

# Sighting of a Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* in Pune

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The Spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* is a winter visitor to Baluchistan, and the Himalayas in Pakistan, and a passage migrant in Pakistan, and north-western India (Ali & Ripley 2001; Grimmett *et al.* 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). In India, most of the recent records of this species have been from Gujarat, though it has been reported from further north (Ali & Ripley 2001). Here, I report an instance where the bird stayed for two weeks in the neighbourhood of Pune, Maharashtra.

legs were dark, and its dark tail had a slight notch. The dark grey greater, and median coverts had obvious buffish-grey, or buffish-white edges. The tertial feathers also had similar buffish-white edges. Based on other photographs in 'Oriental Bird Images' (Parekh 2012, 2015), this bird appears to be an adult.

Since my initial sighting in December 2015, I have seen this bird in the same tree, around the same time in the morning, and in the same set of branches almost every day till 25 December 2015.

Prasad (2006) does not include this species in his list of birds of western Maharashtra but includes it as possible during the autumn migration. There are no other known records from the state. For a species, which is normally restricted up to western Gujarat, its occurrence in Pune, 1000 km away from its regular passage range, is noteworthy. However, this species is easy to confuse with the more common Asian Brown Flycatcher, and hence there is chance that it was overlooked earlier. It will be important to monitor its duration of stay in coming years, in Pune, to understand if this was a vagrant bird, or the species is a regular visitor, or a passage migrant.

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Photo: Raghunath Iyer



54. Spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* in Pune.

A large pipal tree *Ficus religiosa* stands in the backyard of my workplace at Parihar Chowk, Aundh, Pune (18.55°N, 73.80°E). The windows on this side open into the pipal's canopy. In winters this tree comes alive with several resident and wintering birds. On the morning of 10 December 2015, as I was peering into the tree at 1015 hrs to spot some activity, I noticed a single, pale, sparrow-sized bird. The bird would fly away, and return to the same branch, or adjacent branches within a radius of 1.5 m. This behavior lasted for an hour. Next day, at the same time, I saw this bird again. I photographed it [54], and sent the picture to a few birdwatchers in Pune, who tentatively identified it as an Asian Brown Flycatcher *M. latirostris*. Later, when I posted the photos on Facebook's 'Indian Birds Group', Pankaj Gupta, and Shantanu Bhattacharya corrected my identification to Spotted Flycatcher.

The bird was grey, or brownish-grey overall. It had a dark eye with no eye-ring, whitish under parts with some signature dark streaks on the breast, and the crown of the head. The longish beak was dark, and the lower mandible had a pale base. Its