Blue-and-white Flycatcher *Cyanoptila cyanomelana* from Kotagiri, an addition to Tamil Nadu avifauna

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Manuscript received on 24 November 2015.

Blue-and-white Flycatcher *Cyanoptila cyanomelana* is a recent addition to the avifauna of South Asia. It is not listed in Ali & Ripley (1987), Rasmussen & Anderton (2005), and Grimmett et al. (2011). It was first reported from near Mumbai (Kawale 2013), and included in Rasmussen & Anderton (2012). Since then, it has been reported from a few other parts of the Indian Subcontinent (Rajeshkumar et al. 2014), including one from Sri Lanka (Vidanapathirana et al. 2014). Here we report its first record from Kotagiri, Tamil Nadu.

On 21 November 2015, while watching birds by the roadside in Kotagiri (11.41°N, 76.85°E), Nilgiris District, AI pointed out a strange flycatcher which he could not identify. We both watched the bird for the next four hours. AI was able to take several good photographs from various angles [40, 41]. The bird was similar to the resident White-bellied Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis pallipes*, but several features, including the colour of its face, and breast, were markedly different. After referring to bird books, and several online websites, including BirdLife International (2015), we were able to identify it as a male Blue-and-white Flycatcher. We circulated the photographs amongst many birdwatchers, who confirmed it as this species, and we have entered our record in eBird (Bhoopathy 2015). We obtained additional references, regarding its prior records from the Indian Subcontinent, and it was clear that the species had not been recorded from Tamil Nadu. This bird was last sighted on 02 December 2015.

The species is described as an uncommon, to rare, non-breeding visitor to the Malay Peninsula, Singapore, and the Philippines, and a rare non-breeding visitor to Sumatra (BirdLife International 2015). Most reports from the Indian Subcontinent are from its spring migration (Rajeshkumar et al. 2014); while this is probably the second time it has been recorded during autumn migration, after Choudhury (2006). Birdwatchers in the Nilgiris should carefully check all individuals of White-bellied Blue Flycatcher during November and March for this species.

References


