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## Vigors's Sunbird *Aethopyga vigorsii* in Yawal Wildlife Sanctuary, Satpuda Ranges, Maharashtra, India

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Early in the morning on 26 January 2017 we visited Mandapnala (Yawal Wildlife Sanctuary, District Jalgaon, Maharashtra) for bird watching. PS alerted LS to a bird that was restlessly calling from the branch of a mistletoe or '*bandgul*' *Dendrothoe falcata* var. *coccinea*. After careful observation, and reference to Grimmett *et al.* (2011), and Kazmierczack (2009), we concluded that it was an immature male of either Vigors's Sunbird *Aethopyga vigorsii*, or a Crimson Sunbird *A. siparaja*. It was difficult to establish species of this sunbird, as there was no conclusive evidence to rule out either. The bird had a scarlet throat and breast, uniform grey underparts, and uniform grey-brown wings. We were able to take a few photographs [173] and a short video. We noted four individuals of this species from the same locality: two immature males, and two females.

During subsequent visits to the area, in the hope of spotting a male of the species, we always found immatures and females of this sunbird, sipping nectar from the mistletoe flowers. On 21 May 2017 we found an adult male on a flowering *Albizia* tree in the same locality. It was sipping nectar from its flowers. PS took several photographs of this bird [174]. It had a scarlet throat and breast mixed with fine yellow streaking, uniform grey underparts, and uniform grey-brown wings. Yellow streaks on scarlet throat and breast ruled out the Crimson Sunbird, confirming it as Vigors's Sunbird (Ali 2002; Kazmierczack 2009; Grimmett *et al.* 2011). We monitored this Vigors's Sunbird for four months, details of which are given in Table 1.

Vigors's Sunbird is a resident, endemic species of the Western Ghats (Rahmani *et al.* 2013: 168). There are no explicit historical records of its presence east of Purna Wildlife Sanctuary



173. Immature *Aethopyga* sunbird.

174. Male Vigors's Sunbird.

Pics: Prasad Sonawane

(20.91°N, 73.72°E), or in Khandesh (=Jalgaon, Dhule, and Nandurbar Districts; Ali & Ripley 1987; Grimmett *et al.* 2011; Mahajan *et al.* 2013; Uzagare 2013; eBird 2016; Patil 2016)—barring a mention of Khandesh in the distribution section in Rasmussen & Anderton (2012), for which the original record could not be traced. The table indicates that the species is at least regular in the area, either as a local migrant, or more likely as a resident in this sanctuary. It is an addition to the avifauna of the Satpuda Range.

**Table 1.** Date-wise monitoring of Vigors's Sunbird *Aethopyga vigorsii*

No.	Date	Number of birds seen			Activity	Other birds seen in association with Vigors's Sunbird
		Adult male	Immature male	Female		
1	26 January 2017	00	01	00	Nectaring on <i>D. falcata coccinea</i>	Jerdon's Leafbird <i>Chloropsis jerdoni</i>
2	3 February 2017	00	01	00	Hovering and moving restlessly among Bamboo stands	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch <i>Sitta frontalis</i>
3	10 February 2017	00	02	02	Nectaring on <i>D. f. coccinea</i>	Oriental White Eye <i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
4	19 February 2017	00	02	00	Nectaring on <i>D. f. coccinea</i>	Oriental White Eye <i>Z. palpebrosus</i> , Black-lored Tit <i>Machlolophus xanthogenys</i>
5	27 February 2017	00	01	00	Nectaring on <i>D. f. coccinea</i>	Oriental White Eye <i>Z. palpebrosus</i> , Black-lored Tit <i>M. xanthogenys</i> , Common Tailorbird <i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
6	4 March 2017	00	00	00	.....	Oriental White Eye <i>Z. palpebrosus</i> , Black-lored Tit <i>M. xanthogenys</i>
7	19 March 2017	00	00	00	.....	Grey-breasted prinia <i>Prinia hodgsonii</i> , Oriental White Eye <i>Z. palpebrosus</i>
8	9 April 2017	00	00	00	.....	Jerdon's Leafbird <i>Chloropsis jerdoni</i> ; Oriental White Eye <i>Z. palpebrosus</i> ; Black-lored Tit <i>M. xanthogenys</i>
9	14 May 2017	00	00	00	.....	Jerdon's Leafbird <i>Chloropsis jerdoni</i>
10	21 May 2017	02	00	02	Perched on <i>Albizia</i> tree and nectaring on its flowers	Grey-breasted Prinia <i>P. hodgsonii</i> ; Oriental White Eye <i>Z. palpebrosus</i> ; Black-lored Tit <i>M. xanthogenys</i>

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# Correspondence

## Assemblages of White-winged Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus grandis* in the Spiti Valley

During a successful snow leopard *Uncia uncia* safari to Kaza (32.37°N, 78.13°E) and its environs in the Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh, from 20 to 23 February 2017, we observed large concentrations of White-winged Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogastrus grandis*. It is the largest redstart of upper montane areas of the Caucasus and Central Asia, to central China, breeding above the tree line on open dry, rocky or barren hillsides, and wintering in similar habitats at lower altitudes (Clement & Rose 2015). In the Indian Subcontinent it is resident, subject to altitudinal movements, and breeds in Chitral, Gilgit, Baltistan, Ladakh, and along the northern Himalayan slopes (sporadic on southern slopes), through Kumaon, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and Arunachal Pradesh (Ali & Ripley 1997).

While driving c. 80 km from Nako (3625 m asl), Kinnaur District, to Kaza (3800 m), c. 85 birds, including approximately ten females, were counted along the road. Later, while based at Kaza, we explored the accessible parts of the snow-bound Spiti Valley and found the species very common in valley-bottom thickets/ plantations of poplar *Populus* sp., and willow *Salix* sp., with great partiality to sea buckthorn *Hippophae rhamnoides* thickets as has been reported earlier (Ludlow 1950; Mallon 1987; Collar 2005). In one such extensive sea buckthorn thicket along the Spiti River, measuring c. 1200 x 500 m, close to the Rangrik Bridge, in Spiti Valley, their concentration exceeded 300 individuals on a daily basis, reminiscent of numbers observed in winter along the floor of the Indus Valley between Tikse and Spituk, in Ladakh, by Mallon (1987), and near Tabo (30.05°N, 78.28°E, 3280 asl) in Spiti Valley (Singh 2003).

While most of the birds were confined to the berry-bearing