



# DAANGER

Issue 2 • Summer 2024



Events  
Updates  
Trip Reports  
National First

A Quarterly Analysis of Pakistan's Birds

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Western Tragopan *Tragopan melanocephalus*. Oil on Canvas (48 x 36 inches). Misty Jungle. Painting by Ahsan Qureshi.



**BACK COVER:**

Featuring a dashing Brown-necked Raven *Corvus ruficollis* from Hingol National Park, Lasbela, Balochistan. Photo by Rashid Asghar.

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Trumpeter Finch *Bucanetes githagineus* in breeding plumage from Chaman road, Killa Abdullah, Balochistan - 6 May 2024. (Photo used with permission).

# Introduction

Daangeer is a platform dedicated to celebrating the avian diversity of Pakistan. We invite submissions from all bird enthusiasts, researchers, and writers who wish to share their insights, observations, and experiences related to birds and birdwatching in Pakistan. Here are some basic guidelines for submitting your work:

#### Scope:

- Daangeer accepts any writing related to birds and birdwatching in Pakistan.

#### Format:

- Email submissions to [rewildingindusmanagement@gmail.com](mailto:rewildingindusmanagement@gmail.com) with "Submission: [Title]" in the subject line.
- Attach your submission as a Word document and send in relevant figures and photographs separately.

#### Review Process:

- Our editorial team will review submissions for quality and adherence to guidelines.

#### Publication:

- Accepted submissions will be featured in Daangeer. Contributors will be credited.

#### Copyright:

- Contributors retain the copyright to their work but permit us to publish it.

#### Editor Note:

Daangeer Team strives for the best quality of data and information published. However, given the extent of the experience of the Editorial board, some discrepancies may be expected and if our readers may come across any inaccuracies, we motivate them to get in touch with us so we may aspire to identify, address and learn religiously.

## EDITORIAL TEAM

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## NEW TO BIRDWATCHING?

Below are some relevant Links for you if you are interested in learning more about Birds and the Birdwatching scene in Pakistan:

#### Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/672890519498797>

#### Twitter:

@OrnithoPakistan

#### Ebird:

<https://ebird.org/region/PK>

## Pakistan Rarities and Distribution Committee (PRDC)

### Guidelines for submissions to PRDC

Rare bird assessment is an initial step to establishing a record; evidence must be submitted to PRDC. Here are our essential guidelines to explorers, we would expect you to follow them religiously. We understand not all of these guidelines can be followed in certain situations, but failing to fulfill most of the necessary guidelines will deem the record pending until more evidence is presented or rejected, independently. We still encourage you to submit any record you think is rare to PRDC.

Ideally we would like to receive reports/sightings that include the following:

1. We strongly advise photographers and birders to strictly avoid disturbing actively breeding birds, e.g. approaching a nest with eggs, nestlings or a parent, using loud playbacks in breeding season and stop others from doing so.
2. We recommend activating coordinates recording settings in your camera, which should be embedded in EXIF.
3. Observations must have a complete date (DD/MM/YY), specific location of observation (preferably coordinates) and observer (s) name.
4. Written or digital documentation of the events surrounding the observation, e.g. clear photos or videos of habitat and surroundings.
5. Identification of species in question with reasons, e.g. personal identification, taking help from online ID forums or an expert. It will go through critical scrutiny and review by PRDC.
6. We recommend good quality photographs from various angles, clips, and adding sound recordings (if necessary).
7. Supporting evidence from co-observers, if any. Co-observers can be contacted independently.
8. We advise birders to use the eBird Mobile App and turn on live locations when bird watching in the field.
9. English is a recommended language to submit observations, otherwise Urdu and major provincial languages are also accepted. The records, however, will be published solely in English.

Any supporting evidence in the form of photos, video clips, vocal recordings, are for the purpose of record evaluation and publication in the newsletter. They will not be used otherwise unless approved by the observer.

**Note:** We value published historical data (books, articles, personal notes) to cross-check validity of personal claims, such as "first record for Pakistan". We understand that most of the historical data is based on sightings, descriptions, sketches and museum specimens. Lack of digital documentation does not mean the old data is all wrong. Any relevant records of further queries can be emailed to [iazankhan4@gmail.com](mailto:iazankhan4@gmail.com).

# Rarities Review

January to May 2024

Azan Karam

The following observations are open to critical questioning after publication. If any record was found weak, it will be re-published as erratum in the proceeding issue. The symbol (Δ) with a record shows that supporting digital media was shared with PRDC.

Five Smews *Mergellus albellus* (Δ) were present at a large lake in Dera Ismail Khan. The flock of two males and three females was first noted on 28 January, while one female was seen 2 weeks later as well (MAR). Additionally, two White-tailed Eagles *Haliaeetus albicilla* (Δ) were seen in the vicinity on the following day. One adult was at Hamal Lake, Qambar Shahdadt on 24 January (YP) while a juvenile was also seen and photographed for a period: 28 January to 2 February in Head Maralla, Sialkot by several birdwatchers (AKu, MB, PNA). An unconfirmed sighting (Δ) also came from an urban sprawl in Nazimabad, Karachi, of a juvenile on 5 January (SH, MAR, MT, ZA). During the same time, a juvenile Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* was seen, which is uncommon to rare for the region and an anomaly for that kind of vicinity.

First provincial records of an Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* (Δ) came from SB's garden on 2 February. This is the second national record that comes after a 28-year hiatus when a flock of 15 was recorded from Islamabad. The second national record of a juvenile Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus* (Δ) arrived very close to the Olive-backed Pipit locale at a nearby river named Thado. The individual, first noted on 9 February, was seen by numerous observers (KM, WM, KK, SB, SB, ZA, ZAS) and stayed for at least two weeks. It was very skulking and mainly stuck to thick grass cover. The first record was from Haleji Wildlife Sanctuary in 1980 (Roberts 1992).

The northernmost record of Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* (Δ) for the country came from Community Reserve Zone Jhampir (HP), Thatta district (HP), on 8 March. This was also the 12th national record of this species. Subsequently, a third national record came in the form of a female Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* (Δ) at Haji Shambe village, Malir district, Karachi (SB & SB) on 10 March 2024.

An error of omission of two important and notable records occurred last time. The second national record of a Pale Rockfinch *Carpospiza brachydactyla* (Δ) came from Community Reserve Zone Jhampir on 1 December 2024 (HP) and subsequently, at least three were also seen in Killa Abdullah on 6 May (AA & SB). Furthermore, a national rarity, Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* (Δ), was also seen there by the same observer.

'Tae', a beloved sub-adult male Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor* (Δ), was released into the wild on 12 March after seven months of rehabilitation and care on the outskirts of Karachi division (ZAS). This range-restricted species was rescued from the local bird market where it was put on sale illegally, and thus, the origins of the bird could not be confirmed. The native range of this species is along the Makran coast of Balochistan, where it has been recorded in summer, most likely as a breeder.



Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea*

A country first and a long-awaited species, White-throated Robin *Irania gutturalis* (Δ) was recorded at Karachi port on the dock of a small boat in a frail condition, on 12 April. It was recorded on a docked boat and thus, the origins of the bird could not be traced. The bird, after some time, gained consciousness and flew away. Additionally, a Eurasian Griffon *Gyps fulvus* (Δ) and Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis* (Δ) were seen in Lahore on 29 April (FM). At least three Lesser Flamingoes *Phoenicopterus minor* (Δ) were seen on 25 March 2024 at the Lagoon of Clifton Urban Forest in Karachi, where the birds stayed with repeated sightings till 22 May, when two birds were noted; an adult and a juvenile (ZAS). A singular Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* (Δ) was noted during passage at Chasma (MAR) on 8 May.

