

Notes on the vocalizations of Square-tailed Black Bulbul (*Hypsipetes ganeesa*) and Himalayan Black Bulbul (*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*)

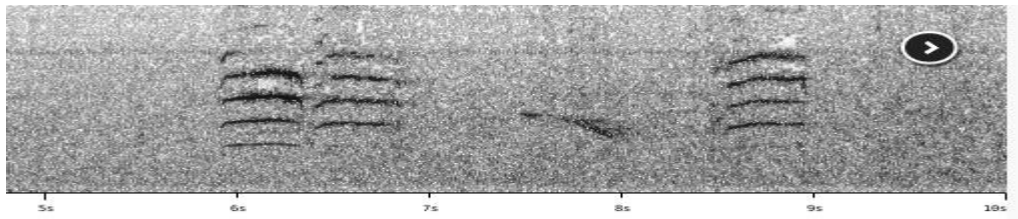
Peter Boesman

In the following we briefly analyze and compare voice of the different races of Square-tailed Black Bulbul (*Hypsipetes ganeesa*) and Himalayan Black Bulbul (*Hypsipetes leucocephalus*). We also try to quantify the extent of any vocal differences using the criteria proposed by Tobias *et al.* (2010), as a support for taxonomic review. We have made use of sound recordings available on-line from Xeno Canto (XC), Macaulay Library (ML).

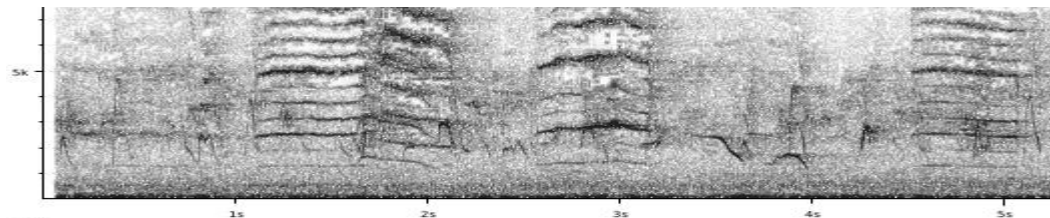
This is quite a complex case, given the many subspecies. Most vocalization types are seemingly shared by many races. A quick overview:

