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– Yogesh Patel, Shreya Sahu, Swapnil Gosavi, Prabhu Swami & Kaushal Dubey

Yogesh Patel, C/503 Sai Krupa C.H.S., Pratap Nagar, Jogeshwari East, Mumbai 400060, Maharashtra, India. E-mail: yogesh.lifer@gmail.com

Shreya Sahu, Mahavir house - 202, 2nd floor, Bazar lane, Versova, Andheri West, Mumbai 400061, Maharashtra, India.

Prabhu Swami, Room No. 100, Navjivan Nagar Society, New Hill Quarters, Aarey Colony, Goregaon East, Mumbai 400065, Maharashtra, India.

Kaushal Dubey, Vaitnari Vinayagar Welfare Society, Unit No.7, Aarey Milk Colony, Near Tamil Church, Goregaon East, Mumbai 400065, Maharashtra, India.

The Ruby-cheeked Sunbird *Chalcoparia singalensis* in southern West Bengal, and its status in the Ganga–Brahmaputra Delta

The Ruby-cheeked Sunbird *Chalcoparia singalensis* is found from Nepal to north-eastern India, and from Bangladesh to Southeast Asia including Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

The race *assamensis* occupies open forest in Nepal, Bhutan, India, and Bangladesh (Cheke & Mann 2020). In West Bengal, it occurs in the foothills of the Himalaya and in the adjoining plains of northern West Bengal (Baidya et al. 2017), particularly in Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, and Koch Bihar districts (eBird 2021).

On 22 November 2019, AS and TS were on a field visit to Hijuli Forest (23.19°N, 88.58°E) (Fig. 1) in Ranaghat, Nadia District of West Bengal. At 0958 h, while attempting to photograph a Green-crowned Warbler *Phylloscopus burkii* in the canopy, they observed a pair of male and female sunbirds (Singhamahapatra 2019) in the canopy of an *Adina cordifolia* (Roxb.) Brandis, locally called Haldi tree. The male of the pair was distinctive and could be easily identified by its iridescent green upperparts, ruby-red lores and ear-coverts bordered below with a purplish moustachial stripe (190; Grewal 2016). The female is yellowish olive green above and has a dull orange throat [191]. However, both sexes of this sexually dimorphic sunbird can be easily distinguished from other sunbirds by their relatively shorter, straighter bills (Cheke & Mann 2001; Grimmett et al. 2011).

Hijuli is a remnant forest that is located about one kilometer away from the eastern bank of Churni River, near the densely populated town of Ranaghat, in the inactive and moribund region of the Ganga–Brahmaputra Delta, the largest river delta in the world. The habitat was a fragmented remnant of dry deciduous forest with moderate degree of human interference

resulting from habitations around the forest. *Shorea robusta*, *Terminalia arjuna*, *Dendrocalamus* spp., *Gmelina arborea*, *Adina cordifolia*, *Mangifera indica*, *Ficus bengalensis*, and *Delonix regia* were the common trees here. Local people also collect firewood from this forest.

Although the Ruby-cheeked Sunbird is not rare in the plains adjoining the foothills of the Himalaya, and is widely distributed across Bangladesh (Onu & Haque 2015), this happens to be the first report of the species from the southern part of West Bengal. Though it was reported from Simlipal National Park and Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary in Odisha (eBird 2021) in the northern portion of the Eastern Ghats, there is no report from the adjoining western part of West Bengal, which shares the deciduous forests of the Chhotanagpur Plateau. From the Ganga-Brahmaputra Delta (Fig.1), spread across southern West Bengal and south-western Bangladesh, reports of the species exist from the Bangladesh section, including Sundarban (Law 1945; eBird 2021). However, there is no record from the Indian part of the Sundarban, lying in West Bengal (Sen 2011).

