



Research Paper

Rescue and release of fledgling chicks of Indian Silver-bill *Euodice malabarica* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Passeriformes: Estrildidae) at Prithvipur, Niwari district, Madhya Pradesh (India), with systematic account, new record, distribution and other aspects

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Abstract: The present communication deals with the rescue and release of fledgling chicks of *Euodice malabarica*, the Indian Silver-bill, belonging to family Estrildidae within order Passeriformes, at Prithvipur, Niwari district, Madhya Pradesh (India), with distribution and general account.

Keywords: Rescue & release, fledgling chicks, Indian Silver-bill, Niwari.

Introduction:

The Indian Silver-bill, is a small passerine finch and common resident breeding bird living mostly in drier regions. Recently some of its fledgling chicks were found accidentally fallen on ground from the nest while trying their first flight in Government College Campus at Prithvipur, Niwari district, Madhya Pradesh (India) which required immediate care and treatment and

hence dealt on this aspect, with other account of the species.

Besides, a detailed account of the species with synonyms, diagnostic features, altitudinal range, distribution, habitat, food & feeding, call, breeding, and other aspects has been provided

Study site: Government College Campus, Prithvipur, Niwari district, Madhya Pradesh, India.

Location: Prithvipur, 25°11'7"N, 78°39'54"E, falls in Niwari district of Madhya Pradesh (India), bounded by Tikamgarh (M. P.) to south-west and state of Uttar Pradesh to north-east with river Betwa passing through.

Climate: Semi-arid, av. range of temperature 38°-48,7°C during summer and av. around 20°-25°C, with minimum dipping down to 5°-9°C during winter; monsoon

active during July-September with most of rainfall.

Flora (around): Family wise:

Combretaceae: *Terminalia anogeissiana* (syn. *Anogeissus latifolia*) (Dhau),

Ebenaceae: *Diospyros melanoxylon* (Ebony),

Fabaceae: *Vachellia nilotica* (syn. *Acacia nilotica*) (Babul),

Lamiaceae: *Tectona grandis* (Teak),

Sapotaceae: *Madhuca longifolia* (Mahua) and some flowering plants.

INDIAN SILVER-BILL

Rescue & Release:

Recently, one of the authors (AKD) found fallen four fledgling chicks of Indian Silver-bill on ground from the nest while trying their first flight, out of them one was badly injured and could not survive, the rest ones were hopping/fluttering slowly and kept on watch with immediate treatment. As silver-bills are seed eaters and chicks require protein, provided tiny bits of boiled egg mixed with a drop of water into a paste, as an emergency food, which they took easily and after some time got regained, then were kept them on a nearby tree branch where parents were still watching.

Adult and Fledgling Differences:

1. Adults have thick, conical silver-grey bill v/s fledglings have a pale greyish-pink to dull grey bill.

2. Adults show distinct, fine barring on their sides/flanks and rump white v/s fledglings uniformly buff-brown, buffish or pale underneath, flanks unbarred/lacking rufous barring flanks; rump mottled brown;

3. Adults have tail black, long and sharply pointed v/s fledglings have shorter and slightly rounded central tail feathers (rectrices) as still being growing.

4. Adults have legs and feet grey or greyish-pink v/s fledglings have pale greyish-pink to dull grey.

**SYSTEMATIC ACCOOUNT,
DISTRIBUTION & OTHER ASPECTS**
***Euodice malabarica* (Linnaeus, 1766)**

Synonymy:

Loxia malabarica Linnaeus, 1766. *Syst. Nat.*, 12th Ed. I: 305.

Uroloncha malabarica, Baker, 1926. *Faun. Brit. India, Birds*, 3: 89-90; Gupta & Siddons, 1941. *The Indian Medical Gazette*, 76(3): 151-152, pl. IX.

