

Photo: Rajat Bhargava



187. Amur Falcons *Falco amurensis* on electric wires of paddy fields.

[187]. While we counted more than 100 falcons perched on the wires, we could also see about 40–50 falcons flying overhead. As we moved towards the falcons, most birds flew away and finally settled on the electric wires. We did not go much nearer fearing that the birds may desert the ‘roost’ and since it was getting dark we moved to the forest rest house in Poorvi Suhelwa. During the following week we went around the same place in the evening but did not encounter any falcons suggesting that the birds were there for a short period, probably a night halt.

First record of the Chinese Thrush *Turdus mupinensis* from the Indian Subcontinent

R. Rajagopal & Tim Inskipp

Rajagopal, R., & Inskipp, T., 2014. First record of the Chinese Thrush *Turdus mupinensis* from the Indian Subcontinent. *Indian BIRDS* 9 (5&6): 155–157.

R. Rajagopal, 127/6, Golden Jubilee Air Force Officers Enclave, Artillery Road, Bengaluru 560007, Karnataka, India. Email: ravidoc@gmail.com. [RR]

Tim Inskipp, 1 Herneside, Welney, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, PE14 9SB, United Kingdom. Email: tim.inskipp@btinternet.com. [TI]

Manuscript received on 05 January 2014.

During a recent visit to Namdapha National Park (27°64'N, 95°92'E), Arunachal Pradesh, India, RR was walking along a trail at c. 500 m in tropical evergreen forest between Haldibari and Hornbill camp, on 17 November 2013, accompanied by Dattakiran Joshi, Sangeeta Joshi and a guide, Asam Moshang, when an unidentified bird was seen and photographed, at about 1400 hr.

The bird was noted flying for a short distance and then perching on the ground, foraging among the leaves. It was shy and kept a distance of 60–70 m from the observers. For most of the time it kept on the main path, perching on elevated objects such as fallen logs, or on the ground when a log was not available. The bird's brown colour against the sand and leaves on the ground, as well as pockets of light shining through the forest thickets, made it exceedingly difficult to obtain a good photograph. The bird was observed with 8x42 binoculars, and several photographs were taken with a Canon EOS 7D camera and 400 mm zoom lens. The bird moved in front of the observers

The sighting of Amur Falcon near Soheldev WLS is the first record of this species from Uttar Pradesh (Rahmani *et al.* 2011).

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge Sarus Sanrakshan Samiti for funding our study on Soheldev Wildlife Sanctuary. We are grateful to Uttar Pradesh Forest Department for granting us necessary permission. We wish to put on record our appreciation for all forest staff of Soheldev Wildlife Sanctuary especially S. S. Shrivastava, DFO, Balrampur and Sri Parkash Shukla, FRO, Rampur Range for their kind support, without which, our fieldwork would not have been possible. We would like to thank Niharika Singh of the Soheldev Sanrakshan Samiti for her support, and also our project volunteer and staff namely: Fazlur Rahman, Mohammad Bilal and Brijesh Kumar for their kind cooperation.

References

- Dalvi, S. & Sreenivasan, R., 2012. Shocking Amur Massacre in Nagaland. Website: www.conservationindia.org/campaigns/amur-massacre. [Accessed on 26 January 2014.]
- Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2012. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378, 1–683.
- Rahmani, A. R., Islam, M. Z., Singh, V. P., & Chaudhuri, S., 2011. *Important Bird Areas of Uttar Pradesh: Priority sites for conservation*. Indian Bird Conservation Network, Bombay Natural History Society and Katerniaghat Foundation. Pp. 1–122.

for about one kilometer before disappearing into the adjoining forest. It was seen again the following afternoon in the same area but no further photographs were possible.

There were no other birds close enough to assess its size by direct comparison, but it was thought to be between an Oriental Magpie Robin *Copsychus saularis* and a Blue Whistling Thrush *Myophonus caeruleus* in size. The photographs [188, 189, 190, 191] show that the bird was a thrush *Turdus/Zoothera*, with a greyish-brown crown, back, and tail. The face is fairly pale with two dark vertical stripes, the first extending down from the side of the crown through the dark eye to the lower edge of the ear-coverts, and the second along the rear edge of the ear-coverts. The wing shows two distinct pale wing-bars: a short one on the median coverts and a longer one on the greater coverts, and also a suggestion on the tertials of dark outer webs and brighter, olive inner webs. The underparts are not very clear in the relevant photographs (Figs. 3,4) but there are numerous large, round dark spots visible on the breast, and others can be made out

188. Chinese Thrush *Turdus mupinensis*: Face.189. Chinese Thrush *Turdus mupinensis*: Back view.190. Chinese Thrush *Turdus mupinensis*: Belly spots and face pattern.191. Chinese Thrush *Turdus mupinensis*: Side view also showing belly spots and face pattern.

extending down to the belly. The legs appear pale and the bill grey. The bird was silent throughout the periods of observation.

