

The Blue-and-white Flycatcher *Cyanoptila cyanomelana*: A new record for Telangana, India

Spotting an unexpected species boosts birdwatchers' morale towards more birding. One such recent find of significance was the sighting of two first winter males of the rare and vagrant Blue-and-white Flycatcher *Cyanoptila cyanomelana* in the Damagundam Reserve Forest (17.26°N, 77.93°E) in Vikarabad, on the outskirts of Hyderabad (Telangana, India), in December 2020. The most important aspect of this sighting is that most records of this migratory flycatcher, till date, have been from the Western Ghats and southern Indian states (Barve & Kamath 2016). This is the first time that it has been sighted in the Deccan region, from the south-eastern part of mainland India. We tracked the movement of the two birds in the forest area where we first spotted them on 11 December 2020, where they wintered until mid-January 2021. Another such previous record of a long stay by a Blue-and-white Flycatcher was reported by Manoj Kanakambaran from Kanthalloor, Idukki District (Kanakambaran 2018), where the individual continued to winter in the same site at least from 23 November 2018 till 28 February 2019 (Chandran & Praveen 2019).

The Blue-and-white Flycatcher is a breeding migrant in Japan and the adjacent north-eastern Asian mainland, and migrates towards the south-eastern parts of Asia in winter. Besides Japan, it breeds in Korea, parts of north-eastern China, and Russia, to the Far East (Hooper 2006). In winter, it migrates through South-east Asia, largely in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand, to winter in Borneo and Java (Fig. 1). It has been recorded as a vagrant in other parts of the Indian Subcontinent too, namely, Sinharaja Rainforest in Sri Lanka in 2014 (Vidanapathirana et al. 2014), and the Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park in Bhutan (Rinchen et al. 2019).

In India, there have been sporadic wintering records since 2012 from Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, and also from Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, and the Andaman Islands in the extreme eastern parts of the country (Table 1).

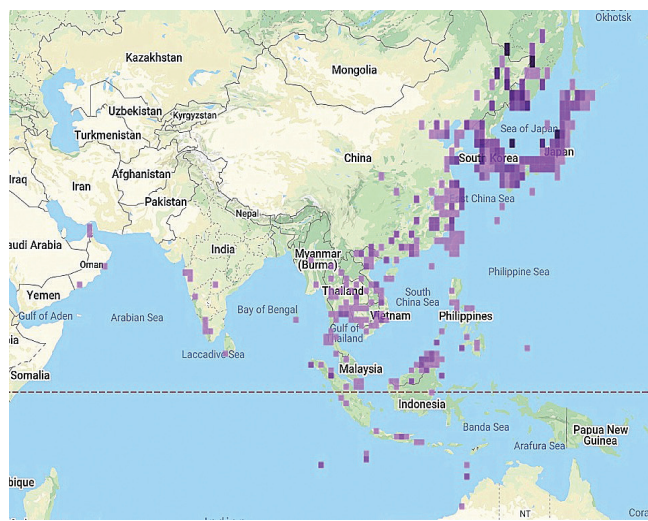


Fig. 1. The intermittent distribution of the Blue-and-white Flycatcher (eBird 2021a).

The adult males of the Blue-and-white Flycatchers have a vibrant blue back, white belly and black face, throat, and breast. The females are brown all over. An immature male, which we

sighted, has the adult's blue wings but is brown otherwise. In our sighting, both the birds had grey-brown heads and upper backs, and white chests and bellies. One bird had more blue on its back than the other, a much clearer white eye ring, and also the white on its belly was more clean and prominent than the other [148a, b].



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148a, b. First winter male Blue-and-white Flycatcher plumages.

Zappey's Flycatcher *C. cumatilis* (Fig. 2) and the Blue-and-white Flycatcher overlap in their migration range, and the great similarity of their first winter plumages makes it impossible to separate them. However, and on the balance of probability, given that all identifiable records from mainland India have thus far been of Blue-and-white, we tentatively regard this record too as such, or until a Zappey's is confirmed. Consequently, all previous records of non-adult Blue-and-white Flycatchers and Zappey's Flycatchers (Table 1) from India would also be open to review.

Table 1. Historical records of the Blue-and-white Flycatcher and Zappey's Flycatcher from India

