larger geographical area, or citizen science initiatives like Migrant Watch (http://migrantwatch.in), may help in understanding the wintering grounds of these cuckoos in the Western Ghats better.

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First photographic record of Blyth's Rosefinch *Carpodacus grandis* from Sikkim, India

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Rahut, B., Dutta, M., & Bonpo, C. R., 2011. First photographic record of Blyth's Rosefinch *Carpodacus grandis* from Sikkim, India. *Indian BIRDS* 7 (5): 146–147.
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Blyth's Rosefinch *Carpodacus grandis*[1] **(Fig. 1)** is found from northern Baluchistan (Ziarat) to Chitral, thence eastward through Gilgit, Astor, Baltistan, Ladakh (not being recorded in Kashmir proper), Lahul, Spiti, Garhwal, and Kumaon (Ali & Ripley 2007). The British Museum holds a specimen from Kumaon (Ali & Ripley 2007).

The species is not globally threatened, and is known to be locally common (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005).

It breeds between 2400 m and 3500 m in Baluchistan (North-West Frontier Province), up to 3700 m in Gilgit (Baltistan), and between 3400 m and 3800 m in Ladakh and Lahul (Ali & Ripley 2007).

Blyth's Rosefinch generally affects juniper, briar, rose bushes, and shrubs in dry biotpope. In winter (end of October to April) it moves down to the foothills (300–2400 m), into the Quetta Valley, Kohat, the Salt Range, Campbellpur, and Rawalapindi. In Dharmsala, Kangra, and Simla it is recorded in winter between 2200 m and 2600 m. In foothill areas it affects bushes, wild olive trees, patches of thorny scrub, gardens, and cultivated spots (Ali & Ripley 2007).

During our third visit to Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary (28–31 August 2011; guide: Chewang Rinchen Bonpo), a designated Important Bird Area in eastern Sikkim, we recorded and photographed a large, stout-billed rosefinch at *c.* 3800 m, near Lungthu (27°45'N, 88°02'E). Instantly noticeable morphological characters of the species were: (i) The prominently large size of the bird as compared to the other rosefinches (e.g. Himalayan White-browed Rosefinch *Carpodacus thura*, Dark-breasted Rosefinch *C. nipalensis*) normally found in the area, (ii) a large heavy bill, (iii) vinous-washed mantle, (iv) silvery-pink supercilium, cheek, and throat, (v) pinkish vent, and (vi) streaks all through the ventral part from throat to the belly.

After minute scrutiny of the photographs, we concluded that it was a Blyth's Rosefinch. We sent photographs of the bird to Krys Kazmierczak, who also confirmed it as a Blyth's Rosefinch (*in litt.* 17 September 2011). Tim Inskipp too posted on the Facebook page of the Sikkim bird group (13 October 2011) that this was probably the first fully acceptable record of the bird from Sikkim.

Sharpe (1888) gives its distribution as, 'Afghanistan and Himalayas from Northern Cashmere to Native Sikhim,' and records a specimen collected in 'Native Sikhim, Aug. 19, 1879 (L. Mandelli),' i.e., present day Sikkim. However, Oates (1890) noted that, 'In the British Museum there is also a single female said to have been procured in Sikhim by Mandelli, but there is no original label attached to this specimen and I fear that some mistake may have been made regarding this locality,' (pp. 216–217). Baker (1926) referred to this Mandelli specimen but attached no doubt to the locality information, and in 1934 he simply stated, 'has once occurred in Sikkim,' (p. 48). Finally Ganguli-Lachungpa et al. (2007) mention its occurrence in the Tso Lhamo plateau-Lashar-Sebu La-Yumesamdong complex.

This is the first photographic documentation of the species not only in the Eastern Himalayas but also east of the Kumaon region.

The Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary in Sikkim, the Neora Valley National Park in West Bengal, and the Toorsa Nature Reserve in Bhutan form a sort of green triangle that is extremely rich in biodiversity. The varied altitudes of these protected areas formulate a wide tier of natural vegetation from the barren alpine slopes at the top to the mixed deciduous variety at the foothills,

1 Elevated to species level from Red-mantled Rosefinch *C. rhodochlamys grandis*, and re-christened Blyth's Rosefinch by Rasmussen & Anderton (2005).

Photos: Biswapriya Rahut

Fig. 1. Blyth's Rosefinch *Carpodacus grandis*.

with conifers, rhododendron groves, malinga bamboo areas, and moist evergreen forests in between. Such a variety of natural vegetation is home to wide diversity of fauna.

The natural vegetation, altitude, and topography somewhat match with the places where the species normally occurs except for the fact that Lungthu is, by no means, a dry biotope.

Rosefinches are much understudied in these areas as the region falls within the restricted zone close to the Indo-Chinese border.

Future studies may reveal an extended home range of Blyth's Rosefinch in the Eastern Himalayas, where they seems to be apparently rare.

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Figs in the diet of Greater Golden-backed Woodpecker *Chrysocolaptes lucidus*

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Figs (*Ficus* spp.) are an important source of food for a wide range of bird species. Surveys of bird diets in both, the New-, and the Old Worlds show that among 1,230 species of frugivorous birds, 990 spp., feed on figs (Shanahan *et al.* 2001; Kissling 2007; Sreekar *et al.* 2010). Though the diet of woodpeckers consists mostly of insects, there are scattered records of figs being eaten by woodpeckers (Shanahan *et al.* 2001).

On 28 February 2010 in Agumbe, Karnataka, India (13°50′52″N, 75°09′35″E; *c.* 557 m ASL), I observed a female Greater Golden-backed Woodpecker *Chrysocolaptes lucidus* on a *Ficus tsjahela* in fruit. The woodpecker was feeding on the ripe fruits of *F. tsjahela* for about five minutes till it flew away. My presence might have affected the behaviour of the woodpecker.

The diet of the Greater Golden-backed Woodpecker consists mostly of insects and grubs, nectar and fruit are taken occasionally as supplementary food (Ali & Ripley 1983; Santharam 2003). Frugivory by woodpeckers in the Western Ghats was earlier reported by Santharam (1999, 2003), who observed frugivory in seven species of woodpeckers (Picidae), none of which were observed feeding on figs. This is the first record of the Greater Golden-backed Woodpecker feeding on figs. The previous records, as well as the current observation, of frugivory in woodpeckers suggest that fruit may comprise a supplementary diet in woodpeckers.

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