

Report on birds seen in Goa, India November 5-9, 2013



India is an excellent country to observe birds which mostly are not terribly afraid of human beings, because there is so little, if any hunting. By and large, Indians are tolerant of wildlife, even in densely habited areas. Good guidebooks are available, but English language names of birds have recently changed somewhat, and also some Latin names have been changed when species have been split and redefined. The Western Ghats, a coastal mountain range from Goa to Kerala, is a hotspot of endemism, in fact one of the most important centres of endemism in the world. A temporary ban on new mining projects has given relief to many good birding areas, including officially gazetted sanctuaries.

Thanks to the generous invitation by our long-time friend, Danish diplomat Peter Mark, some 20 of his friends we gathered in the southern tip of North Goa at Sinquerim, with Marbella Guesthouse as our base. Some of us like Peter, his girlfriend Bodil Nydal Engell, and Birte Poulsen, and me, have been birding for ages. Several others joined walks and excursions, some for the first time in their life, and enjoyed it. For two excursions, our excellent expert guide was Pankaj Lad (Canopy) who



impressed us with his ability to imitate many bird songs and sounds. He also was using play-back occasionally.

Marbella Guesthouse and vicinity

In Siquerim, we woke up to the melodious songs of thrushes and robins, mewing calls of Peacocks and the nervous scream of Common Hawk-Cuckoo. Soon the yelp of White-cheeked Barbet (endemic) and the winding tunes of drongos joined the concert, and at 6:30 dozens of birds were singing.

The thicket just in front of Marbella Guesthouse was a wonderful shelter for many hiding birds who came out to drink at the water pools left after washing cars: Asian Paradise Flycatcher, White-rumped Munia, Orange-headed Ground Thrush (endemic subspecies), Jungle Babbler, White-breasted Waterhen, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher (migratory), White-spotted Fantail. Flowering vines and trees brought in Crimson-backed Sunbird (endemic), Purple-rumped Sunbird, Pale-billed Flowerpecker. A couple of times Loten's Sunbird was seen. From Peter's balcony many beautiful birds were seen: Oriental Magpie-Robin, Black-hooded Oriole, White-cheeked Barbet, Asian Fairy Bluebird (tbc), Small Minivet, Vernal Hanging Parrot, Greenish Warbler (migratory), Ashy Drongo (migratory), Black Drongo, Red-whiskered Bulbul, House Crow. Rufous (Indian) Tree-pie was often calling, but was not actually seen. Same with Coppersmith Barbet, Red-breasted Flycatcher (migratory), Common Rosefinch (migratory) and Koel.

Walking deeper into the ticket one could see birds which did not come easily in view like Rufous Woodpecker, Asian Brown Flycatcher (migratory), White-browed Fantail, Black-headed Munia, Malabar Whistling Thrush (endemic), Puff-throated Babbler, Indian Blue Robin (migratory), Thick-billed Leaf Warbler (migratory), Red Spurfowl.

A walk to the "sunset viewpoint" at the seaside brought many other interesting birds, the most spectacular being White-bellied Sea-eagle which sailed in the sky repeatedly very near to our group before sunset. The most beautiful bird was Green Bee-eater which roosted overnight in large flocks



on wires. Several Brahminy Kites and Little Swifts were always in the air, once also two Alpine Swifts. Black and Ashy Drongos were very visible and always noisy. Barbets and Bulbuls (Red-whiskered and Red-vented) came to a fruiting tree. A female Shikra (a type of sparrowhawk), Kestrel and a juvenile White-eyed Buzzard hunted smaller birds or other small animals. Asian Paradise Flycatchers were flashing around, males with their long white waving tails. Occasionally there was a glimpse of the loud-voiced White-browed Bulbul, and the quiet Black-headed Cuckooshrike. At the waterline, White-throated Kingfisher, Indian Pond Herons (once 40 individuals!), Common Sandpipers and Striated Herons were seen, and once Intermediate Egret. In low bushes, Southern (Greater) Coucal, Common Iora, Indian Robin and Common Tailorbird. Groups of Rose-ringed Parakeets abounded, and once among them was an Alexandrine Parakeet. Once there was a gorgeous red-breasted male Orange Minivet (endemic).

