

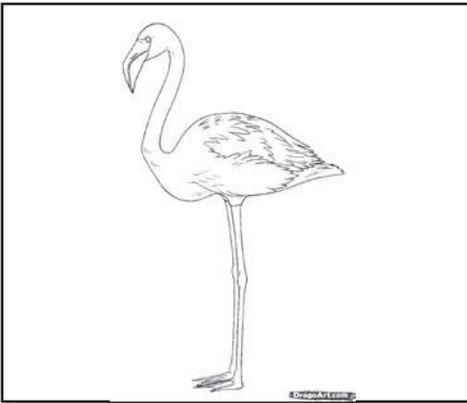
ABSTRACTS

This feature reports articles and papers published in various national and international journals regarding birds in Gujarat.



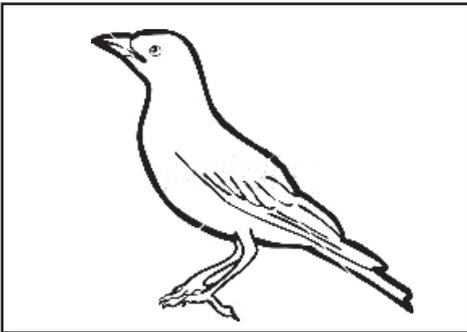
Sand Lark: 'Field identification of Sand Lark and Lesser/Asian Short-toed Lark – An unacknowledged pitfall' by Prasad Ganpule. *Indian BIRDS* 15 (4): 97-111

The author presents a detailed paper on field identification of Sand Lark (*Alaudala raytal*) and Lesser/Asian Short-toed Lark (*A. rufescens/cheleensis*) based on study of Sand Larks in Gujarat. The author has stated that identification and separation of Sand Lark from the Lesser/Asian Short-toed Lark is difficult and requires studying a host of features, with overlap of features in these species. A photo of 'putative' Lesser/Asian Short-toed Lark from Gujarat is also discussed in detail and remarks are given on photos of Lesser/Asian Short-toed Lark taken in India. Variation in Sand Larks in Gujarat is discussed, and it is stated that both subspecies (*adamsi* and *krishnukumarsinhji*) of Sand Lark are widely distributed in Gujarat. The author suggests taking photos, from all angles, of suspected Lesser/Asian Short-toed Lark for identification, and also further study of Sand Larks in Gujarat.



Greater Flamingo: 'First report of successful breeding of Greater Flamingo in the Gulf of Khambhat' by B. M. Parasharya & I. R. Gadhvi: *Indian BIRDS* 15 (5): 136-139

The authors report on the breeding of Greater Flamingo in the Gulf of Khambhat, Gujarat. A colony of Greater Flamingos (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) was seen in a salt pan around the Gulf of Khambhat and observations were made over a period of more than three months. Breeding was successful and more than 300+ chicks were seen there. This was the first ever successful breeding of Greater Flamingo at a new site in the Gulf of Khambhat. The authors propose to inform the salt pan owners to provide a larger island and manage the water depth in the pan to deter terrestrial predators and keep out visitors from the area so that Greater Flamingos breed here regularly.



Rufous-tailed Lark: 'Colour aberration in Rufous-tailed Lark from Gujarat' by Yuyutshu N. Bhattacharya & others: *Indian BIRDS* 16 (2): 54

A colour-aberrant Rufous-tailed Lark (*Ammomanes phoenicurus*) was seen and photographed near Timbi Irrigation Reservoir, near Vadodara, by the authors. A 'white plumaged' Rufous-tailed Lark was seen with a normal plumaged individual. The colour aberration in this individual was identified as 'progressive greying', which is due to the result of progressive loss of melanin pigments with each successive moult. In this individual, whitening of more than 75% of the feathers was seen. The authors state that this was the first record of progressive greying for this species from India.



European Honey Buzzard: 'First record of European Honey Buzzard for India' by Dhaval Vargiya & others. *Birding ASIA* 33: 128-131

The authors report of a rescue of a juvenile honey buzzard from Porbandar, which was later identified as a European Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*). The individual was rescued off the Porbandar coast, was injured, and recovered after treatment. Measurements were taken for this bird and the plumage (lack of gorget) and underwing pattern (dark carpal patches and the pattern of barring on the secondaries) were similar to European Honey Buzzard and did not match to Oriental Honey Buzzard (*Pernis ptilorhynchus*). The wing formula further confirmed it as a European Honey Buzzard. Expert opinions were taken and they confirmed that it was a juvenile European Honey Buzzard. This was a first record of European Honey Buzzard for Gujarat as well as India.