1. Overslurred nasal call

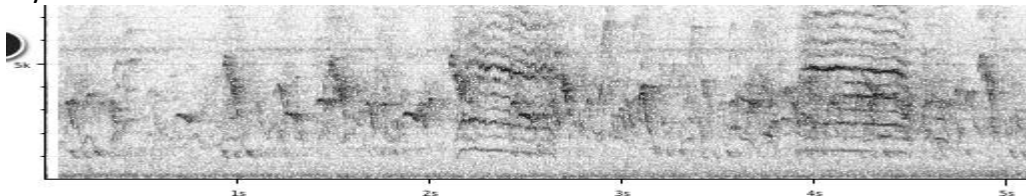
Sri Lanka



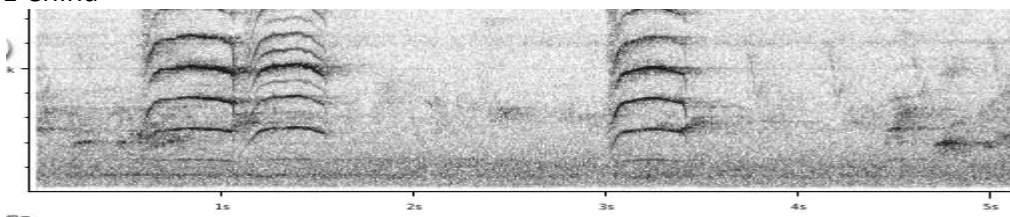
Thailand



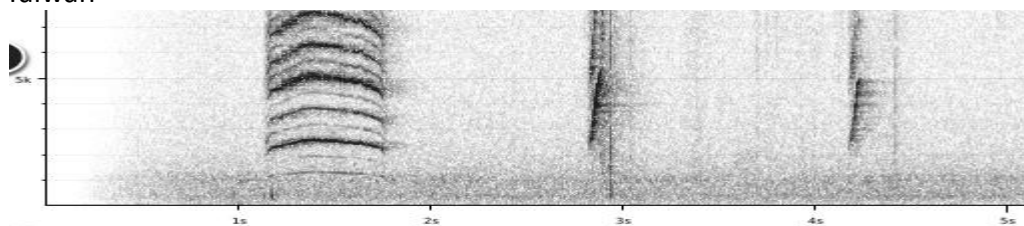
Myanmar



E China

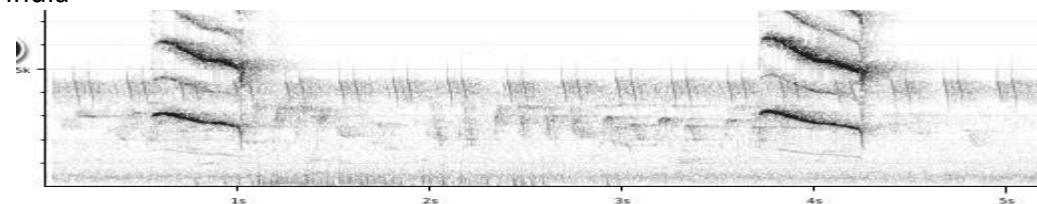


Taiwan

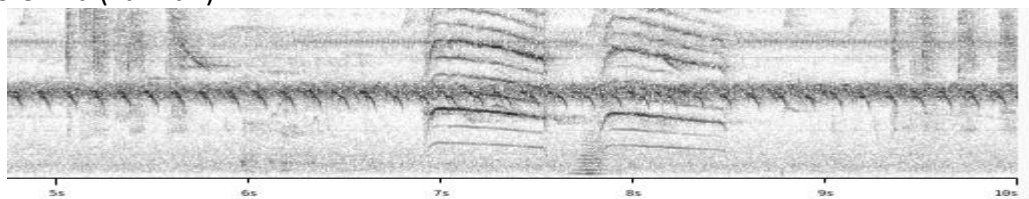


2. Descending nasal call

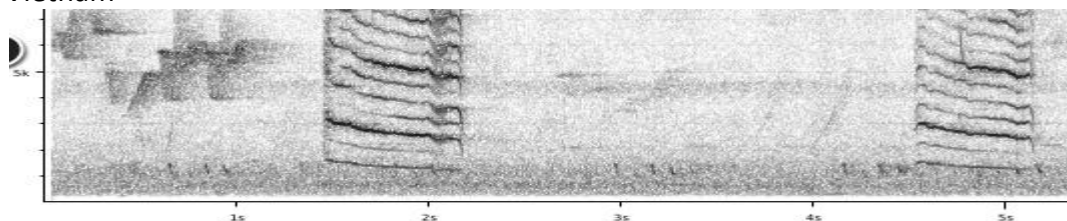
India



S China (Yunnan)



