

Rescue of Slaty-legged Crake *Rallina eurizonoides* from Madhavpur-Ghed, near Porbandar

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On 17 October 2020, people from the village area of Madhavpur-Ghed, near Porbandar, found an injured bird and informed Paresh Nimavat, of Sanjivani Nature Foundation, about it. Paresh Nimavat visited the place immediately and rescued the bird, gave primary treatment, and brought it to the Sanjeevani Nature Foundation hospital for more treatment.

A brief description of the bird is as follows: it had olive-brown upperparts and head. The breast and upper belly was also olive-brown in colour. The lower belly had prominent black-and-white barring. The legs were slaty-grey in colour.

The photograph of the bird was sent to senior birder Ashok Mashru for identification; he identified it as Slaty-legged Crake (*Rallina eurizonoides*) and it seemed to be a juvenile bird, lacking rufous on head and nape. The Ruddy-breasted Crake (*Porzana fusca*), which is found in Saurashtra, lacks the prominent white-and-black barring on belly in all plumages. The Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*), Slaty-breasted Rail (*Gallirallus striatus*) and Spotted Crake (*Porzana porzana*) have different plumage, and the bill size, colour and shape is also different

from what was observed here and hence, this bird could be identified as a Slaty-legged Crake. He further informed that it was a very important sighting and a first record of the species for Saurashtra area. The bird was treated for two days under my guidance and was released back in the wild on 19 October 2020. The bird flew away immediately on release and so, we could not capture a photo or video of its release. It had fully recovered and hence was released back in the wild.

The Slaty-legged Crake is a monsoon migrant to the base of the Himalayas and in the Western Ghats in Maharashtra and Karnataka; it is resident in Northeast India, Kerala and is shown with isolated records from elsewhere in the country (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). For Gujarat, the Slaty-legged Crake was recently photographed at Madhuban Dam, near Silvassa, in Dadra & Nagar Haveli, near southern Gujarat (Mishra 2017) which was the first record for the state since records from the Union Territories of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli were included in the state checklist. It was again seen in the same area with chicks and it was confirmed to be breeding in the area (Mishra 2019). However, there are no records of this species from adjoining parts of south Gujarat or from central Gujarat. Hence, this rescue of a juvenile Slaty-legged Crake from coastal area of Saurashtra is very interesting and is the first record within the boundaries of the state. It suggests that juvenile birds may be dispersing in other parts of Gujarat. This sighting further confirms that the addition of the Slaty-legged Crake to the Gujarat checklist is correct.

References

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