Identification as a Chinese Thrush *Turdus mupinensis* is based mainly on the distinctive face pattern and the heavily spotted underparts, which eliminate most other similar species. The Spot-winged Thrush *Zoothera spiloptera*, a Sri Lankan endemic, has a similar face pattern but is distinguished by having much sparser spotting on the underparts, and the larger Mistle Thrush *T. viscivorus* has a less distinct face pattern and wing-bars. Two other superficially similar species, with uniform upperparts and heavily marked underparts, Plain-backed Thrush *Zoothera mollissima* and Long-tailed Thrush *Z. dixonii*, have been recorded in Namdapha National Park. Unlike this bird both have dark half-moon shaped scaling on the breast rather than dark round spots, and lack the sharply defined, thin, vertical dark bar below the eye. Some individuals of these species show a thicker, diffuse vertical line below the eye but Plain-backed can be eliminated by the presence in this bird of two conspicuous wing-bars, and Long-tailed Thrush typically shows a narrower bar on the greater coverts. In addition, both species have narrow, rounded tails compared with the fuller, square-ended tail of this bird.

T. mupinensis is an endemic breeding species in China, occurring in a band from Inner Mongolia in the north to Yunnan in the south (Fig. 1), where it is described as uncommon to locally common (Clement & Hathway 2000). Although described as almost entirely resident (Cheng 1987), it occurs as a scarce or rare spring and autumn migrant on the coast of Hubei at Beidaihe (39°50'N, 119°29'E; Clement & Hathway 2000). Further sources of information with localities and dates (Global Biodiversity Information Facility; eBird 2013 map; Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University; China Ornithological Society 2004–2008; Paul Holt, *pers. comm.*, email dated 17 December 2013) show that the species has been recorded widely in China outside of the breeding season. Chinese Thrush has also been recorded four times as a vagrant in Hong Kong (Carthy 2009; Carey & Lockey 2010; Lewthwaite 2013; Wong & Wong 2014), twice in South Korea (Moore 2007), four times in Taiwan, including most recently on 27 October 2013 (Trabalon 2013), and four times in Vietnam (Pilgrim *et al.* 2009; GBIF: eBird). It seems likely that the northern population is a summer visitor to the breeding areas and moves south in the winter. It is also possible that at least some southern birds are subject to post-breeding dispersal, which could account for records of some individuals. Note that Namdapha National Park is only 295

