

## Forest Owlet in Dang, South Gujarat

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Mukesh Bhatt

After hearing news about the sighting of Forest Owlet (*Heteroglaux blewitti*) in Dang forest, I visited the location (precise location withheld – Eds) with Devavratsinh Mori, Yagnesh Bhatt and Vimalbhai on 22 January 2016. After reaching there, I immediately recognized the call of the Forest Owlet, as I had heard it many times in Melghat Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra. Finally, we were very excited to see one Forest Owlet. We observed it for a while and took a few photos. On 28 January 2016, I again found it in the same area with Anil Bhardwaj and DFO Mohan Ram.

Previously, I had recorded it in Dang forest in the year 2000, 2007 and 2008, but after these sightings, I had not record it in

the last few years. I believed that it was vagrant in Dang. But it has been recorded by Jenis Patel in 2015 in Purna Wildlife Sanctuary (Patel *et al.* 2015) and by DFO Anand Kumar recently in 2016 (*pers. comm.*). I am monitoring it



since last two months in the current location. Hence it seems that either it has become a resident in Dang now or was present previously, but overlooked.

[Forest Owlet is Critically Endangered (BirdLife International 2016), and its continued presence in Dang forest is heartening news towards the conservation of this species. Special efforts should be taken to conserve the habitat here, and any disturbance should be avoided. There are many threats to the continued existence of this species; hence birdwatchers and forest department officials should take extra efforts towards its protection in Gujarat – Eds]

### References:

BirdLife International, 2016. Species factsheet: *Heteroglaux blewitti*. Downloaded from <http://www.birdlife.org> on 1 May 2016

Patel, J. R., S. B. Patel, S.C. Rathor, J. A. Patel, P. B. Patel & A. G. Vasava . 2015. New distribution record of the Forest Owlet *Heteroglaux blewitti* Hume, 1873 (Aves: Strigiformes: Strigidae), in Purna Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat, India. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 7(12): 7940–7944

## Isabelline Shrike preying on pipit

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Viral Patel

The Isabelline Shrike (*Lanius isabellinus*) is a passerine bird, and a member of Shrike family (*Laniidae*). We report here an Isabelline Shrike preying on a Pipit (*Anthus sp.*) in Little Rann of Kachchh.

We were on the way back to our vehicle after photographing water birds at Nava-talav, Little Rann of Kachchh on

29 November 2015. We heard a kind of noise; a 'frightened' or 'unpleasant' call of a bird. Soon we located two birds duelling in mid-air. We identified these birds as an Isabelline Shrike and either a Paddyfield Pipit (*Anthus rufulus*) or a Tawny Pipit (*Anthus campestris*). The Isabelline Shrike caught the pipit's neck firmly in its feet, while fiercely twisting and turning through the air. The pipit kept fluttering in the shrike's talons, trying to escape, but it was of no use. The shrike pinned down the pipit to the ground in a small pit. It tried to kill the pipit by repeatedly striking at the back of the pipit's head with its bill, probably using its tomial teeth to disarticulate the cervical vertebrae.

Out of curiosity, we tried to have a closer look. But due to our movements, the shrike hid its prey in the grass and flew away. When we reached the site, we searched and found a dead pipit in the grass. After that, we moved away and waited for the shrike to come back and eat its prey. We waited for a while,