

Occurrence of the Grey-crowned Prinia *Prinia cinereocapilla* in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India

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Sondhi, S., 2011. Occurrence of the Grey-crowned Prinia *Prinia cinereocapilla* in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

Indian BIRDS 7 (1): 21.

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Manuscript received on 12 December 2009.



I would like to report the occurrence of the Grey-crowned Prinia *Prinia cinereocapilla* from Dehradun in western Uttarakhand. On 18 October 2009, I was birdwatching with Anchal, my wife, and Yash, my son, on the hill slopes near Sahastradhara, north of Dehradun. We had driven approximately 4 km along the road leading from Sahastradhara to the village of Karligad (30°24'07"N 78°8'25"E). Below us was the Baldi Rau (Baldi River); while to the north-west were the hills of Mussoorie and Dhanaulti.

As we climbed up the hill, we saw a flock of prinias on the bushes and heard them call. The prinia's call note was a soft "t-sirrrr", which was quite unlike other prinia calls. Attempts to observe and identify the birds initially, proved unsuccessful. However, a few hours later in the same area, we were able to observe the prinia and photograph it as well. The prinia, with its rufous-brown wings, back and tail, grey head and nape with a long, prominent rufous-tinged supercilium extending well behind the eye, was unmistakable as the Grey-crowned Prinia. The rufous-tinged supercilium was only visible in good light. The bird had a prominent black streak through the eye while the underside was buff. In the same area, we also observed a flock of Grey-breasted Prinia *P. hodgsonii*. It is likely that the two species exist in mixed flocks together.

The Grey-crowned Prinias were seen on a hill slope with scrub, bushes, and secondary growth, at an approximate altitude of 1,180 m. The prinias were always seen at the tops of bushes.

The bird is clearly shy, and I did not see it on two subsequent visits to the same area on 19 and 31 October 2009.

The Grey-crowned Prinia is an uncommon resident, which is endemic to the Indian Subcontinent. To the west of Dehradun, it has been recorded in the Margalla Hills in Pakistan (Roberts 1992) but has not been subsequently located in the same area. Singh (2006) recorded it from Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary, Chandigarh, which is approximately 180 km due west of Dehradun. To the east of Dehradun, there have been sightings of the bird in Corbett National Park (c. 200 km south-east of Dehradun), and Dudhwa National Park. Further, older records exist from Nepal, Bhutan, and the Indian states of West Bengal, and Assam (Grimmett & Inskipp 1998; Baker 1997).

This sighting further extends the range of this species, bridging the gap between Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary and Corbett National Park.

I had another unconfirmed sighting of the same prinia at Jardhargaoon, near Chamba in Tehri district, Uttarakhand, on 15 August 2009. The prinia was singing, and despite efforts to record its song, I could not do so in Jardhargaoon.

The Grey-crowned Prinia's status in India is described as "uncertain" with only a few published records (Grimmett & Inskipp 1998). As per the 2009 IUCN Red List Category (as evaluated by BirdLife International - the official Red List Authority for birds for IUCN), this species is listed as "Vulnerable". The main threats to the bird are habitat destruction, so its sighting in a semi-urban location, close to habitation gives hope that the bird's distribution is wider than previously known.

References

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- Roberts, T. J., 1992. *The Birds of Pakistan. Passeriformes: Pittas to Buntings*. Vol 2. 1st ed. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Singh, A. P., 2006. Grey-crowned Prinia *Prinia cinereocapilla* in Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary, Chandigarh, northern India. *Indian Birds* 2 (1): 11.

Notice

Indian BIRDS
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is enclosed with this issue.

Errata *Indian birds* vol. 6 no. 6

Contents: Author of fourth paper should be Odd W. Jacobsen, not B. M. Parasharya. In penultimate line, the Latin name of Orange-breasted Green-pigeon should be *Treron bicinctus*.
Page 153, left column, fourth line from bottom: delete "(Fig. 1)."
Page 163: captions of the maps should be interchanged.
Page 168, right column, first line, of Sangha *et al.*: change "winter" to 'non-breeding.'