

get a clinching opinion. Looking at the three images of the bird, and giving weightage to its two wing bars and white supercilium extending beyond the eyes, RT identified it as a Western Crowned Warbler *P. occipitalis*. He submitted the image to the Editor of *Vihang* (Gujarati newsletter for birdwatchers) for publication along with the sighting details, which were published (Trivedi 2012). As the Western Crowned Warbler is known to occur in Gujarat, this photographic record went un-noticed. Recently, while reviewing soft copies of the images of warblers in RT's collection, DM felt that identification of this already published photograph of the warbler was not correct and required further expert opinion. We sent the photographs to Viral Joshi, Shashank Dalvi, and Kryz Kazmierczak for confirmation of the identification.

The bird was identified as a *Phylloscopus* warbler by its tiny and compact size, generally greenish appearance and broad yellowish-white supercilium. The bird had two clear yellowish bold wing bars, a thin dark eye-stripe, thicker around ear-coverts, and a conspicuous yellowish stripe through the centre of the crown. Other features noted at the time included the yellow-tinged alula and black bill. In one of the photograph, legs are under the shadow of the bird itself and hence look dark. In a second photograph, the legs are in bright sunlight and look lighter (at least not grey or horny) [164, 165]. All these features eliminate other leaf warblers and we concluded that it is a Lemon-rumped Warbler, and earlier it was misidentified as Western Crowned Warbler (Trivedi 2012).



164. Lemon-rumped Warbler.



165. Lemon-rumped Warbler showing crown stripe.

Both: Rajni Trivedi

The Lemon-rumped Warbler is known to occur in the Himalayan foothills, right from Jammu & Kashmir in the west to Arunachal Pradesh in the east. It is not recorded in the northern and north-western plains of India, except in the Delhi region (Vyas 2019; eBird 2020), and Harike Lake, Punjab (eBird 2020). Earlier records of the species at Delhi and Harike were within c.200 km of the Himalayan foothills. However, its present record at Ahmedabad is more than 1,200 km southward of the Himalayan foothills is surprising.

The Lemon-rumped Warbler has not been included in Gujarat's bird checklists (Parasharya et al. 2004; Ganpule 2016, 2017). This is the first record of the Lemon-rumped Warbler in Gujarat and it is an addition to the avifauna of Gujarat. According to Ganpule (2016, 2017), only 12 species of *Phylloscopus* warblers have been recorded in Gujarat, largely due to the difficulties in identification of these tiny and skulking birds.

We are very thankful to Viral Joshi, Shashank Dalvi, and Kryz Kazmierczak for their help in the identification of this bird. Special thanks to B. M. Parasharya for his valuable suggestions for improvements to the manuscript.

References

- Alström, P., & Christie, D. A., 2020. Lemon-rumped Warbler (*Phylloscopus chloronotus*), version 1.0. In: Birds of the World (J. del Hoyo, A. Elliott, J. Sargatal, D. A. Christie, & E. de Juana, Editors). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. Website URL: <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.parwar1.01>. [Accessed on 11 September 2020.]
- eBird 2020. Lemon-rumped Warbler (*Phylloscopus chloronotus*). Webpage URL: <https://ebird.org/india/map/parwar1>. [Accessed on 11 September 2020.]
- Ganpule, P., 2016. The birds of Gujarat: Status and distribution. *Flamingo* 8 (3)–12 (4): 2–40.
- Ganpule, P., 2017. First update to the Gujarat checklist: December 2017. *Flamingo* 15 (4): 17–20.
- Parasharya, B. M., Borad, C. K., & Rank, D. N., 2004. *A checklist of the birds of Gujarat*. 1st ed. Gujarat: Bird Conservation Society. Pp. 1–27.
- 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.
- Trivedi, R., 2012. *Ratanmahal ma tikkalno kasturo* (with photograph on central pages). *Vihang* 6 (1): 22. [In Gujarati.]
- Vyas, S., 2019. The birds of the Delhi area: An annotated checklist. *Indian BIRDS Monograph* 1: 1–128.

