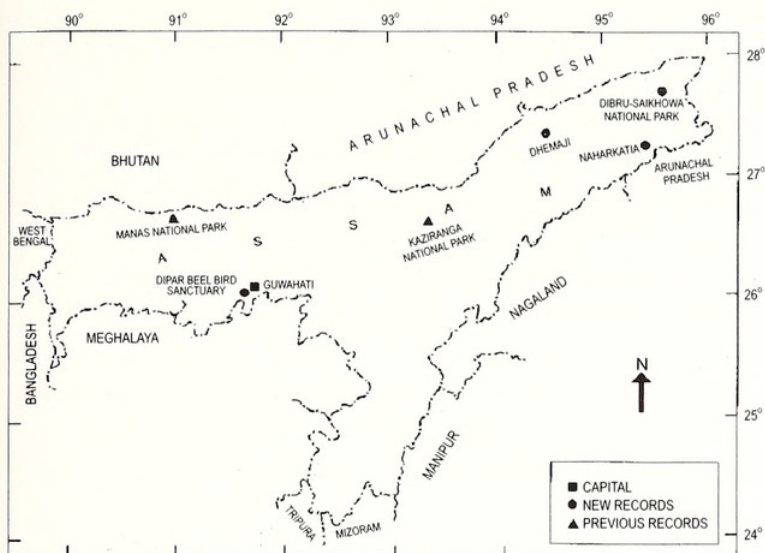


Fig. 1: Past and present wintering sites of White-throated Bushchat

grasses and ground close to the water. Later, on January 01, 2004, one male was observed in the same area. Again on January 01, 2005, one female was observed on an *Ipomoea aquatica* grove in the northern edge of the Sanctuary close to the Satmile.

On another occasion, a male was seen by the first author on February 10, 2004 near the Jia Dhal river (27° 25' N; 94° 30' E) close to National Highway 31 and 10 km west of Dhemaji town. The bird was perched on *Vetiveria zizanioides* grass. There were other short grasses and small scrubs in the area.

In Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, a lone male was

observed foraging on April 04, 1997 at Kolomi grassland near Kolomi camp (27° 37' N; 95° 21' E). Then on March 01, 1999 two males were observed at Kundaghat area and a lone male was observed near Kolomi (27° 38' N; 95° 20' E) on April 15, 2000. The habitat of the area was *Salix tetrasperma* swamp forest mixed with grassland. Later, on December 19 and 20, 2004 a female was observed at Toralimukh (27° 38' N; 95° 20' E) at about 1030 hours. All observations in the Dibru-Saikhowa National Park were made by the second author.

From these observations it is clear that the easternmost winter range of the White-throated Bushchat in India extends at least up to Dibru-Saikhowa National Park (Kolomi grassland 27° 37' N; 95° 21' E) and Merbil (27° 19' N; 95° 18' E) of Assam. Another important point is that a small population of *Saxicola insignis* regularly visits both Deepar Beel Bird Sanctuary and Dibru-Saikhowa National Park. However, there has been no recent report of this species in Manas and Kaziranga national parks after the sightings of Narayan and Rosalind (1997), and Sarma *et al.* (1997).

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8. FOREST WAGTAIL *DENDRONANTHUS INDICUS* IN JAMNAGAR MEDICAL CAMPUS¹

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On February 23, 2005, at 1430 hours, we sighted a Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus* on a Neem tree in our hostel campus. We photographed the bird (Eds: photographic evidence provided) and observed it for the next three days at the same place.

Dendronanthus indicus is mostly recorded in evergreen and deciduous forests. In Gujarat, it is recorded in the Gir

and Dang forest (Dharmakumarsinhji 1954, 1963). Himmatsinhji (1967, 1970) had seen this bird at Bhuj in his garden on January 10, 1967 and again at Vijayvilas, Mandvi on December 31, 1969. Khacher (1989) had seen it at Jasdan in his compound on November 19, 1967.

Our campus is in the middle of Jamnagar city, hence this sighting is worth recording.



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