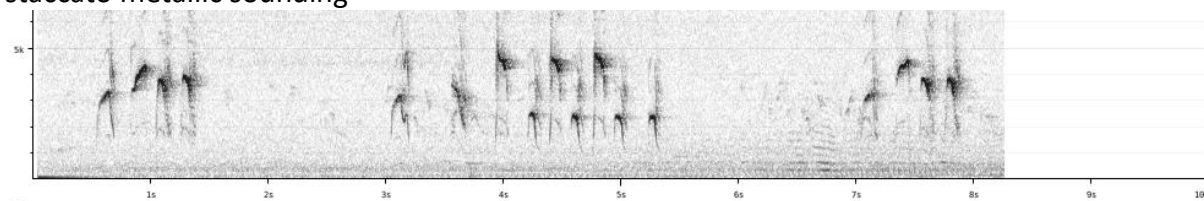
Vietnam

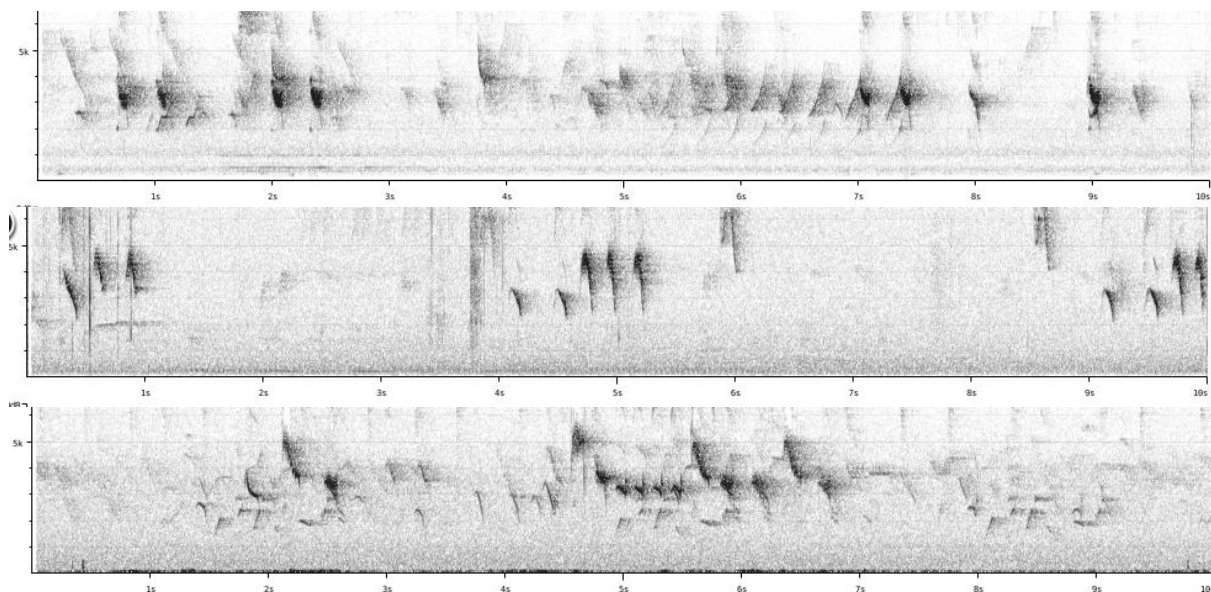


While there is a marked difference between e.g. the descending call of mainland India vs. the overslurred call of Sri Lanka, placed in a larger perspective it would seem that the picture is not clear-cut, with e.g. gradual transitions from S China over Thailand to Myanmar. There are apparently no recordings of this vocalization from India/Nepal/Bhutan in the Himalayas (*psaroides*) (although a voice description in the Ripley Guide suggests this call is also heard in Nepal (Rasmussen *et al.* 2012)).

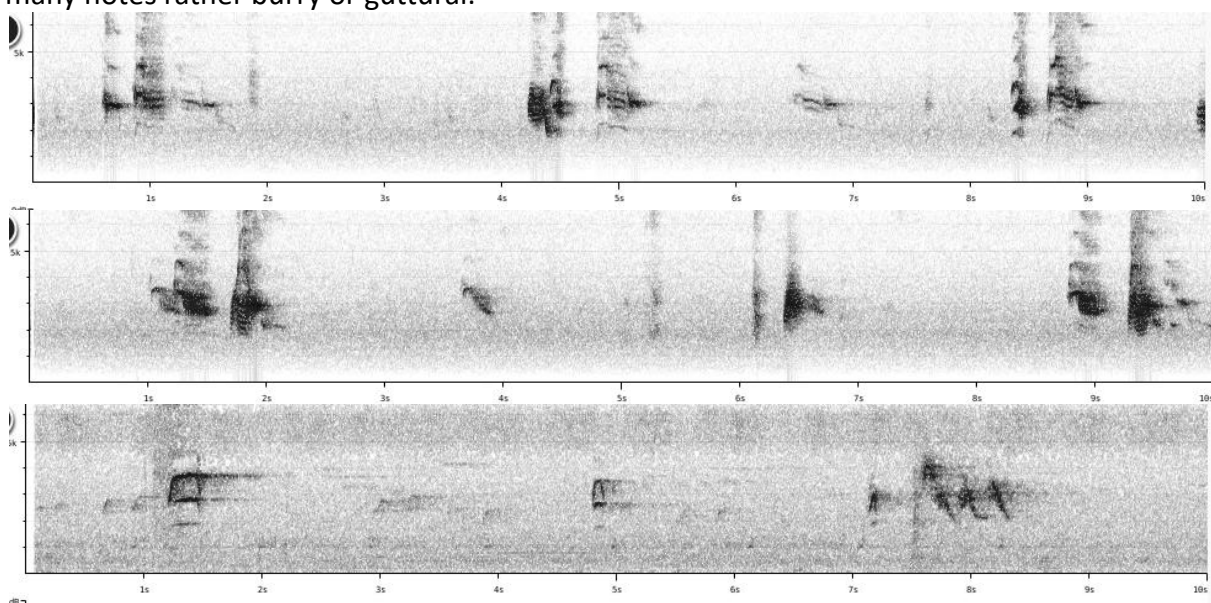
3. Other vocalizations

Race *ganeesa* (SW India): Variations mainly based on short emphatic clear notes, rather staccato metallic sounding



