Key Features:

- Rich, rufous crown.
- Black & white eye stripe to nape.
- Bill black, narrow, curved downwards.
- Iris - Hazel.
- Sandy, brown plumage above, chestnut below.
- Wings: narrow, pointed.
- Dark primaries seen in flight.
- Legs – bare, long, slender, china white.
- Hind toe absent.
- Chick: Patterned with mottled ginger, whirish and dark down, whirish below, grey legs.
- Young: Dull buff, barred, pale eyestripes, lacks black eye stripe.

Indicator species:
A representative bird of dry open habitat, one of our most threatened habitats today. The life of the Courser indicates that the so called ‘waste’ lands are also full of life, where species like Courser find sufficient food to live and breed.

Habitat: Small and rocky country, edges of deserts, short sparse grasslands, fallow land, non-agricultural plains and village grazing grounds or ‘gaay-rans’. Avoid thick vegetation, high rainfall and deserts.

Distribution: In the Subcontinent, India, West Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Usually inhabit low and dry country.

Status: Resident. Local migration in summer and monsoon.

Indicator species: A representative bird of dry open habitat, one of our most threatened habitats today. The life of the Courser indicates that the so called ‘waste’ lands are also full of life, where species like Courser find sufficient food to live and breed.

Habit: Diurnal. In pairs or small parties. Large seasonal congregations of 70 birds are recorded by us. Stand in the shade of short trees on hot noon. Cautiously approach waterholes with lapwings, sandgrouses, larks, babblers, etc. to drink water at noon.

Food: Ground dwelling invertebrates like termites (Isoptera), ants (Hymenoptera), beetles (Coleoptera), bugs (Heteroptera), Homopterans, web-spinners (Embioptera), crickets and grasshoppers (Orthoptera). The dry weight of a single dropping of the Courser ranges 230 to 280 mg. Fecal droppings are loaded with undigested food remains, from which food species may be identified.

Eggs: A camouflaged chick of less than one week age
- Patterned with mottled ginger, whitish and dark down; whitish below; grey legs.
- Young: Dull buff, barred, pale eyestripes, lacks black eye stripe.

Loving care of the young:
- Both parents incubate, female more than male.
- Chicks start walking after hatching, instinctively fed by themselves, but are supplemented for a day or two by parents.
- Adults supervise their movements by uttering specific calls.

Nest:
- A shallow scrape on bare ground, amidst debris, pebbles, stones, and cow dung heaps. Nesting material not added. In arid, semi-arid and fallow land. Both parents incubate, female more than male.
- Chicks start walking after hatching, instinctively feed by themselves, but are supplemented for a day or two by parents. Adults supervise their movements by uttering specific calls.

Incubation:
- Both parents incubate, female more than male. Chicks start walking after hatching, instinctively fed by themselves, but are supplemented for a day or two by parents. Adults supervise their movements by uttering specific calls.

Related species:
- Cream-coloured Courser (Cursorius cursor): winter visitor to NW India
Indian Courser

**Order:** Charadriiformes  
**Family:** Glareolidae  
**Status:** Resident.

**Size:** 260-300 mm.  
**Weight:** 110-191 g.  
**Wing:** Male 145 - 160 mm.  
**Tail:** 65 - 64 mm.  
**Narrows:** 69 - 73 mm.  
**Incubation:** 15-16 d.  
**Nuptial displays:** Running, mutual pecking and calls.  
**Call:** Piping, shrill calls, usually uttered when disturbed.

**Breeding season:** March - April.  
**Nests:** 1 - 3 eggs.  
**Eggs:** 31.5 x 23.4 mm (MHU-MPh Thesis).

**Economic importance and conservation:** The insectivorous coursers play an important role as controllers of insect pest. Protected Under Wildlife (Protection) Act. Today, courser habitats are being converted to crop land with negative effect on their populations. Identifying occupied habitats and protecting them by people's participation is the only hope for this beautiful species. "Rural Outreach Programs", such as undertaken by Ela Foundation for public education stressing conservation of so called 'wastelands' is the key to their survival.

**Recommended citation:** Pande, Satish (2003). Birds of Western Ghats, Kokan and Malabar. Last two published by Oxford University Press and Funded by Ela Foundation.; Satish Pande, Rahul Lonkar, Dr. M.N.Mahajan, Rajkumar Pawar, Prashant Deshpande, Arjun Jadhav, Kiran Ghadge and Dr. Satish Karmalkar did field research. Special thanks to Shri. Sunil Limaye, IFS, Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Pune.

**Behaviour:**
- Piping, shrill calls, usually uttered when disturbed.
- Running, mutual pecking and calls.
- Broken-wing display.

**Threats:**
- Road widening can destroy the already shrinking habitat of coursers.
- A herd of goats can trample the eggs of grassland birds.
- Habitat loss, collection of firewood, road development and converting semi-arid habitats to cropland by providing irrigation are major threats.

**Conservation:**
- Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Pune.  
- Ela Foundation, Pune.  
- Oxford University Press.  
- Bombay Natural History Society.  
- Ela Foundation, Pune.


**Status:**
- Resident of charadriiformes family and glareolidae, which is the order and family of the Indian Courser respectively. It is a small ground dwelling bird that is difficult to spot in drab brownish habitats as a survival adaptation. The related Jerdon's Courser, discovered by T. C. Jerdon in 1846, was thought to be extinct, and an epitaph was built in Bronx Zoo. It was later rediscovered in 1994. A postal stamp is released in its commemoration.

**Cultural aspects:**
- The Courser prefers to walk and run than fly. Children from villages often chase it for fun, hence the Marathi name Pore-chalawani – kid teaser.

**Camouflage:**
- Cryptic coloration of eggs.

**Economic importance:**
- Economic importance of the Indian Courser is its control role as an important predator for insects. It plays a crucial role in maintaining the balance of ecosystems and is a key species for the conservation of its habitat.

**Other avifauna in Courser habitat:**
- Lark species: Coromandel Coast (India).
- Indian Courser: Cursorius coromandelicus (Gmelin, 1789).
- Type locality: Coromandel Coast (India).
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