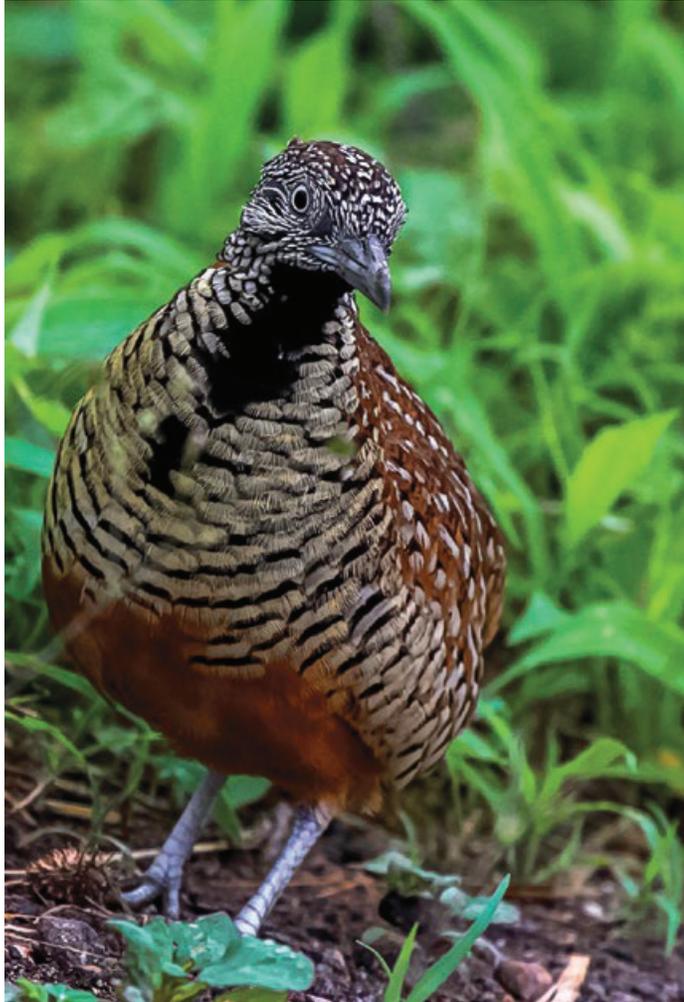


Buttonquails around Rajkot city

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Three species of Buttonquails (*Turnix* sp.) occur in Gujarat; Barred Buttonquail (*Turnix suscitator*), Yellow-legged Buttonquail (*Turnix tanki*) and Small Buttonquail (*Turnix sylvaticus*) (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). They are small, enigmatic, terrestrial birds seen mainly in the monsoon season. All the three Buttonquails were listed in the birds of Hingolghadh (Naik *et al.* 1990), which is near Rajkot. They are seen around Rajkot city and current sightings of these birds are given below:

Barred Buttonquail



Ashok Mashru

Barred Buttonquail is the commonest amongst the three species of Buttonquails occurring here. It is resident and is usually skulking, but easily found in Rajkot city outskirts. I have noted it around Ishwariya Pond in Rajkot outskirts on 23 July 2015, 05 February 2011 and 18 December 2011. Other location around Rajkot where I have seen it is in Nyari River area on 4 July 2012. It is seen on country roads or in grassland areas, mostly in pairs. It breeds in the entire state (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). Ali (1954) collected specimens from Kachchh, around Baroda and in north Gujarat (Mehsana and Patan). Thus it is fairly widespread species in Gujarat.