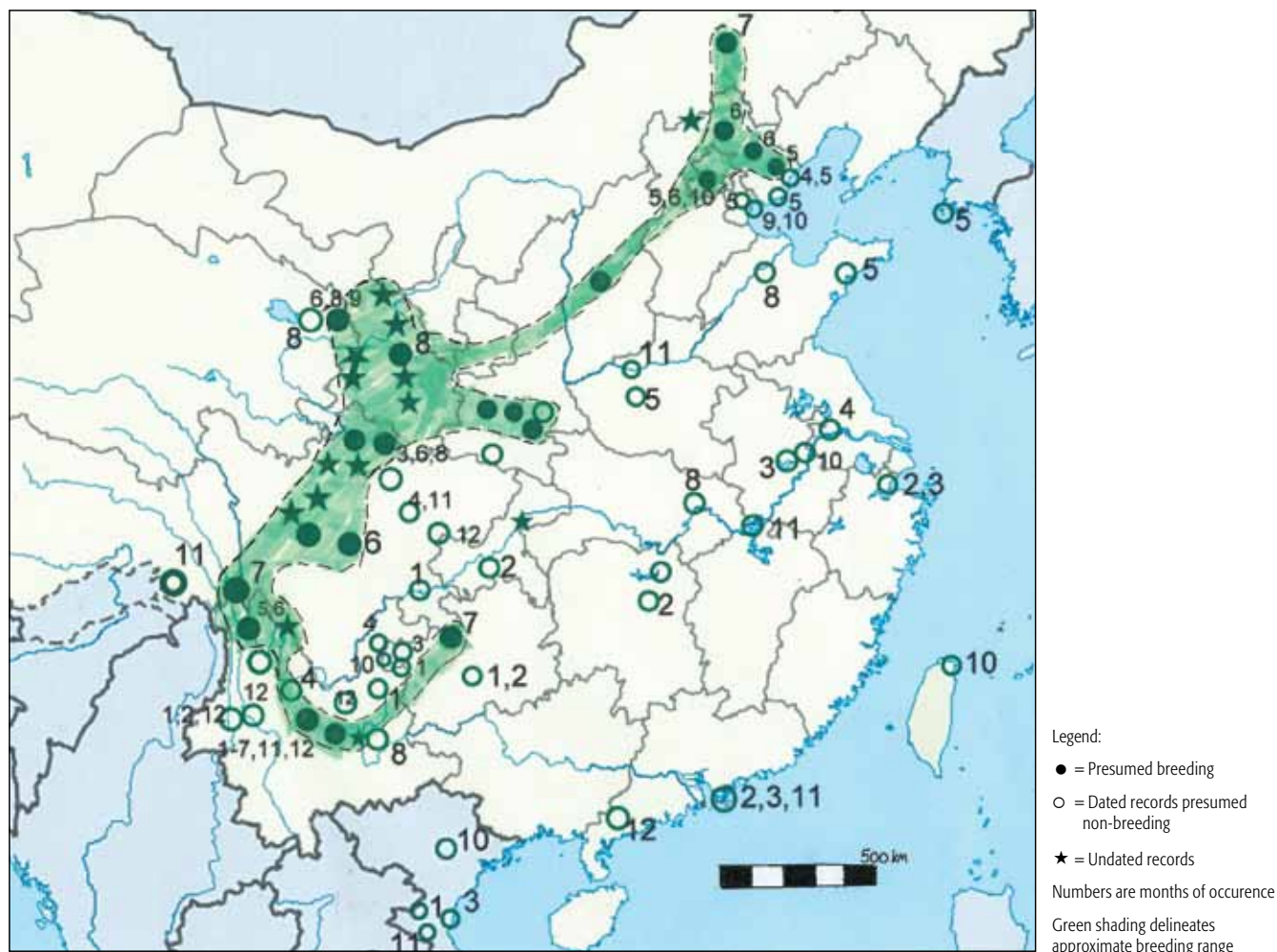


Fig 1. Chinese Thrush *Turdus mupinensis* distribution map.

km west of a locality in Yunnan (28°28'N, 98°49'E) where the species was recorded on 12 July 2005 (eBird 2013).

The present record in Namdapha National Park, Arunachal Pradesh is apparently the first record of Chinese Thrush in India, and for the Indian Subcontinent.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to IT Nature Club for organising the visit, and to my birder colleagues on the trip. Also to Paul Holt for confirming the identification, and providing information on recent records of the species from China.

References

- Carey, G. J., & Lockey, H., (Eds.) 2010. *The Hong Kong Bird Report 2005–06*.
 Carthy, D., 2009. Chinese Thrush *Turdus mupinensis* at Kadoorie Agricultural Research Centre. *The Hong Kong Bird Report 2003–04*: 203–206.
 Cheng, T.-H., 1987. *A synopsis of the avifauna of China*. 1st ed. Beijing; Hamburg and Berlin: Science Press; Paul Parey Scientific Publishers. Pp. i-xvi, 1–1222.
 China Ornithological Society. 2004. *China Bird Report 2003*. Beijing: China Ornithological Society.
 China Ornithological Society. 2005. *China Bird Report 2004*. Beijing: China Ornithological Society.
 China Ornithological Society. 2006. *China Bird Report 2005*. Beijing: China Ornithological Society.
 China Ornithological Society. 2007. *China Bird Report 2006*. Beijing: China Ornithological Society.
 China Ornithological Society. 2008. *China Bird Report 2007*. Beijing: China Ornithological Society.
 Chinese Thrush map. eBird. <http://ebird.org/ebird/map/chithr?neg=true&env.minX=&env.minY=&env.maxX=&env.maxY=&zh=false&gp=false&ev=Z&mr=1-12&bmo=1&emo=12&yr=all&byr=1900&eyr=2014>. [Accessed on 30 December 2013].
 Clement, P., & Hathway, R., 2000. *Thrushes*. 1st ed. London: Christopher Helm, A & C Black. Pp. 1–463.
 eBird., 2013. eBird: An online database of bird distribution and abundance [web application]. eBird, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York. Available: <http://www.ebird.org>. (Accessed: December 30, 2013).
 Global Biodiversity Information Facility: GBIF Backbone Taxonomy, 2013-07-01. Website: <http://www.gbif.org/species/2490739>. [Accessed on 30 December 2013].
 Lewthwaite, R., 2013. Hong Kong bird news, Oct–Dec 2012. *The Hong Kong Bird Watching Society Bulletin* 227: 20–22.
 Moores, N., 2007. Selected records from Socheong Island, South Korea. *Forktail* 23: 102–124.
 Pilgrim, J. D., Bijlmaekers, P., de Bruyn, T., Doppagene, S., Mahood, S. P., & Tordoff, A. W., 2009. Updates to the distribution and status of birds in Vietnam. *Forktail* 25: 130–136.
 Trabalon, F., 2013. Chinese Thrush (*Turdus mupinensis*). Website: <http://ibc.lynxeds.com/photo/chinese-thrush-turdus-mupinensis/bird-ground-fourth-record-taiwan>. [Accessed on 30 December 2013].
 Wong, M., & Wong, P., 2014. Chinese Thrush *Turdus mupinensis*. Website: http://orientalbirdimages.org/birdimages.php?action=birdspecies&Bird_ID=2437. [Accessed on 19 September 2014].