

Correspondence

The Indian Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi* from the Little Andaman Island: An addition to the avifauna of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands

We spent a few days birding in Little Andaman in early December 2024. On the morning of 13 December 2024, while exploring a forest edge near the Farm Tikery settlements (10.587°N, 92.528°E), we encountered a mixed species foraging flock. Most of the birds were local species, but the sudden appearance of a Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone* sp. quickly captured our attention. DAP first spotted it in a berry-laden tree, and he immediately alerted the rest of us. The sighting caused a stir of excitement, as a Paradise-Flycatcher in this region suggested it could be either an Amur Paradise-Flycatcher *T. incei* (hereinafter, APFC) or a Blyth's Paradise-Flycatcher *T. affinis* (hereinafter, BPFC), both species rarely seen in India outside the northeast (eBird 2025).

Soon after our initial sighting, the bird flew to a broad-leaved tree, where DB managed to take a few photographs [181]. He remarked that the bird appeared different from the Paradise-Flycatchers typically encountered in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands – the APFC and BPFC. This prompted a closer inspection, during which we all noted that the bird resembled an Indian Paradise-Flycatcher *T. paradisi* (hereinafter, IPFC), a species familiar to us from mainland India. We continued to follow the bird as it perched briefly on another tree, providing a clear, well-lit view. This observation confirmed our identification of the bird as an IPFC.



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181. Indian Paradise-Flycatcher exhibits a long crest, strongly contrasting plumage, and a broader black throat patch that merges into the chest.

The BPFC is a common resident across the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, frequently encountered in forests and known to breed locally (Rasmussen et al. 2024). In contrast, the APFC is a rare winter visitor or passage migrant, with only a few records between October and March and no evidence of breeding on the islands (del Hoyo et al. 2020). The bird we observed differed from both these species in several distinct field marks. It lacked the cold grey upperparts and faint eye-ring typical of the APFC, instead showing rich rufous tones across the mantle, wings, and tail. Compared to BPFC, it appeared larger, with a longer crest,

and displayed a stronger contrast between the glossy black head and rufous upperparts. The black throat patch was also broader and merged more fully into the chest. These combined features closely matched those of the IPFC (Moeliker et al. 2020), a species not recorded from the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

There is one confirmed observation of IPFC from Andaman & Nicobar Islands subsequent to ours, of a similar plumaged bird from Swaraj Dweep on 14 April 2025 (Kumar 2025). However, several records of IPFC exist from regions surrounding the Andaman Islands. A notable pelagic observation was made near Rondo Island, Iboih, Sukakarya, Sabang City, Aceh, Indonesia (6.300°N, 94.700°E) in international waters (Bandara 2020). The observer, a navy merchant, reported that the vessel was enroute from Djibouti to Singapore without any port stops, crossing south of Sri Lanka when the sighting occurred; the bird was found dead the following day. Additional reports include one from Pahang, Malaysia (Zahidin 2019), although this record lacks supporting details or photographs and may represent a misidentification. In Thailand, the species has been documented in Phetchaburi (Lawton 2022) and in Nong Plak Phraya during January–March 2023 (Taengtum 2023). In Singapore, it was recorded at the Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve between December 2017 and November 2018 (Tan 2017) and later at the Singapore Botanic Gardens in November 2022 (Lee 2022). Additionally, Myanmar has yielded about six to seven records since 2017 (eBird 2025).

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– **Debankur Biswas, G. Shaktivel, Badri Rao, Dev Anand Paul & Latha Prabhakaran**

Debankur Biswas, TZed Homes, R Narayanapura, Whitefield, Bangalore 560066, Karnataka, India. E-mail: debbfreewings@gmail.com [DB] [Corresponding author]
G. Shaktivel, Near PG Homes, Buniyadabaad, Port Blair, 744102, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, India. E-mail: shakti.oceans@gmail.com [GS]
Badri Rao, Windmills Of Your Mind, Shivaji Nagar, Basavanna Nagar, Whitefield, Bangalore, 560066, Karnataka, India. E-mail: badri123@gmail.com [BR]
Dev Anand Paul, Al Armeen Street, Peruvillai, Nagercoil, 629003, Tamil Nadu, India. E-mail: devanand.paul@gmail.com [DAP]
Latha P, Empire Heights L.F.C Road, Kaloor Post, Ernakulam, Kochi, 682017, Kerala, India. E-mail: prabhakaran.latha@gmail.com [LP]