Yellow-legged Buttonquail



Gaurang Bagada

Yellow-legged Buttonquail is a summer/monsoon migrant to Gujarat. Usually shy and skulking, it is difficult to observe. Dharmakumarsinhji (1955) stated that it is rarely seen and fairly secretive. Rainfall seems to affect its movements to a great extent. He has mentioned seeing its nest in a scrub jungle near Wankaner, which is near Rajkot. Kazmierczak (2000) has shown it as a summer visitor in most of Gujarat. Ali (1954) collected specimens from Kachchh and north Gujarat, but does not mention its occurrence in Saurashtra. On 05 August 2015, during a visit to Khirasara *vidi*, a grassland near Rajkot, I was able to observe a Yellow-legged Buttonquail in the area. I could only get a record image. It is worth mentioning that in Gir/Girnar forest area, Gaurang Bagada has recently sighted the bird twice: first on 21 June 2014 near Dalkhania (21° 14' N 70° 55' E) and then on 03 May 2015 near Vadali (21° 36' N 70° 30' E). Sightings have been reported near Amreli (Viral Joshi, *pers. comm.*) and from Paneli *vidi*, near Morbi (Prasad Ganpule, *pers. comm.*). It is generally the rarest Buttonquail here.

Small Buttonquail



Ravi Ardesana

Small Buttonquail is also a summer/monsoon migrant to Gujarat. Usually shy and skulking, it is difficult to observe. Dharmakumarsinhji (1955) stated that it is seldom seen, but mentioned about sighting its nest many times. It is not uncommon, and is more frequently seen in the *vidis*,

particularly around hilly areas. Kazmierczak (2000) and Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) have shown it as a summer visitor in most parts of Gujarat.

On a visit to Gondal, near Rajkot, on 22 August 2015, we (Manoj Finava, Prasad Ganpule and me) visited three scrub forests/grasslands in the area. We saw Small Buttonquails in two of the scrub forests and grasslands in the area, which was surprising since it is not commonly seen here. We recorded a total of four individuals. After a few days, on 30 August 2015, Ravi Ardesana saw a Small Buttonquail at Khirasara *vidi*, near Rajkot city.

Conclusion

Though Barred Buttonquail is common around Rajkot, Small Buttonquail and Yellow-legged Buttonquail are uncommon in our area. Grasslands are their preferred habitats and looking at historical observations of their breeding in Saurashtra, a detailed survey in Rajkot district in scrub/grassland areas will help in understanding their current status here.

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Sighting of Tickell's Leaf Warbler in Little Rann of Kachchh

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Catherine Christian

The Tickell's Leaf Warbler (*Phylloscopus affinis*), breeds in the Himalayas and is a widespread winter migrant in the Peninsula, wintering mainly in the Western Ghats (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). It is a vagrant to Gujarat, with only two previous records, both from Saurashtra (Akhtar & Tiwari 1994, Ganpule 2015).

On consecutive visits to the Little Rann of Kachchh on 23 and 26 December 2015, we visited Vachhraj Bet (23°24' N, 71°26' E), in the Little Rann of Kachchh. There, in the temple premises, I saw a warbler, which I initially thought was a Sulphur-bellied Warbler (*Phylloscopus griseolus*), but it seemed different. I identified it as a Tickell's Leaf Warbler, based on the following features:

- prominent yellow supercilium, of similar colour to the throat, which would be contrasting in Sulphur-bellied Warbler
- greenish brown upperparts
- greenish edges to the wing feathers
- bright yellow underparts

Both Tickell's Leaf Warbler and Sulphur-bellied Warbler can be quite variable. Though the contrast between the throat and the supercilium are said to be important for identification, the greenish edges to the wing feathers and olive-green upperparts are more conclusive (R Jaypal, *in litt.*). Hence, this individual could be identified as a Tickell's Leaf Warbler.

This was found in the temple premises and it was foraging on the ground. Though this behaviour is similar to Sulphur-bellied Warbler, it is possible that this individual, probably in migration, was foraging on the ground for insects. Hence, this was not very unusual.

The sighting of Tickell's Leaf Warbler in the middle of the Rann is quite odd as both the previous records from Gujarat are from Saurashtra, and not from desert areas. This is the third sighting of the species from Gujarat.

Acknowledgements

I thank Tim Inskipp, Praveen J., R. Jaypal, Dipu K. and Mike Prince for their inputs in the identification of this bird.

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