– Rajni Trivedi & Devvratsinh Mori

Rajni Trivedi, 20/C Mangaldeep App., Jodhpur Gam Road, Satellite, Ahmedabad 380015, Gujarat, India. E-mail: rajnitrivedi1950@gmail.com [RT]
Devvratsinh Mori, Opp. Darbar Gadh, Wadhwan 363030, Gujarat, India.
E-mail: devvratsinhmori@gmail.com [corresponding author] [DM]

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* preying on Five-striped Palm Squirrel *Funambulus pennantii*

On 29 June 2018, at 1240 h, during the routine field supervision, we heard the unusually loud squeak of a Five-striped Palm Squirrel *Funambulus pennantii* at the Tughlaqabad Biodiversity Park, Delhi (28.50°N, 77.27°E; 220 m asl). After a search in the direction of the sound, we saw a Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* chasing the squirrel and trying to attack it with its beak and talons. The squirrel tried to hide in the branches, and scampered around the main trunk of a Vilayati Keekar *Prosopis juliflora* tree to escape the attack. But the Greater Coucal was quick and determined. To save itself, the squirrel jumped from a branch (3.6 m) on to the ground and climbed up again. However, a few minutes later, the squirrel got exhausted. The Greater Coucal got a chance to grab it by its nape, with its talons. The whole incident

occurred within a span of four to five minutes. After grabbing the wriggling squirrel, the Greater Coucal flew laboriously towards the greener area of the park. Later, we observed the Greater Coucal feeding on the squirrel by puncturing the cervical vertebrae on the dorsal side of the body.

The Greater Coucal is known to feed on small mammals (mice, hedgehog), lizards, snakes, frogs, insects, centipedes, scorpions, spiders, crabs, snails, slugs, eggs and nestlings of small birds, fruits, and seeds (Payne 2020). Specifically, it has been reported to kill a Saw-scaled Viper *Echis carinatus* (Venugopal 1982), Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* (Narayan et al. 2013), and a young Indian Hare *Lepus nigricollis* (Simmonds 1981). However, there have been no previous records of the Greater Coucal preying on the Five-striped Palm Squirrel, an addition to the record of its varied diet, and hunting behaviour.

The authors acknowledge the support of C. R. Babu and Faiyaz A Khudsar, who always promote scientific documentation and interpretations. We sincerely thank Monica Kaushik, Manoj Kumar Singh, and Amit Kumar for their valuable guidance and comments.

References

- Naryana, B. L., Surender, G., Swamy, K., Venkateshwarlu, P., Kumar, R. S., & Rao, V. V., 2013. Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* feeding on the Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* - A case report from Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India. *Life Sciences Leaflets* 10: 72–75.
- Payne, R. B., 2020. Greater Coucal (*Centropus sinensis*), version 1.0. In: Birds of the World (J. del Hoyo, A. Elliott, J. Sargatal, D. A. Christie, and E. de Juana, Editors). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.grecou1.01> [Accessed on 20 September 2020.]
- Simmonds, F., 1981. Crow-pheasant killing a hare. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 21 (5): 13.
- Venugopal, B., 1982. Observations on the Southern Coucal *Centropus sinensis* feeding on the Saw-scaled Viper *Echis carinatus*. *Newsletter for Birdwatchers* 21 (12): 19 (1981).

