

New species of bird discovered in Arunachal Pradesh



Comments 0



Bilwada Kale 21 January 2016 Updated 24 Jan 7466 views

A bird species, locally common in eastern Himalaya and overlooked till now, has been identified [as](#) a new species. A team of scientists from [India](#), Sweden, China, [US](#) and Russia have described this species from northeastern [India](#) and adjacent parts of China [as](#) Himalayan Forest Thrush. This is the first Indian bird (*Zoothera salimalii*), which has been named after Late Dr Sálím Ali, who was closely associated with BNHS-[India](#), including [as](#) a researcher, honorary secretary and finally [as](#) its president. The bird has been named after him in recognition of his huge contributions to the development of modern Indian ornithology and wildlife conservation.

New bird species are rarely discovered to science nowadays, when most natural habitats are shrinking. Since 2000, an average of five new species have been discovered globally every year, mostly from South America. Himalayan Forest Thrush is only the fourth new bird species described from [India](#) by modern ornithologist since independence. Commenting on the development, Dr Asad Rahmani, Senior Scientific [Adviser](#) and former Director, BNHS said, “It is a remarkable discovery and shows how much more we have to do in the field of ornithology in [India](#). It also proves that northeastern [India](#) is a treasure trove of biodiversity that needs protection from the mega projects that are planned in [Arunachal](#) Pradesh without giving any attention to biodiversity conservation.”

The tale of discovery

Dr Per Alström and Shashank Dalvi first discovered the species in May-June 2009 while studying birds at high elevations in western [Arunachal](#) Pradesh. It was realized that instead of a single species - Plain-backed Thrush (*Zoothera mollissima*) - [as](#) believed till now, in reality there exist two different species in eastern Himalaya. Till now Himalayan Forest Thrush has been overlooked because of its close similarity in appearance to the Plain-based Thrush, now renamed [as](#) Alpine Thrush.

Studies of specimens in 15 museums across seven countries revealed consistent differences in plumage and structure in the birds from the above two populations. It was confirmed that the species - Himalayan Forest Thrush - [found](#) to be breeding in the coniferous and mixed forests of eastern Himalaya was not separately classified till now. What first [caught](#) the attention of the scientists was the fact that the ones [found](#) in forests (Himalayan Forest Thrush) had a rather musical song, whereas individuals [found](#) in the same region on bare rocky habitats above the tree-line (Alpine Thrush) had a much harsher, scratchier and unmusical song.

Further analyses of its plumage, structure, song, DNA and ecology throughout the range revealed that a third species was present in central China. While this population was already known, it was treated [as](#) a subspecies of Plain-backed Thrush. It is now called Sichuan Forest Thrush, which has an even more musical song than that of Himalayan Forest Thrush. A fourth species from China remains unnamed. Future field studies are required to confirm this.

Bilwada Kale

ON THIS DAY

Hagrama tsunami in BTAD, UPPL, BJP at a loss

Golok Samman 2023 Announced: Four Young Honourees Recognized

Lokdarshan: A Vibrant Folk Dance Extravaganza in Udalguri

Manas National Park Reopens for Visitors, World Tourism Day Celebration Planned

Webinar held: women entrepreneurship and women empowerment

RELATED

ABSU burns copies of 'Hamkoshar Parishista' over Bodo script issue

Tension persists in Bihubar after former paramilitary personnel's killing

A heartfelt tribute to poet Anis Uz Zaman

Tension grips Bihubar after youth social worker's killing

New Delhi BRICS Summit: Hoping for a Permanent Indian Presence in the UNSC
