

## Some new sighting records of flycatchers in Chandgad Taluka: Kolhapur District, Maharashtra

The Indian subcontinent is a home ground for 1263 bird species (Praveen, et al., 2016). Of which, Maharashtra State represents 632 bird species (Avibase, 2017). Prasad (2003) reported 450 bird species from Western Maharashtra. Chandgad Taluka of Kolhapur District is a part of Western Ghats, which harbours very rich biodiversity. The Chandgad Taluka (Latitude 15° 45' to 16° 3' North and Longitude 74° 1' to 74° 27' East) is located around 762 m MSL, and witness heavy rainfall (ca. 3000 to 5000 mm/year). The new sighting records of Orange-breasted Green-Pigeon *Treron bicinctus* (Hiragond and Gavade, 2012) and White-throated Thrush *Zoothera citrina cyanotus* (Hiragond et al., 2015) were reported from Chandgad Taluka in recent past. In our birding trips to different parts of Chandgad Taluka, we sighted Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*), White-bellied Blue-flycatcher (*Cyornis pallipes*), Blue-throated Blue-flycatcher (*Cyornis rubeculoides*) and Verditer Flycatcher (*Eumyias thalassinus*). Since, there is no any published literature of sightings of these flycatchers in Chandgad Taluka till date, we have tried to draw an attention of the birders' community to report their probable records of first sighting from Chandgad Taluka, Kolhapur District. Identification of the observed bird species were confirmed using field guides by Kazmierczak (2000), Grimmett et al., (1998, 2011) and, Rasmussen and Anderton (2012).

### 1. Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher (*Culicicapa ceylonensis*)

It is a small, greenish yellow bird with grey head and breast, inhabits the broad-leaved forest, coffee plantations and open wooded areas. It is reported from Bombay, Nasrapur and Bhimashankar in Pune District, Jaikwadi Dam and Paithan in Aurangabad District, Kalambushi and Chiplun in Ratnagiri Districts, and Ahemadnagr (Prasad, 2003); and Melghat Tiger Reserve (Lambert, 2014) in Maharashtra. Joshua et al., (2005) reported the first sighting of Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher from Jamnagar district of Gujarat. They found the bird was calling from *Vachellia nilotica* forest and feeding in association with few Oriental White-eye (*Zosterops palpebrosus*) and a common Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*).

We were on a birding trip towards Sundi Falls in Chandgad Taluka on 24.12.2016. Around 3.30 pm, we accidentally sighted a single individual of Grey-headed



Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher photographed in Sundi falls

Canary-flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis* associated with male Asian Paradise-flycatcher (*Terpsiphone paradisi*). Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher was flying along the rocky waterfall. The bird was there for few minutes, flying from one branch to another branch on a small unidentified tree along the rocky wall. It is around 10 meter height from the bottom of waterfall. Local people does not regularly sight this bird as it is a rare species in this area. Recently, several trees are removed from Sundi Water Falls that destroyed the natural habitat.

## 2. White-bellied Blue-flycatcher (*Cyornis pallipes*)

It is a medium sized (around 15 cm) resident bird in Western Ghats found up to central Maharashtra from south upwards. It inhabits the broad-leaved evergreen forest. The distribution map by Grimmitt et al., (2011) and, Rasmussen and Anderton (2012) shows



White-bellied Blue-flycatcher a) photographed in Tillari forest on 13.11.2016, b) photographed in Tillari forest on 10.12.2017 and c) photographed in Perani forest on 17.02.2018

its distribution in Sothern Western Ghats up to Karnataka and Goa, and few sightings in Western Maharashtra. In Maharashtra, the said bird was reported from Bhimashankar in Pune District (Ali, 1950); nearby Pune (Khare, 2015); Panshet, Lonavla, Sinhagad, Pune, Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary and Matheran in Raigad District, Mahabaleshwar and Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary in Satara district and Radhanagari in Kolhapur district (Prasad, 2003).

