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A review of recent occurrences of Blyth's Kingfisher *Alcedo hercules* from Arunachal Pradesh

Blyth's Kingfisher *Alcedo hercules* is a riverine species that is widespread across South-east Asia. It extends its range into north-eastern India, the eastern Himalayas till about extreme eastern Nepal (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; Woodall 2020). Listed as Near Threatened under the IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species (BirdLife International 2016), this species exists in low numbers, as a result of its narrow habitat requirements, and is likely to be declining as a result of habitat loss and fragmentation (BirdLife International 2020). Though it is listed as 'rare' in north-eastern India (Woodall 2020), Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) indicated it as 'fairly common' in Arunachal Pradesh, up to an altitude of 1,200 m. Grimmett et al. (2019) map seven patches in Arunachal Pradesh as its range. However, sight records of Blyth's Kingfisher in India are generally rare, and hill streams of Arunachal Pradesh form an important habitat for this species in its Indian range.

Among 107 eBird records (<https://ebird.org/india/species/blykin1>) of Blyth's Kingfisher across its range, 39 are from India of which 35 are from Arunachal Pradesh. In contrast, amongst the 34 specimens listed in <http://portal.vertnet.org/>, 23 are from India and only three are from Arunachal Pradesh; 15 additional are from areas along the border with Assam (old localities could lie in either of the present states). We compile (Table 1) all known published, and online records of Blyth's Kingfisher (49 records) to provide an insight into the past and recent records through this note. We map (Fig. 1) the records that have location precision and the site numbers (27 sites) are included in the table for cross-reference. Most photographic and sighting records in recent years have been mainly from Namdapha National Park and the West Kameng region (Eagle Nest Wildlife Sanctuary, Pakke Tiger Reserve)—clearly attributed to better coverage by visiting birdwatchers, to birdwatching hotspots. Our aim is to highlight recent sight records to aid in the conservation of Blyth's Kingfisher across its known distributional range in north-eastern India.

Table 1. Sight records of Blyth's Kingfisher reported from various locations of Arunachal Pradesh from 1987 to 2020

Date	Site	District	Coordinates	Site #	Remarks	References
1987	Namdapha NP	Changlang		NA	Seen	Ghosh (1987)
1994	Sessa	West Kameng	27.1°N 92.6°E	15	Seen	Singh (1995)
1994	Tipi	West Kameng	27.02°N 92.63°E	16	Seen	Singh (1995)
1994	Itanagar	Papum pare		NA	Seen	Singh (1995)
1994	Karsinghsa	Papum pare	27.12°N 93.79°E	23	Seen	Singh (1995)
1994	Wakro Glao-Lake	Changlang	27.68°N 96.45°E	1	Seen	Singh (1995)
1996	Namdapha NP	Changlang		NA	Seen	Choudhury (1996)

Table 1. Sight records of Blyth's Kingfisher reported from various locations of Arunachal Pradesh from 1987 to 2020

