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SHORT COMMUNICATION

FIRST RECORD OF SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *MUSCICAPA STRIATA* (PALLAS, 1764) (PASSERIFORMES, MUSCICAPIDAE) FROM ODISHA AND EASTERN GHATS OF INDIA

 Bibhu Prasad Panda* and  Manas Ranjan Sahoo**

*Sálim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Anaikatty (Post), Coimbatore 641108, Tamil Nadu, India.

**OUAT Colony, Bhubaneswar 751003, Odisha, India.

◆Corresponding author E-mail: bibhuprasadpanda14@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This note reported the first record of Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* (Pallas, 1764) (Passeriformes, Muscicapidae) from the state of Odisha, India. This species was recorded from the north and western part of the country as well as from the Western Ghats, but this note reports the first record from the Eastern Ghats of India.

Keywords: Eastern Ghats, First record, India, *Muscicapa*, Spotted Flycatcher.

INTRODUCTION

The spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* (Pallas, 1764) is a small-sized (15 cm) passerine bird of the Muscicapidae family; it has a distribution range (resident or migratory) from Africa, Central Asia and Europe (Taylor, 2020). This species breeds in Western Europe to Mongolia and migrates to Africa in winter; this migration occurs through the Indian subcontinent (Bird Count India, 2021) and recorded in India as a passage migrant (Grimmett *et al.*, 2011; Rasmussen and Anderton, 2012). While going to Africa, these birds migrate through north and western India. At the time of returning, mostly it bypasses the country like several other species (Bird Count India, 2021).

This species is categorised as Least Concern in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species due to its high population and wide distribution range (BirdLife International, 2019). *Muscicapa striata* was recorded commonly in Gujarat State but there were few records from southern-west India at Pune (Iyer, 2016), Goa (Dharwadkar *et al.*, 2017) and Tamil Nadu (Anand *et al.*, 2017). All these records are from the Western Ghats, but there is no found from the Eastern Ghats before. In Eastern India, it is only recorded near the Sunderbans of West Bengal (eBird, 2021).

This investigation presents the first sighting report of the Spotted Flycatcher *M. striata* from Odisha as well as Eastern Ghats.

