



Rock Bunting in Gujarat: 'Rock Bunting – an addition to the birds of Gujarat' by Rajni Trivedi. Indian BIRDS 12 (2&3): 84-85

The author reported three sightings of Rock Bunting (*Emberiza cia*) from Gujarat. One sighting from Kalo Dungar in Kachchh and two sightings from Saurashtra - one from Velavadar National Park and one near Dhari, Amreli district, were reported. The sightings were in 2007, 2008 and 2014, and the birds were seen in January, February and September. The author states that it is possible Rock Bunting is overlooked since it resembles Striolated Bunting (*Fringillaria striolata*), which is common here. These are the first confirmed sightings of Rock Bunting from Gujarat and this species is an addition to the birds of Gujarat.

Taimyr Gulls in Okha: 'Observations of probable Taimyr Gulls at Okha' by Prasad Ganpule. Indian BIRDS 12 (1): 1-4



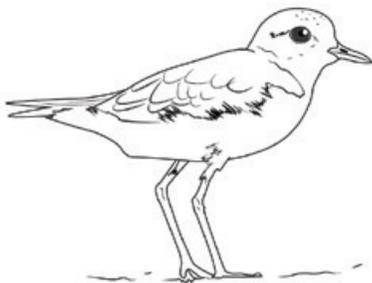
The author carried out a study on probable Taimyr Gulls (*Larus fuscus taimyrensis*) in Okha for three years, from 2014-2014, in the winter. The gulls seen in Okha were identified as probable Taimyr Gulls based on the paler mantle, prominent head streaking and late moult. A few juveniles were also photographed. Some individuals seen there had very prominent head streaking, with blotches on the nape, recalling Vega Gull (*Larus smithsonianus vegae*) and such individuals were kept unidentified until further research, as Vega Gull is not known to occur in India. This was the first such study carried out on these gulls and the presence of such birds in India presents a challenge to gull researchers.

Tagged Eastern Imperial Eagle in Little Rann of Kachchh: 'Sighting of wing-tagged Eastern Imperial Eagle in Little Rann of Kachchh' by H S Sangha et al., Indian BIRDS 12 (2&3): 73



The authors report an interesting sighting of a wing-tagged Eastern Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*) from the Little Rann of Kachchh. A juvenile Eastern Imperial Eagle with a yellow tag on its wing, bearing alpha-numeric code H04, was photographed in late January 2012. The tagging details were as follows: the eagle was tagged in Naurzum State Nature Reserve, in the Kostanay Region of Kazakhstan. The tagged bird travelled a distance of around 3200 kms (in a straight line) from Kazakhstan to Gujarat. This was the first time a tagged Eastern Imperial Eagle from Kazakhstan had been seen in Gujarat.

Tagged Lesser and Greater Sand Plovers in Kachchh: 'Clues towards migration routes of Lesser and Greater Sand Plovers wintering in Kenya' by C. Jackson., Biodiversity Observations 7.36: 1-8



The author reports on sightings of tagged Lesser Sand Plovers (*Charadrius mongolus*) and Greater Sand Plover (*Charadrius leschenaultii*) seen at Modhva beach, Kachchh. A Greater Sand Plover was seen for two consecutive years at Modhva beach while a Lesser Sand Plover was seen once at the same place during 2015 and 2016. Both the birds were ringed at Mida Creek, Kenya. The author speculates on the strategy for return migration adopted by both these species, wherein they stop at two sites en route to their breeding ground, one of which is Modhva beach. These stop-over sites are used for fattening up for further migration, but this can only be confirmed by further observations. The author requests birdwatchers in Gujarat to look for tagged sand plovers, particularly at Modhva beach during March-April.

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When we approached Man Marudi Island juvenile storks were seen among the overhanging vegetation. From the sea below, the proper estimation cannot be made because of the dense euphorbia and other tangles vegetation on the sides and on the flattop of the island. Those birds crouching or down among the bushes are not visible. I asked for the launch to circle the island to the leeward side since a strong surface breeze had started blowing from the west. This surface wind produces an updraft against the island which I suspect is the main reason for the storks to favour it as a nesting site. Without much effort they rise high to enter the upper air where turbulences are noticeable by the cumulus clouds rising above. The storks rise on these updrafts and then disperse in different directions to feed. Some even cross the Gulf towards Kachhh! The adult storks start arriving in mid September and the last of the late breeders depart by mid December leaving the fully fledged juveniles to themselves and I was fortunate to see these, possibly the later hatchlings departing.

As we were cruising slowly along the length of the island, a flock of around 120 storks, all dark plumaged juveniles took off. They flew into the wind and then turned to take the updrafts off the island to rise above us. I thought they were practicing and would, after a few circles land again. Instead, they quickly rose above the surface wind and into the upper turbulences and began to circle upward toward the dark under surface of a large cumulus cloud. As we watched, the spiralling birds rose higher and higher until they were mere specks. From that great height, they levelled off and began a glide towards the Saurashtra mainland. It was 4.30pm. What I had witnessed was the young storks taking their leap into the future. Not a single adult was any where in sight. Some juveniles, possibly the last to have hatched were still on the island, a few making tentative flights around. In a day or two they too would have to leave to seek their fortunes in the great world beyond, or starve: the rocky sea swept base of the island had no place where a stork could find any food.

On one lucky day, I had witnessed the end of a breeding year even as the start of the next had begun. ”

- Lavkumar Khachar