Snow Partridges *Lerwa lerwa* (Δ) were photographed at Muchuwar Valley, Hunza, on 12 May (IS). The country's second Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* (Δ), also a male, was recorded at Don-e-Das, Hunza, on 20 May (IS). Other important sightings by the same observer included an Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* (Δ) in breeding plumage at Borith Lake, Gojal, Hunza, on multiple days from 15 April to 20 May, Tibetan Snowcocks *Tetraogallus tibetanus* (Δ) at Khunjerab National Park on 23 May, and the fifth national record of a Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* (Δ) at Don-e-Das, Hunza, on 5 May. On 1 June, an Indian Pitta *Pitta brachyura* (Δ) in 'rough' condition was rescued at Gujranwala city (SHD) where it is being taken care of until fit enough to be released. This marks the southernmost record for Punjab Province of this scarce to rare summer breeder.

Last but not least, an exciting re-review of old photos resulted in an addition to the Checklist of Birds of Pakistan: a non-adult Eastern Mourning Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens* (Δ), most likely of the *persica* subspecies, which shows more dominant ochre-buff coloration in the ventral region and a 'dirtier' white cap, from the semi-desert region of Dera Ismail Khan on 6 November 2022 (MAR). This record could very well be the first record for the Indian subcontinent, if not the Oriental Region.

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Indian Pitta *Pitta brachyura*

©Shams-ul-Haq Dirvi

© Sadiq Baloch

# Hotspot Review

April 2024

Zafeer Ahmed Shaikh

Rawal Lake, located in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), is an artificial reservoir formed by Rawal Dam in 1962. The lake, fed by the Korang River and other small streams and streamlets from the Margalla Hills, spans approximately 8.8 square kilometers. It serves as a primary water source for the twin cities: Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The surrounding area, known as Rawal Lake Park, provides a habitat for diverse flora and fauna, including migratory birds, fish, and various plant species. This lake, due to its convenient location for the capital, is also well known for its recreational activities like boating, fishing, and picnicking.

The lake, along with the adjacent parks (Lake View and Kinara), offers a mosaic of habitats from woodlands to open water and wetland vegetation like marshland. This diversity contributes to the variety of bird species recorded at this hotspot. Additionally, it nestles in the foothills of the Himalayas, hosting not only Western Palearctic winter migrants and birds of passage but also altitudinal migrants that do not wander far, such as Slaty-Blue Flycatcher *Ficedula tricolor*, Grey-hooded Warbler *Phylloscopus xanthoschistos*, Lemon-rumped Warbler *Phylloscopus chloronotus*, Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii*, and Yellow-breasted Greenfinch *Chloris spinoides*. The open water and marshlands can host anatids as late as June, including Greylag Goose *Anser anser*, Cotton Teal *Nettapus coromandelianus*, Red-headed Pochard *Netta rufina*, Gadwall *Mareca strepera*, Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*, Garganey *Spatula querquedula*, Eurasian Wigeon *Mareca penelope*, and Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*. Winter may also bring rarities like Eared Grebes *Podiceps nigricollis*. Important passerines include Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus*, which winters here in good numbers, Crested Kingfishers *Megaceryle lugubris*, and Reed Buntings *Emberiza schoeniclus* in lesser numbers.



A view of Rawal lake with *Sacharum spontaneum* clumps

from Pakistan. The reeds are rife with Scaly-bellied Munias *Lonchura punctulata*, Red Munias *Amandava amandava*, Clamorous Reed Warblers *Acrocephalus stentoreus*, White-breasted Waterhens *Amaurornis phoenicurus*, and Baya Weavers *Ploceus philippinus* and Streaked Weavers *Ploceus manyar* in the summer. The resident wagtail species, White-browed Wagtail *Motacilla maderaspatensis*, is very common, as is the super-coloniser, Brown Rockchat *Oenanthe fusca*. The lake also has sightings of Barred Buttonquails *Turnix suscitator*, the only known *Turnix* species from the region. During passage, many Western Palearctic migrants pass through here, including various species of sandpipers and allies. Red-headed Buntings *Emberiza bruniceps* are a standout species that migrates through here.



Jungle Mynah *Acridotheres fuscus*

Come summer, the resident breeders are in full force. The adjoining woods host a small but important breeding population of Chestnut-tailed Starlings *Sturnia malabarica*. Currently, this is the only known site in Pakistan where this species is known to breed. Their allies, Brahminy Starlings *Sturnia pagodarum*, Jungle Mynas *Acridotheres fuscus*, and Indian Pied Mynas *Gracupica contra* also nest around the vicinity. This is the breeding season for Indian Golden Orioles *Oriolus kundoo*, Black Drongos *Dicrurus macrocerus*, Asian Green Bee-eaters *Merops orientalis*, Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters *Merops persicus*, Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*, Black Bulbuls *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*, Himalayan Bulbuls *Pycnonotus leucogenys*, Jacobin Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus*, Grey-bellied Cuckoo *Cacomantis passerinus*, Common Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococcyx varius*, Coppermith Barbet *Psilopogon haemacephalus*, and Blue-throated Barbet *Psilopogon asiaticus*. Calls of these birds can be heard everywhere. Spotted Doves *Spilopelia chinensis*, Yellow-throated Sparrows *Gymnoris xanthocollis*, and Yellow-crowned Woodpeckers *Leiopicus mahrattensis* are also common. The wetlands host good numbers of Pheasant-tailed Jacanas *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* in the summer, along with Black Bittern *Ixobrychus flavicollis*, Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis*, and Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*. The Egretta Trifecta — Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*, Medium Egret *Ardea intermedia*, and Great Egret *Ardea alba*—are ever-present along with Black-crowned Night Herons *Nycticorax nycticorax*.

The riparian zone of the lake also hosts Brown Crake *Zapornia akool*, the most range-restricted crake species in the country. This hotspot has also been known to host the last confirmed sighting of Indian Skimmers *Rynchops albicollis*



Himalayan Prinia *Prinia crinigera*



Grey Bushchat *Saxicola ferreus*

eBird links for the hotspots that make up the entire area are provided as follows:

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L7966131?m=6>

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L950809?m=6>

<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L6313468?m=6>

# Karoojhar: Ecotourism alone could be a transformative force for the economy

Salman Baloch

The Karoojhar Mountains, nestled in the arid expanse of the Thar Desert in Sindh, Pakistan, stand as a testament to cultural, ecological, historical, and geological richness. The need to protect this haven for birds in the Karoojhar region cannot be overstated. Contributing significantly to the region's geological and ecological diversity, these mountains host a plethora of unique flora and fauna specially adapted to the harsh conditions of the Thar Desert. Researching these species offers invaluable insights into life's evolution and adaptation in extreme environments.

The Karoojhar Mountains (Figure 1.) play a vital role in conserving unique and endangered species, particularly serving as a safe zone for various endangered vulture species. Their conservation is imperative, prompting researchers and conservationists to delve into these ecosystems, implementing measures for the protection and preservation of biodiversity. Functioning as a catchment area for rainwater, the mountains give rise to seasonal rivers and streams, crucial for managing water resources in the water-scarce Thar Desert. After constructing various small check dams, this catchment has become a game-changer for local farmers, transforming into an economic zone for the region.

