

Thick-billed Green Pigeon....

can it be that it was a vagrant and reached here? We can make assumptions but it is difficult to be sure in this case.

[It can be seen from the photos that it is indeed the Thick-billed Green Pigeon and there is no doubt regarding its identification. As stated by the observer, it is not known to occur in Gujarat. In fact, there are no records from western India. Hence, it is really surprising that this species was seen here. It is most probable that this was an escapee from the pet bird trade. We tried to search whether this species is kept as a cage bird in Gujarat but could not find any details for this species and it seems it is not kept as a pet here. Also, since it was seen in a coastal area, it could be a bird which was released or escaped from a ship or arrived here by ship assistance. There could be many reasons for its occurrence here and though chances are very less, it is also probable that it could be a wild vagrant. However, in view of the fact that it is way out of its range and has not been noted in western India before, this species is not

included in the Gujarat checklist at present. A decision can be taken later by a committee regarding its inclusion or exclusion in the state checklist – Eds]

Acknowledgements

I thank Arvind Parmar for informing me about this bird. I am grateful to Dr. Gaurang Bagda and Irshad Theba for their help in identification.

References

Ganpule, P., 2016. The birds of Gujarat: Status and distribution. *Flamingo* 8 (3)–12 (4): 2–40

Ganpule, P., 2017. First update to the Gujarat checklist: December 2017. *Flamingo* 15 (4): 17–20

Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T. 2011. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 2nd ed. Christopher Helm & Oxford University Press. London. □

Black-legged Kittiwake in Kachchh: an addition to the avifauna of Gujarat

Rishi Mehta: Madhapar (Bhuj), Kachchh 370020. officialrishiphotography@gmail.com

On 24 December 2017, I visited Mandvi coastal area in Kachchh with my friends for bird watching. At around 07:10 hrs, we saw a flock of gulls (*Larus* sp.) and approached nearer to take photos. While taking photos, I saw a gull which seemed quite different from the other gulls there. It was perched alone besides the flock. I managed to take some good photographs of this bird and shared the photos with my friends. It was

identified as a Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*). There are no previous records of this species in Gujarat. Hence, this sighting is an addition to avifauna of Gujarat.

[As can be seen from the two photos taken by the observer, the characteristic features like the small, thin, all yellow bill, large eye, very pale grey mantle, the diagnostic all black 'dipped in ink' extreme wing tip, grey neck and darker grey ear-spot, reaching onto hind-



neck as half hood and the very short legs are visible. Though similar to Mew Gull (*Larus canus*), the above features help to confirm its identification as a Black-legged Kittiwake and there remains no doubt regarding its identification. It is an adult, in non-breeding plumage, based on its bill and plumage, which is similar to that described for adults in winter plumage by Olsen & Larsson (2004). It is not known which subspecies occurs here; two subspecies are known – the nominate *R. t. tridactyla* and *R. t. pollicaris* (Olsen & Larsson 2004). Praveen et al. (2014) speculate that birds occurring here are likely to be of the nominate subspecies. For this individual seen in Kachchh, we are unable to comment on the subspecies based on these two photographs.



Rishi Mehta

The Black-legged Kittiwake is a vagrant to India; Praveen et al. (2014) list six records from the country, till February 2013, from Rajasthan, Goa, Kerala, Maharashtra and Assam. More records from Rajasthan (Lawrence 2014), West Bengal (photos

on the website Oriental Bird Images) and Odisha (Bhujbal et al. 2015) are now known. As noted by Praveen et al. (2014), all birds recorded here were juveniles or first-winter birds, including the birds seen subsequently. This individual, noted in Kachchh, is an adult and this is different from the other records so far. Looking at the number of records from India, it is quite possible that the species is a rare straggler to the country.

For Gujarat, this species is not included in the earlier state checklist (Parasharya et al. 2004) nor in the latest checklist by Ganpule (2016). This is the first record of the species from the state. Hence, the Black-legged Kittiwake is an addition to the avifauna of Gujarat – Eds]

Acknowledgements

I am thankful to Ashish Gohil, Dr. Pankaj Maheria and Prasad Ganpule for helping with the identification.

References

- Bhujbal, M., Bhujbal, N. K., & Bhujbal, C., 2015. First Record of Black-Legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* in Odisha, India. *J Bombay Nat Hist Soc.* 112 (3): 172-173
- Ganpule, P., 2016. The Birds of Gujarat: Status and Distribution. *Flamingo* 8(3) – 12 (4): 2-40
- Lawrence, J., 2014. Record of a Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* in south-eastern Rajasthan, India. *J Bombay Nat Hist Soc.* 110: (3) 227
- Olsen, K. M., & Larsson, H. 2004. *Gulls of Europe, Asia and North America*. Helm, London.
- Parasharya, B. M., Borad, C. K. & Rank, D. N. 2004. *A Checklist of Birds of Gujarat*. Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat.
- Praveen J., Jayapal, R., & Pittie, A., 2014. Notes on Indian rarities-2: Waterfowl, diving waterbirds, and gulls and terns. *Indian BIRDS* 9 (5&6): 113–136 □

Status of Red-tailed Shrike in Kachchh

Prasad Ganpule: C/o Parshuram Pottery Works, Opp. Nazarbaug, Morbi 363642. prasadganpule@gmail.com

The Red-tailed Shrike (*Lanius phoenicuroides*) is now treated as a separate species from Isabelline Shrike (*Lanius isabellinus*) (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). It is given as a rare autumn passage migrant in Kachchh and Saurashtra, with a few individuals noted in September during the autumn passage migration season (Ganpule 2017).

This year, I visited the Banni area in Kachchh from 24 to 26 September 2017 with my friends to search for passage migrants. Senior ornithologist Jugal Tiwari, from the Centre for Desert and Ocean (CEDO), at Moti-Virani, near Nakhatrana, kindly accompanied us in the field. In the course of three days, we saw at least three adult Red-tailed Shrikes and many first winter birds. The first-winter birds could not be conclusively identified as Red-tailed Shrikes as their separation from

Isabelline Shrike in first-winter plumages is quite difficult (Worfolk 2000). But, for adults, it was fairly easy, and the birds were typical Red-tailed Shrikes. One individual, which was seen very closely and gave very good views, showed all the typical features of *phoenicuroides*: red crown contrasting with brown back (which is diagnostic), blackish wings with very prominent primary patch, red tail, white underparts, prominent face mask and supercilium. I could get very good photos and two images of the same individual are given here. It can be seen that sometimes, when the bird is perched, the white primary patch is not visible.

There is no doubt that the Red-tailed Shrike is a passage migrant in Kachchh. In addition to our sightings and sightings of Red-tailed Shrike given in Ganpule (2017), a sighting was