

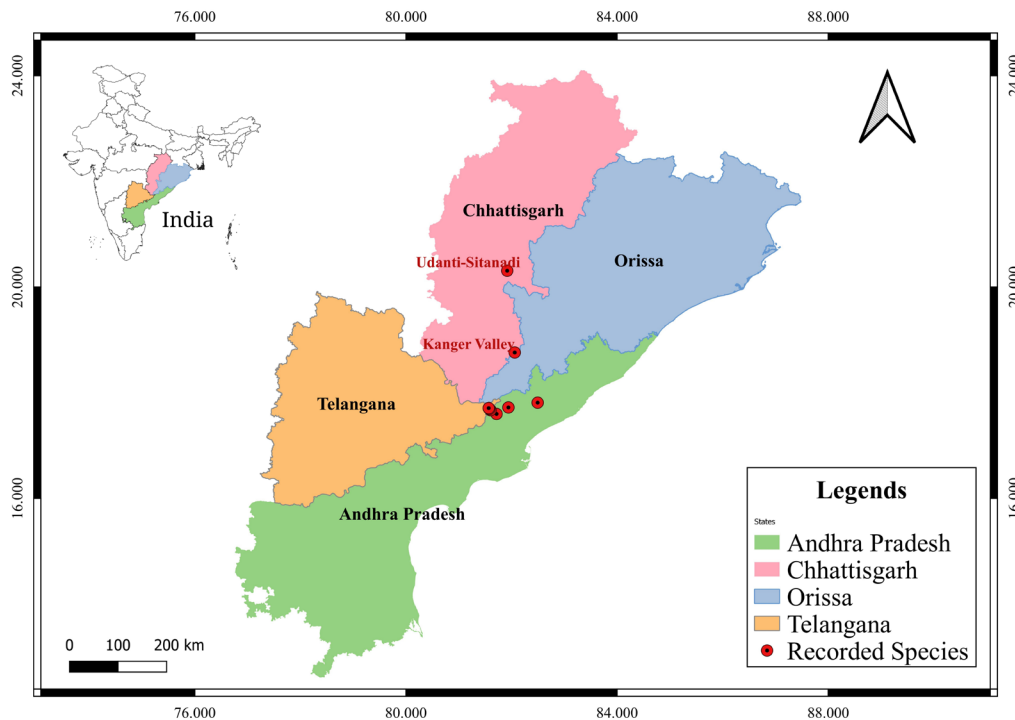
First photographic record of the Little Spiderhunter *Arachnothera longirostra* from Kanger Valley National Park, Bastar, Chhattisgarh

The Little Spiderhunter *Arachnothera longirostra* (Latham, 1790) is a nectarivore bird species found in the Western Ghats (Ali & Ripley 1989), Lamasinghi in Vishakhapatnam District of the Eastern Ghats (Raju & Selvin 1971; Ripley et al. 1986), parts of Odisha (Majumdar 1979), eastern Himalayan foothills, and hills of northeastern India (Grimmett et al. 2014).

They are usually seen in single or pairs. They have a distinctive long beak that sets it apart from other sunbirds. The male and female are alike except for a paler base to lower mandible in the female. Male has complete black beak (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005). They make a buzzy *zick-zick* call that is made regularly when disturbed or foraging (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005). Spiderhunters have been noted as good



Photograph of Little Spiderhunter observed in Bastar Plateau on 29 November 2018.



Recorded species from Chhattisgarh and surrounding state (Source www.ebird.org).

pollinators of wild banana species (Zhong et al. 2002) and several species of the ginger family (Yumoto et al. 1997; Sakai et al. 1999).

Here we report a sighting and the first photographic record of the Little Spiderhunter from Koleng range (18.761°N & 82.059°E) of Kanger Valley National Park (KVNP), Bastar, Chhattisgarh.

The KVNP is located in Bastar Plateau of southern Chhattisgarh. On 29 November 2018, a Little Spiderhunter was seen

foraging on a wild banana flower in Kanger Valley National Park. Although the species was reported earlier from the Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve (20.309°N and 81.916°E), Chhattisgarh in May 1996 (Bharos et al. 2018) after that there was no report of this species for more than 23 years. There is around 150km aerial distance from previous sighting to this sighting. Furthermore, this is the first photographic record of this species from Chhattisgarh.

Birds are highly mobile vertebrates and considered

as indicators of biological richness and health of our environment. The KVNP is rich in terms of birds (311 species; Bharos et al. 2019) and other fauna with high endemism but it is now threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation. As a result of that, some habitats have totally vanished while others are getting fragmented.

The major difficulties in conserving birds are limited by the availability of habitat, which highly impacts wide-ranging species. In this context, we suggest a

systematic study of birds of this landscape is a prerequisite for the long-term conservation and to fill the existing knowledge gap on birds.

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