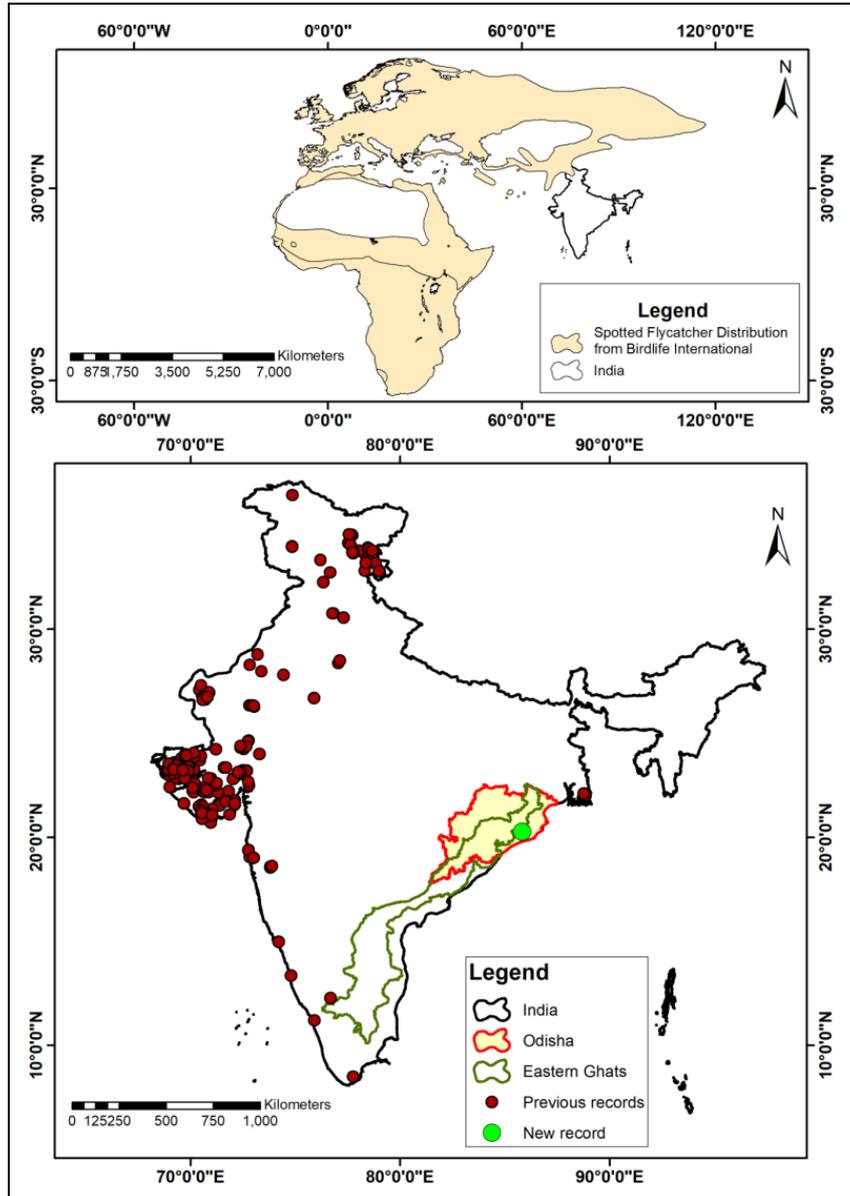
First record of spotted flycatcher

NOTES AND TAXONOMIC TREATMENT

On 24th April 2020, around 0845 hrs, we sighted a single individual of the species perching on an electric wire of a residential complex of Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India (20.271°N & 85.806°E) (Map 1). This bird was recorded flying from the electric wire to the gates of the residential complex and then to the lower branches of nearby trees. This activity of this individual was recorded within 50m radius for 15 minutes in that location before it flew away.

On the first day of sighting we misidentified this species as Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica* (Pallas, 1811); but after seeing the photographs, we realised that this is an individual of Spotted Flycatcher *M. striata*. Though this bird looked like an Asian brown flycatcher with its pale grey-brown upperparts, the distinct grey brown streaking on the crown, throat and breast confirmed it as a Spotted Flycatcher. This feature differentiates it from Asian brown flycatcher and Dark Sided Flycatcher *M. sibirica* (Gmelin, 1789). It also had dark eyes with no eye ring, long beak with a pale bill base and black legs (Grimmett *et al.*, 2011). An assistance was provided by senior bird researchers including Dr. Rajah Jaypal, Mr. Praveen Jayadevan and Mr. Ashwin Viswanathan to confirm the ID as Spotted Flycatcher (Pl. 1).

This species may not be in the list of conservation priority because of its large population, but in the recent past, the trend of the population declined (BirdLife International, 2019). Though this species was recorded in western India with large number, its record from the eastern parts was very rare (eBird, 2021). The records from Eastern India were in January and February but at Bhubaneswar, it was recorded in April which was the only spring record in India (Bird Count India, 2021); this species recorded as winter migrant in the western parts but this record showed it as a spring migrant. Due to the only record it can be considered as a vagrant in this season, but a detailed monitoring can describe it as a spring migrant or not, to this region with the current climatic conditions. This presents the first report of this species from Odisha as well as from the Eastern Ghats as this recorded location resides in the peripheral region of Eastern Ghats. A detailed status of this species in India can be assessed after further monitoring of this species.



Map (1): Global distribution of Spotted Flycatcher (BirdLife International and Handbook of the Birds of the World, 2021) and previous records in India as red dots (eBird, 2021) with new record as green dot from Odisha.

First record of spotted flycatcher



Plate (1): A Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* at Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India. (Photograph by Manas Ranjan Sahoo).

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

"The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare".

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تسجيل أول لطائر خاطف الذباب المرقط

Muscicapa striata (Pallas, 1764) (Passeriformes, Muscicapidae)

من أوديشا وشرق الغاتس في الهند

بيهو براساد باندا * و ماناس رانجان ساهو **

* مركز سليم علي لعلم الطيور والتاريخ الطبيعي، أنايكاتي، كويمباتور 641108،
تاميل نادو، الهند.

** جامعة أوريسا للزراعة والتكنولوجيا، بوبانسوار 751003، أوديشا، الهند.

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الخلاصة

أشارت هذه الدراسة إلى أول تسجيل لصائد الذباب المرقط *Muscicapa striata* (Pallas, 1764) (Passeriformes, Muscicapidae) من ولاية أوديشا، الهند. إذ سجل هذا النوع من الجزء الشمالي والغربي من البلاد، وكذلك من منطقة غاتس الغربية، ولكن هذه التحريات تشير إلى أول سجل من منطقة غاتس الشرقية في الهند.