Date	Site	District	Coordinates	Site #	Remarks	References
1996	Namdapha NP	Changlang		NA	Seen	Athreya (1996)
31/03/96	Namdapha NP	Changlang	27.53°N 96.44°E	2	Seen	Barua (1996)
1997	Namdapha NP	Changlang		NA	Seen	Athreya et al. (1997); Rahmani (2012)
20/06/01	Laungka Nala, Namdapha NP	Changlang	27.48°N 96.45°E	3	Heard	Birand & Pawar (2004); Rahmani (2012)
06/03/03	Namdapha NP	Changlang	27.44°N 96.6°E	4	Seen	
29/03/06	Namong, Jairampur	Changlang	27.29°N 96.06°E	5	Flying across the river	Praveen & Dalvi (2007)
30/03/06	Manmao, Jairampur	Changlang	27.25°N 95.91°E	6	Perched	Praveen (2006b), Praveen & Dalvi (2007)
01/12/06	Doimara Bridge	West Kameng	26.98°N 92.4°E	18	Seen	Rahmani (2012)
26/01/07	Eaglenest WLS	West Kameng	27.04°N 92.41°E	17	Seen	Nitu pers. comm. (2007), Rahmani (2012)
12/2008 to 01/2009	Namdapha (27th mile)	Changlang	27.46°N 96.38°E	7	Seen	Shashank Dalvi pers. comm. 2010; Rahmani (2012)
2010	Namdapha NP	Changlang		NA	Seen	Srinivasan et al. (2010)
14/04/10	Doimara River, Eaglenest WLS	West Kameng	26.98°N 92.4°E	18	Photo	Flack (2010); Kennewell (2010)
02/2009 to 05/2010	Doimara River, Eaglenest WLS	West Kameng	26.98°N 92.4°E	18	Seen	Rahmani (2012)
29/03/10	Bompu Khellong	West Kameng	27.02°N 92.41°E	19	Seen	Paal (2010)
20/02/12	Eaglenest WLS	West Kameng		NA	Photo	Bunting (2012)
10/02/13	Eaglenest WLS	West Kameng		NA	Photo	Ekins (2013)
28/03/13	Eaglenest WLS	West Kameng		NA	Photo	Bonpo (2013)
23/10/13	Manmao, Jairampur	Changlang	27.23°N 95.92°E	8	Seen	Singhal (2013)
05/03/14	Deban River, Namdapha National Park	Changlang		NA	Photo	Kuriakose (2014)
26/04/15		West Kameng		NA	Photo	Islam (2015)
26/04/15	Nameri Lama	West Kameng	27.13°N 92.54°E	20	Seen	Dixit & Dalvi (2015)
05/05/15	Sessa Orchid Sanctuary	West Kameng	27.13°N 92.54°E	20	Seen	Schweinhart (2015)
09/04/15	Sessa Orchid Sanctuary	West Kameng	27.1°N 92.56°E	21	Seen	Campbell (2015)

Table 1. Sight records of Blyth's Kingfisher reported from various locations of Arunachal Pradesh from 1987 to 2020

Date	Site	District	Coordinates	Site #	Remarks	References
17/05/15	Near Suba	West Kameng	27.29°N 92.8°E	22	Seen	Palliser (2015)
26/01/15	Wakro	Lohit	27.71°N 96.32°E	27	Seen	Surya (2015)
26/02/17	Pangin Area	East Siang	28.2°N 94.98°E	26	Photo	Dhar (2017)
20/11/18	Disi Village, Basar	West Siang	27.93°N 94.73°E	25	Photo	This work
27/04/18	Pakke WLS	Pakke Kessang	26.98°N 92.91°E	10	Seen	Stanton (2018)
30/03/18	Pakke WLS	Pakke Kessang	26.98°N 92.91°E	10	Photo	Vyas et al. (2018)
27/04/18	Pakke WLS	Pakke Kessang		NA	Photo	Shaw (2018)
14/06/18	Pakke WLS	Pakke Kessang	27.08°N 92.81°E	11	Seen	Naik & Munshi (2018)
29/10/18	Pakke WLS	Pakke Kessang		NA	Photo	Gaikwad (2018)
30/03/18	Pakke Tiger Reserve	Pakke Kessang	26.94°N 92.98°E	12	Photo	Pradhan (2018)

Table 1. Sight records of Blyth's Kingfisher reported from various locations of Arunachal Pradesh from 1987 to 2020

Date	Site	District	Coordinates	Site #	Remarks	References
28/11/2018 & 18/02/2019	Pange, Talle WLS	Lower Subansiri	27.54°N 93.89°E	24	Seen	Pratim (2018, 2019)
24/02/19	Namdapha NP (Deban)	Changlang	27.49°N 96.39°E	9	Seen	Sharm (2019)
21/02/19	Namdapha NP (Deban)	Changlang	27.49°N 96.39°E	9	Seen	Deb (2019)
01/03/19	Pakke Jungle camp	Pakke Kessang	26.98°N 93.03°E	13	Seen	Menon & Thakoor (2019)
08/04/19	Pakke WLS	Pakke Kessang	26.98°N 92.91°E	10	Seen	Vijairaghavan (2019)
01/03/19	Pakke WLS	Pakke Kessang	26.98°N 92.91°E	10	Seen	Nalawade (2019)
22/02/19	Pakke WLS	Pakke Kessang	26.98°N 92.91°E	10	Seen	Kothiala (2019)
10/11/19	Pakke WLS	Pakke Kessang	27.08°N 92.81°E	11	Photo	Thangaraj (2019)
23/02/20	Pakke Jungle camp	Pakke Kessang	26.99°N 93.02°E	14	Seen	Srinivas et al., 2020

