

Calling behaviour of Small Buttonquail in breeding season

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On 30 August 2015, at around 17:45 hrs, we saw a Small Buttonquail (*Turnix sylvaticus*) giving booming calls in the grassland of Khirasara *vidi*, near Rajkot. In this species, the females are larger than the males; they are dominant and known to be polyandrous (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). The ordinary call-note is a soft booming sound, which is ventriloquial in character, and usually uttered by the female. It attracts the male, whom she courts, turning and twisting and posturing. The females are very pugnacious and fight amongst themselves fiercely for the possession of the male (Whistler & Kinnear 1949).

While the call of the Small Buttonquail is frequently heard in the grasslands of Saurashtra in the monsoon season, we could not find photographic observations of the female uttering

the call in the wild. We observed that the female fluffed up its body, with a noticeable protuberance of the nape (hindneck), which can be seen from the photograph given here, and gave a series of booming calls, which were repeated. These calls are given during the breeding period of the birds, which is in the monsoon season in Saurashtra. Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) describe that the 'polyandrous female booms with fluffed-out plumage'. This is similar to what we observed here, but the hindneck was visibly more fluffed-out while calling. This raises an interesting question; is the fluffed up nape a subtle visual display or is it a physical requirement for uttering the call? It is well known that in many bird species, the song is often accompanied by a visual display, ranging from simple adjustment of feather posture to complex and dramatic display of plumage. We are not aware whether the fluffed-out nape in the Small Buttonquail is a visual display and this is not described in literature either. Studying songs and calls of birds is very interesting, and is helpful in understanding bird behaviour and ecology.

References

Rasmussen, P. C. & Anderton, J. C. 2012. *Birds of South Asia: The Ripley Guide*. 2 vols. 2nd Ed. Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions, Washington D. C. and Barcelona.

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Status of Blue-capped Rock Thrush in Girnar Wildlife Sanctuary

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The Blue-capped Rock Thrush (*Monticola cinclorhynchus*) is a species of the Chat family, which breeds in the Himalayas and winters in the Western Ghats (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). In Gujarat, Ali (1955) collected specimens from the Dang

forest, and found it in small numbers in the area, and stated that it was not recorded in north Gujarat, Saurashtra and Kachchh. It is shown as a winter visitor to south Gujarat, with an isolated record from Saurashtra (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). We present records of the Blue-capped Rock Thrush from Girnar Wildlife Sanctuary (henceforth Girnar WLS) and discuss its status. The Girnar WLS (21° 30' N 70° 32' E) is located in the Junagadh district. It is a sub-tropical forest, with areas of scrub in between. There are a few rivers in the area, some of which are perennial.

On 11 December 2016, during our survey of birds in the southern part of Girnar WLS, we saw and photographed a male Blue-capped Rock Thrush. We have seen this species regularly for the last three years in the sanctuary. We also collected records of the species from the Girnar WLS from birdwatchers. The list of records is presented below in table.