Lonchura malabarica malabarica, Tak., 1995. *Aves. In: Faun. West. Himalaya, Part 1, Uttar Pradesh. Himalayan Ecosystem Series*: 193; Majumdar et al., 1992. *Fauna of West Bengal, Part I. State Fauna Series*, 3: 188, 407-408; Tak & Sati, 1997. *Aves. In: Fauna of Delhi, State Fauna Series*, 6: 816; Dutta et al., 2004. *Aves. In: Fauna of Bihar (including Jharkhand), State Fauna Series*, 11 (Part-1): 140.

Lonchura malabarica, Ali, 1941; Grimmett et al., 2001. *Oxford Pocket Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*; Dutta & Saha, 2007. *Aves. In: Fauna of Mizoram, State Fauna Series*, 14: 590; Ghosh et al., 2008. *Aves. In: Fauna of Madhya Pradesh (including Chhattisgarh), State Fauna Series*, 15 Part-2): 73; Datta & Sakthivel, 2008. *Faun. Andhra Pradesh, State Fauna Series*, 5 (Part-8)-Aves: 55; Mahabal & Patil, 2008. *Aves. In: Fauna of Goa, State Fauna Series*, 16: 421; Thirumalai et al., 2009. *Aves. In: Fauna of Tamil Nadu. State Fauna Series*, 17 (Part-2): 212; Tak & Sati, 2010. *Aves. In: Fauna of Uttarakhand. State Fauna Series*, 18 (Part-1), *Vertebrates*: 116, 411.

Euodice malabarica, Mahabal et al., 2011. *Aves. In: Fauna of Maharashtra. State Fauna Series*, 20 (Part-1): 182; Mandal et al., 2018.

Aves. In: *Faunal Diversity of Indian Himalaya*: 842.

Common Names: Common Silver-bill, Indian Silver-bill or White-throated Munia.

Vernacular Names: *Piduri* or *Sar Munia* (Bengali), *Pavai Munia* (Gujarati), *Charchari*, *Charga*, *Charakka* or *Pidda* (Hindi); *Vatalatta* (Malayalam), *Charchra* (North-west Provinces), *Pidar* (South and Central India), *Nellu-kuruwi* (Tamil), *Jinuwayi* (Telugu) and *Wee-kurulla* (Sinhala).

Classification: Class Aves, order Passeriformes, family Estrildidae, genus *Euodice* Reichenbach, 1862.

Sighting & Photographs: 3 fledgling chicks; Science Block, Government College Campus, Prithvipur, Niwari district, Madhya Pradesh, India; 5.ix.2026; by 2nd author (AKD).

Diagnostic Features:

Adults: Bill short, thick, conical silver-grey, with upper mandible often bring darker grey at than the slivery lower mandible; upper plumage, wing coverts and inner secondaries dull-brown; crown feathers darker centrally; ear-coverts white; wings and primaries blackish; lower rump white; underparts (throat and belly) pale buffy-white; sides of breast and flanks barred with darker buff; upper tail coverts white, outer tail coverts edged black; tail pointed (appear so due to reducing of feathers from centre to outwards), black edged, except near tip, with bright rusty; legs and feet primarily grey or greyish-pink; sexes similar.

Fledglings: Having pale greyish-pink to dull grey bill, buff underparts, shorter tail, pale greyish-pink to dull grey legs & feet.

Size: Total length about 120 mm, wing 53-54 mm, tarsus 14-15 mm, culmen 10-11 mm, tail 48-49 mm (Baker, 1926); 11.0-11.5 cm in length (Oates, 1890; Ali & Ripley, 1999); sparrow (Ali, 1941; Tak &

Sati, 2010); wing 52-53, tail 42, bill 11-12 mm (Majumdar et al., 1992); 11.0-11.5 cm (Grimmett et al., 2001); 10 cm (Tak & Sati, 2010; Grewal et al., 2016).

