

Short Birding Notes



Ultramarine Flycatcher at Sodam Bandhara, near Diu

On a birding trip to Sodam Bandhara (20° 43' 8.029" N, 70° 48' 45.583" E), a creek in Gir Somnath district near Diu, Bakul Trivedi spotted an Ultramarine Flycatcher (*Ficedula superciliaris*) perched on a Peepal (*Ficus religiosa*) near Sodavmata Temple. We got ample opportunity to watch it and take its pictures. There are isolated records of Ultramarine Flycatcher from Gujarat (Mashru 2012). It was noted in this area for the first time; probably first record of the species from the coasts of Gujarat.

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Photo : Parv Trivedi



Amur Falcons at Velavadar

I visited the Blackbuck National Park, Velavadar on 14 April 2015 with my family. On the road surrounding the park, we saw 5 Amur Falcons (*Falco amurensis*) perched on a wire. When we approached to photograph them, they became alert, and flew away. We noticed that there were a total of 18 birds; five birds were perched on electricity wires plus thirteen other birds flew off from nearby trees. We were very excited to see this species in such numbers here, as it is an uncommon passage migrant in Gujarat (Ganpule 2011).

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Masked Booby near Surat

On 4 July 2016, an unknown pelagic bird was rescued by the volunteers of Nature Club Surat, near Hazira Police Station (40° 42' N, 74° 00' W), Surat, Gujarat. The bird was kept under observation. When we (Mukesh Bhatt, Ashish Chaudhari and I) came to know about it, we approached the Nature Club. We noticed that the bird was responding well to treatment. We were confused between Adult Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) and immature Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*), but with the help of field guide (Grimmet *et. al.* 2011), it was identified as an immature Masked Booby. We tried to release the bird at Suvali Beach, Surat, but the attempt was unsuccessful and after three days, the bird perished. There are several previous records of this species from Gujarat, mostly in the monsoon season. More than 10 sightings in Gujarat from various areas like Mithapur, Porbandar, Kachchh have been reported (Ganpule 2016). But this record is from southern inland Gujarat and it is a rarity here.

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Oriental Pratincole in Navsari District

On 13 August 2016, at around 11:45 hrs, the second author saw more than 100 pratincoles scattered in an open field near the sea in Dandi, Navsari District. The area is near to the sea shore, and there is very less disturbance in this area. The birds, based on the features seen and using Driessens & Svensson (2005) were identified as Oriental Pratincoles (*Glareola pratincola*). The flock consisted mainly of immature and juvenile birds. The next day, we again visited the place at around 09:00 hrs and located the birds in the same area.

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Red-backed Shrike in Rajkot & Junagadh

Rajkot: A juvenile Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*) was seen and photographed in Khirasara Vidi, near Rajkot, on 10 September 2016. It was identified as a juvenile Red-backed Shrike based on the heavy barring, grayish nape and rump and squarer tail.

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Junagadh: A juvenile/first-winter Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*) was seen and photographed in Girnar, near Junagadh, on 16 October 2016. It was identified as a juvenile Red-backed Shrike.

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[Red-backed Shrike is an autumn passage migrant in Gujarat, mainly seen in Kachchh. Records from other regions of Gujarat are scanty. Hence this sightings from Rajkot and Junagadh are noteworthy – Eds]



Red-throated Pipit near Naliya, Kachchh

A first-winter Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*) was seen and photographed near Naliya, in Abdasa taluka of Kachchh on 25 October 2016. It was identified as a Red-throated Pipit based on the very heavy streaking on the lower flanks, which was unlike a Tree Pipit (*A. trivialis*).

There are a few records of Red-throated Pipit from Gujarat, with a record from Jakhau, near Kachchh, in November 2007 (Deomorari 2009).

We thank Krys Kazmierczak, Jan van der Woude and Prasad Ganpule for helping with the identification of this individual

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Spotted Flycatcher near Surat

A Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*) was seen and photographed at Dabhari village, near Surat, on 2 October 2016. Spotted Flycatcher is an autumn passage migrant in Gujarat, mainly in Kachchh and Saurashtra (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). It has been noted in other areas of Gujarat (see editor's note in Ganpule 2009), but there are no recent records of this species from south Gujarat as far as I know. It is either rare here or overlooked. [Senior birder Mukesh Bhatt informed that the Spotted Flycatcher has not been recently recorded from Surat area – Eds]

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Sightings of Watercock in Amreli District

On 8 August 2016, a single Watercock (*Gallicrex cinerea*) was seen in grassland near Nana Liliya village, Dist: Amreli. Further sightings on 11 August 2016 of 3 Watercocks and on 17 August 2016 of 5 Watercocks confirmed their presence in the area. During the previous year, on 25 July 2015, a single Watercock was recorded at the same location. These observations are significant and indicate a possibility of a good population of Watercocks in Amreli.

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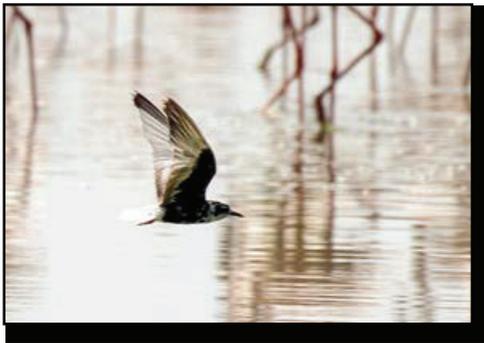
Sulphur-bellied Warbler in Kachchh

A Sulphur-bellied Warbler (*Phylloscopus griseolus*) was seen at Phot Mahadev, Kachchh, in the first week of November 2015. The bird was seen in a thick thorn forest. The warbler was hopping on the rocks and searching for food. Due to very poor light conditions, I could not photograph the bird. I was accompanied by Alan Pearson, a famous bird illustrator from Malaysia. His illustration of the Sulphur-bellied Warbler is given here. The only previous record of this species that I could find from Kachchh was a bird seen in November 2014 by Gani Khatri (photo on Facebook).

Sulphur-bellied Warbler is not shown to occur in Kachchh in Grimmett *et al.* (2011) and Rasmussen & Anderton (2012). Hence these are confirmed records of the Sulphur-bellied Warbler from Kachchh.

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Painting by Alan Pearson.



White-winged Tern in Porbandar and Jamnagar

Porbandar: On 17 April 2016, while birdwatching in Porbandar city, we saw five White-winged Terns (*Chlidonias leucopterus*) flying along with a flock of Whiskered Terns (*C. hybrida*). They were almost in full breeding plumage.

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Jamnagar: A single White-winged Tern in breeding plumage was noted at Jamnagar on 24 April, 2016.

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Breeding of Grey Hornbill in Dharmaj, Dist. Anand

On 7 August 2011, we sighted a Grey Hornbill (*Ocyrceros birostris*) for the first time in Dharmaj, Dist. Anand. Since September 2011, we have been regularly observing it in Dharmaj mostly on Peepal and Banyan trees. Bhavesh Manger has been observing it regularly in Petlad, Dist. Anand. On 10 June 2015, he found a nest of a Grey Hornbill at Petlad on Arduso (*Ailanthus excelsa*). On 13 June, a juvenile hornbill was out of the nest and both the parents were seen feeding it. Another chick inside the nest was also being fed. On 14 June, two juveniles were being fed outside the nest, but the adults visited the nest and fed a third chick inside the nest. On 20 June, we saw that both the juvenile hornbills flew about 100 mts and began feeding on berries from large trees. This was the first time we saw a nest in Anand area. The successful breeding of Grey Hornbill in Anand district is noteworthy.

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