

Sighting of Long-toed Stint in Jamnagar

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The Long-toed Stint (*Calidris subminuta*) is a small wader. It looks like a miniature Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) from a distance, but is the size of a Temminck's Stint (*Calidris temminckii*), to which it is very similar. It could also be confused with Little Stint (*C. minuta*), but the Long-toed Stint has yellowish-green legs and long toes. The long toes are diagnostic in identification, but not very useful in the field as they are many times not seen.



Chirag Solanki

Senior birder Adesh Shivkar was the first to spot a solitary Long-toed Stint in a marshy area on the outskirts of Jamnagar, in the last week of January 2016. He was sure about his finding but could not take pictures of the bird as he did not carry a camera at that time. Following this, Chirag Solanki and Kunal Joshi observed and re-confirmed it on the evening of 3 February 2016. While scanning the area suggested by Adesh, they were able to get some photographs. The first author went there for the next three days continuously to search for it and eventually was able to take some good photographs.

We found the Long-toed Stint in a brackish, swampy area consisting of soft mud and rich in grasses/small shrubs. It favours this habitat, as the small vegetation and the shallow depressions and small mounds provide ample hiding places in the area. The location in which Long-toed Stint was found surprisingly was full of human activities; people going around for morning chores, children playing cricket and flying kites around the area and women washing clothes. Due to a local garbage disposal site, House Crows (*Corvus splendens*) and Black Kites (*Milvus migrans*) were also present there. We observed that it avoided House Crows and Black Kites and flew away as they came nearer to it, and returned again when they were not around. It was feeding rapidly and was a non-stop eater. It probed the ground hastily, searching for insects, and stopping at intervals to inspect the area and hiding in the depressions in the muck and vegetation. Apparently, it was concerned about human presence. But once it got disturbed and flew away, it

took a lot of time to come back to the same patch. In the end, it flew away to a distant area consisting of mangroves.

Long-toed Stint is a vagrant in Gujarat. It is seldom seen in western India (Grimmett *et al.* 2011) and is a rarity for

the birders here. I suppose, that it might be overlooked as it is difficult to distinguish it from other waders. While searching for past records if any, we came across one by Kunan Naik (Pers. comm.) who had seen it in salt pans at Charakla (Dist. Jamnagar) in 2009. He had found a lone bird trailing behind the flock of dunlins and curlew sandpipers.



Yashodhan Bhatia

[There are five isolated records of Long-toed Stint given for Gujarat in Kazmierczak (2000), and this species is also included in the checklist of birds of Gujarat (Parasharya *et al.* 2004). However Grimmett *et al.* (2011) put a question mark regarding its occurrence here, while Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) considers it an autumn and spring passage migrant in Gujarat. The photographic documentation of this species for Gujarat is thus important – Eds]

References:

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- Rasmussen, P. C. & Anderton, J. C. 2012. *Birds of South Asia: The Ripley Guide*. 2 vols. 2nd ed. Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions, Washington D. C. and Barcelona. □