The scenic beauty of the Karoojhar Mountains beckons tourists and nature enthusiasts, presenting an opportunity for eco-tourism. This potential hub could generate economic opportunities for local communities while fostering environmental awareness.

In a recent field visit to Karoojhar on January 14th, 2024, we explored historical and cultivation sites to understand the environmental concerns related to mining in the Karoojhar Hills. Due to restrictions on exploration, this critically important habitat for wildlife remains largely unexplored. During this visit, observations of three endangered vulture species (Indian Vulture *Gyps indicus*, Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*, and Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis*) and the rare Grey-Headed Canary-Flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis* were recorded. The latter marks the third record in some decades for the Sindh region

No.	Common Name	Scientific Name
1	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
2	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>
3	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
4	Asian Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
5	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i>
6	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
7	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
8	Rock Pigeon (Feral)	<i>Columba livia</i>
9	Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>
10	Eurasian Collared-Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
11	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
12	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
13	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
14	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>
15	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
16	White-tailed Lapwing	<i>Vanellus leucurus</i>
17	Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>
18	River Tern	<i>Sterna aurantia</i>

19	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>
20	Himalayan Griffon	<i>Gyps himalayensis</i>
21	Indian Vulture	<i>Gyps indicus</i>
22	Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>
23	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
24	Long-legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo rufinus</i>
25	Greater Spotted Eagle	<i>Clanga clanga</i>
26	Steppe Eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>
27	Bonelli's Eagle	<i>Aquila fasciata</i>
28	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus pennatus</i>
29	Indian Pond-Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
30	Eastern Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus coromandus</i>
31	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
32	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
33	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>
34	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>
35	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
36	Gray-headed Canary-Flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>
37	Indian Robin	<i>Copsychus fulicatus</i>
38	Variable Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe picata</i>
39	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
40	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
41	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
42	White-eared Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus leucotis</i>
43	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Curruca curruca</i>
44	Purple Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i>
45	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
46	Yellow-throated Sparrow	<i>Gymnoris xanthocollis</i>

**Table 1.** List of species of birds seen and observed throughout the trip

The birdwatching list from this visit includes a diverse array of species, but it's essential to note that Karoojhar and its surroundings boast a potential hotspot for over 500 bird species. In comparison, neighboring Indian districts, drawing thousands of local and international birdwatchers, report the uniqueness of this region. Analyzing reports on platforms like eBird, iNaturalist, and other publicly available resources reveals the untapped biodiversity.

In light of these observations, I urge the Government of Sindh and the Government of Pakistan to explore the ecotourism potential of this region. Ecotourism alone could be a transformative force for the economy, inviting international conservationist organizations to protect endangered species like vultures and other mammals. While agriculture contributes to local economic growth, unchecked mining poses a severe threat. It not only jeopardizes heritage sites but also endangers the future of Pakistan. Halting mining activities is not just an option; it is a necessity. I am hopeful that the Supreme Court of Pakistan will uphold its stance on protecting the critically important ecological Karoojhar Mountains, preventing the destruction of this precious gift of nature.



Himalayan Griffon Vulture *Gyps himalayensis*



Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*



Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*



Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis*



Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*



Yellow-throated Sparrow *Petronia xanthocollis*



Long-billed Vulture *Gyps indicus*



Figure . Habitat of Karoonjhar Mountains showing the expanse of scrubland and rainfed nullahs at Nagarparkar city. ©Dileep Permar



# Whinchat on a winning streak

Pharahnaz Naveed Ashraf

During our trip to Gilgit-Baltistan last year, our group made an unexpected and thrilling discovery. On the evening of May 10th, while heading back to our hotel, we decided to make use of the remaining daylight by stopping at the confluence of the Hunza and Nagar rivers near Ganish. This area, situated at an elevation of around 2,500 meters (8,200 feet), is characterized by its unique confluence, where the icy waters from the Nagar River merge with the turquoise Hunza River. The habitat around Ganish features a mix of sparse alpine vegetation and scattered trees, set against the dramatic backdrop of rugged mountain peaks (Figure 1.).

Like typical birders, we all tended to our instinctual paths when we saw Ellen Van Kalmhout, an ardent Dutch birder gesturing to us urgently. Her attention had been diverted by our driver Wajahat to some birds. Looking through her binoculars, Ellen found one that was a little different and not quite like the rest of the Siberian Stonechats *Saxicola maurus*. Seeing her calling us, we rushed over to her side of the bridge and observed the bird she had pointed out. Upon close examination, Anssi Kulberg, a very dedicated Finnish birdwatcher, proclaimed it to be a Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*, without realizing at that moment that this bird had never been recorded in Pakistan before. I was busy firing away my camera shutter for some clear images for identification. Back at the hotel, we gathered around our bird guides, scrutinizing the photographs. It was then that the excitement erupted—we had indeed found a Whinchat (Figure 2.), a bird never before documented in Pakistan. This remarkable sighting marked a new country record, underscoring the ever-surprising nature of birding and the importance of keen observation and thorough documentation.

Whinchat is mainly distributed widely across the Western Palearctic realm, and has been recorded from Srilanka and India already. This was a long awaited bird for the Checklist of Birds of Pakistan.



Figure 1. Ganish bridge between Hunza and Nagar



Figure 2. Male Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* a top of a heightened platform

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## Rarity from the Zoo: Brown-breasted Flycatcher in Pakistan

Rashid Asghar

The Brown-breasted Flycatcher *Muscicapa muttui* also known as Layard's Flycatcher is a winter migrant to Southern India up to Gujarat state to the west and Sri Lanka to the south. It breeds in China, Northeast India and Southeast Asia. It can be easily told apart from other similar 'brown' flycatchers by its pale legs, pale and long beak with a decurved tip and brown breast-band and flanks.

The first record of this species from Pakistan was in January 2019 by Noor Alam at WWF Wetland Centre, Hawksbay, Karachi, Sindh province. and since then it has been regularly recorded by many birdwatchers from different parts of Karachi in winter months. It has not yet been found elsewhere in Pakistan. Brown Breasted Flycatcher is seen in Karachi division (Figure 1.) from November to April as till now. Table 1. summarizes all the records of this bird from Pakistan:

