

## Occurrence of Purple Cochoa from Darjeeling town of West Bengal, India

Purple Cochoa *Cochoa purpurea* (Hodgson, 1836) is a stocky, generally lethargic and unobtrusive thrush with dull purplish-grey body, distinct lilac-blue crown, lilac tail with black tip which is closely related to the more frequently encountered Green Cochoa *Cochoa viridis* (Inskipp et al. 2011). It is apparently a summer visitor to the Himalayas from May to October, or else strongly nomadic (Collar 2020) and found from Uttarakhand of India to Bhutan (at least with Sikkim) and southern Assam hills (Khasi hills and Nagaland) to west Arunachal Pradesh at 915–3,000 m. It was also recorded in southeastern Bangladesh (Collar 2020), but it becomes more difficult to find to the farther west of West Bengal. Probably the seasonal movement of Cochoa to lower altitudes depends on tracking fruit resources (Lahiri & Sonowal 2020). Despite these data found in literature, it is not enough to conclude its residential status or seasonal movement pattern. However, the eBird data from

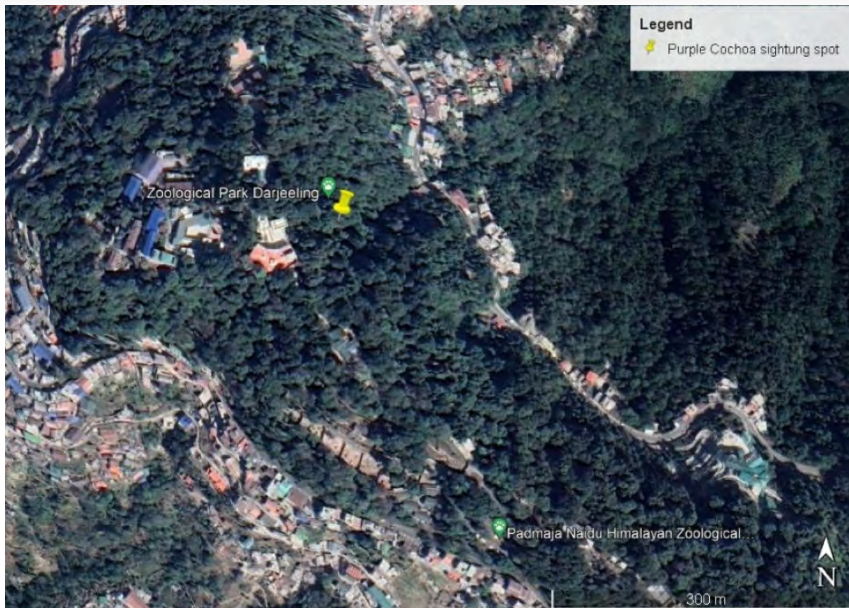


On above was the immature *C. purpurea*. Below (marked with a circle) was the mature one clicked by smartphone on the first day. © Asim Giri.

199 records shows that it is found from September to May in India from 50–3,000 m. It prefers dense, moist broadleaved evergreen forests and humid undergrowth in ravines through pine forests. Their main diets are berries, insects and molluscs. At the

Namdapha National Park of northeastern India, it was recorded feeding on wild fruits (Viswanathan & Naniwadekar 2014).

On 15 September 2021, while I was on my way to the work station inside Padmaja



Location where *C. purpurea* was photographed, marked with the yellow pin ©Google Earth Pro.

Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park (27.0587N, 88.2546E) Darjeeling, West Bengal, I saw a mature *P. purpurea* lazily foraging inside dense foliage near the trail. Fortunately, I was able to take a photograph on my smartphone. Again, on the next day, I was able to photograph an immature male bird at the same spot but was unable to find either of them after that day. There are very few records from Darjeeling, and the first one was by Jerdon (1863), who managed to collect only a specimen from above 2,420 m. Other nearby records were from the adjacent Kalimpong District (which was previously under Darjeeling District) of West Bengal on the eBird platform. Despite

these evidences, there was not a single photographic record from Darjeeling District. As visitors are not allowed there, this becomes an undisturbed small forest patch home for more than hundreds of birds and other fauna, including this Cochoa.

## References

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