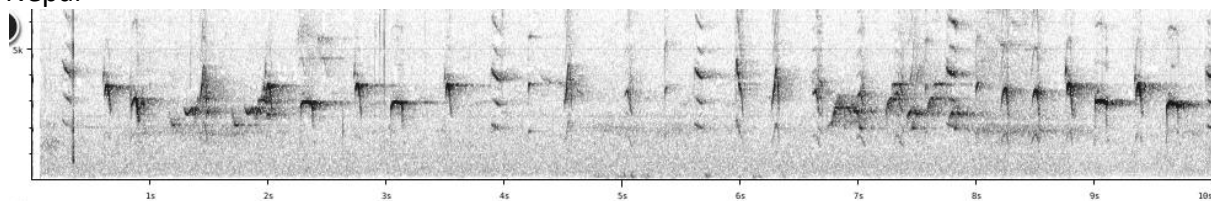


Race *humii* (Sri Lanka): Rather different vocalizations, mainly unmusical short phrases with many notes rather burry or guttural:

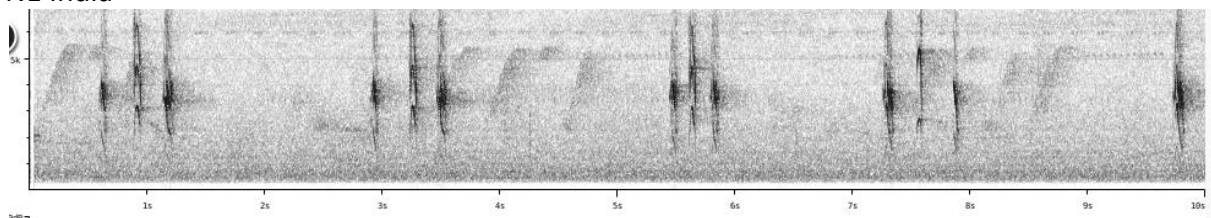


Other races have several calls similar (but not identical) to *ganeesa*:

