

We then moved onwards with the aim of not disturbing the owl further. We visited two villages and interacted with the villagers regarding the sanctuary and its wildlife. We returned back to Sagai Campsite later. After returning back, I searched the literature for records of this owl and confirmed that this was the first record of the species from Gujarat. I was very happy to see this bird here.

[The observers took good photographs of this owl and there is no doubt regarding its identification and it is indeed a Spot-bellied Eagle Owl, which is also known as Forest Eagle Owl. In India, the Spot-bellied Eagle Owl is resident in Northeast India, in forests of the Himalayan Foothills and in the Western Ghats (Grimmett et al. 2011). There are isolated records from forests of Central India, mainly from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh (Deshmukh 2008, Majumder et al. 2011, Rai 2018).

For Gujarat, the Spot-bellied Eagle Owl has not been included in the Gujarat Checklist (Parasharya et al. 2004, Ganpule 2016) or in the first update to the Gujarat Checklist (Ganpule 2017). As stated here earlier, this is the first record of the Spot-bellied Eagle Owl from Gujarat and it is an addition to the avifauna of the state – Eds]

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## Sighting of Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* near Mahuva, Bhavnagar District – a first photographic record from Gujarat

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sides of neck and upper breast. This bird was seen standing alone, slightly away from Little Stints. I initially thought that it could be a Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*) and so picked out my camera (a Nikon P-900), and took a few photographs. On seeing the photographs in detail, I was overjoyed to see that it was a Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*) in breeding plumage. I approached nearer to take some better photographs, but the bird flew away.

Since I had never seen a Red-necked Stint before, I thought that, it would be better to get the identification confirmed by experts. So, after coming home in the evening, I shared the photographs with senior birders and they confirmed that this was a Red-necked Stint in breeding plumage. I was further informed that this was the first photographic record of a Red-necked Stint from Gujarat. I visited this location the next evening, but I did not find the bird again.

[The author took a few photographs of this bird and the rufous-orange or chestnut throat, upper breast and sides of neck are clearly visible. The bill is short and deep-based, and shows white at the base. A Little Stint is seen besides this Red-necked Stint and both can be compared in the photograph. Thus, there is no doubt that this is a Red-necked Stint in breeding plumage.

On 16 May 2019, I visited the salt pans near Victor Port (20° 58' 44" N, 71° 33' 25" E), Victor Village, on the road towards Rajula, near Mahuva, Bhavnagar District. I reached the salt pans at around 17:30 hrs and saw that there were very few birds in the area. I travelled about one km in the area and saw a group of Little Stints (*Calidris minuta*) spread in the area. I stopped in the hope of seeing some rare /uncommon waders in this group. While scanning this group, I noticed a wader slightly larger than Little Stints, which had orange-red throat,

## Red-necked Stint....

The Red-necked Stint is now a 'Near Threatened' species (BirdLife International 2019). It is a winter visitor to eastern India, with isolated records from Tamil Nadu (Grimmett et al. 2011). It should be noted that Grimmett et al. (2011) show only one isolated record, which is from Karnataka, for the entire western coast of India (from Kerala to Gujarat). Thus, it seems that the Red-necked Stint is very rare on the western coast of India. The species is a winter migrant to E India, Myanmar, S China and Taiwan through Philippines and Indonesia to Solomon Islands, Australia and New Zealand (Van Gils et al. 2019). Thus, its sighting in Gujarat is surprising. It is possible that this bird took a more westerly route on its return migration to its breeding grounds, thus arriving in Gujarat.

The Red-necked Stint is a vagrant to Gujarat and was included in the Gujarat checklist by Parasharya et al. (2004). However, there is no record shown for Gujarat in Grimmett et al. (2011) or in Rasmussen & Anderton (2012). Ganpule (2016) stated that a single bird was ringed under the BNHS-MAPS program at Jakhau, Kachchh, by McClure & Porntip (1972), and included the species in the latest Gujarat checklist. In the list of birds ringed at Jakhau by McClure & Porntip (1972), one Red-necked Stint and 43 Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) were ringed. However, the commoner Little Stint is absent from this list. But, since this is a ringing record, it can be assumed that the bird was correctly identified. Thus, only one previous record of the species is known for the state.

The present sighting further confirms that the Red-necked Stint occurs in Gujarat and this is the first photographic record from the state. It is well known that the Red-necked Stint is very similar to the Little Stint in non-breeding plumage, and difficult to identify and separate in the field in the winter. Bird watchers should be

aware and carefully check flocks of Little Stints in detail as there is a possibility of Red-necked Stint occurring here – Eds]

## Acknowledgements

I am very thankful to RFO R. D. Pathak, who gave permission to me to go out in the field and I am grateful for his help and support.

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## Some significant avian records from Prashnavada Wetland, near Sutrapada, Gir-Somnath District

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The Prashnavada Wetland (20°48' N, 70°34' E), near Sutrapada, in Gir-Somnath District, supports a wide variety of avifauna. The area includes a mosaic of habitats, with a main wetland and micro-habitats consisting of coastal area, woodland, scrub, and farms. The wetland dries out in the summer and is filled up by the monsoon rains; it is approximately 8 sq. kms in size and is adjacent to the coast. I carried out a detailed study in this area and recorded all the bird sightings from December 2017 to January 2019 – a period of 14 months. The study was conducted round the year, in the winter season as well as in the summer and monsoon. I noted a total of 149 species, out of which 13 species are of interest. The sightings of these species of interest are presented in the table.



Anup Chavada