Excursion on 6 November to Ambeshi, Bondla and Bhagwan Mahaveer

Nine persons (Peter Mark, Bodil Nydal, Birte Poulsen, Lars Koberg Christiansen, Jørgen Gam, Pia Sovio-Pyhälä, Børge Sommer, Gabriele Abild-Schindler and me) participated, and we left the hotel at 5:30 in the morning. We picked up our guide Pankaj at Ponda town and continued NE shortly to Ambeshi bridge when first light came and birds started to wake up. The finest moment was to see at 7 a.m. two hugh Malabar Pied Hornbills (endemic) fly to the riverside trees who were soon joined by two Indian Grey Hornbills, seen well by all through Pankaj's telescope. First we looked at Ashy Drongo, Red-whiskered Bulbul, Red-vented Bulbul, Jungle Myna, Purple Sunbird (gorgeous male, later also a female), Black-throated Munia (endemic), Ashy Prinia, Brown Shrike (migratory), Spotted Dove, Greenish Warbler (migratory). White-cheeked Barbet and three Rufous Tree-pies on top of a dead tree. A pair of Plum-headed Parakeets came to be admired. White-browed Bulbul responded very well



to play-back and stayed in view for a good while. By the river, there were White-throated Kingfisher, Common Kingfisher, Pied Kingfisher, Red-wattled Lapwing, Indian Pond Heron, White-browed Wagtail. Perched on wires and/or flying around, Red-rumped Swallow, Wire-tailed Swallow, Dusky Crag Martin, Barn Swallow (migratory). In the sky, Brahminy Kites, Little Swifts. Only Pankaj spotted two Vernal Hanging Parrots flying over and heard Asian Fairy Bluebird, and pointed out to us the calls of Grey-headed Bulbul (endemic).

When leaving the bridge, there was a noisy juvenile Banded Bay Cuckoo (big!) begging noisily its foster parents Common Ioras (small!) to give food. In the first village thereafter, there were Grey-headed Pigeons (endemic subspecies), two males and one female, and in the same tree one Indian Grey Hornbill.

We had breakfast near farming fields just before entering the Bondla Sanctuary. Greater Goldenback (woodpecker) was seen even at nest-hole and the drumming HEARD. A family group of Common Ioras were feeding busily next to us. Also Bulbuls (Red-



whiskered, White-eared, Red-vented), Spotted Doves. A Booted Eagle flew over. Crested Treeswift was seen by Mikko.

Soon after entering Bondla Sanctuary Pankaj spotted Flame-throated Bullbul on top of a tree. A few meters ahead, he pointed to a group of Dark-fronted Babblers (endemic), and here were Crimson-backed Sunbirds. A group of

Bonnet Macaques passed by. Indian Blue Robin was singing ferociously, but did not come in view. Blyth's Reed Warbler was ticking.



Pompadour Green Pigeon



White-rumped Shama

The visitors' centre brought to us Indian Pond Heron, White-throated Kingfisher, White-browed Wagtail, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, Jungle Crow, Barbets, Bulbuls, Jungle Babbler, Brown-cheeked Fulvetta (not seen well). A stop at a small lake with a crocodile had White-rumped Shama which Pankaj managed to lure with his own whistles, and along came Orange-headed Ground Thrush. We also saw Asian Paradise Flycatcher, Black-naped Monarch, Greenish Warbler, Blyth's Reed Warbler. A stop at the Environmental Education Centre had Greater Racket-tailed

Drongo with its rich song repertoire. Mikko stepped out of the road and ran into two Wild Boars which were more scared than Mikko.

