

## POST-MONSOON DISPERSAL OF MALABAR WHISTLING THRUSH *MYIOPHONUS HORSFIELDII* (VIGORS) TO CHAMUNDI HILL AND NANDI HILLS, KARNATAKA, SOUTHERN INDIA

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Malabar Whistling Thrush (*Myiophonus horsfieldii*), though considered resident in the Western Ghats, is known to move locally to adjacent and perhaps far localities (Ali & Ripley, 2001). However, there is not enough information documented on how far the birds disperse after their breeding months. This note details on two sight records of this species from isolated hills in peninsular India during post-monsoon months.

### Chamundi hill (12°18'N - 76°33'E)

An isolated hill running longitudinally in a north-south direction to the east of Mysore city in southern Karnataka, it covers an area of c.17km<sup>2</sup> with the highest point at 1100m. The hill area is a typical tropical deciduous thorn scrub forest with large section of rather "evergreen" scrub at higher elevations (Rao & Razi, 1981).

While on a bird-watching trip to Mysore and surrounding areas, Job K. Joseph and myself visited Chamundi hill on 7.xii.2002 morning. We spotted a single Malabar Whistling Thrush near the hilltop at Chamundi at 0645hr. The bird made the normal "tsee" swing like call when it got flushed. Subsequently, the sighting was discussed with Thejaswi Shivanand from Mysore who indicated this to be a "first time" for the Chamundi hill.

### Nandi hills (12°53'N - 78°12'E)

The nearest and most easily accessible hills around Bangalore city, the Nandi hills lie almost due north at a distance of 60km and are visible as a compact block of three rocky outcrops, one of them, Nandidurg, rising some 1416m. Though most of the original forest cover has disappeared yielding place to secondary growth, primarily thorny scrub and the inevitable invasion of the exotic *Lantana* has occurred together with the 'afforestation' with the Australian Eucalyptus, some percentage of the hill flora has persisted, especially nearer the summit (Ghorpade *et al.*, 1974). This small patch has constantly yielded some form of excitement or the other to the bird watchers of Bangalore.

On a misty morning of 11 December 2005, a Malabar Whistling Thrush was flushed from the undergrowth by Sudhir Shivaram and myself at the very top of Nandi hills. The bird flew up on to the trees offering us a good view for correct identification. No calls were recorded. After checking with the available literature, message archives of bngbirds (Bangalore Birds), Birdspot database (Shyamal, 2003) and discussing with L. Shyamal (30 December 2005), it was concluded that there is no previous record of this species from Nandi hills. This is also the second

sight-report for the Bangalore region in recent years.

There are several reports of post-monsoon movements of Whistling Thrush from Kerala by many observers (Kerala Birder, 2005). It is known to turn-up in village groves quite far from the nearest natural forests. Reports of movements on the deccan side of the ghats is comparatively less - there is a single report at UAS Hebbal (seen in a bamboo thicket: L. Shyamal pers. comm., 30 December 2005) in the near-outskirts of Bangalore on 26 December 1995 (Shyamal, 2003) while it has been reported from Rishi Valley, southwestern Andhra Pradesh by G. Ananth Madanapalli on 1 January 1982 (Shyamal, 2003). Local migration has been reported where a ringed individual was recovered from a locality c.650km south of the actual ringing point (Mahabaleshwar) (Ambedkar, 1991). It would be an interesting exercise to track and map all the records of Malabar Whistling Thrush in southern India during all months and compare the distribution during monsoon and post monsoon months.

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