Abbreviations: NP=National Park; WLS=Wildlife Sanctuary

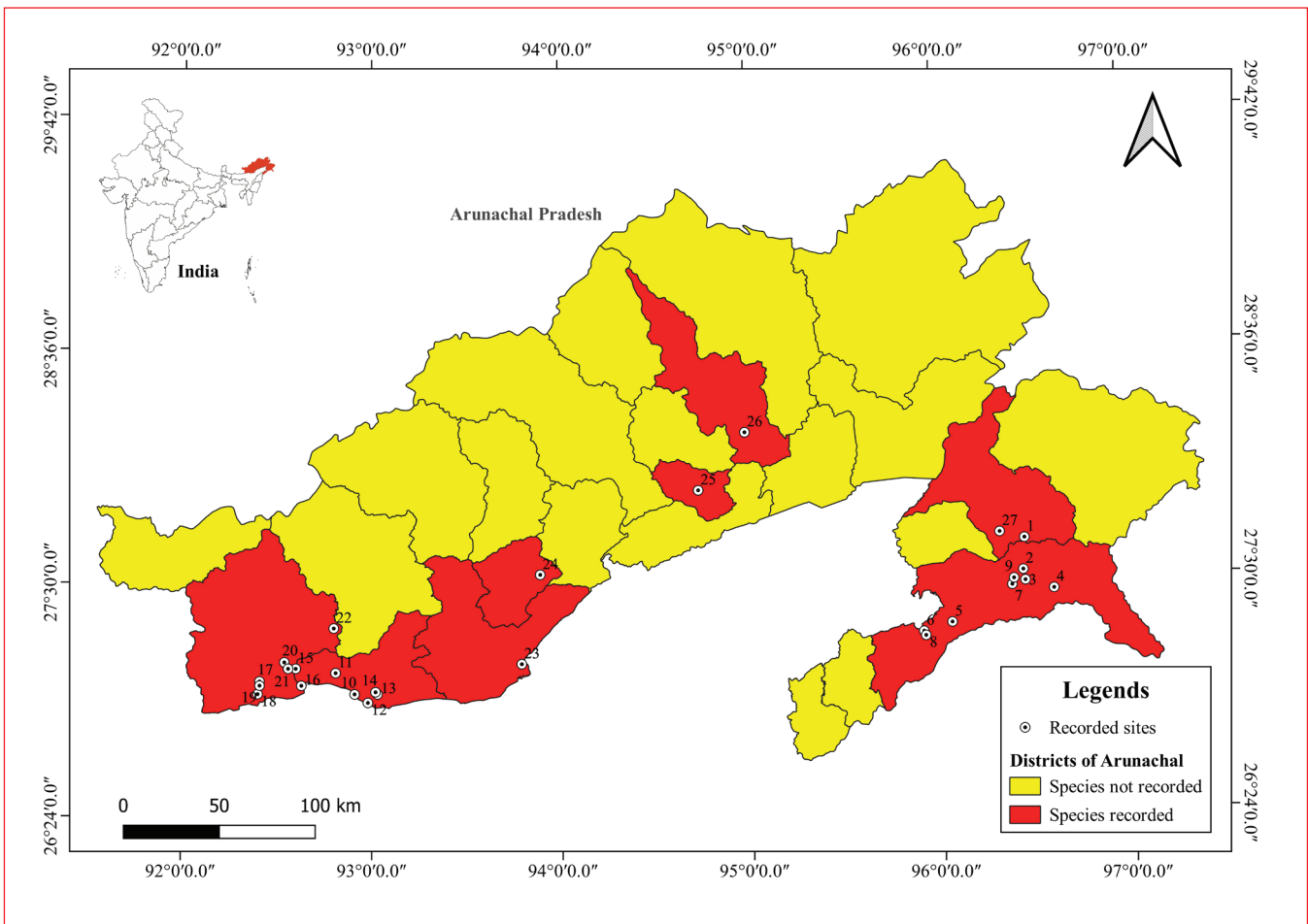


Fig. 1. Distribution of Blyth's Kingfisher in Arunachal Pradesh with districts and sites marked. Map: d-maps.com.

On 20 November 2018, when the authors were on a routine birding trip to Disi (27.90°N, 94.73°E), a remote village in the Basar circle of the newly created district of Lepa Rada, two different individual adult Blyth's Kingfishers were photographed by the first author c.750 m asl [192A]. The individuals were roosting on boulders in Kidi River, close to the village. In total, three different individuals were sighted on a 5 km walk [192B]. Also, a burrow nest [193] was observed during the visit, which was presumed to be of this species, indicating that they might be breeding in the area. The surrounding tropical semi-evergreen forest [194], has a prevalence of species such as *Terminalia myriocarpa*, *Shorea assamica*, *Bischofia javanica*, *Altingia excelsa*, *Anthocephallus chinensis*, and *Ficus drupacea* (Singh et al. 2002). However, the habitat was quite disturbed with wet rice cultivation along the Kidi River, and there was huge logging activity in the nearby forests. Villagers were fishing in the river using traditional methods of fishing. This is the first report of the species from Lepa Rada District.



192A.



192B.



193. Presumed burrow nest of a Blyth's Kingfisher from Disi, Arunachal Pradesh



194. Habitat of Blyth's Kingfisher.

The sight records of this species from a new area in central Arunachal Pradesh indicate a population in that part of the state as well, while its presence in eight low-lying districts indicates that appropriate habitats for the species still exist. More focused conservation efforts may be expended in the conservation of these limited habitats that hold this rare kingfisher within Arunachal Pradesh.

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A Siberian Rubythroat *Calliope calliope* from the Andaman Islands

