

Green Pigeon....

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Sighting of Indian Swiftlet *Aerodramus unicolor* at Kevdi Campsite, near Surat: a first record for Gujarat

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plumage as none of these matched with what was seen here. This identification was then informed to the administrators of the OBI website; this photograph was checked for identification, corrected and was subsequently uploaded as an Indian Swiftlet on the website.

The Indian Swiftlet is a monotypic species, endemic to the Indian Subcontinent (SW India & Sri Lanka) (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). It prefers hills in forested areas, and roosts gregariously, frequently in caves (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). It is resident in Sri Lanka and in the Western Ghats, up to Maharashtra. There are recent records of the Indian Swiftlet on eBird, with photographs, from Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary, in Thane District near Mumbai, Maharashtra; there are other records north of Mumbai on this website. These locations are quite near to Gujarat. Hence, its occurrence in our state is not very surprising. As such, swifts and martins are ignored by birders since it is very difficult to get good photographs and the identification is often quite challenging. In view of this, the Indian Swiftlet, even if present earlier in Gujarat, was likely to be overlooked. This photographic record confirms its occurrence here in Gujarat. The Indian Swiftlet was not included in the Gujarat checklist (Ganpule 2016, 2017). Hence, it is an addition to the avifauna of Gujarat.

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On 15 April 2017, it was our first visit to the Kevdi Ecotourism Campsite, in Mandvi Taluka, Surat District. As we were coming from Patan, where the Red-whiskered Bulbul (*Pycnonotus jocosus*) is not seen, we stopped on seeing these birds. We saw several Red-whiskered Bulbuls perched on farm hedges, and we took some photographs. After some time, we also scanned the surrounding area. On the opposite side, a few swift-like (*Apus* sp.) birds were hunting over the farms. The structure and hunting style of these birds was similar to swifts, and so we believed they were Little Swifts (*Apus affinis*). Since the Little Swift is a common and resident bird at Patan (in North Gujarat), we took just a single record photograph and went ahead.

After several months, this photograph was uploaded as a Little Swift on the 'Oriental Bird Images' (OBI) database/website. In March 2020, while looking at photos of Little Swift on the website, Prasad Ganpule identified this bird as an Indian Swiftlet (*Aerodramus unicolor*). The main features were grayish-brown underparts with only slightly paler throat, lack of white rump, tail without any significant indentation, and grayish wings with darker (blackish) wing linings led to its identification as an Indian Swiftlet. The Little Swift has much darker underparts, with a prominent pale rump. Other martins and swallows (*Hirundinidae*) could be excluded based on the