

## Large congregation of Grey Hypocolius in Kachchh

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The Grey Hypocolius (*Hypocolius ampelinus*) is a regular winter visitor to Kachchh. The regular wintering site is near Fulay Village in the Banni area, where a maximum number of 150 birds was seen on 20

December 1993 (Tiwari *et al.* 1995). In the winter of 2015-2016, a maximum of 40 birds were seen at Fulay (*pers. observation*).

It can be safely concluded that this huge congregation of Grey Hypocolius was a return migration phenomenon. On 8th April, when we visited the site again all the birds had left the site.

December 1993 (Tiwari *et al.* 1995). In the winter of 2015-2016, a maximum of 40 birds were seen at Fulay (*pers. observation*).

In my earlier observations of Grey Hypocolius in Kachchh, I had noted flocks of 20-25 birds in Fulay area. The maximum count was when I had noted 175 birds on 24 March 2007 – perhaps congregating before their return migration (Tiwari 2008).

On 26 March 2016 & 27 March 2016, at around 08:45 hrs on both days, about 35 km east of Fulay near Palanpur in Banni, We came across over 500 Grey Hypocolius (a very conservative estimate). The actual number could be around 700 birds. We counted the birds and took images of flying, roosting and feeding birds. They were very vocal and seen feeding on *Salvadora persica* berries. The site was full of *Salvadora persica* and *Prosopis juliflora*. In this area, the *Salvadora* bushes were in a single line and over-grown (packed with thorny bushes), so movement in the habitat was difficult. But in 10 minutes, we could count over 100 Hypocolius flying from one side to the other.

Since this was the highest number of Grey Hypocolius ever seen in a single flock (before our sighting the largest congregation



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### References:

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- Tiwari, J., Varu, S. N., & Himmatsinhji, M. K. 1995. The occurrence of Grey Hypocolius *Hypocolius ampelinus* in Kutch, Gujarat, India. *Forktail* 11: 33-38 □