

connecting the pale lores across the lower forehead. This, combined with the rather broad off-white eye-rings, created a bespectacled facial pattern reminiscent of the plumbeous vireo *Vireo plumbeus*.

The underparts were pale yellowish-white, somewhat scruffy in that the yellow tone was not evenly distributed but patchy. The vent and undertail coverts were clean white and there was some slight olive mottling, almost scaling, on the sides of the breast. The three innermost greater coverts had conspicuous blackish centres, broad white tips and narrower white fringes on the outer webs. Two, or possibly three, median coverts were similarly patterned with dark centres and whitish edges. The longest tertial also had a prominent white fringe.

The bill was entirely black, stout and heavy-looking, the legs a paler plumbeous grey, and the eye dark and appearing large.

The bird called several times during the observation — a dry, hollow sounding 'trrrrt', that was mellower and softer than the similar contact calls of the red-throated flycatcher.

This was the second documented record of the yellow-rumped flycatcher from the

Subcontinent. The first, a male in the Melghat Sanctuary in Maharashtra on the April 30, 1989, was documented by Haribal (1991). Interestingly, a bird answering the description of a female yellow-rumped flycatcher was apparently also present at Melghat in the winter of 1994-95. It was described to K. Kazmierczak by the local Forest Department staff who had been unable to identify it and were unaware of the previous record. There is another more recent report — a male observed by Steve Rooke and Deepal Warakagoda *et al.* in Sri Lanka on the March 7, 1999. (Steve Rooke pers. comm.)

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PAUL I. HOLT
New Laund Farm,
Greenhead Lane,
Fence, Burnley,
Lancashire, BB12 9DU, UK.
Email: piholt@hotmail.com

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31. BREEDING RECORDS OF THE ASIAN BROWN FLYCATCHER *MUSCICAPA DAUURICA* IN SOUTHERN INDIA

Commenting on the status and distribution of the Asian brown flycatcher (*Muscicapa dauurica*), Ali and Ripley (1983) mention: "A partial migrant having a disjunct breeding range. Movements imperfectly understood." More specifically of its status in southern India, they say that the bird is a scarce breeder in the southern parts of the Western Ghats at about 900 m in North Kanara, Coorg, the Palni Hills and Cardamom Hills. It is also suspected that

the flycatcher may breed in the Chitteri Range (Eastern Ghats) where it has been obtained in June, and in the Biligirirangan Hills (obtained in July). Post-dispersal of southern birds takes place as early as August. Ghorpade (1973) has mentioned it as a resident species in Sandur (E. Karnataka). Recently, Pittie (2000) recorded a young bird in June in Hyderabad.

My own records for the last two decades indicate that the Asian brown flycatcher could

be resident in small numbers in the neighbourhood of Chennai city, Tamil Nadu and in the Rishi Valley area (Chittoor district, Andhra Pradesh). I have also seen a nest and a juvenile in the Peechi-Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary in Trichur district, Kerala. I present the details below.

In Chennai, I have 12 records of the bird in the Guindy National Park and Theosophical Society estate during June-August (1984-1990). Usually single birds were noticed. Juvenile birds with spotted plumage were seen on at least two occasions — on July 29, 1984 and July 3, 1990 at the Guindy Park. On the latter occasion, an adult bird was also seen.

In Rishi Valley (c. 700 m), I have more than 20 records of the bird in June-August, when more than one bird was present on at least six occasions during these months. Juvenile birds

were seen in July-August 1999 and in June-July 2000.

At the Peechi-Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary (c. 100 m), a nest was seen on March 2, 1993, atop a dead tree at c. 17 m inside a hollow. On August 26, 1991, I had seen a juvenile with spots at Mannuthy close to the Sanctuary.

These records show that the Asian brown flycatcher may nest in suitable localities in small numbers in peninsular India, and more information can be collected by birdwatchers by careful observations.

March 23, 2001

V. SANTHARAM

Institute of Bird Studies & Natural History,
Rishi Valley Education Centre,
Rishi Valley 517 352,
Chittoor district, Andhra Pradesh,
India.

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32. CRIMSON SUNBIRD *AETHOPYGA SIPARAJA SEHERIAE* IN MADHYA PRADESH

The crimson sunbird *Aethopyga siparaja* appears to have a patchy distribution in the Indian subcontinent. The subspecies *seheriae*, according to the HANDBOOK (Ali and Ripley 1987) and the SYNOPSIS (Ripley 1982), is a common resident from Kangra east to Sikkim (Himalayan foothills, subject to vertical movements) and thence south to the plains of eastern Bihar, north Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, hills of northeastern Peninsula and Orissa. The southernmost record for this subspecies is Balaghat in Madhya Pradesh.

The record of *Aethopyga siparaja seheriae* for Madhya Pradesh (Balaghat) is based on a single male specimen shot by D'Abreu at Laughor Ghat (c. 589 m) in the Balaghat district on April 1, 1913 (D'Abreu 1913). Since then,

nobody has reported this bird from Madhya Pradesh.

I have been staying in the buffer zone (village Mocha) of Kanha National Park (22° 17' N, 80° 30' E) since November 1986 and my first sighting of this bird was in February 1992. It was a male (easily identifiable), hopping busily about the fire bush *Woodfordia fruticosa*, which was in full bloom. I was quite surprised to see this bird here, as there were no previous records of the species from around Kanha. Within a few days of my first sighting the male, I saw a female of this species which was not very difficult to distinguish from the female purple sunbird *Nectarinia asiatica*, that happens to be the only other resident sunbird species.



Santharam, V. 2003. "Breeding Records of the Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica* in Southern India." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 100, 146–147.

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