

## Copper-throated sunbird preying on spider

**Subject:** Copper-throated sunbird, *Leptocoma calcostetha* (Aves: Passeriformes: Nectariniidae).

**Subject identified by:** Contributors.

**Location, date and time:** Singapore Island, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, mangrove boardwalk; 30 June 2015; between 1000 and 1030 hrs.

**Habitat:** Mangrove forest.

**Observers:** Contributors.

**Observation:** An adult male copper-throated sunbird was observed flitting among the branches of a mangrove tree at around the observers' eye-level at the boardwalk. There were no flowers on the tree. The bird stopped to peck at some folded mangrove leaves (Fig. 1) and from these, it extracted a small arthropod prey. The sunbird proceeded to rub its bill vigorously on the tree branch (Fig. 2), presumably to dismember its prey. A thread of silk extruding from the prey (Fig. 3) suggests that it is a spider. The bird then flew down and landed on the lower branches where it consumed its prey.

**Remarks:** The copper-throated sunbird inhabits mangrove forests, and has been recorded to feed on the nectar of the large flowers of the *Bruguiera* (Rhizophoraceae) mangrove (Yong et al., 2013). The featured observation shows that this species also feeds on terrestrial arthropods (see Myers, 2009). The contributors have not been able to identify the spider from the attached photographs. Its limbs appear to have become detached when the bird rubbed its bill on the branch.



Fig. 1. A male copper-throated sunbird pecking and extracting a prey item from folded leaves on a mangrove tree. Photographs by Tan Heok Hui



Fig. 2. Bird with prey item, likely to be a spider with its limbs removed after the bird rubbed its bill on the branch. Photographs by Tan Heok Hui



Fig. 3. Sunbird with possible spider prey in bill. A thread of silk extruded by the prey can be seen within the red circle. Photograph by Jeremy Yeo

**References:**

- Myers, S., 2009. *A Field Guide to the Birds of Borneo*. Talisman Publishing Pte Ltd, Singapore. 272 pp.  
Yong D. L., K. C. Lim & T. K. Lee, 2013. *A Naturalist's Guide to the Birds of Singapore*. John Beaufoy Publishing Limited, Oxford, England. 176 pp.

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