Altitudinal Range: Ascend Himalayas up to 6,000 ft below Shimla, locally migratory in higher hills but resident up to 3,000 ft or even higher (Baker, 1926); about 2,000 m in Himalayas (Ali, 1941); ascend Himalayas up to 6,000 ft below Shimla (Das Gupta & Siddons, 1941); plains and lower hills up to 600 m, extending to about 12,00 m in sub-Himalayan regions during summer (Rand & Fleming, 1957); 2000, 1000-1,500 ft (Datta & Sakthivel, 2008); <2,000 m (Tak & Sati, 2010); to about 1,500 m in Himalaya, chiefly outer ranges (Grewal et al., 2016); upper elevation limit 1,200 m (www.iucnredlist.org).

DISTRIBUTION: Indian Sub-continent.

India: Throughout in general.

Madhya Pradesh: Balaghat, Bhopal, Gwalior, Indore, Jabalpur, Morena, Sagar, Sheopur and Singrauli districts (Ghosh et al., 2008; ebird.org); Pirthivipur, Niwari district (present new record).

Rest of India: **Andhra Pradesh** (Ananthapuramu, Hindupuram, Panchavati Vilas- Puttaparthi, Pedda Reddy Palem Cheruvu, Old Singanaguttapalli and Pvt. Farm near Chilamathur, Anantapuramu dist.; Nagajuna Sagar; Kawal WLS, Adilabad; Koduru, Seshachalam Hills; Cumbum Valley), **Assam**, **Bihar** (Gokul Jalashay, Buxar; Manbhum, Lohardugga, Saran [Sonepur], Madhubani), Chhattisgarh (Bastar, Bilaspur [Guru Ghasidas University campus], Raipur [Naya Raipur; Prem Park, Mahavirnagar; Sapphire Greens; Sarvodaya Hospital] and Surguja dists.), **Delhi**, **Gujarat** (Abhishree Society, Ahmedabad; Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary, Jamnagar district), **Haryana** (Dharampur [Najafgarh], Gurugram; Mundakhera, Jhajjar; Kaithal;

Karnal; Panchkula; Rohtak- Sampla village; Sultanpur National Park), **Himachal Pradesh** (Shah Nehar Barrage Ponds in Kangra), **Himalaya-north-west and Himalaya-West, Jammu & Kashmir UT** (Kaleeth and Ramnagar Wildlife Sanctuary, Jammu dist. and Samba dist.), **Jharkhand** (Rajmahal Hills; Hazaribagh, Koderma, Lohardugga, Pithoria [Ranchi], Ranchi Udhwa Lake Bird Sanctuary, Sahibganj, Singhbhum, Pithoria- Ranchi and dists.), **Karnataka** (Bagalkot, Ballari [Daroji Sloth Bear Sanctuary and Tungabhadra High Level Canal], Bengaluru Urban [Hessaraghatta], Chitradurga, Hampi [Daroji Sloth Bear Sanctuary, and Ankasamudra Bird Sanctuary], Haveri, Koppal, Mandya [Kaveri River-Satthegala Bridge], Mysuru [Muddahalli, Nanjangud Taluka], Vijayanagara [Hampi and Ankasamudra Bird Sanctuary] and Vijayapura [Bhutnal Kere, Dawal Malik Dargah and Domanal] dists.), **Kerala** (Kannur- Kattampally and Madayi Para; Karingali Puncta and Thonnallur Ela wetlands- in Pathanamthitta; Kasaragaod & Palakkad districts; and occasionally in Alappuzha Malappuram-Pazhambadam and Perinthalmanna districts), **Madhya Pradesh** (as above)), Maharashtra (Siddhewadi [Shingare vasti] Grasslands, Sangli), **Manipur, Meghalaya** (as *Euodice malabarica*, vide avibase), **Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab** (Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Mohali- Zirakpur [Peermuchalla village forest] and Patiaa dists.), **Rajasthan** (Ajmer [including regions like Shokhaliya and Ajaymeru], Jaipur, Netsi Lake- Jaisalmer and Jodhpur dists.), **Tamil Nadu** (Pallikaranai Marsh Forest Department Watchtower, Chennai; Pappampatti Grassland, Coimbatore; Adhanur Lake-East, Kancheepuram), **Telangana** (Hyderabad- Ameenpur Lake, Himayat Sagar, Shamirpet Lake,

