

Photographic record of Tickell's Thrush from Harike Wetland, Punjab, India

Harike is a birding hotspot that never ceases to amaze with its incredible sightings. On 4 February 2023, authors searched the sheesham forest along the Sutlej River for White-crowned Penduline-Tits. These thorny trees, bushes, and other plants in this dense mixed forest provide an ideal habitat for a wide range of bird and mammal species.

We encountered two medium-sized black birds in flight while exploring the woods in the morning. They appeared to us at first to be Indian Blackbirds. It was challenging to take pictures because of the birds' quick flight and hiding behaviors. One of them eventually landed in front of us on a clear perch, allowing us to take some pictures as we waited to photograph and study them in the open.

The bird appeared to sparkle in the magnificent morning light, making it easy to identify as a Tickell's Thrush *Turdus unicolor* Tickell, 1833. Tickell's Thrush was clearly identifiable by its



Tickell's Thrush *Turdus unicolor*.

pale, blue-gray upperparts and white belly plumage (Ali & Ripley 1983; Grimmett et al. 2011).

After conducting a literature review, we discovered that in north India species shows large variation in different states as in Jammu & Kashmir (common resident), Himachal Pradesh, (not common resident), Punjab (not common winter visitor), Delhi (vagrant), Rajasthan (not common winter visitor) & Uttarakhand (not common summer visitor) (Grimmett et al. 2011).

With the emergence of ebird records of these bird become very much clear from the last decade we had clearly found that species was observed throughout the year in Himachal and Uttarakhand earlier considered (not common resident and not common summer visitor respectively), there are more records in Delhi, Rajasthan, as compare to Punjab.

Punjab shows significantly very low records of Tickell's Thrush without any photographic evidence probably there are more individuals of species

that has to be identified for that this study will bridges the gaps. A few eBird checklists indicate that the bird is present in Punjab, specifically around the Shiwalik foothill range specifically form Siswan dam. S.A.S Nagar during winter seasons only (<https://ebird.org/species/ticthr1/IN-PB>). Since the Tickell's Thrush prefers hilly and sub mountainous region regions, its appearance in the designs for the Harike Wetland caught us off guard. This sighting serves as a reminder of how unique Harike is as a birding destination.

References

- Ali, S. & S.D. Ripley (1983).** Compact Edition of Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan. Bombay Natural History Society and Oxford University Press, Bombay, 737 pp.
- Grimmett, R., C. Inskipp & T. Inskipp (2011).** Birds of the Indian Subcontinent. 2nd ed. Oxford University Press & Christopher Helm, London, 528 pp.
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