Then a very tasty lunch near Surla at Nature's Nest run by Canopy, an ecotourism company operated jointly by Pankaj and his friends, where there are a number of cottages meant primarily for biding groups. After lunch, a walk along the border of Bhagwan Mahaveer Sanctuary with excellent view of Yellow-browed Bulbul (endemic), an encounter with Blue-bearded Bee-eater (seen only in flight), a flock of Brown-cheeked Fulvettas (difficult to see well in deep foliage). Our group saw the endemic Malabar Giant Squirrel. On the drive out, Mikko saw a juvenile Oriental Honey-Buzzard. Puff-throated Babbler, Greater Coucal and Shikra were heard.



Orange-headed Ground-Thrush

Excursion to Succorro plateau

This plateau is only one hour's drive from Marbella Guesthouse, so we (Birte Paulson and me) left at 6 a.m. and in Alto Porvorim were joined by environmentalist, herpetologist Sujeet Dongra who also had Pankaj in his car. We drove to a wooded area in the Succorro plateau and started observing. We saw first an Emerald Dove on the road, thereafter a flock of Golden-fronted Leafbirds, Looten's Sunbirds, Purple-rumped Sunbirds, Crimson-backed Sunbirds, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher; a Nilgiri Wood Pigeon (endemic) flew over – it is known to be a very shy species. Pankaj pointed out the calls of a flock of Indian Scimitar Babblers, he also heard Nilgiri Flowerpecker (endemic). Jungle Babblers and Jungle Mynas were present, so were White-spotted Fantails and Black-hooded Orioles.



Tickell's Blue Flycatcher

We walked around lightly wooded savanna vegetation and met a Savanna Nightjar which was flushed from our feet. Only Sujeet managed to see it sitting on ground. A roosting Booted Eagle allowed us to approach quite close for taking a photo. A small group of Blue-tailed Bee-eaters landed on a tree – young ones without extended feathers on their tails, having just arrived from the north. White-

**Large Cuckoo-Shrike**

bellied and Ashy Drongos were there, so was a single Chestnut-shouldered Petronia. A pair of adult Indian Golden Orioles (migratory). A male Large Cuckooshrike was doing a round of courtship flight, and Pankaj heard Black-headed Cuckooshrike call. At the forest edge, a pair of Indian Robins, Purple Sunbird, Large Green-billed Malkoha (a large bird with striking neon blue eye ring - we later saw three in deeper forest), Common Wood Shrike, Common Iora, a pair of Grey-bellied Prinia. In the air, Little Swifts, some Red-rumped Swallows and one Crested Tree-Swift flying over. Two adult Brahminy Kites were roosting and took to air. Spotted Doves, yes, but no more Nilgiri Wood Pigeons. Puff-breasted Babblers were calling actively in thickets, but could not be seen, as usual with this species. Our breakfast at 9 a.m. was enlivened by three colorful Small Minivets which landed within sight. Grey-headed Bulbuls probably called, so did Greenish Warblers. Some White-browed Bulbuls were seen. Blyth's Reed Warblers were calling in thickets. On the way back, one Plum-headed Parakeet posed on a tree.

Driving down to the first village, we encountered a male Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike flying into a treetop. Bronzed Drongo was calling and upon play-back, a pair arrived and stayed with us for photos. Also Drongo Cuckoo appeared. Large-billed Leaf Warbler was heard.

**Bronzed Drongo****Little Cormorant**

We made our last stop at the Poetana wetland-farm. In the distance, Open billed Stork (also took a round of flight) and Woolly-necked Stork, some 20 Cattle Egrets, a male Eurasian Marsh Harrier. A White Ibis flew over. Black Kites were circling around. Quite near to us by the river, a pair of Common Kingfishers sitting on bamboo rods, one White-throated Kingfisher. One Little Cormorant very near to us, two Indian Cormorants, one Spotted Sandpiper, one Red-wattled Lapwing, a pair of Streaked Herons, a couple of Little Egrets, one Intermediate Egret. A male Pied Bush-chat, a pair of Malabar Larks (endemic) on the field, a pair of Paddyfield Pipits, too. Black Drongo next to us, Koel calling in the

horizon.