We had sighted a single individual of White-bellied Blue-flycatcher *Cyornis pallipes* on 12.11.2016 around 12.15 pm near Swapnill point in Tillari forest of Chandgad Taluka. It was photographed in the same area on 10.12.2017 around 4.00 pm and in Perani forest on 17.02.2018 at 4.10 pm. This Perani forest is around 25 km away from Tillari towards Amboli. The bird was perching on unidentified tree branch around 4-6 meters height from the ground, was observed for few minutes in all the three sightings. The bird was disturbed by our movements and flew in to the forest.

## 3. Verditer Flycatcher (*Eumyias thalassinus*)

Verditer Flycatcher is a greenish blue bird inhabited the open forest, forest clearings and roadside vegetation in forests; found in solitary or in pairs. In Maharashtra, the bird was reported from Dhule, Pune, Ahemadnagar and Solapur district (Prasad, 2003), and Danoli village of Sawantwadi taluk in Sindadurg district (Vannur and Hiragond, 2016).



Verditer Flycatcher photographed in Waghotri

In Kachchh District of Gujarat Verditer Flycatcher seems to be a vagrant, as it was sighted in Dhunai of Kachchh on 12.04.2002 after 38 years (Soni and Joshua, 2013).

On 11.11.2016 around 5.00 pm, we were walking along the roadside near Mahadev temple in Waghotri of Chandgad taluka. All of a sudden, two individuals of Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassinus*

flew into a small unidentified tree along the road side. Birds were perching on a tree

branch around 6-7 meter above the ground. These birds were there for about 2 minutes flying from a branch to other on the same tree using outer canopy of the tree. While taking photographs they were disturbed and flew into the forest. Towards south of Waghotri around 40 km in Belagavi district of Karnataka, Verditer Flycatcher was sighted earlier by Mallya (2009) on 26.11.2009 in outskirts of Belagavi (IndiaNaturewatch, 2009), and by NageshVannur in Vaccine depot of Belagavi city on 30.01.2015 and Kusamalli village in Khanapur taluk of Belagavi on 29.03.2015 (Vannur and Hiragond, 2016).

#### 4. Blue-throated Blue-flycatcher (*Cyornis rubeculoides*)

Blue-throated Blue-flycatcher is a winter visitor to southern Western Ghats. In Maharashtra, there are few sightings of this bird from Sindhudurg / Ratnagiri district (Prasad, 2003).

We had sighted Blue-throated Blue-flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides* in outskirts of Halkarni village of Chandgad taluka on 02.11.2016. The bird was devouring some unidentified larvae on unidentified tree branch. The bird was perching on a large tree branch at the middle part of the canopy around 6-7m height from the ground. The bird was videographed ([Video 1](#)). The bird was observed devouring the larvae for 2 minutes. Later, the bird was disturbed by our movements and flew to nearby tree along with the killed larvae.

Since, Chandgad taluka is a part of Western Ghats having suitable habitat for birds. Study area representing large number of fruiting trees like Ficus (*Ficus benghalensis* and *Ficus racemosa*), Jambolan (*Syzygium cumini*), Jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*), several vegetable crops and agricultural plants like Maize (*Zea mays*), Ground nut (*Arachis hypogea*), Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*), Millet finger (*Eleusine coracana*), Peas (*Pisum sativum*) support the avifauna diversity. The Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher, White-bellied Blue-flycatcher, Blue-throated Blue-flycatcher and Verditer Flycatcher sighted in Chandgad taluka are listed as Least Concern (IUCN, 2017). Since, the White-bellied Blue-flycatcher and Verditer Flycatcher sighted in interior forested area and, Blue-throated Blue-flycatcher sighted in outskirts of Halkarni village are not facing any threats at present whereas, in



Sundi Water Falls the natural habit is lost due to felling of trees. This is to be restored by planting several trees especially fruiting trees. Otherwise, the habitat loss may affect the presence of Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher in the near future.