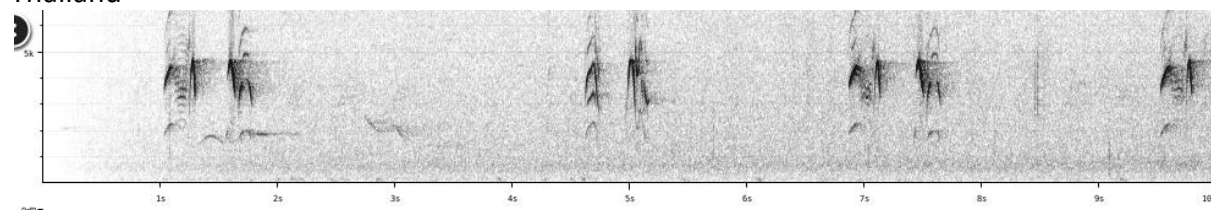
Nepal



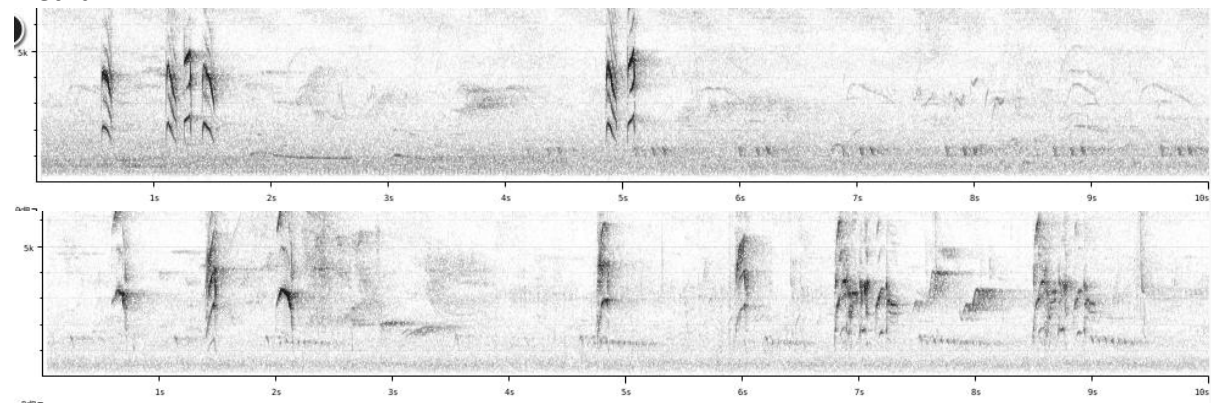
NE India



Thailand

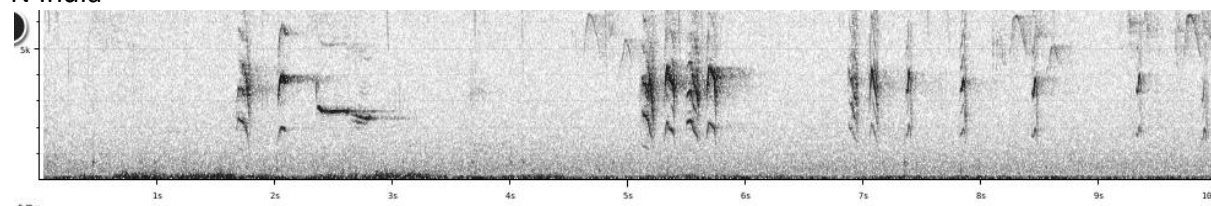


Vietnam

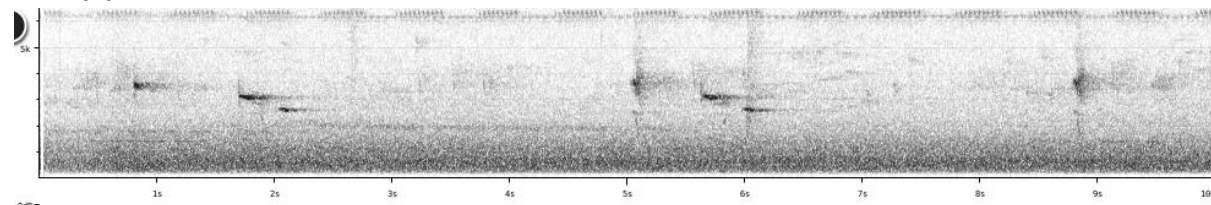


Furthermore, several races have short phrases with melodic notes at flat pitch mixed in:

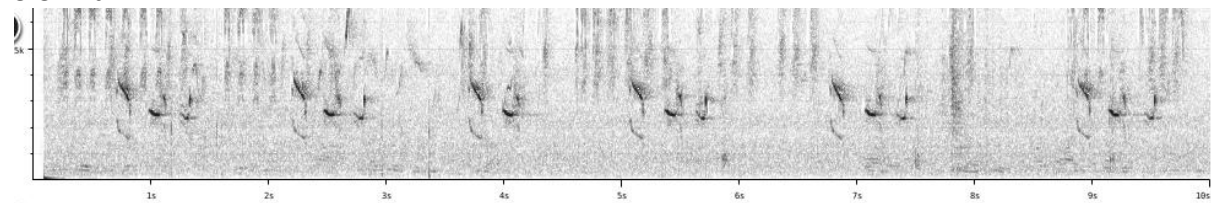
N India



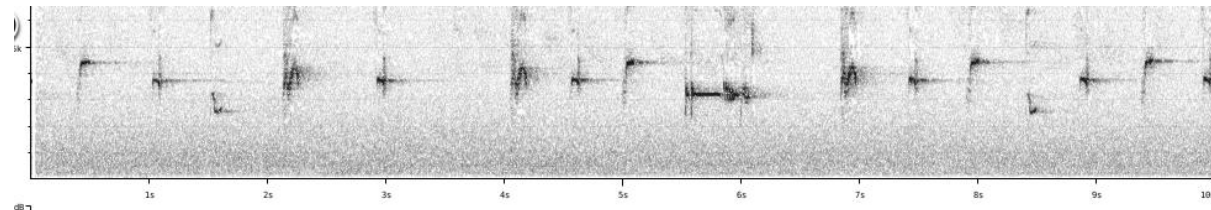
NE India



C China



Taiwan



Based on the above, it would seem that vocally there are three distinct groups.

* *the leucocephalus* group

* *ganeesa*

* *humii*

While they all share drawn-out nasal screaming calls, they differ in their other vocalizations: *humii* has mainly unmusical short phrases with many notes rather burry or guttural (allow score 3). *ganeesa* shares with the *leucocephalus* group the general structure of short phrases, but the staccato overslurred notes are purer (much less energy in harmonics)(score 1), and *ganeesa* lacks the melodious song phrases with short sweet notes on flat pitch (score 1-2), while *ganeesa* has many pure downslurred notes in its vocabulary. Total vocal score compared to other races about 2-3.

This note was finalized on 21st February 2016, using sound recordings available on-line at that moment. We would like to thank in particular the many sound recordists who placed their recordings for this species on XC.

References

Rasmussen, P.C. & Anderton, J.C. (2012). Birds of South Asia: the Ripley Guide. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.

Tobias, J.A., Seddon, N., Spottiswoode, C.N., Pilgrim, J.D., Fishpool, L.D.C. & Collar, N.J. (2010). Quantitative criteria for species delimitation. *Ibis* 152(4): 724–746.

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