

## Broad-billed Sandpiper....

(*Charadrius leschenaultii*) etc. The ringed Broad-billed Sandpiper was foraging alone rather than with this group. It was also not allowing other waders to come nearby. When we saw the ring on its leg, we tried to get closer to take photos of the numbers/alphabets that were written on it. The details were not visible clearly and we had to struggle a lot of to take pictures of the ring. We also tried to see with binoculars but could not succeed. Finally, we got some photos in which the details were visible.

The photographs were sent to BNHS (Bombay Natural History Society) for getting the ringing details. Following ringing details were received from BNHS.

Ring Number: AB 169297

Species: Broad-billed Sandpiper

Ringing Date: 11 February 2015

Ringed By: Tuhina Katti, Scientist-A, Wetland Programme.

Ringing Place: Panje, Uran (near Mumbai)

Ringing Coordinates: 18° 90' N, 72° 95' E

Finding Date: 25 November 2017

Province: India

Finding Place: Jamnagar, Gujarat

Finding Coordinates: 22° 48' N, 70° 06' E

Thus, this bird was ringed near Mumbai in early 2015. It was seen by us again after two years and nine months at Jamnagar in the winter and was seen at a different location from its ringing place.

The first author had earlier recovered two ringed birds which had died due to electrocution; a dead Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) and a Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*) were recovered in Surendranagar district. The Ruff was ringed near Nurinskiy, Kazakhstan (Mori 2017a), while the Dalmatian Pelican was ringed at the delta of Ili River, Kazakhstan (Mori 2017b).

There are recent records of sightings of ringed/tagged Lesser Sand Plover and Greater Sand Plover from Kachchh (Parekh 2017, Parekh & Parekh 2017). This sighting is another addition to the sighting of ringed waders in Gujarat.

### Acknowledgments

I thank Tuhina Katti & Taej Mundkur for all their help.

### References

Mori, D., 2017a. <https://birdingugujarat.wordpress.com/2017/08/24/ringed-ruff-near-surendranagar-gujarat/> [Accessed on 25 February 2018].

Mori, D., 2017b. <https://birdingugujarat.wordpress.com/2017/08/13/ringed-dalmatian-pelican-near-surendranagar-gujarat/> [Accessed on 25 February 2018].

Parekh, J., 2017. Sighting of tagged Lesser Sand Plover from Kachchh. *Flamingo*. 15 (1): 16

Parekh, J., & Parekh, N. 2017. Re-sighting of tagged Greater Sand Plover at Modhava, near Mandvi, Kachchh. *Flamingo*. 15 (3): 13 □

## Indian Blackbird near Mahuva, Bhavnagar district

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Mahuva, Dist: Bhavnagar, I saw a Myna-like (*Acridotheres* sp.) bird in flight, which came towards me and perched on a Neem tree (*Azadirachta indica*). After careful observation, I identified it as an Indian Blackbird (*Turdus merula simillimus*). As I did not have a camera with me at that time, I immediately called my friend Rameshbhai Makwana to bring the camera. But before he could arrive at this place, the bird flew away and could not be located again. In next two days, on 8 and 9 February 2018, I again visited the same place and was able to see it both the times and took a few record photographs.

As per my observations, the Indian Blackbird was not very shy. When undisturbed, it came as close as 7-8 feet. It used to feed on the ground, searching for insects under fallen leaves, dried twigs, small stones etc. and sometimes foraged in cattle dung. Once, I noted that it was mobbed by a Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) and it in turn successfully chased an Oriental Magpie Robin (*Copsychus saularis*) for a caterpillar.

On 7 February 2018, When I was passing on the road near Nikol Bandhara wetland (21°05'31" N, 71°50'14"E ) near

The Indian Blackbird is an uncommon resident/local winter migrant in Gujarat (Ganpule 2016) with most of the sightings in well wooded areas. It is seen in south Gujarat, and it is known to occur in Gir National Park in Saurashtra. This is the first time I have seen this species near Mahuva and it is an important record for this area.

## References

Ganpule, P., 2016. The Birds of Gujarat: Status and Distribution. *Flamingo* 8 (3) – 12 (4): 2-40 □

## Sighting of Black-bellied Tern near Bharuch

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structural differences (Black-bellied Tern is smaller than River Tern) and orange bill are the main differences from River Tern.

For Gujarat, Dharmakumarsinhji (1955) gave it as 'not as common as River Tern but as many as half a dozen pairs are sometimes found on larger lakes and rivers' and gave its distribution as whole of India including Saurashtra and in the winter, a local migrant all over the country; also breeding here, and stated the breeding period to be from January/February to April. Ali (1955) noted it in Kaira (now Anand and Kheda) and Baroda districts but stated that its status was uncertain and it was probably resident and breeding on the sandbanks of some rivers here. Khacher (1996) noted that he had seen the Black-bellied Tern breeding at Jasdan, near Rajkot, and stated that the large reservoirs constructed in the state had become nesting areas for the species.

I visited Bharuch, south Gujarat, on 24 February 2018, for watching birds. On the banks of the Narmada River, I noticed a group of five Black-bellied Terns (*Sterna acuticauda*). In this group of five birds, I noticed that three birds were immature or non-breeding plumaged birds and two were adults in breeding plumage. The adults were identified by orange bill, black cap not reaching till the forehead and black upper breast, belly and vent. The immature/non-breeding birds were having white underparts, orange bill with black tip, and diffuse black crown and dark eye mask. I took photos and confirmed the identification.

The Black-bellied Tern is given as formerly resident in Gujarat with no recent records (but may still survive) (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). There are no recent photo records of the species from Gujarat and thus, this is an important sighting from Bharuch. This photographic record from Bharuch confirms that the Black-bellied Tern is still seen along the Narmada River.

[The Black-bellied Tern is now classified as 'Endangered' since the species is almost extinct in large parts of its range and is thought to be in very rapid decline overall, owing to a multitude of threatening processes that affect riverine species in southern Asia (BirdLife International 2017). Its decline has been noted earlier (Sykes 2010), and there are only a few locations in India now where it is reliably seen and still breeds. Regarding its identification, the Black-bellied Tern can be confused with both the River Tern (*Sterna aurantia*) and Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonias hybrida*). It can be separated from Whiskered Tern by its long orange bill and deeply forked tail, while



In the recent reference texts, Grimmett *et al.* (2011) give it as formerly resident with no recent records while Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) give it as a resident along the Narmada River. Ganpule (2016) gives it as probably rare and a migrant, possibly overlooked in non-breeding plumage. There are a few records from the state in the bibliography by Pittie (2018), but there are no photos of the species on popular birding/bird photography websites or on the social media. It is certainly not seen regularly in Saurashtra now, which is quite different from what is stated in Dharmakumarsinhji (1955). Thus, there is no doubt that it has either become rare or is overlooked. As