

### PREVENTING EXTINCTIONS

#### Jerdon's Courser *Rhinoptilus bitorquatus*



**Bombay Natural  
History Society**



**Conservation of Jerdon's Courser has been stepped up recently (© Simon Cook).**

#### **Background**

Jerdon's Courser is a rare and local endemic to the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh and extreme southern Madhya Pradesh, India. Historically, it was known from just a few records in the Pennar and Godavari river valleys and was assumed to be extinct until its sensational rediscovery around Lankamalai in 1986, over 100 years since the previous record. It has since been found at six further localities in the vicinity of the Lankamalai, Velikonda and Palakonda hill-ranges, southern Andhra Pradesh, with all localities probably holding birds from a single population. Two individuals were sighted in 2009 in the Cudaapah District of Andhra Pradesh, the first confirmed sightings of this elusive species for several years.

Its scrub-forest habitat is becoming increasingly scarce and fragmented. The dependence of local communities on the area for resources and the increase in the number of settlers poses a serious threat to habitat through fuel-wood collection, livestock grazing, quarrying and clearance for agriculture, and to the birds themselves through increased disturbance.

#### **Actions being implemented**

1. BNHS is working with the RSPB on Jerdon's Courser **conservation at Sri Lankamaleswara Wildlife Sanctuary**, Andhra Pradesh.
2. Heavily degraded areas in the species's known range have been surveyed as part of **habitat evaluation studies**, which will be repeated to assess changes in the species's habitat through time.
3. The project has provided **training** for around 70 Forest Department staff and local villagers, in monitoring techniques and habitat management for Jerdon's Courser. An awareness programme has also been carried out successfully, involving 85 people from five different villages.

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