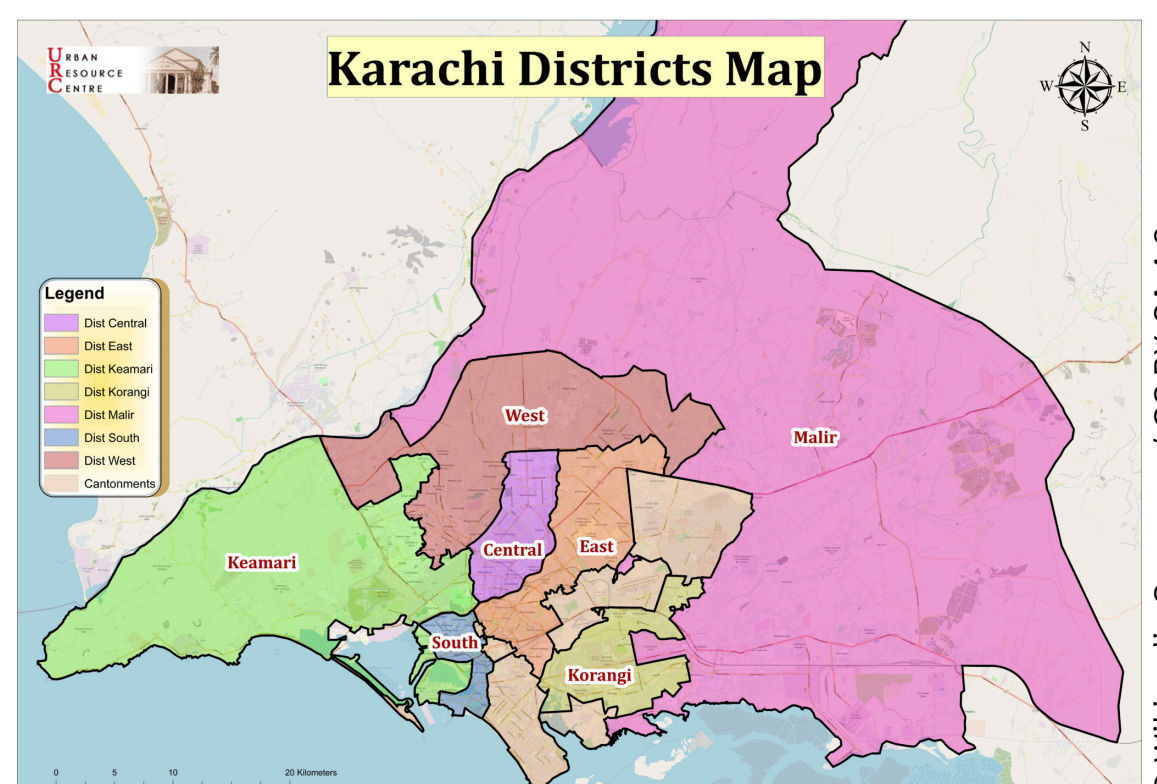


Figure 1. Map of the Districts of Karachi Division

**Table 1.** Records of Brown-breasted Flycatcher *Muscicapa muttui* from Pakistan

No.	Location	Date	Individual(s)	Reference
1	WWF Wetland center, Hawksbay, Keamari	January 2019	1	Alam (2019)
2	Karachi Zoological Garden, Karachi South	29 November 2020	1	Shaikh (2019)
3	Deh Thano, Malir	14 November 2021 - 5 December 2021	1	Baloch and Baloch (2021)
4	Karachi Zoological Garden, Karachi South	5 February 2023	3	Pechuho (2023)
5	Karachi Zoological Garden, Karachi South	16 January 2023	-	Mustafa (2023)
6	Karachi Zoological Garden, Karachi South	25 February 2023	1	Mendhro (2023)
7	Karachi Zoological Garden, Karachi South	April 2023	-	Taj (2023)
8	Karachi Zoological Garden, Karachi South (Figure 2.)	20 February 2024	1	Asghar (2024)

As the table shows, Karachi Zoo has been the most preferred site for the Brown-breasted Flycatcher's occurrence, perhaps due to the fact that this flycatcher lives among dense thickets of broad-leaved forests in other parts of its range. The zoo, being one of the most well-wooded places in the mega-city, provides the best match to its favorite habitat, surrounded by densely packed buildings and settlements mainly bare of any groves or gardens.

At the time of its early sightings in 2019, it was considered a national rarity, but over the last five years, the frequency of records indicates that it is now a rare winter visitor to Karachi, which is now the westernmost tip of its global range. A fair number of birdwatchers in the mega-city is why it is so well-documented. Previously known to winter up to the state of Gujarat in India, this species could very well winter in suitable localities in Thatta and Badin districts of Sindh along the coastal region.

Karachi Zoological Garden has also been very favorable for other national and local rarities until now. Some of these include the Gray-headed Canary Flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis*, Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*, Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*, and Black-naped Oriole *Oriolus chinensis*. This green spot appears to be a respite for many resident bird species as well, including a large heronry with large numbers of Black-crowned Night Herons *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta*, and Indian Pond Herons *Ardeola grayii*.

**Figure 1.** Brown-breasted Flycatcher *Muscicapa muttui* above the crocodile pond**References:**

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# Birds of Dera Ismail Khan: In The Footsteps of Juha Kylänpää

Muhammad Ali Rajput

Juha Kylänpää spent around 10 years in Dera Ismail Khan (1988-1998) and documented the avifauna of the district during that period, recording 341 species. He published his work in the journal "Forktail" (Issue No. 16 – August 2000) with the title "Birds of Dera Ismail Khan District of North West Frontier Province in Pakistan" (Pages 15-28). His work was groundbreaking and laid the foundation for future ornithological research in this remarkable region. It provided amateurs like me with a solid starting point to explore the fauna of the area. Since his research, significant changes have occurred in Dera Ismail Khan (D.I.Khan), with very few being positive. A surge in terrorism in the surrounding districts has led to mass migration towards D.I.Khan. Accompanied by the rise in the local population, the impact of human activity is evident everywhere. Increased use of land for agriculture, use of modern machinery and firearms has resulted in escalating habitat destruction and hunting.

I (along with my younger brother, Muhammad Taha, who goes out exploring with me from time to time) have been observing the fauna of the region for over 6 years. Although my knowledge does not compare to that of Juha Kylänpää, I have recorded some new birds that Juha Kylänpää never saw, and noted some other changes as well. My observations are summarized in the following tables:

