



Typical habitat of the Small Minivet

Food:

Grub, worms, caterpillars, grasshoppers, spiders, berries, etc. Glean food from under the leaves by bending, by aerial sallies and rummaging through foliage while flapping wings



Short-horned grasshopper



Long-horned grasshopper



Caterpillar



Pupa



Moth



Macerated food

Habitat:

Sparse forests, agricultural cropland, scrub land, roadside avenues and groves.

Habit:

Diurnal. Arboreal. Occur in pairs or family parties with seasonal congregations before and outside the breeding season. Often with other insect eating birds like woodpeckers, prinias and flycatchers.

Distribution:

In entire India except in deserts. Also Sri Lanka, West Pakistan, Bangladesh and Iran.

Status:

Resident. Common.



Male Small Minivet perching on an euphorbia



Phenology:



Side-wise nest using cryptic material



Nest in a tree fork



Clutch of three eggs



Newly hatched chicks



3 to 4 days old chicks



8 days old chicks



10 days old chicks



14 days old chicks spill out of the nest!



19 days old fledged chick

Economic importance and conservation:

These insectivorous birds play an important role as controllers of insect pest. Protected under Indian Wild Life (Protection) Act. Rural Outreach Programs, such as those undertaken by Ela Foundation for public education stressing conservation of so called ‘wastelands’ is the key to their survival.



Key Features:

Black tail. Bill black, curved downwards. Iris – dark brown. Legs –dark, horny.



Female



Female in flight back and front views



Male, perching and in flight

Male:

Sooty grey head, neck, throat, back and wings. Orange-red breast and rump.



Underwing of male

Female:

Like male above, paler. Throat grey. Under parts yellow, white.

Chick:

Cryptically patterned with scaly design on feathers, brownish. Red mouth.

Cultural Aspect:



Etymology:

Pericrocotus (Gr.), Peri-very; *krokotos*-saffron coloured; *cinnamomeus* (L.), cinnamon coloured. (Pande, Satish (2009).

Related species:

Orange Minivet (*Pericrocotus flammeus*): In forested areas.

White-bellied Minivet (*Pericrocotus erythropygius*). In scrub region.

Finding Food:



Searching for food



Hovering in vegetation



Aerial search for food among foliage. Small Minivet adopts several aerobatic postures.

THREATS:

Insecticides, pesticides, habitat loss, road widening and diverting open habitats for infrastructure development. Natural causes are predation of nests by birds of prey, small mammals and unseasonal rains and hail.



Ember-like male Small Minivet

Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* (Linnaeus, 1766)

Type locality: Ceylon and Ambala, Punjab (India). Total 5 races.

Kunkumpu jitta (Telugu); **Teechinnan** (Malayalam); **Weli kirala** (Sinhala); **Chota Nikhar** (Marathi); **Saheli, Bulalchasm** (Hindi); **Kos-kurulla** (Sinhala); **Vishpulingakac**(Sanskrit).

- **Size:** 13 cm.
- **Weight:** 18 -22 g.
- **Male/Female: Wing:** 84-92 mm/ 78-86 mm.
- **Tail** 46-54 mm / 43-50 mm.
- **Tarsus:** 20-21 mm.
- **Bill:** 13-15 mm.
- **Breeding season:** March –September.
- **Clutch:** 2-4 eggs. One clutch / year.
- **Eggs:** Oval; creamy, finely stippled with pale to dark brown.
- **Egg Size:** 19.9 x 14.6 mm (Baker).
- **Incubation:** 12-13 d; by both parents.
- **Nuptial displays:** Both sexes – Aerial displays with singing; Exchange of food.
- **Song:** Sings melodiously in flight or from perch; Also mimicry. *Swee, Swee*

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Small Minivet

- **Order:** Passeriformes
- **Family:** Campephagidae
- **Status:** Resident

ELA FOUNDATION



Flight:



Parental Care:



Male on wings and female in nest



Male in nest



Female in nest



Male feeding the nestling



Male inspecting the nest



Male and female feeding the chicks



Both parents take turns in nurturing the nestlings in a cryptically coloured camouflaged nest



Nestlings sleeping in the nest at night

Nest:

A deep but small cup made from bark, twigs, lichen and stems of grass, placed in a fork or along a branch, with nest material woven around it. Cryptic. Female builds and male occasionally provides nest material. Female incubates, both feed the young. Adults teach the chicks to catch prey by uttering specific calls while accompanying them.

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