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# Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* at Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, Assam

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and later published included in his checklist (Palin 1904). Murray (1889) included Kutch [=Kachchh] and Guzerat [=Gujarat] in its range without any further details; his source from Kachchh might have been Palin's work. Ticehurst (1923), without details, noted that it was less common than Lesser Whistling Duck in Kachchh. Sálím Ali did not record it in Kachchh (Ali 1945).

While Ali & Ripley (1978) indicated all of Gujarat in its range map, contemporary field guides (Grimmett *et al.* 1998; Kazmierczak 2000; Grimmett *et al.* 2011) do not show its distribution in the state. However, Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) shades some parts of extreme southern Gujarat in its range. Khacher (1996) did not list the species, but Parasharya *et al.* (2004), and Ganpule (2016) included it as a vagrant to the state—based on historical records from Kachchh. There are no recent records in online forums either (eBird 2019; Oriental Bird Images 2019). Hence, our observation from central Gujarat is the first photographic record from the western part of India.

This species migrates long distances in search of suitable habitat, indicating that it exhibits irregular local movements within Africa, with periodic appearances of huge numbers in some areas (Scott & Rose 1996). Roberts (1991) stated that the species was a seasonal migrant to Pakistan but had not been authentically recorded northwards of Sindh Province; and there too could be considered only an occasional visitor. Roberts stated 'K. Eates definitely encountered it in 1921 on Khinjar Lake, Thatta district'; on 26 June Roberts also observed the species on Haleji Lake (Roberts 1991). Since the region is adjoining Kachchh, its occurrence in there is likely and Palin's statement may have been correct. Its presence might be getting overlooked in flocks of Lesser Whistling Ducks and our record should alert other birdwatchers of Gujarat to look for this species amongst such flocks.

We used Pittie (2005) and Pittie (2019) for obtaining relevant references for this manuscript.

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## Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* at Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, Assam

On 14 December 2018, at 1415 h, we observed an Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* at Dibru-Saikhowa National Park (henceforth, DSNP) in Assam, India [68]. A single bird was seen perched for over half an hour on top of a tree (27.75°N, 95.41°E), and we were able to photograph the bird. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (BirdLife International 2017) has listed it as globally Vulnerable. Though it is seen in other parts of Assam (Barua & Sharma 1999), it has never been reported from DSNP (Allen 2002; Choudhury 2006; Joshi *et al.* 2014).

In a literature review by Rahmani (2012), and Rahmani & Choudhury (2012), the Eastern Imperial Eagle is only listed as being found in Kaziranga, and Nameri National Parks. The records on eBird, from north-eastern India, are restricted to Assam, with a majority of the sightings from Kaziranga National Park and a few from Darrang District (Brahmaputra River), Deepor Beel Sanctuary, Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, and Nameri National Park (eBird 2018). Other published annotated checklists from north-eastern India, namely, Manipur (Choudhury 2009), Nagaland (Choudhury 2001), Tripura (Choudhury 2010), and select parts of other north-eastern Indian states (Birand & Pawar 2004), all, do not include the Eastern Imperial Eagle. Accessible literature, and eBird data from Assam suggest that our record of the Eastern Imperial Eagle could be the eastern-most for India, though not unexpected, as it is found in South-east Asia.

We thank Rohit Naniwadekar and Shashank Dalvi for confirming the identification. We are grateful to the Wildlife Conservation Trust-India, the Ravi Sankaran Foundation, and the Rufford Small Grants for Nature Conservation for financial and logistical support. We are grateful to the Assam Forest Department for permitting us to work in this region. We thank Jaganath Agarwal for his assistance in DSNP.

Megha Rao



68. Eastern Imperial Eagle at Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, eastern Assam.

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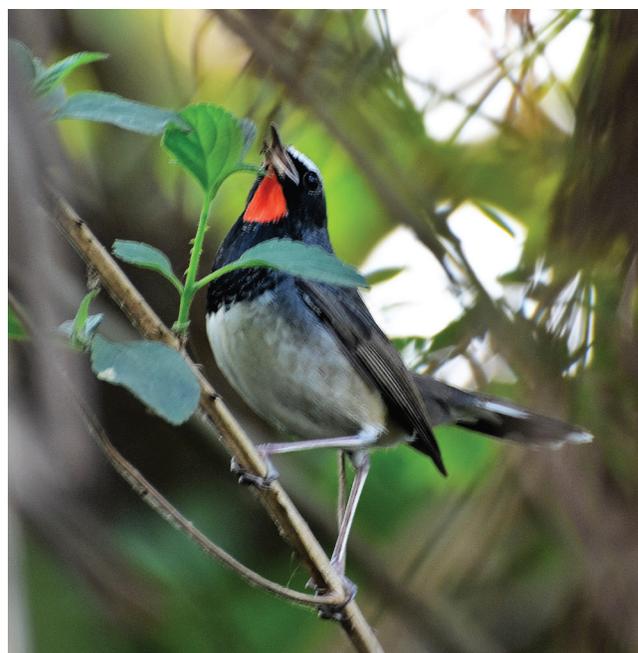
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## Himalayan Rubythroat *Calliope pectoralis* in southern Bengal

At 1500 h, on 12 February 2017, while birding on the outskirts of the Uluberia Subdivision (22.47°N, 88.02° E) of Howrah District, West Bengal, I heard a sound from within a low dense bush as if a predator had caught a bird. In the enclosing darkness, when I checked the bush, I saw a bird perched on a branch. Initially thought it was an Oriental Magpie Robin *Copsychus saularis*; but when my eyes got accustomed with the darkness, I saw a vivid scarlet red spot on the throat of the bird. I began to take pictures immediately—managing six shots before the bird flew away.

I was unable to identify the bird until I compared my images with those of rubythroats *Calliope* sp., on Wikipedia, and my bird seem to be a Himalayan Rubythroat *C. pectoralis* [69]. The absence of a white sub-moustachial stripe eliminated the closely related Chinese Rubythroat *C. tschebaiewi*. This bird also had a smaller red throat patch, greater extent of white on the tail, and a wider supercilium, which eliminated the Chinese Rubythroat. The Siberian Rubythroat *C. calliope* was also considered, but it is plain brown above, except for the distinctive black tail with red side patches.



69. Himalayan Rubythroat.

A. K. Hazra

Several other birders confirmed identification. It seems to be the first photographic record from southern Bengal (south of River Ganga). A female was collected on Sagar Island, South 24-Parganas District by Srikumar Chattopadhyay on 11 November 1979, which might be held in the collections of the Zoological Survey of India (Chattopadhyay 1987; Majumdar *et al.* 1992); this bird is listed as '*pectoralis*' and could imply either species. This needs to be revisited. There are no other records of either of the erstwhile 'White-tailed Rubythroats' from southern Bengal (Grimmett *et al.* 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; eBird 2019a, 2019b, 2019c)

I thank Kanad Baidya, Santanu Manna, Sandip Das, and Swapnodeep Sarkar for confirming the species and providing the information on historical records.