#### References

- Ali, S. (1950).** Extension of Range of the White-bellied Blue-flycatcher (*Muscicapula pallipes* Jerdon. *J. Bombay Natural History Society*, 49(1): 785 - downloaded from <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/48182349#page/995/mode/1up> on 20.12.2017.
- Avibase (2017).** <http://avibase.bsc-eoc.org/checklist.jsp?region=INswmh&list=howardmoore> Accessed on 20.12.2017
- Grimmett, R., C. Inskipp & T. Inskipp (1998).** *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Grimmett, R., C. Inskipp & T. Inskipp (2011).** *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent* 2nd Edn. Christopher Helm, Oxford University Press.
- Hiragond, N.C. & S.L. Gavade, (2012).** Range Extension of Orange-breasted Green-pigeon *Treron bicinctus* (Jerdon 1840) – First Record from Maharashtra, India *J. Bombay Natural History Society*, 109(3): 202-203.
- Hiragond, N.C., A.S. Lokhande & K.N. Nikkam (2015).** New sighting records of the White-throated Thrush *Zoothera citrina cyanotus* from southern Maharashtra. *Biolife*, 3(3):595-596.
- IUCN (2017).** The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Version 2017-3. <[www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org)>. Downloaded on 20 December 2017.
- Joshua, J., H. Soni, N.M. Joshi, P.N. Joshi & O. Deiva (2005).** Occurrence of Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis* (Swainson) in Jamnagar District, Gujarat, India. *J. of Bombay Natural History Society*. 102 (3): 340-341.
- Kazmierczak, K. (2000).** *Birds of India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and the Maldives* 1st Edn. Christopher Helm, London.
- Khare, A. (2015).** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETmgu9mKR2w> downloaded on 13.12.2017.
- Lambert, F. (2014).** <http://www.xeno-canto.org/species/Culicicapa-ceylonensis?pg=2> downloaded on 07.12.2017.
- Mallya, R. (2009).** <http://www.indianaturewatch.net/displayimage.php?id=123970> downloaded on 20.12.2017.
- Prasad, A. (2003).** Annotated checklist of the Birds of Western Maharashtra. *Buceros*, 8 (2&3): 3-174.
- Praveen, J., R. Jayapal, & A. Pittie (2016).** A checklist of the birds of India. *Indian Birds*, 11 (5&6): 113-172.
- Rasmussen, P.C. & J.C. Anderton (2012).** *Birds of South Asia*. The Ripley Guide. Vol. 1 and 2. 2nd Edition. National Museum of Natural History – Smithsonian Institution, Michigan State University and Lynx Edicions, Washington, DC., Michigan and Barcelona.
- Soni, H. & J. Joshua (2013).** Verditer Flycatcher (*Muscicapa thalassina* Swainson, 1838) (Passeriformes: Muscicapidae) in Kachchh (Gujarat). *Newsletter for Birdwatchers*. 53 (3): 42.
- Vannur, N.S. & N.C. Hiragond (2016).** Sighting Records of Verditer Flycatcher (*Eumyias thalassinus*) from Belagavi, North Karnataka and Sawantwadi, Southern Maharashtra. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers*, 55(2): 22-23.

**Acknowledgements:** Authors wish to thank the Principal, Yashwantrao Chavan College, Halkarni for providing facilities. NCH wish to thank forest department Kolhapur Division for giving permission to do field work in Chandgad forest. NCH also thank Akash Kamble, Sagar Chikhalkar, Pradeep Chandekar and Ankush More for joining in the field. NCH wish to thank the anonymous referees for their valuable comments on earlier draft, which improved the quality of the Manuscript.

**N.C. Hiragond<sup>1</sup>, K.N. Nikkam<sup>2</sup>, N.T. Avadan<sup>3</sup>, S.S. Bhate<sup>4</sup> & R.N. Patil<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>1,3-5</sup> Department of Zoology, Yashwantrao Chavan College, Halkarni, Chandgad Taluka, Kolhapur District, Maharashtra 416552, India

<sup>2</sup> R.B. Madkholkar Mahavidyalaya Chandgad, Chandgad Taluka, Kolhapur District, Maharashtra 416552, India  
Email: [hiragond@gmail.com](mailto:hiragond@gmail.com) (Corresponding author)

Citation: Hiragond, N.C., K.N. Nikkam, N.T. Avadan, S.S. Bhate & R.N. Patil (2018). Some new sighting records of flycatchers in Chandgad Taluka: Kolhapur District, Maharashtra. *Bird-o-soar* #22. In: *Zoo's Print* 33(9): 10-13