Manikonda, Mokila, Tarnaka, and Secunderabad), **Uttarakhand** (Dehra Dun [New Forest, Asan Barrage, Khaddar], Haridwar and Pauri dists.; Corbet Tiger Reserve; Rajaji National Park), **Uttar Pradesh** (Agra; Aligarh; Ayodhia; Lucknow; Okhla Dam, Gautam Buddha Nagar; Surajpur Wetland in Greater Noida; mathura, Prayagraj; Unnao districts) and **West Bengal** (Bankura [Sunuria Hills], Malda, Murshidabad, North 24 Parganas and Purulia districts) (Ali, 1941; Majumdar et al., 1992; Tak, 1995; Tak & Sati, 1997, 2010; Dutta et al., 2004; Dutta & Saha, 2007; Datta & Sakthivel, 2008; Ghosh et al., 2008; Mahabal & Patil, 2008; Thirumalai et al., 2009; Mahasbal et al., 2011; Mandal et al., 2018; avibase.bsc-eoc.org; ebird.org).

Elsewhere (including introduced): Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Egypt, Europe (Nice in S. France), Jordan, Iran, Israel (Eilat--Holland park, HaDarom), Kuwait, Middle East (parts), Myanmar, Nepal, Oman (Muscat), Pakistan (Balochistan; Sind), Puerto Rico, Qatar, E. Saudi Arabia, South Asia, Southern Arabia, Sri Lanka, United Arab Emirates, United States (Hawaiian Islands) and Virgin Islands (St. Croix) (from records).

Habitat: Forage in small flocks in grassland, fallow land, cultivation/agricultural fields, dry woodland and open scrub habitats in plains, light secondary growth and drier regions.

Food & Feeding: Feed on grass or standing crop seeds especially millet, insects and nectar, visiting flowers of *Erythrina* trees, also seen around water drinking and bathing (Oates, 1890; Verma & Rana, 1977; Ali & Ripley, 1999)

Call: Faint *tee tee* (Grewal et al., 2017); sharp *tsik* and *tseet* calls (ebird.org); low cheeping or chirping, when foraging (en.wikipedia.org).

Breeding: In Niwar they breed after summer (as the chicks were seen in early September), build a untidy bulky ball-like or globular nest of grass with thick walls, lined with softer flowering grass and a hole for entry, in thorny low shrubs or *Acacia* plants for safety and sometimes in varandahas, ventilators, windows (presently in Government College Campus, Prithvipur) or some higher platform in buildings, also sometimes use abandoned baya weaver bird nests and then female lays about 4-8 white eggs (av. size 15.7x11.7 mm) in a clutch which get incubated by both parents for about 11 days (Butler, 1899; Ali, 1941; Whistler, 1949; Ali & Ripley, 1999).

Nature: Mainly sedentary but also make seasonal movements (Johnson, 1968; Verma & Rana, 1977), gregarious and seen around 60 in a flock (en.wikipedia.org).

Conservation Status: IUCN Red List: Least Concern (BirdLife International, 2018); Schedule- IV (Tak & Sati, 2010).

Infestations: Das Gupta & Siddons (1941) discovered a new species of monomorphic Trypanosome, a unicellular parasitic flagellate protozoan, from the blood of this little bird and named it as *Trypanosoma knowlesi* in honour of the late Lieut. Colonel R. Knowles, I. M. S. Later, Grewal (1962) documented and described avian hemoparasites (blood parasites) found in the White-throated Munia.

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<https://avibase.bsc-eoc.org/checklist.jsp?region=INhimp>.



Figure 1. Silver-bill nest site



Figure 2. Fledgling fallen from nest



Figure 3. Fledgling fallen (closeup)



Figure 3. Fledgling taken for care



Figure 4. Fledgling regaining



Figure 5. Fledgling regained