

## Probable poaching of Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* in Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary

**Dhyey Shah:** 39, Geetanagar Society, Pratapnagar Road, Vadodara. dhyevian@gmail.com



Dhyey Shah

On 18 October 2020, I, along with my father Ketan Shah, visited the Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary, near Rajpipla. We were on a birding trip to the Sagai range of the sanctuary. We went from Sagai to Ninai Waterfall. In between, there is a

trail known as the Dr. Shailendra Sinha trail. On reaching Ninai, we decided to return back to the Sagai campsite and explore the trail. Right outside the entrance of the trail and on the tar road, there was an adult Crested Serpent Eagle (*Spilornis cheela*) lying dead on the road. While going to Ninai, this dead bird was not present on the road and so, in the interval of about 15-20 minutes, this bird had appeared there. We initially thought it was a road kill but noted the following: ants were crawling all over the body, its eyes were taken out, its talons were cut and the legs were disoriented.

Based on these observations, we concluded that it was not a fresh road kill but rather, someone might have killed the bird and then put it on the road to trick people into believing that it was a road kill. In this area, we noted some kids with *gulel* (slingshot), which can be used to throw stones at birds and animals. On seeing us, the kids ran away. We tried to lodge a complaint about this incident but there was no authorised person available. On speaking with locals, they denied that any hunting was taking place in this area. However, it is possible that the locals do hunt wild birds and animals. This incident highlights the need to be vigilant regarding poaching in this area. □

## Indian Blue Robin *Larvivora brunnea* revisits Barda Hills, Porbandar

**Dhaval Vargiya:** 36 Balaji Park Society, 'Sant Krupa', Vanthali Road, Madhuram 362015, Junagadh. dhaval.mwcc@gmail.com



Dhaval Vargiya

With reference to my previous sighting of Indian Blue Robin (*Larvivora brunnea*) (previously known as Indian Blue Chat *Erithacus brunneus*) in November 2016 from Barda Hills (Vargiya & Legha 2017), it is interesting to record that one

male was sighted again at Kileshwar Temple of Barda Hills on 29 October 2017 by my wife Divya and I. It was observed from 15 ft distance under the shade of a large banyan tree (known as Ravan Vruksh locally), perched on a huge stone and looking for insects. The bird was observed for five minutes and then flew away. It is pertinent to note that during both sightings, the birds were observed close to a puddle during the afternoon, hopping and pecking on the ground, turning leaves and looking for insects.

The bright chestnut underparts contrasting with blue upperparts, short tail with white vent were unmistakable and its identification as a male of Indian Blue Robin was confirmed beyond doubt. As seen in the photo, the chestnut on primaries and 'not well developed' - distinct white supercilium suggests, the bird is not an adult but perhaps an immature or a first-winter male.