

Sighting of a Leucistic *Ploceus philippinus* Linn. from India

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Abstract: First sighting record of Leucistic *Ploceus philippinus* Linn. was made at 20°55'21.07"N, 76° 3'56.08"E within agriculture farms near Chinchkheda, Taluka Jamner, Maharashtra, India.

Introduction

Aberrant colourations in birds are rare (Sage 1962, 1963). There are various causes for such aberration, genetic mutation is primarily responsible for such aberration (Sage 1962). Pigments responsible for plumage colouration in birds are melanines and carotenoids (Van Grouw 2006). Aberration due to carotenoids is generally caused by food (Van Grouw 2006). Second form of aberration is due to melanin. Two forms of melanin occur in bird eumelanin and pheomelanin. Qualitative and quantitative imbalance in these two forms of melanin results in albinism, leucism, dilution, ino, schizochroism and melanism (Van Grouw 2006). Leucism is a complete loss of melanin in some or all feather, while other body parts like legs, eye and beak remains unchanged, or very little effected (Buckley 1982). Leucism is due to expression of mutant alleles (Bensch *et al.* 2000).

Observations

During a field survey for bird population and status, conducted by Cohort for Bio-Research Organization in Jamner forest area, an unusual white bird was observed in the flock of baya weaver *Ploceus philippinus* Linn, and was later identified as female of *Ploceus philippinus* Linn. Photograph of the bird was captured using Sony HX100V camera. Fig.1. shows a *Ploceus philippinus* Linn. Female totally covered with pure white feather, light creamish in feather above beak, and faintly on tail edges, eye and beak were normal coloured, while naked skin on leg is slightly brighter than normal. Reports for albinism and leucism in several species are published, (D'Abreu, 1923), (Salunkhe 2003), *Corvus macrorhynchos* (Sar 1987), (Grewal 2000), (Mahabal 1991),



Fig 1. A Leucistic female of *Ploceus philippinus* Linn. Photo: Ganesh R. Sonar

(Sani and Kasambe 2007). Leucism (presence of pure white feathers on complete body) in *Ploceus philippinus* Linn. was obtained, hence it could be the first record for leucism in *Ploceus philippinus* Linn.

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