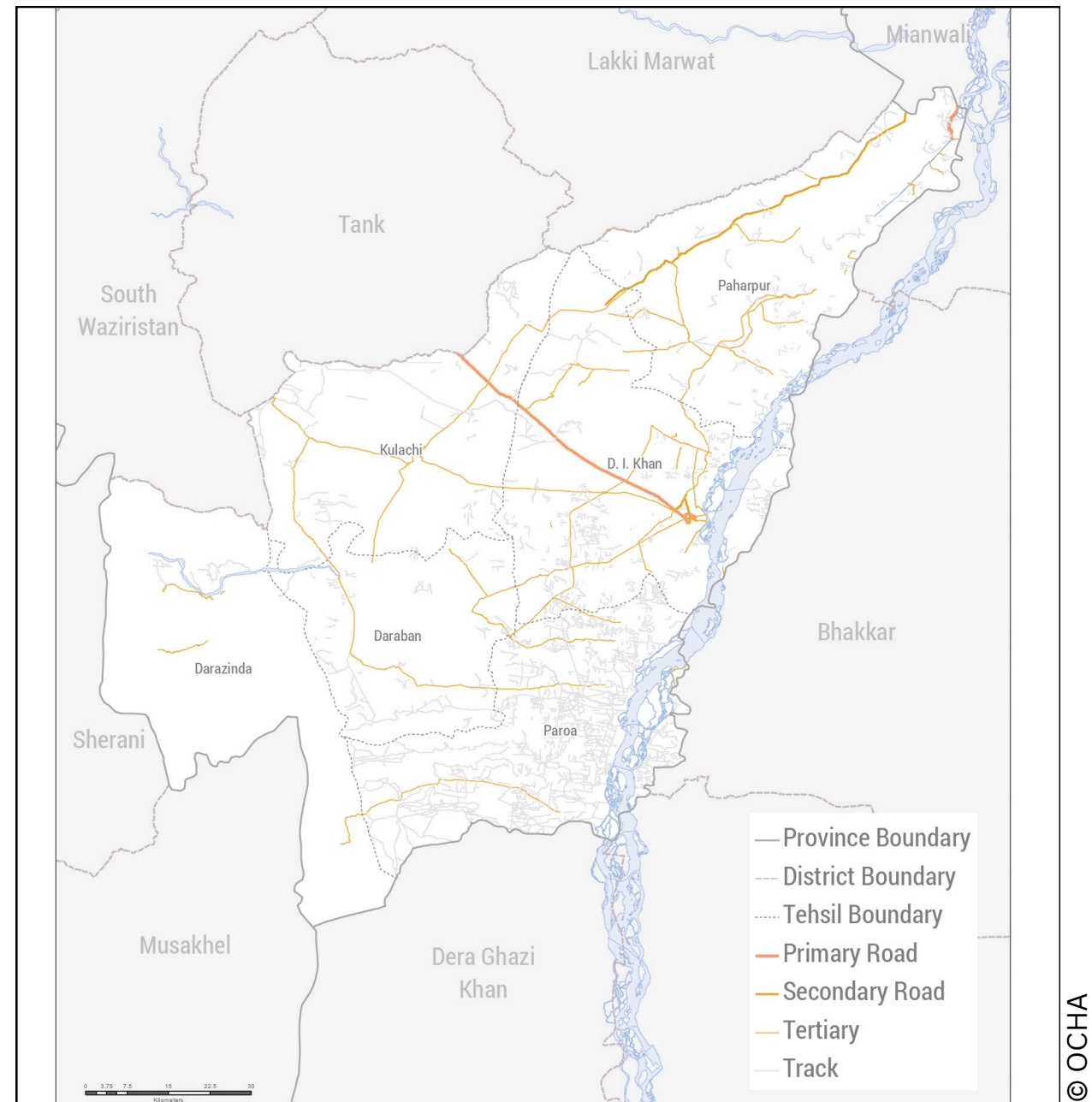


Figure 1. Map of the District of Dera Ismail Khan

Table 1. List of Additions to Juha Kylänpää's Birds of D.I.Khan

No.	Common Name <sup>s</sup>	Scientific Name	Sightings
1	Greater White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	One sighting of a flock of 3 birds on Indus River.
2	Knob-billed Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>	One sighting of a single bird in a wetland near Indus River.
3	Smew	<i>Mergellus albellus</i>	At least 3 sightings at a single location from 28 January to 11 February, 2024 on a large freshwater lake. At most, 5 birds were seen together.
4	Common Wood-Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Migrant and occasionally recorded. Once observed a flock of over 500 individuals. Usually found in plains near the Indus River.
5	Grey-bellied Cuckoo	<i>Cacomantis passerinus</i>	At least 2 confirmed records. One was heard in Sheikh Badin National Park, and another was recorded in a wetland near the Indus River.
6	European Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	Regularly recorded. Mostly seen in the plains near Indus and Sheikh Badin National Park. Its absence in Kylänpää's work is quite strange.
7	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	One sighting of a single bird resting in a flock of other Waders in a wetland-fishing farm complex.
8	Barred Buttonquail	<i>Turnix suscitator</i>	Regularly recorded. Mostly close to Indus River.
9	Oriental Pratincole	<i>Glareola maldivarum</i>	At least one confirmed sighting of 2 birds in flight over a large lake near the Indus River. Large pratincoles seen a couple of times again, but they couldn't be identified. It should be noted that Kylänpää recorded Collared Pratincole, not Oriental.
10	Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>	One sighting of a single bird in flight over the Indus River.
11	Himalayan Griffon	<i>Gyps himalayensis</i>	A single adult bird observed in a flock of Eurasian Griffons in Sheikh Badin National Park.
12	Scaly-bellied Woodpecker	<i>Picus squamatus</i>	One sighting of a single bird in Sheikh Badin National Park.
13	Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	Only seen in some areas of Sulaiman Mountains above Darazinda.
14	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	Uncommon but widespread in the cultivated/forested regions of the district.
15	Striated Grassbird	<i>Megalurus palustris</i>	Constantly present at a few wetlands.
16	Indian Pied Starling	<i>Gracupica contra</i>	2 sightings of a few birds near wetlands of the Indus River. Both sightings are around 100 KM apart..

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17	Brown Rock Chat	<i>Oenanthe fusca</i>	This species has established itself. Quite common around human habitations.
18	Trumpeter Finch	<i>Bucanetes githagineus</i>	One sighting of a single bird in the semidesert region.
19	Black-headed Bunting	<i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>	One sighting of a single bird in a flock of Red-headed Bunting and other passerines in a wetland and cultivated habitat near the Indus River.



Brown Rockchat *Oenanthe fusca*



Knob-billed duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*



Barred Buttonquail *Turnix suscitator*



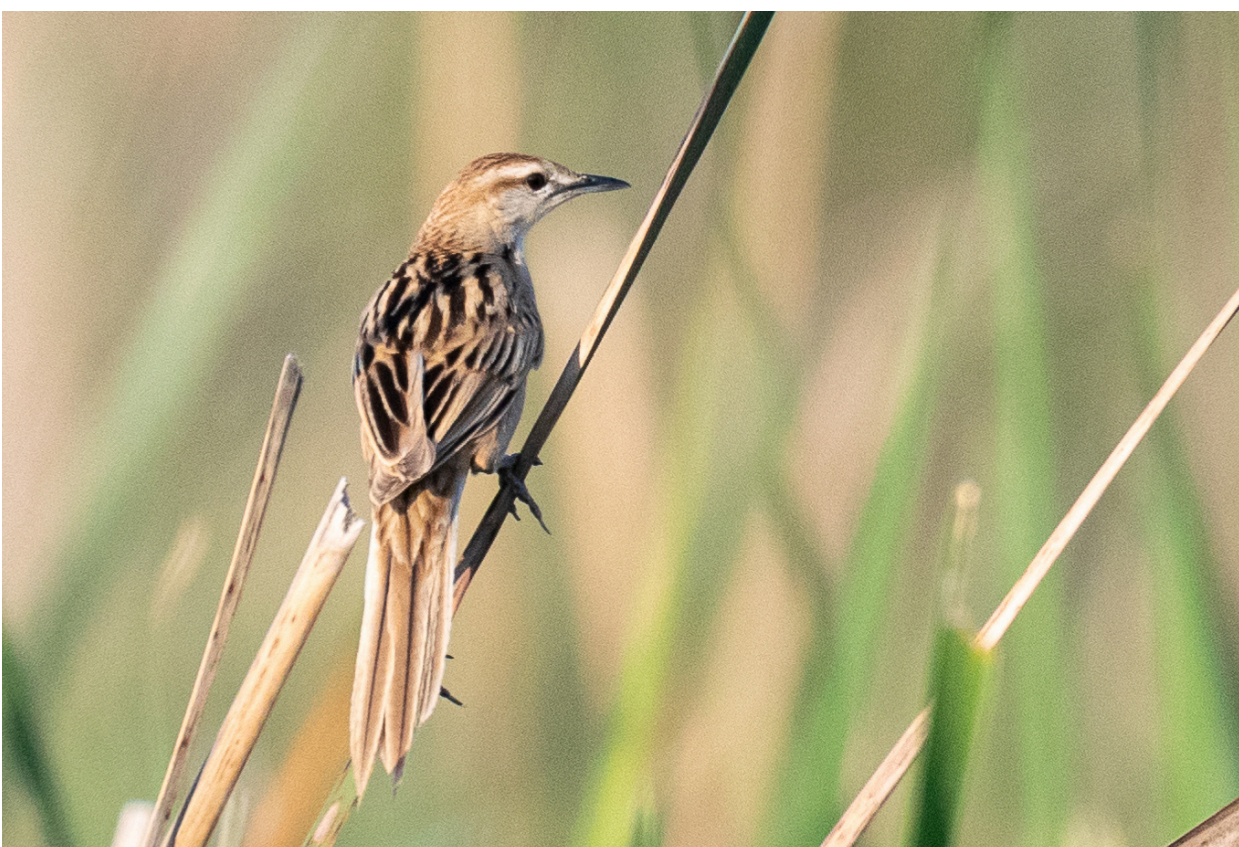
Scaly-bellied Woodpecker *Picus squamatus*



