

Oriental Magpie Robin (*Copsychus saularis*) preying on Northern House Gecko (*Hemidactylus flaviviridis*)

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Fig. 1

Introduction

The Oriental Magpie Robin (*Copsychus saularis*) is a small passerine bird that resides in tropical southern Asia from Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and further east to Indonesia, Thailand, South China, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines (Grimmett et al. 1998). It is a common bird of forests, agricultural fields, urban gardens, and forests and feeds on insects and other invertebrates. It is a sexual-dimorphic bird. The male has black upperparts, head and throat apart from a white shoulder patch and long tail. However, when the females are morphologically similar to the males, the black colour of the male is replaced with a grey colour in females (Ali & Ripley 2001). Adult birds usually feed various invertebrates and vertebrates, including insects, ants, centipedes, geckos, and lizards (Sreekar 2010). Here we present an incidence of gecko feeding by an Oriental magpie robin at Jambughoda Wildlife Sanctuary, Panchmahal, Gujarat, India.

Observation

On 17th July 2022, we are visiting Jambughoda Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat. During the return, we show a small black-coloured bird chasing prey at Bhat village (22°24'20.82"N; 73°37'23.04"E), the area of the edge of the Sanctuary. There was a male Oriental Magpie-robin chasing something on the ground. Having caught it, we realised it was a lizard – it looked like the strategy of losing the wriggling tail. Having the lizard securely between its bill, the bird it's very vigorous in trashing the lizard, the bird whipping its head from side to side, with the prey held firmly between its bill (Fig. 1). And unlike other birds that would smash the prey (Fig. 2).

At last satisfied that the lizard was dead, the bird stopped its side-to-side whipping motion, thus showing me his prey. Then, finally, the oriental magpie engulfed the gecko. On careful observation, the prey identifies Northern house gecko (*Hemidactylus flaviviridis*), with the help of photographs and literature (Daniel 2002). However, the oriental magpie robin is known to prey on lizards such as Brooks gecko *Hemidactylus cf brookii*, Northern house gecko *Hemidactylus flaviviridis* and Bark gecko *Hemidactylus leschenaultii* (Sumithran 1982; Saxena 1998; Sreekar 2010) and White-spotted Skink *Lygosoma albopunctata* (Mahapatra et al. 2020).



Fig. 2

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