– Aditya Singh Chauhan & Durga Prasad Srivastava

Aditya Singh Chauhan, H. No. 125, Village Jasola, Chauhan Mohalla, Galli No. 3., P.O. Jamia Nagar, New Delhi 110025, India. E-mail: aditya.chauhan999@gmail.com
Durga Prasad Srivastava, 1A, Anshul Vihar Extension, Bairagarh-Chichali, Kolar Road, Bhopal 462042, Madhya Pradesh, India. E-mail: dpsrivastava1992@gmail.com

Asian Glossy Starling *Aplonis panayensis affinis* in India: Recent records, and a note on its likely status in India and Bangladesh

During an afternoon birding session on 02 October 2019, RDP was drawn to some unfamiliar high-pitched metallic calls from semi-evergreen forest (~20 m asl) near his home in Agartala, West Tripura (23.86°N, 91.30°E). On investigation with his telephoto lens, he saw and photographed three blackish-green birds with striking red eyes [166]; they were actively foraging high up in the canopy. All three birds were readily identified as male Asian Glossy Starlings *Aplonis panayensis* due to their distinctive plumage (Purkayastha 2019). A single male was also seen during April 2016 (Biswajit Saha, *pers. comm.*) in West Tripura. Although two subspecies of the Asian Glossy Starling are resident in India (*tytleri* and *albiris* in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands) (Ali & Ripley 1972; Craig & Feare 2020), these observations constitute the first documented records of the subspecies *affinis* within Indian limits since March/April 1991 (Choudhury 1991), and the first photographs. Our birds were identified as subspecies *affinis*, rather than *tytleri* or *albiris* from the greenish gloss (more bluish and less glossy in the other two) and the bright red iris (brownish in *tytleri*, and white in *albiris*) (Craig & Feare 2020).



166. Asian Glossy Starling in Tripura.

R. D. Purkayastha

The subspecies *affinis* is perhaps the least known of the many Asian Glossy Starling forms, and is restricted to India, Bangladesh, and Myanmar (Craig & Feare 2010); although a straggler (presumably of this subspecies) has reached eastern Nepal (Choudhary 2004). Ali & Ripley (1972) stated that its status within the Indian Subcontinent is 'equivocal.' In India, earlier literature has considered the subspecies to be a summer/breeding visitor to the Garo, Khasi, and northern Cachar Hills (Ali & Ripley 1972; Craig & Feare 2010). In Bangladesh, it is largely restricted to the Chittagong Hill tracts (eBird 2020) where Ali & Ripley (1972) stated that it is locally common. In Myanmar, the subspecies is present only within a narrow belt in the Arakan (Rakhine) region (Smythies 1953; Ali & Ripley 1972; Feare & Craig 2020); but it has also occurred in Ayeyarwady (Murray-Jones et al. 2017) and that the subspecies *strigata* occurs in the Tenasserim region of southern Myanmar (Smythies 1953; Feare & Craig 2020). One individual, found near Chennai in southern India on 09 October 1880, is of unknown subspecies (Dique 1880; Ali & Ripley 1972).

We suggest that subspecies *affinis* may currently be an extremely rare vagrant to north-eastern India, rather than a regular summer/breeding visitor as stated in Ali & Ripley (1972) (albeit with some doubt). Several dated records (Inglis 1878; Baker 1893; Inglis 1893; Anonymous 1897) perhaps indicate that the species was once regular, but there is little recent evidence to suggest that this is still the case. In the past decades, the Asian Glossy Starling has been documented only thrice in north-eastern India, and once in eastern Nepal, and the dates (March/April/May and October) suggest vagrancy during spring/autumn migration. Similarly, in adjacent north-eastern Bangladesh, the species appears to be very rare, with just one historical record (Primrose 1900) and none after the year 2005. One possible reason for the lack of recent records from the Cachar Hills and north-eastern Bangladesh may be a lack of surveying in states like Tripura and southern Mizoram. But there is some indication that it may not be the only reason because sources like eBird (eBird 2020), iNaturalist (iNaturalist 2020b), and other relevant literature has some locations from the region that are well-monitored, e.g., Makunda Christian Leprosy and General Hospital, Karimganj in Assam, India (iNaturalist 2020a), and Satchari and Lawachara National Park in Sylhet, Bangladesh (Khan & Aziz 2012; Bangladesh Forest Department 2015).