Red-naped Ibis *Pseudibis papillosa*



Indian Pied Starling *Gracupica contra*



Striated Grassbird *Megalurus palustris*



Smew *Mergellus albellus*

**Table 2.** List of Birds with Drastic Increase/Decrease in Population since Juha Kylänpää's Work (Incomplete list)

No.	Common Name	Scientific Name	Status
1	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	Kylänpää mentions it as "regular and not uncommon migrant on the river." Only a few sightings by me. Mostly in flocks of Grey Herons and other waders in the middle of the River.
2	White-rumped Vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>	Kylänpää mentions it as a "regular visitor in February-July, occasional in August-January." There have been no sightings of this species by me.
3	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Kylänpää mentions it as a "common winter visitor." He mentions seeing over 100 birds together. Its population seems to have dwindled here. Now recorded on healthy wetlands only and mostly single birds. Only occurring in decent sized flocks (10+ birds) at Chashma Barrage Wetlands and around the River.
4	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	Kylänpää mentions it as a "common migrant." Though only 3 sightings by me.
5	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	Kylänpää mentions it as a "common migrant in spring, uncommon but regular in autumn, rare in summer, very rare in winter." This species has never felt as "common" to me. Only a few sightings.
6	European Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	Kylänpää never recorded it. Now regular sightings every year. Mostly recorded in the plains near Indus and also in Sheikh Badin National Park. Its absence during Kylänpää's time is quite surprising.
7	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	Kylänpää mentions it as "Very common resident, occurring throughout the area". Now it occurs only in and around the D.I.Khan city with a few sightings elsewhere. It was very common practice in the past to take chicks from the nests, which might be one of the main reasons in its disappearance.
8	Streaked Scrub Warbler	<i>Scotocerca inquieta</i>	Kylänpää mentions it as a "common resident." I have recorded it only once.
9	Cetti's Warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>	Kylänpää mentions it as a "not uncommon winter visitor on the best wetlands." Yet to be recorded by me. Perhaps overlooked?
10	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	Kylänpää never recorded it. It is still scarce but uncommon but widespread in the cultivated/forested regions of the district.
11	Yellow-eyed Babbler	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>	Kylänpää recorded two sightings only. Now recorded regularly throughout the district in wetlands, cultivated plains.
12	White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>	Kylänpää mentions it as a "not uncommon resident." Recorded only once by me.
13	Indian Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>	Kylänpää saw a single bird only. Good number of sightings by me. Now this bird is also a summer breeding visitor to particular forested areas. This bird is mostly seen in plantations.
14	Common Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i>	Kylänpää recorded a single bird. Now it is constantly present in healthy forested areas.
15	Brown Rock Chat	<i>Cercomela fusca</i>	Kylänpää never recorded it. Now it is quite common. Recorded mostly around human populations.
16	Black-breasted Weaver	<i>Ploceus benghalensis</i>	Kylänpää recorded 9 sightings. But now regularly recorded in summer. Sometimes breeding around the author's home as well.



**Figure 2.** A view of Chasma wetlands

#### Discussion:

There are around 50 species that Juha Kylänpää recorded which I haven't seen yet. Some of these birds are quite rare in Pakistan, such as the Redwing, Eurasian Reed Warbler, Red-necked Grebe, Sociable Lapwing, Indian Skimmer, and Greater Scaup. It makes sense that I haven't seen these species due to their rare status. Other species might have simply been overlooked, such as some warblers and pipits.

Some species that I have not recorded, or have recorded rarely, might be migrants passing through D.I. Khan within a limited timeframe, which could cause them to be overlooked if I am not out exploring on those days. Some of these species include the Eurasian Curlew, Whimbrel, and Caspian Tern. This may simply be speculation on my part, and these birds might have become rarer since Juha Kylänpää's work.

Some of the species that were globally threatened during Juha Kylänpää's time seem to have, unfortunately, become even rarer, like the Pallas's Fish Eagle, Indian Skimmer, and Sociable Lapwing.

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# Large-Leaf Dogwood: A Natural Bird Magnet

Marium Majeed Dar

Who does not want to observe beautiful and diverse wildlife, especially birds, in their surroundings without keeping them in captivity? Trees are important shelters and food sources for birds, and we can attract and observe various bird species by planting appropriate trees in and around our residences. I have a tree in my backyard where I have recorded dozens of bird species. This bird magnet belongs to the Dogwood family and is known as Large-Leaf Dogwood *Cornus macrophylla*, which is found in many parts of Asia between 1500-2700 m elevation, including Japan, Taiwan, China, Myanmar (Burma), Bhutan, Nepal, India, Kashmir, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. In Pakistan, it is quite common in the Murree hills range. Its impressive size, attractive foliage, and vibrant berries make it a popular ornamental tree in gardens and landscapes. This deciduous tree grows up to 15-20 meters tall, with a broad, spreading crown and a straight, sturdy trunk. Its most distinctive feature is its large, oval-shaped leaves reaching up to 20 cm in length. These leaves are glossy dark green and have a smooth texture, with a pointed tip and serrated edges. In the fall, the leaves turn a vibrant yellow or orange before dropping.



Figure 1. Flowers of Large-Leaf Dogwood *Cornus macrophylla*

It was noticed that different birds exhibit different behaviors in food consumption. Some birds, such as woodpeckers, mynas, bulbuls, and tits, like to eat the berries perching on the branches of the same tree, while corvids (crows and magpies) just pluck the berries off and take them away to eat elsewhere. Berries of the Dogwood tree, being rich in fats, are of great nutritious value, particularly for wintering birds of the Himalayas, and keep them active during the long cold months. Mynas, crows, and magpies consume the whole berry and pass the seed through their gut. I have observed this many times in their droppings. Smaller birds, such as tits and sparrows, take off and consume the pulp of berries instead of swallowing the whole fruit. They eat the coat and leave the seed as it is.

The Large-Leaf Dogwood's dense foliage and sturdy branches provide an ideal nesting site for tits, flycatchers, and Russet Sparrows. Its broad canopy and dense leaves are ideal for providing shelter and roosting sites for many birds, protecting them from harsh weather and predators.

