



Habitat:

Village outskirts, gardens in towns, groves, agricultural cropland, secondary forests and scrub country.

Distribution:

From the NW Frontier of Pakistan through Himalayas up to 1000 m till Arunachal Pradesh and across peninsular India. Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and SE Asia.

Status: Resident. Common.



A hill slope with sparse woodland is a typical lora habitat

Food:



The lora commonly finds food by easily assuming an upside down stance to inspect underside of leaves; also rummages in dense foliage

Insects their larvae, caterpillars and eggs (beetles, ants, bees, butterflies, odonates, etc.); worms and spiders. Hunt by hopping from tree to tree to disturb insects and often turning upside down in aerobatic positions amidst foliage to inspect undersides of the leaves.



Breeding and Phenology:



Female and male lora with nesting material



Female is building the nest and male is provisioning nest material

Nest:

Placed on a vertical crotch or horizontal fork of branches in bushes or trees; 1 to 9 m from ground. Both bring nest material, female builds and male inspects and approves after completion. The nest is made of twigs woven into a tight cup that is not shallow. The outside of the nest is secured with copious amount of cobwebs as binding material making it appear white.



The nest is conspicuous due to white cobweb plastering. Eggs and naked chicks are seen in the nest



The chicks quickly change the plumage colour to attain adult plumage prior to fledging. This is an amazing progression

Key Features:

- Black and yellow plumage.
- Two white wing bars. Wings rounded.
- Male: Black crown, back and tail. Lacks yellow collar.
- Female: Yellow overall, dark wings and upper tail.
- Bill bluish – slate, notched, pointed.
- Legs and feet plumbeous.
- Claws – grey-blue. Soles white.
- Young have stubby tail.



Arboreal habit of the lora

Cultural aspects:

The Hindi name *Shaubegi* is onomatopoeic. 'Bruhatsamhita' by Varahmir and 'Vasatrajsakuna' mention it under the name *Sookari*, (after the call soo, swee) as a bird of augury. The Sanskrit name of lora given in 'Deshi Naam-mala' is *Madhuka Shreevad* - melodious whistler. (K. N. Dave, 2005-Revised edition. 'Birds in Sanskrit Literature')



Marshall's lora

Related species:

Marshall's lora *Aegithina nigrolutea*. Male has a yellow collar in breeding plumage. Both sexes have dark tail with white tips.

Etymology:

Aegithina (Gr.), mythical bird mentioned by Aristotle, Pliny, and other authors; *tiphia*, possibly after Tiphys, the pilot of the Argonauts. L. *Tiphys*, the helmsman of the Argo. (Pande, Satish (2009). Latin *Io*, a cry of joy. (Dave, 2005).

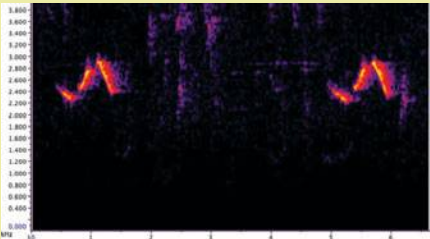
Similar looking birds with yellow plumage:



Citrine Wagtail Yellow-headed Wagtail Small Minivet (F) Yellow Bulbul Black-lored Yellow Tit Scarlet Minivet (F)

Sonogram:

The Common lora has a good repertoire of calls and songs that gives away the bird before it is seen. One of its frequently heard calls is a sweet melodious gently undulating whistle uttered in an unhurried manner. The sonogram shows that it goes up and down in frequency in three distinct notes. Each whistle lasts about a second in duration ranging between 2200 to 3000 Hz in frequency.



Common lora *Aegithina tiphia* (Linnaeus, 1758).

Type locality: Yawdin, Central Burma (for race *deignani*).

Subhag (Marathi); *Shaubeegi* (Hindi); *Patsu-jitta* (Telugu); *Sinna mampala-kuuvi* (Tamil).

- **Size:** 14 cm.
- **Weight:** 15 g.
- **Wing:** Male – 61 - 69 mm; Female – 62 - 67 mm.
- **Breeding season:** January to August.
- **Clutch:** 1 – 4 eggs. More than one clutch per year.
- **Eggs:** Pinkish white, blotched with purple-brown. Ovoid. 17.5 x 13.5 mm (Baker).
- **Incubation:** 16 – 17 d.
- **Nuptial displays:** Spectacular dances, flights and calls.
- **Fledging:** 16 - 18 d. One in five nests is successful.
- **Call:** Pleasant whistles and repertoire of mellow calls. May be rendered as *Shaubeegi*, *If-you-Please*; *peeou*; *chee-whee*; *pheeou*, etc.

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- **Sonogram:** Rajgopal Patil. Ela Foundation's OENSL, Pune.
- **Design:** Kiran Velhankar, MediaNext Infoprocessors Pvt. Ltd.
- **Copyright and Published by:** Ela Foundation, C-9, Bhosale Park, Sahakarnagar-2, Pune 411009. March, 2013. An OENSL initiative. www.elafoundation.org.
- **References:** *Ali & Ripley (1969). *Satish Pande. (2009) Latin Names of Indian Birds Explained. Book made and Funded by Ela Foundation. Published by Oxford University Press and Bombay Natural History Society.
- **Recommended citation:** Pande, Satish and Rajkumar Pawar (2016). Common lora. *Ela File* 26: 1-6. Ela Foundation, Pune.



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Common lora

- **Order:** Passeriformes • **Family:** Aegithinidae
- **Status:** Resident. Least Concern

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Conservation
Through
Education &
Research



Incubation:



Male and female are incubating the eggs. The female is seen like a fluff ball at night

Both parents incubate, but night shift is by female

Feeding the young:



Female is feeding the chicks in the nest and is taking away the fecal sac

Nest approach:

The lora hides its nest in thick foliage and is cautious while approaching the nest while keeping an eye for any predators. It stealthily comes to the nest when incubating the eggs or attending the chicks. However, the white cobweb covered nest remains conspicuous.



The sequence of stealthy nest approach by the male, as captured on the camera



Threats:

Nest predation by crows, coucal, squirrels, snakes, lizards, mongoose, etc. Agricultural pesticides can reduce prey base and enter the food chain. In SE Asia the lora is trapped for popularity as a cage songbird.

Conservation:

Included in Schedule IV of the Indian Wild Life (Protection) Act. Identifying nesting habitats and protecting them by peoples' participation through education can lead to long term effective conservation. Nest trees like Mango, Neem, *Bauhinia*, *Zizyphus*, *Carissa*, etc.

Amazing Facts:

lora nests are parasitized by Baybanded Cuckoo *Cacomantis sonneratii*.

Satish Pande, Rajkumar Pawar, Vivek Vishwasrao, Prashant Deshpande, Dr. Satish Karmalkar and Rajgopla Patil did field research for over 9 years.