

level. There do not appear to be any reports of this species outside this range, particularly in the Eastern Ghats. In this context, it is quite interesting to find a (relict?) population of this species in an isolated pocket in the Eastern Ghats.

S.A. Hussain (pers. comm. 1989) also saw July 15, 1989

V. SANTHARAM

16. AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR OF JUNGLE BABBLERS *TURDOIDES STRIATUS* (DUMONT) TOWARDS A SNAKE

At about 1500 hrs one afternoon during March 1989 we were awakened from our slumber by the agitated calls of jungle babblers *Turdoides striatus* at our residence in Malaparamba at Calicut. When we looked out through the window we saw four babblers attacking a small sized snake on the ground. When we came out for a closer look, the babblers flew away. The snake was unable to move properly and appeared to be in great distress; we ended its misery by killing it. When we examined it we found that most of the peck marks were in the head region and both the eyes were damaged. The snake was about 50 cm long and probably was a striped keelback

Amphiesma stolata. The babblers were regular visitors to our residence but we do not know whether they had a nest nearby, which was the reason for their aggressive behaviour. We presume that this type of behaviour has not been reported earlier for jungle babblers. However, Johnsingh *et al.* (JBNHS 79: 503-511) reported that a group of whiteheaded babblers *T. affinis* lost interest in a 2 m active snake after mobbing it for four minutes.

June 24, 1989

S. DEVASAHAYAM
ANITA DEVASAHAYAM

17. PROBABLE SIGHTING OF PLAINBACKED MOUNTAIN THRUSH *ZOOTHERA MOLLISSIMA* (BLYTH) IN BANDHAVGARH NATIONAL PARK, MADHYA PRADESH

Bandhavgarh National Park is located in Shahdol District of Madhya Pradesh (23°30' to 23°48' N and 80°46'45" to 81°11' 36" E). It lies within the drainage area of the Son river, a southern tributary of the Ganga

On 8 February 1987, while walking along a hill-slope covered with thick bamboo *Dendrocalamus strictus* my attention was attracted by some movement in the bamboo, the source of which was a thrush sitting fairly low on some fallen bamboo. It was positioned sideways on to me and was in clear view. It was about the size of Tickell's thrush *Turdus unicolor*; olive brown above; flanks heavily barred; chin and throat speckled to almost side of the face. Short eyebrow, just a hint of a wing bar, though I could not be sure of this. Bill dark brown and legs of same colour. After a while it flew up to another branch with its back turned towards me, flicking its tail up and then slowly lowering it.

On consulting the HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF

INDIA AND PAKISTAN (Ali, S. and Ripley, S.D. 1968-74), the closest I could get to an identification was the plainbacked mountain thrush *Zoothera mollissima* or the longtailed mountain thrush *Zoothera dixonii*. They are mentioned in the text as being confusingly alike, with the most conspicuous distinguishing feature between them being the whitish wing-bars present in the latter, the former having pale-tipped wing-coverts considered inconspicuous. This bird did not have conspicuous wing-bars.

On 18 January 1988 I saw a similar bird, again on a hill-slope covered with mixed forest and bamboo. This time it was on the ground facing me and I could see the "crescentic spots" mentioned in the HANDBOOK on breast and belly, but no wing-bars.

On 18 November 1988, in company with Jack Poll, an experienced birdwatcher, and Dinesh Thapa, I saw this bird again at a place called Shesh Shayya where the vegetation is very moist and thick. It had



Devasahayam, S and Devasahayam, A. 1991. "16. AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR OF JUNGLE BABBLERS TURDOIDES-STRIATUS DUMONT TOWARDS A SNAKE." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 88, 288–288.

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