127 species recorded by our group. For myself, eleven life species and 22 additional species for my India list. After this visit, I have seen close to 700 species in the Indian subcontinent.

Systematic list of species observed

Nomenclature of Grimmett, Inskipp and Inskipp: *Birds of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and The Maldives* (Princeton Field Guides. Second Edition, 2012)

Red Spurfowl *Galloperdix spadicea* Marbella
 Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* Marbella Ambeshi BhagwanMahaveer Succorro
 Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans* Poetana
 Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* Poetana
 Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* Poetana
 Striated Heron *Butorides striata* Marbella Ambeshi Poetana
 Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii* Marbella Ambeshi Bondla Poetana
 Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* Poetana
 Intermediate Egret *Mesopoyx intermedia* Marbella Poetana

**White-rumped Munia**

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* Poetana

11. Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger* Ambeshi Poetana
 Indian Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis* Poetana
 Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* Marbella
 Black Kite *Milvus migrans* Poetana
 Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* Marbella Ambeshi Succorro
 White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* Marbella
 Oriental Honey-buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* BhagwanMahaveer
 Eurasian Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* Poetana
 Shikra *Accipiter badius* Marbella BhagwanMahaveer
 White-eyed Buzzard *Butastur teesa* Marbella

21. Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus* Bondla Succorro
 White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* Marbella
 Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus* Ambeshi Poetana
 Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* Marbella Poetana
 Common Pigeon *Columba livia* Marbella
 Nilgiri Wood Pigeon *Columba elphinstonii* Succorro
 Spotted Dove *Stigmatopelia chinensis* Marbella Ambeshi Bondla Succorro
 Grey-fronted Green Pigeon *Treron (pompadora) affinis* Ambeshi
 Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica* Succorro
 Vernal Hanging Parrot *Loriculus vernalis* Marbella Ambeshi

31. Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria* Marbella
 Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* Marbella
 Plum-headed Parakeet *Psittacula cyanocephala* Ambeshi Succorro
 Common Hawk Cuckoo *Hierococcyx varius* Marbella Bondla Succorro
 Banded Bay Cuckoo *Cacomantis sonneratii* Ambeshi
 Drongo Cuckoo *Surniculus lugubris* Succorro
 Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopaceus* Marbella Bondla Succorro Poetana
 Blue-faced Malkoha *Rhopodytes viridirostris* Succorro
 Southern Coucal *Centropus (sinensis) parroti* [Greater Coucal] Marbella Ambeshi Bondla Succorro
 Savanna Nightjar *Caprimulgus affinis* Succorro

41. Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* Marbella
 Crested Streeswift *Hemiprocne coronata* Bondla Succorro
 Little Swifr *Apus affinis* Marbella Ambeshi Succorro Poetana
 White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* Marbella Ambeshi Bondla Poetana
 Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* Ambeshi Poetana
 Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* Ambeshi
 Blue-bearded Bee-eater *Nyctyornis athertoni* BhagwanMahaveer
 Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis* Marbella Ambeshi
 Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus* Succorro
 Indian Grey Hornbill *Ocyeros birostris* Ambeshi



Paddyfield Pipit

Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike



Common Iora

51. Malabar Pied Hornbill *Antracoceros coronatus* Ambeshi
 White-cheeked Barbet *Megalaima viridis* Marbella Ambeshi Bondla BhagwanMahaveer Succorro
 Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemacephala* Marbella
 Rufous Woodpecker *Micropternus brachyurus* Marbella
 Greater Goldenback *Chrysocolaptes lucidus* Bondla
 Common Woodshrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus* Succorro
 Large Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei* Succorro
 Black-headed Cuckooshrike *Coracina melanoptera* Marbella Succorro
 Bar-winged Flycatcher-Shrike *Hemipus picatus* Succorro
 Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia* Marbella Bondla Succorro

61. Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* Marbella Succorro
 Orange Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus* Marbella
 Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* Ambeshi
 Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus* Bondla
 Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* Marbella
 Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* Marbella Ambeshi Succorro
 White-bellied Drongo *Dicrurus caerulescens* Succorro
 Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus* Succorro
 Indian Golden Oriole *Oriolus (oriolus) kundoo* Succorro
 Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus* Marbella Bondla Succorro



Booted Eagle

71. White-spotted Fantal *Rhipidura (albigollis) albogularis* Marbella Succorro
 White-browed Faintal *Rhipidura aureola* Marbella
 Asian Paradise-flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradise* Marbella Ambeshi Bondla BhagwanMahaveer Succorro
 Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* Bondla
 Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda* Marbella Ambeshi
 Indian Jungle Crow *Corvus (macrorhynchos) culminatus* Bondla
 House Crow *Corvus splendens* Marbella Ambeshi Poetana
 Dusky Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne concolor* Ambeshi
 Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* Ambeshi
 Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Ambeshi

81. Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* Ambeshi Succorro
 Malabar Lark *Galerida malabarica* Poetana
 White-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucotis* Bondla
 Grey-headed Bulbul *Pycnonotus priocephalus* Ambeshi Succorro
 Flame-throated Bulbul *Pycnonotus (melanicterus) gularis* Bondla
 Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus* Marbella Ambeshi
 Bondla BhagwanMahaveer Succorro
 Red-Vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* Marbella Ambeshi Bondla Succorro
 White-browed Bulbul *Pycnonotus luteolus* Marbella Ambeshi Succorro
 Yellow-browed Bulbul *Acritillas indica* BhagwanMahaveer
 Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii* Succorro



Spot-breasted Fantail



Pale-billed Flowerpecker

91. Ashy Prinia *Prinia socialis* Ambeshi
 Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius* Marbella Bondla
 Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* Bondla Succorro
 Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* Marbella Ambeshi Bondla
 BhagwanMahaveer Succorro
 Large-billed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus magnirostris* Marbella Succorro
 Puff-throated Babbler *Pellorneum ruficeps* Marbella Succorro
 Dark-fronted Babbler *Rhopocichla atriceps* Bondla
 Indian Scimitar Babbler *Pomatorhinus horsfieldii* Succorro
 Jungle Babbler *Turdoides striata sommervillei* Marbella Ambeshi Bondla Succorro
 Brown-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcides poioicephala* Bondla BhagwanMahaveer

101. Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus* Ambeshi Bondla Succorro
 Malabar Whistling Thrush *Myophonus horsfieldii* Marbella
 Orange-headed Thrush *Zoothera citrina cyanotus* Marbella Bondla
 Indian Blue Robin *Luscinia brunnea* Marbella Bondla
 Oriental Magpie Robin *Copsychus saularis* Marbella Ambeshi Bondla Succorro
 White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus* Bondla
 Indian Robin *Saxicoloides fulicatus* Marbella Succorro
 Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata* Poetana
 Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica* Marbella
 Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* Marbella

111. Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassinus* Marbella
 Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae* Marbella Bondla Succorro
 Asian Fairy Bluebird *Irena puella* Marbella Ambeshi
 Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons* Succorro
 Pale-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos* Marbella
 Nilgiri Flowerpecker *Dicaeum concolor* Succorro
 Purple-rumped Sunbird *Leptocoma ceylonica* Marbella Bondla Succorro
 Crimson-backed Sunbird *Leptocoma minima* Marbella Bondla Succorro
 Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus* Ambeshi Bondla Succorro
 Loten's Sunbird *Cinnyris lotenia* Marbella Succorro

121. Chestnut-shouldered Petronia *Petronia xanthocollis* Succorro
 White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata* Marbella Bondla
 Black-throated Munia *Lonchura kelaarti* Ambeshi
 Black-headed Munia *Lonchura malacca* Marbella
 White-browed Wagtail *Motacilla maderaspatensis* Ambeshi
 Pddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus* Poetana
 Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* Marbella



Yellow-browed Bulbul