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Cover: Life and death in one night - wolf hunting the hare. Mixed media—gouache, acrylics, pen & colour pencils. © Dupati Poojitha.



First record of Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* (Scopoli, 1769) (Aves: Passeriformes: Hirundinidae) from Tamil Nadu, India

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Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* is a small-sized aerial insectivorous bird from the family Hirundinidae, commonly grouped under swallows and martins. Eurasian Crag Martin breeds in India and Pakistan Himalayan region; winters mainly in Western Ghats of Karnataka, Maharashtra, Goa, and Gujarat states (Grimmett et. al. 2011). Eurasian Crag Martin has brown-grey crown and upper parts, dark brown wings and tail, tail square, white spots on inner webs of feathers (except inner and outermost pairs, occasionally spots also on outer pair), chin and throat pale with dark speckling, pale buff breast grading into brown-grey belly and brown undertail-coverts, underwing-coverts blackish (Turner 2020). Forages close to cliff faces, over the gorges, woodland and villages; outside breeding season they tend to forage over farmland, meadows, rocky coasts, swamps, and lakes (Turner 2020). Eurasian Crag Martin differs from widely resident Dusky Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne concolor* by larger size, paler brown upperparts and underparts with throat and breast noticeably paler than belly and vent, further underwing appears strong two-toned compared with that of Dusky Crag Martin. Its habitat includes rocky cliffs and gorges (Grimmett et al. 2011), mountains, crags, and coastal cliffs; and around human habitations (Turner 2020).

The Eurasian Crag Martin was recorded from Tamil Nadu State with photographic evidence (Image 1–4). On 18 August 2024 at 0810 hr while birding at Sithakiri

Malai (10.732 °N, 77.694 °E), Kuppanavalasu of Dindigul District of Tamil Nadu, two individuals were recorded actively foraging near cliff faces and occasionally perching on a crag. It is a rocky hill at 350 m surrounded by grasslands and agricultural lands.

The Eurasian Crag Martin is assessed as ‘Least Concern’ on the IUCN Red List (BirdLife International 2024) and listed under Schedule-II of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972. It is listed as species with a high priority with long-term (the proportional change in frequency of reporting in 2022 when compared with the frequency before the year 2000) trend with a rapid decline (79%) and a current annual (the average annual change in frequency of reporting during the year 2015–2022) trend with the decline (5.51%) in the population (SolB 2023) with limitations of the study (Maitreyi 2024), even though it’s stable globally (BirdLife International 2024).

This is the first sighting of Eurasian Crag Martin in Tamil Nadu. Birders overlook these birds due to their small size, speed, and altitude at which they fly (Shendokar & Kukade 2016). Sighting reports of these species are important to predict their migration routes, and range extension and to protect them.

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Image 1–2. Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* perching in a crag. © Naveen Kumar S.



Image 3–4. Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* in flight. © Naveen Kumar S.

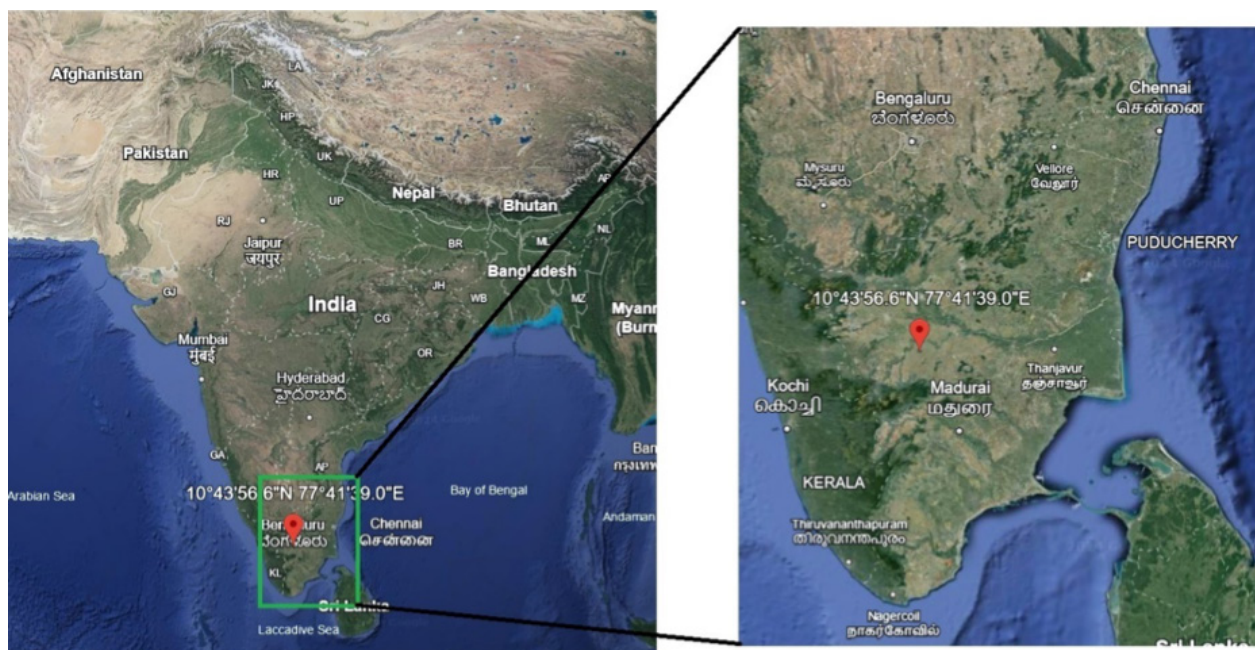


Image 5. Map showing sighting locations of Eurasian Crag Martin in Tamil Nadu, India.

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