

Mugimaki Flycatcher *Ficedula mugimaki* from Neil Island, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, India

Swarnendu Das

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Swarnendu Das, Vivekananda Road, Bbuganj Shibhala, Hooghly 712103, West Bengal, India. Email: das.swn84@gmail.com
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Mugimaki Flycatcher *Ficedula mugimaki* is primarily an East Asian species that winters widely in South-East Asia. It breeds in south-central and south-eastern Siberia, northern Mongolia, north-eastern China, and North Korea, while wintering in south-eastern China, South-East Asia, and the islands of Indonesia, and Philippines (Robson 2008). This species has not been recorded till date from South Asia (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). This note describes the sighting of an immature male Mugimaki Flycatcher from Neil Island (11°49'N, 93°03'E) near Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, India.

While on a birding trip to the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, I visited Neil Island on 28 November 2013. There I photographed an unfamiliar flycatcher [68], and later posted the pictures on the Indian Birds Facebook group for help with its identification. The group's members identified it as an immature male Mugimaki Flycatcher.



Photo: S. Das

68. Mugimaki Flycatcher side view.

Post identification, it became clear that there are very few species which can be confused with this bird. The combination of extensive red on the breast, and white on the head, is only present in the males of Mugimaki Flycatcher, Rufous-chested Flycatcher *F. dumetoria*, and Snowy-browed Flycatcher *F. hyperythra*. The extensive red on the breast and long wings visible in the pictures eliminates Rufous-chested; while the presence of white behind the eyes eliminates Snow-browed. Adult male Mugimaki has a clear white eye-brow and a wing-bar, which is lacking in this bird; the pictures are more similar to the following image available in Oriental Bird Images from Hong Kong (http://orientalbirdimages.org/search.php?p=13&Bird_ID=2681&Bird_Family_ID=&pagesize=1).

Though this is a first record for South Asia, it is a 'locally fairly common winter visitor' to the neighbouring South-East Asia (Robson 2000), and hence it comes as no surprise that the first record for South Asia is from the Andaman Islands. Though these birds normally winter at elevations between 800–2000 m in the Malay Peninsula (Robson 2008), it is interesting to note that the species has been seen at sea level—presumably on migration—as has been seen elsewhere, e.g., Hong Kong.

References

- Rasmussen, P. C., & Anderton, J. C., 2012. *Birds of South Asia: the Ripley guide*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C. and Barcelona: Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. 2 vols. Pp. 1–378; 1–683.
Robson, C., 2008. *A field guide to the birds of South-East Asia*. London: New Holland Publishers (UK) Ltd. Pp. 1–504.

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