The Siberian Rubythroat *Calliope calliope* occurs in the Central- and Eastern Palearctic, western-, northern-, and north-eastern China, Northern Korea, northern Japan. It migrates to southern Asia, southern China, Taiwan, and the Philippines (Collar 2005; Robson 2008). It has been recorded on passage in eastern Tonkin, and is a vagrant to peninsular Malaysia, and Singapore (Robson 2008).

On 27 April 2020, during the dry, summer season, DS photographed a Siberian Rubythroat in Parnashala, Rangat (12.52°N, 92.90°E), Middle Andaman [195, 196]. The bird was observed for about an hour at the same location, and photographed. The bird had a white supercilium, a red throat that was bordered in black and white, and was light brown overhead. It could be clearly distinguished from the Himalayan Rubythroat *C. p. pectoralis* by its white sub-moustachial stripe, which is absent in the latter, and light brown upper parts (vs grey in Himalayan). The Chinese Rubythroat *C. p. tschebaiewi* is also grey above, and has white tail tips and white tail bases – all absent in our bird.



Both: D. Sekhar

195, 196. Two views of the Siberian Rubythroat, first winter male, Parnashala, Rangat, Middle Andaman, 27 April 2020.

According to the available literature, the Siberian Rubythroat has not been reported from the Andaman Islands (Davidar et al. 2008; Pande et al. 2011; Sivaperuman et al. 2018). Over the last decade, twenty-two taxa with a primarily eastern range (Table 1) have been reported by several authors (10 South Andaman Island, 3 Great Nicobar Island, 3 Narcondam Island, 1 Kamorta Island, 1 North Andaman Island, 1 Middle Andaman Island, 1 Little Andaman Island, 1 Neil Island, and 1 Katchal Island). This record further amplifies the point that most easterly migrants that reach the north-eastern Indian Subcontinent, and South-east Asia, often turn up in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands as vagrants.

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