There are multiple reports from the six sites of sightings within the Ganga–

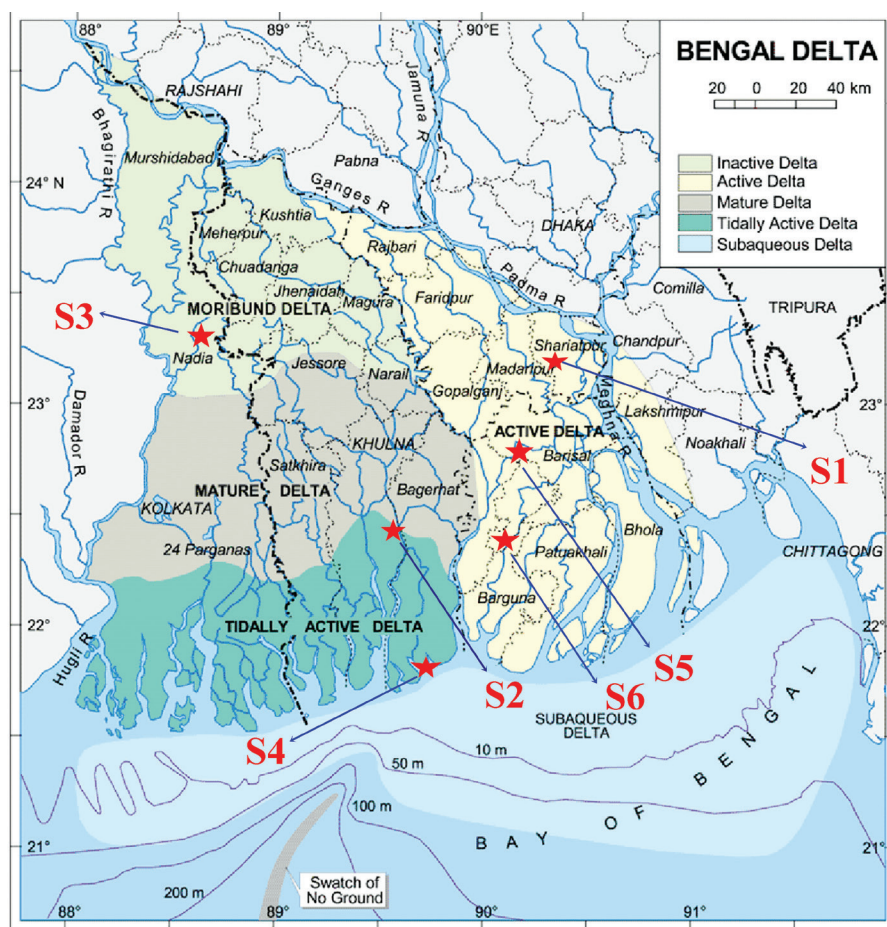


Fig. 1. Map of the Ganga–Brahmaputra Delta indicating Ruby-cheeked Sunbird sight records. Map: Sudhu Banglapedia

Table 1. Site records from the Ganga–Brahmaputra Delta arranged chronologically per eBird records (Source: eBird 2021)

Site	Place	Coordinate	District	Division	Number of eBird sightings	Months of sightings
S1	Atong	23.197°N, 90.372°E	Shariatpur	Dhaka	6	March, August, November
S2	Karamjol	22.427°N, 89.590°E	Barisal	Barisal	7	February, May, November
S3	Hijuli	23.187°N, 88.581°E	Nadia	Presidency	7	February, March, November
S4	Katka	21.854°N, 89.770°E	Khulna	Khulna	1	January
S5	Zirarkati	22.844°N, 90.158°E	Barisal	Barisal	13	March, April, May, November
S6	Golaghata	22.266°N, 90.057°E	Barguna	Barisal	22	March, August

**190.** Male Ruby-cheeked Sunbird photographed on 22 November 2019, at S3.**191.** Female Ruby-cheeked Sunbird photographed on 22 November 2019, at S3.

Both: Tanmoy Sarkar

Brahmaputra Delta (Table 1). After our sighting, it has been sighted six more times (all in 2021) from Hijuli forest, which conforms with the trend of regular and repetitive observations from most of the sites (in this delta).

Being a non-migratory, combined with the fact that the birds are being sighted regularly in the sites across all seasons, it is highly probable that these sites also hold a breeding population.

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- **Subhajit Roy, Aniruddha Singhamahapatra & Tanmoy Sarkar**
 Subhajit Roy, B-9/138, Kalyani, Nadia, West Bengal 741235, India.
 E-mail: roy.riju.nitdgp@gmail.com [Corresponding author]
 Member, Durgapur Wildlife Information and Nature Guide Society, Durgapur, West Bengal 713206, India. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8768-6815>
 Aniruddha Singhamahapatra, Kadma, Bankura, West Bengal 722151, India.
 ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8578-7177>. E-mail: aniruddha9735@gmail.com
 Tanmoy Sarkar, Santinagar, Madanpur, Nadia, West Bengal 741235, India.
 E-mail: explorer.ethan1@gmail.com

A Red-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis* in Jammu & Kashmir

On the afternoon of 31 January 2020, we were observing birds near our home in Humhama (34.03°N, 74.76°E; 1,595 m asl), Budgam District, Jammu & Kashmir (J&K). The area consisted of a grove of Poplar trees *Populus deltoides* bordered by a marsh with a large expanse of reeds.

At 1420 h, we saw a single thrush on a Poplar, where it remained for a few seconds before moving to another, before flying away after one minute (Khaliq 2020). Considering the time of year, we immediately suspected the bird was a Black-throated Thrush *Turdus atrogularis*, however on closer observation through a video camera, we saw that it had a rufous breast and throat. We video-graphed it for 54 seconds before it flew away [192,