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Obituary: “Heavenly flight of a birdman of Gujarat”

Dr. Bhavbhuti Mukundray Parasharya (4 July 1955 – 9 October 2020)

It was Sunday, 20 September 2020; I called Dr. B. M. Parasharya in the morning at around 10 am on his cell phone, telling ‘Bhai’ (as I usually called him) ‘is it convenient for you to have a round in the salt pans in the Bhal region (around 10 km from Bhavnagar city) for birding in the afternoon?’ He received the cell phone call with usual original zeal! ‘Yeah...lovely’ he replied and added ‘but why don’t you join us right now at Victoria Park (a reserve forest in Bhavnagar)?’ He was with a group of students of Zoology Department of Sir P. P. Institute of Science, teaching them biology of butterflies! Unfortunately, it was the last Sunday in the field with him. We were on a birding trip till the late evening. As the light was not favourable, we planned to visit the place again after a couple of days. But that day never came! On the following Sunday (27 September), when I called him again for the planned birding trip he said, ‘I am not feeling well, I am Corona positive and now I have to be home quarantined for a fortnight! You also take care and please finish that pending task’. We were neighbours; his house is just 100 mts away from mine. As he was Corona positive, I could not meet him but I was in constant contact with him till his sad demise. On 2 October, he was admitted to the hospital and on 9 October morning, he was shifted to the ICU as his condition was deteriorating and in the evening, he had some cardiac trouble. It was the most unfortunate day for me and for all the bird lovers of our country, as I received a call from Dr. Dishant, his nephew, at 10 pm, that we had lost the warrior; he had lost the battle against Covid-19 and the birdman took heavenly flight, leaving behind many friends and family members.

Dr. Bhavbhuti Mukundray Parasharya was the sixth among seven children of Smt. Nirmalaben and a great poet and writer, Shri Mukundray Parasharya. He was born in Bhavnagar, in Gujarat, on 4 July 1955. He was a brilliant student from his childhood. His whole academic career was with first class distinction marks. He completed schooling and B. Sc in 1977 from Sir P. P. Institute of Science at Bhavnagar and went to Vadodara for a Masters degree in Zoology, with specialization in ornithology and fisheries biology, from M. S. University, in 1979. He completed his Ph. D. on “Studies on the coastal birds and their marine habitat with a special emphasis on the biology of Indian Reef Heron *Egretta gularis* (Bosc.)” under the supervision of the renowned biologist Prof. R. M. Naik from Saurashtra University, Rajkot, Gujarat, in the year 1985. International heron experts from USA, Dr. James Hancock and Dr. James Kushlan, were the external referees of his Ph. D. and admired his research work greatly. For the initial six months of his career, he joined the National Institute of Virology in the year 1984 and from August 1984, till July 2017, he was in various positions, from Jr. Scientist to Senior Professor (Research), in AINP Ornithology Project, at Anand Agricultural University, Anand, Gujarat.

Dr. Parasharya authored 112 research papers, which were published in peer reviewed national and international journals and also 9 books, including one on butterflies of Gujarat! He also wrote on damselflies, dragon flies and spiders. He was probably the first author to describe the breeding between different colour phases of Reef Egrets. He was a thorough naturalist. He was contributing for Asian Waterfowl Census (AWC), a project by Wetlands International, since 1987 and was the coordinator of the AWC programme for Gujarat State from 2001 till his sad demise. He designed and formulated two masters degree courses (1) Agricultural Ornithology and (2) Vertebrate Pest Management, which were finalized by ICAR and implemented by all agricultural universities of India. He was an active member of research, monitoring and advisory committee, the Standing Committee on Applied Ornithology (SCAO), constituted by International Ornithological Congress (IOC) for 1990-1994 & 1994–1998 and by Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON), Coimbatore, from 2006 to 2020. He was also an active member of more than 10 national and 3 international organizations working for avian diversity and conservation. Being a member of IUCN Flamingo Specialist Group, he prepared an informative booklet on Lesser Flamingo. He was a founder member of Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat (BCSG), and served as Joint Secretary, Secretary and Vice President and was the chief editor of “*Flamingo*”, the newsletter of the society. His demise is a great loss to the scientific community of our country.

- Dr. I. R. Gadhvi

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