

Oriental Scops Owl...

[There are very few previous records of this species in Gujarat. Dharmakumarsinhji (1955) collected two specimens near Bhavnagar and suspected them to be of the subspecies *rufipennis*. There are two subspecies of the Oriental Scops Owl in the Peninsula: the nominate *sunia* and *rufipennis*. *Rufipennis* occurs in 'N Maharashtra through Western Ghats and S E Ghats' and *sunia* in a large area extending from Nepal to Assam, E Bangladesh and through NE Peninsula in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). For Gujarat, the authors give its distribution for south Gujarat and Gir area in Saurashtra, showing it as a resident in our area, with *rufipennis* shown as occurring here. There are three colour morphs in this species; rufous, brown and grey. Regarding identification of the above birds, there is no doubt that these are Oriental Scops Owls. The two birds are clearly of rufous morph.

Oriental Scops Owl was seen and photographed by Mukesh Bhatt in Dang forest (Bhatt 2012) and it is known to occur in the region all round the year (Mukesh Bhatt, pers. comm., verbally). It is presumably resident in the Dang forest area as

many birdwatchers have photographed it in the area in different seasons since then. However these records from Gandhinagar (Central Gujarat) and from Amreli District in Saurashtra are noteworthy.

We thank Abhinand C and Praveen J for their help – Eds]

References:

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Great Bittern at Porbandar

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On 18 Januray 2015, I visited Gosabara wetland, Porbandar with Manojbhai Tank and Jaymeet Solanki. There we photographed a Great Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*). There are very few records of this bird from Gujarat. Hence this sighting is worth reporting.

[There have been recent records of Great Bittern from Gujarat; Bagda (2014) from Junagadh and Trivedi (2015) from Nal sarovar. Also there are records of Great bittern in November and December 2014 from Gosabara (Rughani 2014). Birdwatchers are requested to send their sightings of Great Bittern from Gujarat so that its status and distribution can be understood – Eds]

References:

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