

REPORT OF SIGHTING OF ORIENTAL SCRUB ROBIN IN NUAWARA ELIYA IN GREGORY PARK

1. Species, including age, sex and plumage type, or whichever of these is known.

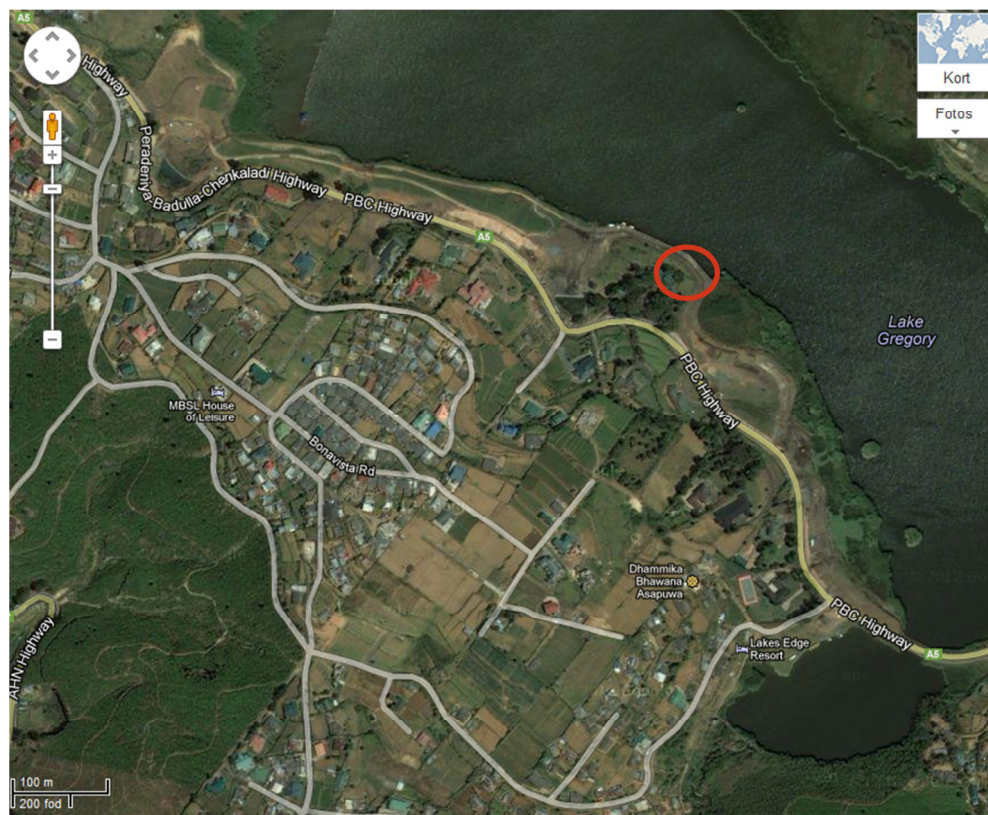
The species observed was an Oriental Scrub Robin or Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin (*Cercotrichas galactotes*). It was not possible to say anything about age or sex. The plumage was fine to look at, it being a little difficult to see if the feathers were worn since a light brown bird does not show the wear so easily.

2. Name and address of observer.

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3. Exact location and description of site.





The site was Gregory Park in Nuwara Eliya in small flower and bush vegetation near the footpath running along the shore of the lake by the restaurant. Very open vegetation with mostly grass lawn and only a little flowers and small bushes.

4. Date and time of observation.

The date 16.02.2013 and the time was at 15:30 in the afternoon

5. Weather and light conditions at time of observation.

The weather was overcast but clear with fine visibility

6. Optical aids used – make, model, magnification and objective-lens diameter.

The binoculars used was Swarovski SLC 10x42 HD

7. Distance of bird/s from observer.

The bird was first on the ground but when we approached it flew up in the top of some tallish flowers in clear view approx. 10 meters from the observer

8. Description of bird/s, e.g. size, shape, plumage details – giving the exact details gathered during the observation, from field notes, without adding any details learnt after the event by referring to literature.

The bird was the size of a small thrush or lark with the shape of a Prinia but markedly larger. The colour was light brown on the back with a lighter sand coloured stomach and chest and with a rusty reddish tail. The whitish eye brow stripe was very significant and it was this that immediately made me think scrub robin. The bird had a raised tail which it flicked most of the time it was observed.

9. Actions, and character of flight, as observed.

The bird was feeding on the ground, but as we approached it flew up in the top of some tallish flowers. The bird was clearly disturbed as it was constantly making warning noises – a short tjek. When the bird flew off the tail was slightly fanned and it was easy to see the white outer tail markings with a dark line at the end of the tail. The bird landed on the ground and disappeared under bushes.

10. Calls, as heard.

Only warning noises heard.

11. Other bird species present nearby for comparison.

No other birds were in the immediate surroundings

12. Previous experience with the subject species and/or other species which are similar to it in the field.

Having grown up in East Africa I am very familiar with the East African Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin to which the Oriental Scrub Robin has a very strong likeness. The species have also previously been seen by the observer in southern Europe on several occasions.

13. Any other relevant information or details pertaining to the observation, the species or the identification.

I was not aware that this bird was a rare sighting in Sri Lanka, so I made nothing much of it at the time of the observation. It was only when our guide Upali Nisshanka from the company WalkWithJith told me that this was a rare bird in Sri Lanka, that I sat down and described the sighting

14. Whether field sketches were made and/or photographs, video or audio recordings were obtained, and copies of these are enclosed.

Unfortunately no photographs were taken

15. Literature referred to in identifying the species.

A Field Guide to the Birds of Sri Lanka by John Harrison, Tim Worfolk