Being a native tree, the Large-Leaf Dogwood plays a crucial role in maintaining ecosystem balance and supporting local biodiversity as well as avifauna. It not only provides food and shelter to various life forms but also brings about seed dispersal and forest regeneration. Its importance for birds highlights the significance of preserving and planting native tree species in urban and natural environments to support local biodiversity and ecosystem health. This tree prefers well-drained soil and partial shade to full sun. It requires relatively low maintenance and can tolerate urban conditions, making it an excellent choice for city gardens and urban parks.

In late spring, the Large-Leaf Dogwood produces small, creamy-white flowers in clusters, which turn into bright red to purple berries in late summer. These delicious and long-lasting berries are a valuable food source for many birds and other wildlife. The Dogwood tree in my backyard attracts different, small and large, resident and migratory birds throughout the year. I have recorded 28 species of birds feeding, nesting, and roosting on this tree in one year, which are listed in the following table (Table 1.):

Table 1. Birds recorded on Large-Leaf Dogwood *Cornus macrophylla*

No.	Common Name	Scientific Name
1	Great Barbet	<i>Psilopogon virens</i>
2	Blue-throated Barbet	<i>Psilopogon asiaticus</i>
3	Brown-fronted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocoptes auriceps</i>
4	Lesser Yellownape	<i>Picus chlorolophus</i>
5	Himalayan Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos himalayensis</i>
6	Grey-headed Woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>
7	Scaly-bellied Woodpecker	<i>Picus squamatus</i>
8	Cinereous Tit	<i>Parus cinereus</i>
9	Green-backed Tit	<i>Parus monticolus</i>
10	Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>
11	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
12	Yellow-billed Blue-Magpie	<i>Urocissa flavirostris</i>
13	Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>
14	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
15	Jungle Myna	<i>Acridotheres fuscus</i>
16	Indian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus kundoo</i>
17	Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>
18	Russet Sparrow	<i>Passer cinnamomeus</i>
19	Black-and-Yellow Grosbeak	<i>Mycerobas icteroides</i>
20	Himalayan Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus leucogenys</i>
21	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
22	Black Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i>
23	Blue Whistling-Thrush	<i>Myophonus caeruleus</i>
24	Black-throated Thrush	<i>Turdus atrogularis</i>
25	Streaked Laughingthrush	<i>Trochalopteron lineatum</i>
26	Himalayan Bluetail	<i>Tarsiger rufilatus</i>
27	Blue-capped Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus caeruleocephalus</i>
28	Red-billed Leiothrix	<i>Leiothrix lutea</i>



Lesser Yellownappe *Picus chlorolophus*



Great Barbet *Psilopogon virens*

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# Trip Report:

## Balochistan Expedition 2024

### Salman Baloch, Muhammad Akram Awan

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan covering 43.6% of the country's area, but it has not had much research done on its wildlife. The advantage of traveling to such an untouched region is that there's always a chance to discover something unique and delightful. From 6th to 11th May 2024, a team of Rewilding Indus consisting of the both authors visited 3 districts of Northern Balochistan (Killa Abdullah, Ziarat and Quetta) to explore biodiversity of the region. A report of the avifauna recorded during our study is being presented here.

**Day 1 (06 May 2024):** Both team members (AA from Islamabad and SB from Karachi) joined one another at Quetta and travelled straight to Killi Haji Muhammad Ali Bawri (30.763, 66.649), a village situated on Chaman road, in Killa Abdullah district. We birded from afternoon to evening in the hills around the Killi (=village).

**Day 2 (07 May 2024):** Next morning we went to Khojak Top (30.841, 66.583) and spent the whole day exploring the hills around Khojak pass and the historical Sheelabagh railway station. We went back to Quetta that evening.

**Day 3 & 4 (08-09 May 2024):** On morning of 7th May we set out for Ziarat, a famous hill station of Balochistan known for Pakistan's largest Juniper forests. We spent 2 days here and explored the places around Ziarat city, Baabe-Ziarat and Zizri (30.358, 67.738). We returned to Quetta on the evening of 9th May.

**Day 5 (10 May 2024):** After spending night in Quetta city, we were up for our last two destinations, both around the capital of Balochistan. The first place we covered was the home of the iconic 'Chiltan Wildgoat *Capra sp.*', Hazarganji-Chiltan National Park (05, 66.91) on 10th May.

**Day 6 (11 May 2024):** The last location on our itinerary was Urak Valley (30.272, 67.161), although a busy picnic spot, always crowded by the residents of Quetta, it had been the most productive locality of our journey with 19 species of birds documented from the valley and the orchards in its immediate neighborhood.

**Weather and Flora:** The weather was very balanced, neither cool nor so hot. The temperature remained between 20 and 28 degrees Celsius. Due to the delay in western depression rain and snowfall in northern Balochistan, almost all spots were lush green and full of wild flowers.

A complete checklist of all the birds we have recorded from Quetta, Ziarat and Killa Abdullah districts, in 6 days, is provided in Table 1.

The following abbreviations have been used to represent the localities. **KL.** Killi Haji Muhammad Bawri. **KJ.** Khojak top and vicinity, **ZR.** Ziarat, **HG.** Hazarganji Chiltan National Park, **UR.** Urak Valley.

**Table 1.** Birds recorded throughout the trip

No.	Common Name	Scientific Name	Localities of Observations
1	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>	ZR.
2	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	HG.
3	Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	ZR.
4	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	KJ.

5	Chukar Partridge	<i>Alectoris chukar</i>	HG.
6	See-see Partridge	<i>Ammoperdix griseogularis</i>	KL.
7	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	KJ.
8	Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	KL. KJ. ZR. UR.
9	Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>	KL. KJ. UR.
10	Eurasian Collared-Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	UR.
11	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	ZR. UR.
12	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	ZR. UR.
13	European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>	KJ. ZR.
14	European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>	KJ.
15	Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	KL. KJ. UR.
16	Desert Lark	<i>Ammomanes deserti</i>	KL. KJ.
17	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	KL. KJ. HG. UR.
18	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>	UR.
19	Pale Martin	<i>Riparia diluta</i>	UR.
20	Long-billed Pipit	<i>Anthus similis</i>	HG.
21	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	UR.
22	White-eared Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus leucotis</i>	HG.
23	Great Gray Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	HG.
24	Bay-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius vittatus</i>	KJ. ZR. UR.
25	Long-tailed Shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>	ZR. UR.
26	Siberian Stonechat	<i>Saxicola maurus</i>	ZR.
27	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	ZR.
28	Hume's Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe albonigra</i>	KJ.
29	Variable Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe picata</i>	KL. UR.
30	Blue Whistling-Thrush	<i>Myophonus caeruleus</i>	ZR.
31	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	ZR.
32	Streaked Scrub Warbler	<i>Scotocerca inquieta</i>	UR.
33	Eastern Orphean Warbler	<i>Curruca crassirostris</i>	HG.
34	Blyth's Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>	KJ.
35	Plain Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus neglectus</i>	ZR.
36	Sulphur-bellied Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus griseolus</i>	ZR.
37	Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>	KJ.
38	Indian Paradise-Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>	KJ.
39	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	UR.
40	Rosy Starling	<i>Pastor roseus</i>	HG.
41	Eurasian Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	KJ. ZR. UR.
42	Yellow-billed Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>	HG.
43	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	KL. KJ. UR.
44	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	KL. KJ. UR.
45	Fire-fronted Serin	<i>Serinus pusillus</i>	ZR.
46	Trumpeter Finch	<i>Bucanetes githagineus</i>	KL.
47	Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	HG.
48	Pale Rock Finch	<i>Carpospiza brachydactyla</i>	KL.
49	White-capped Bunting	<i>Emberiza stewarti</i>	ZR. UR.

