

Sighting of Asian Brown Flycatcher at Rampara Wildlife Sanctuary in July

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I visited Rampara Wildlife Sanctuary near Wankaner (Dist. Morbi) for birding with Manoj Finava and Darshak Karia on 18 July 2015. On that evening I photographed a flycatcher which was perched on a branch of a tree for a few moments. Initially I thought it could be a Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*), but the timing seemed too early as it is an autumn passage migrant, usually seen after August. After careful observation and with the help of Prasad Ganpule, who joined us on the next day, it was confirmed as an Asian Brown Flycatcher (*Muscicapa dauurica*). On 19 July 2015, we again saw the bird in the same area and took some photographs. We were surprised by its presence in the monsoon season as normally it is a winter visitor to our region (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). Asian Brown Flycatcher breeds in Himalayan foothills and hills of central India and Western Ghats and winters in south, central and east India (Ali & Ripley 1996).

Though it is well known that it is a winter migrant to Gujarat, various authors give different status for breeding of Asian Brown Flycatcher in Gujarat. Ali & Ripley (1996) give it as breeding in the hills of Vindhya Range (around Mhow and Sehore), but breeding in Gujarat is not mentioned. Ali (1955) and Dharmakumarsinhji (1955) give it as 'presumably resident in the Dangs'. Mundkur (1990) observed an adult feeding a fledged young in Gir forest in the last week of May in 1988.

Grimmett *et al.* (2011) and Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) show it to be breeding in Gir forest, with the second authors' remark: 'peninsular breeding range poorly known'.

Based on above references it can be said that the individual

observed in Rampara Wildlife Sanctuary might not be a migrant and could be a resident and breeding there. Recently the breeding of this species has been reported from Sitamata Sanctuary, Rajasthan (Sangha *et al.* 2009). This sanctuary is adjoining Sabarkantha district of north Gujarat and this is very much a recent record. But it is surprising that there are no recent observations of its breeding in Gujarat and I have not come across any such records posted on websites or in any publications recently. It is possible that since it is not very conspicuous, it is overlooked. Further observations are required for confirming if Asian Brown Flycatcher does breed here regularly. I request birdwatchers to share observations of its breeding in Gujarat.

[P.S: A single Asian Brown Flycatcher was seen and photographed again at the same place on 17 July 2016 - Ashok Mashru]

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