

Third record of Tristram's Bunting from India

In recent years, citizen scientists have played a pivotal role in expanding our understanding of the avian fauna of northeastern India. It has led to the discovery of previously undocumented birds in the region. In this article, we report the occurrence of Tristram's Bunting *Emberiza tristrami* from Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary, Arunachal Pradesh.

On 29 March 2023, at 1117 h, while observing birds at Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary (28.2276 N & 95.8349 E) near Tiwari Gaon, lower Dibang Valley, we came across a different looking bunting (*Emberiza*) in a flock of Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* and Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus Hodsozni* flying across us. On observing closely, the bunting looked unfamiliar with alternate black and white stripes on the head, and a fair brown pattern body. We were able to take some photographs for correct identification of the bird later. From the photograph, we found that the bird had black and white alternate stripes on its head,



Tristram's Bunting *Emberiza tristrami* at Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary, Arunachal Pradesh. ©Anupam Nahardeka.

fair brown pattern body with black and brown stripes on its primary, secondary, tertiary wing and has rufous coloration on its rump, white whisker marks and broad black stripe curved to the neck. The morphological characters matched with the descriptions provided in different literatures (Naniwadekar et al. 2013; Thangaraj & Mani 2016). After thorough comparison with literatures and discussion with experts, we concluded the bird to be a female (non-breeding) Tristram's Bunting *Emberiza tristrami*. In the following days, several birdwatchers

photographed the species from the same area, which supported our observation.

Tristram's Bunting is reported to breed in northeastern Asia, and seen through winter in southern China and the northern regions of southeastern Asia. It is considered to be a vagrant northern Myanmar species (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012), which is 180 km away from Namdapha Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh, from where the species was first reported in India (Naniwadekar et al. 2013), and secondly from

Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary (Thangaraj & Mani 2016). Hence, our current observation record of the species is supposedly the third occurrence report from India, and second from Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary.

References

Naniwadekar, R., A. Viswanathan, R. Kumar & S. Dalvi (2013). First record of Tristram's Bunting *Emberiza tristrami* from India. *Indian BIRDS* 8(5): 134–135.

Rasmussen, P.C. & J.C. Anderton (2012). *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley Guide*. 2nd ed. Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions, Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: 2 vols. 378 & 683 pp.

Thangaraj, H. & A. Mani (2016). Tristram's Bunting *Schoeniclus tristrami* in Mishmi Hills, Arunachal Pradesh: A second record for India. *Indian BIRDS* 12(1): 16–17.

Acknowledgements

Authors are very thankful to Jaydev Mandal and Pranjal Mahananda for identification and other help.

Tomal Gogoi¹, Anupam Nahardeka², Jonathan Paul Taylor³ & Debojit Nahardeka⁴

^{1,2&4} Naharkatia, Dibrugarh, Assam 786610, India.

³ Huntingdon, England, United Kingdom.

Emails: ¹tomal1235gogoi@gmail.com (corresponding author), ²anahardeka.geetali27@gmail.com,

³jonathan.taylor1971@gmail.com,

⁴dndnaharkatia1995@gmail.com

Citation: Gogoi, T., A. Nahardeka, J.P. Taylor & D. Nahardeka (2024). Third record of Tristram's Bunting from India. *Bird-o-soar* #239, In: *Zoo's Print* 39(6): 32–33.