A total of 49 species of birds have been recorded, of which the most interesting finding was the third national and first record of the Pale Rock Finch *Carpospiza brachydactyla* from Balochistan. It was first reported from Pakistan by Karam and Shaikh (2021) from Kirthar National Park (Photographed by Noor Alam), and was recently recorded by Haroon Ahmed Palari from Jhampir, Thatha district (Sindh).

**Acknowledgements:** We would like to express our gratitude to Rewilding Indus (RI) for organizing and funding the expedition. Our thanks are also due to Mayen Khan, Zahoor Khan Achakzai, Saleh Muhammad Khan, Abdul Jabbar Khan, Dr. Tariq Wajdan Rind, Nauroz Jamali and Shoaib Tariq Baloch, for their guidance, help, hospitality and company in the field, throughout our stay in Balochistan.



We believe that many such interesting records of birds and other wildlife can be achieved if local birdwatchers and nature-loving photographers keep on exploring the province.



European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*



Pale Rockfinch *Carpodacus brachydactyla*



Sulphur-bellied Warbler *Phylloscopus griseolus*



Indian Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi*



Alpine Chough *Pyrrhocorax graculus*



Streaked Scrub Warbler *Scotocerca inquieta*



Plain Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus neglectus*



Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

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# Bird Movement Alert

## Northern & Western Highlands:

Most of the small songbirds are breeding now. Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassinus*, Grey Bushchat *Saxicola ferreus*, and Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia* are nesting and will continue to fledge young ones in coming days. Brook's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus subviridis*, Indian Blue Robin *Larivora brunnea*, Large-billed Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus magnirostris*, and White-bellied Redstart *Luscinia phaenicuroides* are actively singing. Eurasian Sparrowhawks *Accipiter nisus* are displaying in Northern Balochistan and Cuckoos *Cuculus canorus* have arrived as well.

## Indus Plains:

Common Rosefinches *Carpodacus erythrinus* and Leaf Warblers species are almost done passing through via the plains. Indian Paradise Flycatchers *Terpsiphone paradisi* have started breeding in the Upper Indus Plains and wetlands are rife with Black Bitterns *Ixobrychus flavicollis*, Yellow Bitterns *Ixobrychus sinensis*, and Cinnamon Bitterns *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*, as well as Pheasant-tailed Jacanas *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*. Also brace for summer breeders, Jacobin Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus*, Grey-bellied Cuckoo *Cacomantis passerinus*, and Common Hawk-Cuckoo *Hierococyx varius*.

## Coastal & Off-shore:

This is the perfect time to observe waders getting breeding plumages. At this time, Dunlins *Calidris alpina* have black bellies, Curlew Sandpipers *Calidris ferruginea* are in their reds, and Spotted Redshanks *Tringa erythropus* in their iconic pitch black and white mottled look. Skuas *Stercorarius* spp. have been noted at Karachi coast. Head to the coast now to observe the breeding colors of Tibetan Sandpipers *Charadrius atrifrons* and observe how they differ from their recently split sister species, Mongolian Sandpipers *Charadrius mongolus*. Come monsoons, keep a close eye out for wind-blown pelagics.

## Forgotten Birds: Common Nightingale

### Muhammad Akram Awan

#### Introduction:

Common or Rufous Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* breeds in Eurasia from the Britain, Central and Southern Europe, Russia, some African countries (Morocco, Algeria), Western and Central Asia, Turkey, eastward to Iran and Afghanistan (subspecies *golzii*=*hafizi*). It migrates to Sub-Saharan Africa in winter. The nightingale is a skulking bird and is more heard than seen. It is known for its melodious song, which is often mentioned in poetry and fiction. In Persian, Balochi, and Urdu literature, it is often called 'Bolbol,' creating confusion with 'Bulbul' (Family *Pycnonotidae*), but more appropriate names in Persian, e.g., *Hazar-Dastaan* and *Andleeb*, also exist. It is the national bird of Iran.

#### Description, Habits and Habitat:

The Nightingale is an 18 cm-long, plain-brown bird, with whitish under-parts with a sandy-buff wash on the breast, flanks, and under-tail coverts. It has a distinctive rufous-brown tail, a pale eye-ring, and an indistinct supercilium. It often feeds on insects on the ground with its tail partially cocked up and lives in parks, gardens, orchards, and forest edges. It prefers dense undergrowth usually in proximity to water but also seen in dryer habitats, especially on wintering-grounds.

#### When and Where to find Nightingale:

The Nightingale is a passage migrant or vagrant to our region. The first record of this 'chat' for the Subcontinent and the only Indian Record was from Oudh Terai (Uttar Pradesh), in October 1865. All other records are from Pakistan where the best time to find it is in Spring (February to April) and Autumn (October) from Western and North-Western Balochistan (Figure 1.). It is silent outside the breeding season, and due to a lack of observations, it may be more frequent in the province than what the above-mentioned records indicate.



Figure 1. Map of known Records of Nightingale, *Luscinia megarhynchos* in Pakistan



Figure 2. ssp. *megarhynchos* at Whisby Nature Park, Lincolnshire, England

Table 1. Records of Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* from Pakistan

No.	Location	Date	Reference	Remarks
1	Quetta	30th April 1909	Meinertzhagen, 1920; Ticehurst, 1926	Deposited in Quetta Museum
2	Quetta	2nd February 1913	Meinertzhagen, 1920	A Male specimen
3	Quetta	October 1913	Ticehurst, 1926	Collected near Quetta
4	Chaghi	April 1939	Christison, 1942	One bird was recorded at Kacha, another at Robot.
5	Nushki	February (Year Unknown)	Mirza, 2007	Z.B. Mirza observed it in a lawn for 3 days.

#### Acknowledgement:

The editorial team of Daangeer is grateful to Sarfraz Hayat for providing a picture of the Nightingale for this note (Figure 1.). The picture was taken in England. No photograph of this bird was available from Pakistan.

#### References:

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# Events Section

Sikand Kumar Udassi

The Sindh Wildlife Department on 20th march conducted a population survey of House sparrows *Passer domesticus* in the port city of Karachi, saying the results would be compiled using standard scientific methods, unique bird count with 121 photographers and wildlife enthusiasts the team recorded 9,035 house sparrows covering 5% of the city which will be used to estimate remaining 95%. Javed Mahar, Chief Conservator of the Sindh Wildlife Department, organized the unique bird count. The survey, employing scientific protocols, aimed to not only survey for and count sparrows but also shed light on threats stemming from human actions. Mahar acknowledged potential survey errors but emphasized the standard methodology employed. Mahera Omar, a wildlife campaigner, described the counting exercise as "interesting," stressed on the importance of citizens observing sparrows daily and emphasizing the need to understand and protect these familiar species.



Excerpt taken: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2480256/pakistan>

# Comic Section

Shibil Alizada

## WHERE ARE THE TREES?



Shibil Alizada



Rewilding Indus (RI) is a body of like minded individuals concerned with the crippling loss of biodiversity in Pakistan. This young initiative is a collective effort towards making a dent in Wildlife Research and Conservation in Pakistan. Daangeer has been made possible through RI's technical support.