

# Birds in the Backyard

## Indian Paradise Flycatcher (*Terpsiphone paradisi*)



Inhabiting gardens and lightly forested areas across most of the country, the Indian Paradise Flycatcher is a sexually dimorphic but socially monogamous species. Males have a glossy blue-black head, crest and throat, and white underside. There are two colour morphs/phases: one with white back, wings, and long white tail, and the second with these features being rufous-chestnut in colour. Females and young males have a grey rather than black throat, dull white underside, rufous-chestnut wings and a short tail.

The two central tail feathers of long-tailed males form an “ornament”, which in one study showed high variability within areas (doi: 10.1111/j.1095-8312.1988.tb 01969.x). Whether the two colour morphs are age/condition-dependent or distinct and heritable, whether they have different reproductive success due to female choice, and whether ornament symmetry is indicative of quality are not clear. The genus comprises over a dozen species, whose phylogenies are known (doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2699.2012.02744.x), making it suitable for studying sexual selection in a phylogenetic framework.

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