

stated that the male is less richly coloured on the breast. Thus, plumage and colour of legs can be used to sex the adults in the field.

The breeding of the Small Buttonquail in Khirasara *vidi* is not surprising as it is known to breed in Saurashtra commonly (Dharmakumarsinghi 1955). The plumage in juveniles is not often photographed. While my observations of juveniles was limited to a sighting of four chicks together, my data, along with the photos posted on the different website of this species from India show that the leg colour in juvenile is pink or fleshy, and thus juveniles can be mistaken for adult male if the plumage is not properly observed. In juveniles, the white scalloping on the wings is more prominent and the mantle has more white fringes, and juveniles lack the broad pale streaks of adult. The size is smaller than in adult.

Conclusion

The Small Buttonquail is a species which is quite difficult to study over long periods. It is secretive, quite wary and quickly disappears in the grass if there is even a hint of danger. Prolonged observations are difficult. Over the past three years, I have spent many days in the *vidi* during the monsoons in studying these birds and taking photographs. It is not rare, and there is a good population in the *vidi* area but, observing them is challenging. While the observations presented here need further confirmation, it is interesting to note that there is a distinct difference in plumage, as well as leg colour, in adult male and female. This information can be useful in sexing the birds in the field.

Khirasara *vidi* is an ideal area to study this species since the habitat is very good for the Small Buttonquail. Sustained

observations in the coming years will be helpful in knowing more about this secretive species. Many aspects of the species' biology are not known and whether it is a resident bird here or whether it arrives before the monsoon and departs after breeding is not clear. The breeding biology is also not well known. Sustained data should be gathered to know more about the Small Buttonquail in Saurashtra.

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Sighting of Namaqua Dove *Oena capensis* at Nalsarovar: a second record for Gujarat

Shabbir Belim & Mehmud Multani: At – Nalsarovar.

On 1 November 2020, we were doing routine birding at Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary. At around 10:45 hrs, we observed a small dove perched on a *Prosopis juliflora* tree. On closer observation, we realised that it was not one of the common species of doves seen here. This bird had a long tail, with grey patch on the wings and black patches on the lower scapulars. The uppertail coverts had two dark bands. The bill was black and lores were dark. We identified this dove as a Namaqua Dove (*Oena capensis*) based on the above described features. It seemed to be a female or juvenile.

We posted information about this sighting on the social media, on Facebook and Whatsapp groups. Many bird

watchers visited the place and were able to see the individual well and photograph it here. It was seen in the same area for about three to four days. After that, it was not seen again.

A Namaqua Dove was recently seen in Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary, near Jamnagar, which was the first record of the species for Gujarat, as well as India (Trivedi & Trivedi 2018, Patel & Raol 2018); a detailed editor's note was given to explain why the record was considered to be of a genuine wild vagrant and not an escapee from the pet trade; it was included in the Gujarat checklist based on the Jamnagar record (Ganpule 2020). A recent paper on the range expansion of the Namaqua Dove in the Palearctic and South Asia explained the details

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about the expanding range of this species and the Jamnagar record was treated as a part of the range expansion (Ławicki 2020).

This sighting from Nalsarovar is a second record of the Namaqua Dove from Gujarat as well as India. This individual

also did not seem to be an escapee since the plumage was good and there was no damage to the feathers which is often seen in escapees. It has been explained that changes in the landscape, due to shifting agricultural patterns, has benefitted this species and helped it in expanding its range and colonizing new areas. While it is early to say whether the Namaqua Dove could become a regular visitor to Gujarat, it is urged that bird watchers keep a lookout for this species in other parts of the state.

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Sighting of Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* in Kachchh

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Dr. Riaz Khojani

On 13 December 2020, I was bird watching on Misaryado-Udau Road in Banni, Kachchh. The birding was good and I saw many birds in the area. At around 13:00 hrs, I saw an eagle (*Aquila* sp.) in flight. I took a few photographs and noted the following features: a large dark eagle, with blackish underparts, distinct white bases to the primaries and secondaries, white tail with dark tail band, powerful looking beak and large size. When the upperparts were seen in flight, there was a distinct

golden wash on crown and nape. Based on these features, I identified it as a juvenile Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*). The white patch at the base of flight feathers and the white tail with dark band is distinct in the Golden Eagle.

This was a very surprising sighting for Kachchh. The Golden Eagle is a vagrant to Gujarat and there is only one previous published record from the state; a juvenile/immature Golden Eagle was seen near Palanpur, in northern Gujarat, in December 2018 (Prajapati *et al.* 2018) which was the first record for the state. The individual near Palanpur was seen in the same area for more than three months and many birders went to see it. This sighting, from Kachchh, further confirms the occurrence of the Golden Eagle in Gujarat. It will be interesting to see whether there are more sightings of the Golden Eagle from the state in the future. I will continue to visit the area where this bird was seen to see if it remains here for a few weeks.

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