

Martin, J. P., & Garner, M., 2012. Moulting and ageing of male Falcated Ducks in autumn. *British Birds* 105: 2-10

Natarajan, V., & Akhtar, A., 1988. Occurrence of the Falcated Teal *Anas falcata* (Georgi) in Khijadia Bird Sanctuary, Gujarat. *J. Bombay. Nat. Hist. Soc.* 84 (3): 678

Vijayrajji, 1932. Occurrence of the Bronze capped or Falcated Teal *Eunetta falcata* in Kutch. *J. Bombay. Nat. Hist. Soc.* 35 (4): 899 □

A second sighting of Large-billed Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus orinus* from Nal Sarovar

Rajni Trivedi: 20/C, Mangaldeep App., Jodhpur gam road, Satellite, Ahmedabad 380015. rajnitrivedi1950@gmail.com



Rajni Trivedi

On 22 December 2017, I was bird watching in Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary, with local guide Kasam Sama. At around 08:30 hrs in the morning, we were able to see and photograph an *Acrocephalus* sp. warbler. This individual had a rather large bill and was small sized. I was able to take four good photographs which showed the bird from all angles. Based on the smaller size and different structure, I was able to eliminate Clamorous Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus stentoreus*), which is much larger than the individual I saw. I thought that this could be a Large-billed Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus orinus*) since the bill was much longer than what is usually seen in a Blyth's Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus dumetorum*). I had seen a Large-billed Reed Warbler earlier in Nal Sarovar (Trivedi & Ganpule 2016), and hence was aware of the possibility of its occurrence again in this area.

After coming home, I saw the images on my computer and thought that this individual was most probably a Large-billed Reed Warbler. However, since the identification is difficult, I shared the images with senior birders here and finally, the identification was confirmed as a Large-billed Reed Warbler. This is the second record of a Large-billed Reed Warbler from Nal Sarovar and the third record for Gujarat.

[As detailed earlier in Trivedi & Ganpule (2016) and Maheria et al. (2018), the identification of Large-billed Reed Warbler and its separation from Blyth's Reed Warbler is often quite difficult. Like in the previous instances, we again sent the images to Lars Svensson for confirmation and he replied (in litt., email dated 17 May 2018) that, "the bird you asked me about simply must be another Large-billed Reed Warbler. When I compare bill length with tarsus

length, both of which can be fairly accurately estimated on some of the images you sent me, the bill length far exceeds what could be possible for a Blyth's Reed Warbler. I think you can safely publish it as *A. orinus*. It is a slightly more darkly pigmented bird than most, but such birds are documented and not un-typical. This explains the dark smudge on the outer part of the lower mandible (which can similarly be seen on the bird Philip Round trapped in Thailand) and the rather darkish tarsi. All are within the normal variation as we know it for this species. Do you have a suitable swamp in Gujarat where the species could have a regular wintering range? Then you should make a targeted trapping survey there next winter. Or do you think the species moves further south in India before stopping to spend the winter?"

As explained here, there remains no doubt regarding the identification of this individual. It is interesting to note that this is the second record of a Large-billed Reed Warbler from Nal Sarovar. As suggested, it will be interesting to have a targeted trapping survey in this area to look for this species and since the sanctuary does have a habitat suitable (a swampy area), it is quite possible that this could yield positive results. It is also possible that the species could be moving further south in the winter but there are no records till date from any of the southern states. But, it should be noted that an earlier record from Vansada National Park, which is south-east from this area, is known for Gujarat (Maheria et al. 2018). So, only further records (photographic or by trapping) can confirm if the Large-billed Reed Warbler is a regular winter migrant to Nal Sarovar or whether it moves to southern parts of the country in the winter. It is urged that ornithologists / organisations like BNHS undertake the task of targeted trapping in Nal Sarovar at the earliest.

We are very grateful to Lars Svensson for confirming the identification – Eds]

Acknowledgements

I thank Kasam Sama for helping me with the logistics and for his company in the field.

References

Maheria, P., Patel, A., & Ganpule, P. 2018. Sighting of Large-billed Reed Warbler in Vansada National Park. *Flamingo*. 16 (3): 10–12

Trivedi, R. & Ganpule, P. 2016. Sighting of Large-billed Reed Warbler in Nal Sarovar. *Flamingo*. 14 (2): 12–13 □