State	District	Site	Date	Source	Identification
Blue-and-white Flycatcher					
Telangana	Rangareddy	Damagundam Reserve Forest, Vikarabad	11 December 2020	Present record	First-winter male
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	South Andaman	Kalatang	20 February 2020	Vel, S (2020)	Adult male
Kerala	Idukki	Kanthaloor	23 November 2018	Kanakambaran (2018)	Adult male
Kerala	Idukki	Neriamangalam–Painavu Road	02 February 2018	Roddis & Loseby (2018)	Adult male
Kerala	Palakkad	Nellyampathy Ghat Road	05 February 2017	Thekkethala (2017)	Juvenile
Maharashtra	Raigarh	Matheran	13 March 2017	Khatavkar & Gorle (2017)	First-summer male
Maharashtra	Thane	Tungreshwar National Park	18 February 2017	Katvi & Shenai (2017)	Sub-adult male
Maharashtra	Pune	Mulshi, Pune	19 February 2016	Barve & Kamat (2016)	Juvenile
Karnataka	Uttara Kannada	Old Magazine House, Ganeshgudi	18 March 2015	Toliya (2015)	Sub-adult male
Karnataka	Uttara Kannada	Ganeshgudi, Dandeli WLS, Karnataka	07/08 March 2015	Nair (2015); Rebello (2015)	Sub-adult male
Tamil Nadu	The Nilgiris	Near Jawaharlal Nehru Park	21 November 2015	Bhoopathy (2015)	Adult male
Madhya Pradesh	Umaria	Bandhavgarh	9 February 2013	Jannes (2013)	
Maharashtra	Raigad	Alibaug	10 March 2012	Kawale (2013)	Adult male
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	North Andaman	Saddle Peak National Park	05 March 2012	Rajeshkumar et al. (2014)	Juvenile
Maharashtra	Pune	Tamhini forest, Pune	27 February 2011	Barve & Kamath (2016)	Sub-adult male
Arunachal Pradesh	Upper Siang	'9 km north of Tuting'	24 November 2002	Choudhury (2006); Borang (2015)	Adult male
Zappey's Flycatcher					
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	Nicobar	Galathea, Great Nicobar	27 December 2017	Gokulakrishnan et al. (2018)	First-winter male
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	Nicobar	Dagmar, Great Nicobar	10 February 2018	Gokulakrishnan et al. (2018)	First-winter male
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	Nicobar	Kosingdone, Great Nicobar	12 February 2018	Gokulakrishnan et al. (2018)	First-winter male
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	Nicobar	Kondul Island, Nicobar Island	13 February 2018	Gokulakrishnan et al. (2018)	First-winter male
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	North Andaman	Paget Island	21 February 2018	Gokulakrishnan et al. (2018)	First-winter male



Fig. 2. The distribution of the Zappey's Flycatcher (eBird 2021b).

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A Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* in the Vidharbha region of Maharashtra, India

The Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* has a distribution that extends from northern Scandinavia and northern Russia, eastwards to the Chukotski Peninsula, where it is casual breeder. It migrates in winter to Africa, the Mediterranean Basin, the Iberian Peninsula, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and possibly to China and Japan. In South-east Asia it is largely considered a vagrant (Wiersma et al. 2020). The Common Ringed Plover is a winter visitor to the Indian Subcontinent—to south-eastern and north-western India, the Pakistan coast, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka. In India, it has been sighted in all the western states of northern India: Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan; and all states of southern India, except Karnataka (eBird 2021). Generally, these birds are considered rare in India, but are possibly overlooked (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012).

The Sawanga Lake (20.84°N, 77.90°E, c.338 m) in Pohara Malkhed Reserve Forest nestles in the foothills of the Satpura–Melghat Range of Amravati District, Maharashtra, c.30 km from Amravati city. While birding here at 1630 h on 30 March 2018 SAG & PKN sighted the slightly larger Common Ringed Plover near a flock of Little Ringed *C. dubius* and Kentish *C. alexandrinus* Plovers. The water level was low, and the bird was foraging in its peculiar run-stop-search manner (Masero et al. 2007), on mud banks, often entering the territory of its congeners while foraging. In ensuing territorial fights, it invariably yielded, and moved away. This happened several times. This Common Ringed Plover was in breeding plumage, with a dark-tipped bright orange beak, yellowish-orange legs, and a prominent dark frontal bar [149] (Ali & Ripley 1987; Grimmett et al. 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). On 13 December 2018, at 1630 h we sighted another bird in non-breeding plumage, with a blackish bill and a prominent supercilium [150].

We were able to observe the bird in two different seasons. During winter—December 2018–February 2019—it stayed till the end of the season; and in the pre-monsoon period—March–May 2018—it only stayed for five days (30 March–03 April 2018).

Prasad (2004) expressed doubt about records of Common



149. Common Ringed Plover in breeding plumage.



150. Common Ringed Plover in non-breeding plumage.

Both: Shubham Giri

Ringed Plover from Ujani, Pune, and recommended further verification. Other sightings of the bird in Maharashtra are from: Kawadi wetland, Pune (Koparde & Raote 2016), Alibaug, Raigad District (Kawle & Deshmukh 2018), Kelvihire grassland, pune (Sumant et al. 2019), and Sindudurg (Rao et al. 2019). It has not been reported earlier from the Vidharbha region of Maharashtra (Anon. 2009; Wadatkar et al. 2010). A few days after sighting our winter bird, another individual (same?) in breeding plumage, was spotted in neighboring Yavathmal District (Joshi 2018).

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