

Additional record of endemic and threatened Yellow-throated Bulbul from Andhra Pradesh, India

Yellow-throated Bulbul *Pycnonotus xantholaemus* is a threatened passerine (IUCN status 'Vulnerable'), endemic to scrub forests of the Eastern Ghats, inland hillocks of the Deccan Peninsula and eastern slopes of the southern Western Ghats (BirdLife International 2019; Praveen et al. 2019; Jha 2021). It is primarily found in scrub forests on hills with exposed rocky outcrops and has patchy distribution across its distribution range (Ali & Ripley 1987; Subramanya et al. 2006). In this note, I report two new locations of this species from Andhra Pradesh.

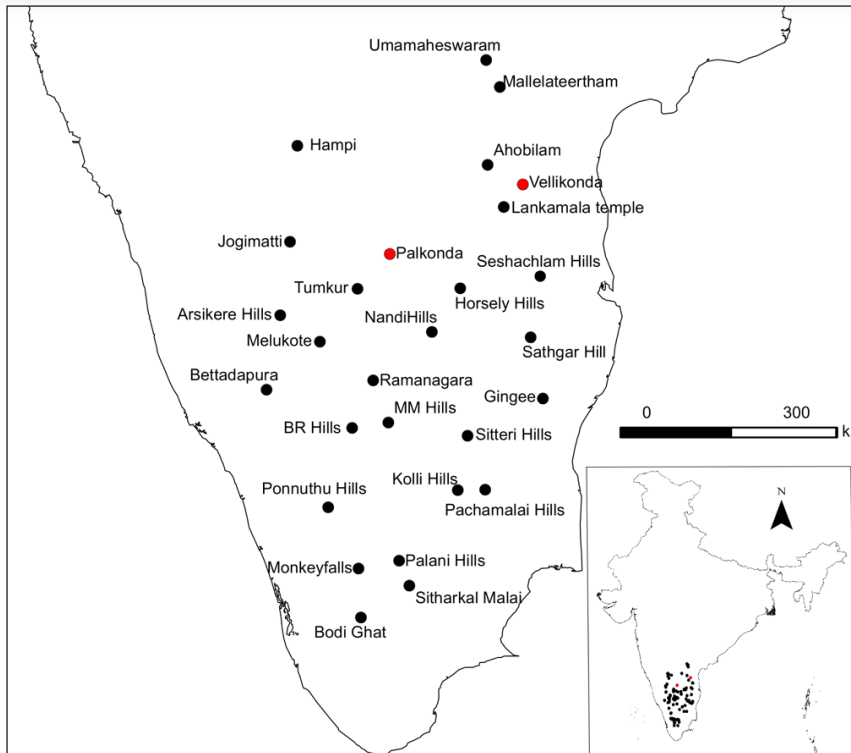
On 17 January 2020, at 0630 hours, I visited Shri Ghanagiri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple (14.0675°N 77.5817°E) in Penukonda town, Ananthapur. This hill forms a part of the Palkonda Range of the Eastern Ghats. The habitat was typical of the Yellow-throated Bulbul



Yellow-throated Bulbul at Penukonda, Andhra Pradesh.



Yellow-throated Bulbul at Cumbum forest, Andhra Pradesh.



Map showing known occurrences of Yellow-throated Bulbul (black) and additional records (red). Inset shows the locations in India. Coordinates of known locations were taken from Jha & Vasudevan (2020).

habitat, an expansive rugged terrain with steep slopes and exposed boulders, shrubs and trees growing amidst the rock. A road from the foothills to the top was under construction; vegetation and rocks had been cleared on both sides of this road.

While birdwatching along this road, I heard the call of the Yellow-throated Bulbul, a rolling and fast paced call, similar to that of White-browed Bulbuls but melodious and shorter.

I followed the calls and spotted four individuals feeding on berries of *Cocculus hirsutus* growing on *Hardwickia binata* tree. During my two-hour stay at the site, I saw up to 13 individuals and heard calls from multiple places.

On 18 January 2020, at 0930 hours, I visited Ghutika Siddheswaram Temple (14.8944°N 79.1633°E), Nellore. This temple lies on the detour at Seetharamapuram-Udaygiri

Road and lies nestled inside the Cumbum Forest in the Velikonda Range of the Eastern Ghats. Unlike the previous habitat, the habitat here was quite moist and dense, with several old-growth trees and a high canopy. Except for a few devotees, there was not much human activity and the surrounding habitat seemed undisturbed.

A Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Nisaetus cirrhatus* was seen nesting in the area. I heard Yellow-throated Bulbul's call from the valley and played the species' call to re-confirm its identity. Visual sightings for a shy and rare species such as Yellow-throated Bulbul are very limited and call playback is known to increase the contact rate for such species (Mosher et al. 1990). The bird responded to the call playback, perched onto a nearby tree and soon flew across the valley. During my one-hour stay at the site, I saw only a single individual but heard a few from across the valley.

A recent study had predicted the distribution of the species

in these areas (Jha & Vasudevan 2020). With these confirmed records, the species is likely to be present in suitable habitats distributed across these hill ranges and nearby hillocks.

References

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Ashish Jha

Kerala Agricultural University, Vellanikkara, Thrissur, Kerala 680656, India.
Email: aashishjha89@gmail.com

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