

from a distance I suddenly saw an unusual looking bird in the waters. I quickly realized that it was a pelagic species and requested the boatman to move the boat slowly towards it. The bird was quite static and floating in the water close to a large patch of reeds. The bird gave us good views and I could photograph it well. I noted that it was a juvenile and probably a vagrant, which lost track during its migration and landed up at Nal Sarovar. This bird was not seen again, in spite of many attempts to search for it by other birders. This leads us to a conclusion that it might not have stayed there for long and may have moved further on in its migration, probably towards the Gulf of Kachchh. The identification of juvenile skuas is tricky but here, since it was seen well and photographed, the identification was confirmed as a juvenile Arctic Skua based on the small fine bill, small head, streaked neck and nape, and upperparts with a rufescent tinge.

There is one inland record of Arctic Skua from the Little Rann of Kachchh, along with a photographic record from the Gulf of Kachchh during a pelagic trip (Ganpule 2016). It has been noted off the Gujarat coast a number of times during pelagic trips (Naik 2016). There is a previous record of a probable Pomarine Skua (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) from Nal Sarovar (Ganpule 2016), but, this is the first record of an Arctic Skua from this area.

#### References

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## Black-capped Kingfisher near Veraval

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On 11 February 2018, I visited the coastal area near Veraval beach (20° 55' N, 70° 27' E), around 5 kms away from Veraval city, with Divyesh Gheravda and Prem Lalchandani. It is a largely unknown and undisturbed area for birding and is good for bird watching because it is a sandy and rocky coastal area with a small check dam, so fresh water is also present most of the year. We saw Pacific Golden Plover (*Pluvialis fulva*), Ruddy Shelduck (*Tadorna ferruginea*), Asian Openbill (*Anastomus oscitans*), Isabelline Wheatear (*Oenanthe isabellina*), Asian Paradise-flycatcher (*Terpsiphone paradisi*), Ruff (*Calidris pugnax*) and many other common fresh water as well as coastal birds here.

While bird watching in this area, I saw a Black-capped Kingfisher (*Halcyon pileata*) perched on a rock by the beach. I called my friends and we took some good images, confirming the identification. On 17 February 2018, I visited this area

again with Pragnesh Patel and Saswat Mishra. We saw the kingfisher again at the same site. This time, we saw it hunt a crab. Another interesting sighting from this area was that of a White-eared Bulbul (*Pycnonotus leucotis*). Though widespread and common in other parts of the state, this bulbul is not common in our area, especially in Gir-Somnath district (*pers. obsv*).

The Black-capped Kingfisher is resident in the coastal areas of Gujarat (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). It is given as an uncommon to rare resident and local migrant in the state (Ganpule 2016). Sightings have been reported from coastal, as well as from inland areas. But, it is not common and this was the first time we had seen this species here. Rank & Parasharya (2005) show sightings from Ahmedpur-Mandvi and Diu (which are not far from Veraval), and state that though it is not common, it is distributed all along the Gujarat coast. This sighting from Veraval is another addition to the sightings of the Black-capped Kingfisher from coastal Saurashtra.

#### References

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