

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I recently read the paper on the gulls of Gujarat by Prasad Ganpule (Ganpule 2019). On the top right of page 7, I was surprised to see a photograph labelled as 'Mew Gull' (*Larus canus*), and even more surprised to read that it was confirmed by some very knowledgeable people!

I feel sure that, if Klaus Olsen and Kjeld Pedersen take a second look at this picture, they will agree with me that the photograph actually shows a (2nd-cycle) Pallas's Gull (*Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus*), and not a Mew/Common Gull. The long, sloping forehead is an immediate giveaway, and so are the stronger bill and much shorter primary projection. In addition, the bill pattern is wrong for (2nd-cycle and adult) Common Gull, which does not show such a big difference in the amount of black between the upper and lower mandible. In 2nd-cycle Common Gull, black is rather evenly distributed across both mandibles, while in this Indian bird, it is clearly more extensive on the lower mandible. Other features that point to Pallas's Gull are the brown ear coverts, white eyelids and, if you zoom in, a hint of the characteristic small, rounded, black spots on the upper mantle.

I double-checked my ideas about this bird with Chris Gibbins, who fully agrees that it is a Pallas's Gull. Perhaps it would be good to rectify the identification in a forthcoming issue of *Flamingo*?

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### Reply from Prasad Ganpule

Dear Editor,

A reply was received from Kjeld T. Pedersen who wrote that 'I can't agree or disagree against those identification features from the actual picture. If you want to change or make comments on this picture/ID in future articles, then make the ID as "unsure" (Kjeld T. Pedersen, *in litt*, email dated 18 March 2021)'.

In view of the detailed identification features explained by Peter Adriaens and concurred with by Chris Gibbins, this record of Mew Gull from Little Rann of Kachchh stands withdrawn (and is rectified). Thus, there remain only two confirmed (photographic) records of Mew Gull from Gujarat; by Eaton (2013) from Bhuj and Olsen (2019) from Una District.

I am thankful to Peter Adriaens for explaining the identification of this bird in detail.

**Prasad Ganpule:** Morbi. prasadganpule@gmail.com

### References

- Eaton, J., 2013. Snapshot sightings: Mew Gull from Bhuj, Gujarat. *Indian BIRDS* 8 (6): 165
- Ganpule, P., 2019. The large and small gulls (Aves: Laridae) of Gujarat. *Flamingo Gujarat* 17: (3): 1–10
- Olsen, K. M., 2019. Mew Gull *Larus canus heinei* in Gujarat in January 2006. *Flamingo Gujarat* 17 (1): 6

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