

16. POSSIBLE RANGE EXTENSION OF THE PENINSULAR BROOKS'S FLYCATCHER (*MUSCICAPA POLIOGENYS VERNAYI*) IN ANDHRA PRADESH

On February 14, 1999, while bird watching at the Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad, during the Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh Project on the Survey of Protected Areas, we observed a small brown flycatcher in an *Acacia* bush at about 1.29 m. We got a good view of the bird for over 10 minutes through a 10 x 40 power binocular and noted the description as follows: olive brown upperparts with a greyish wash on the head. Tail brown. Fulvous throat, breast and underparts.

We referred to THE PICTORIAL GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT (Ali and Ripley 1983) which was handy and identified the bird as the Brooks's flycatcher (*Muscicapa polioGENYS*) from the description.

Back home, we consulted the COMPACT HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN (Ali and Ripley, 1987), for the range of this species, "The Eastern Ghats from northern Orissa (Mayurbhanj) to northeastern Andhra Pradesh (Vishakapatnam district); from the plains (± 600 m -Ed.) to 1000 m." Hyderabad city is at 540 m. A CHECKLIST OF BIRDS OF ANDHRA PRADESH (Taher and Pittie 1989), mentions only the Eastern Ghats as its range.

The Vernay Scientific Survey team had collected specimens of this bird at Anantagiri and Sankrametta in Vizagapatnam district. The bird was recorded as "Very common at Sankrametta and Anantagiri where these birds were breeding in April and May (La Personne). This new form of resident flycatcher of very limited distribution is one of the most interesting discoveries of the Vernay Survey." (Kinnear and Whistler 1933). Price (1979) had trapped and released this species

at Lamasinghi in the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh and he notes these as "Common resident".

The only other flycatcher with which this bird can be confused is the female Tickell's blue flycatcher (*Muscicapa tickelliae*) which, however, has an orange-rufous throat and blue tail. The bird we saw clearly had a brown tail, and thus could not have been a female Tickell's blue flycatcher. The brown flycatcher (*Muscicapa latirostris*) has a conspicuous white throat, while this bird had a fulvous throat. In all respects, the bird we saw resembled closely the Brooks's flycatcher.

This, then, is an interesting sighting and can be an extension of the range of this species. It will be interesting to know if other sightings have been reported from this region, or adjacent areas, especially at lower heights than previously reported.

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