

Sighting of Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush in Kachchh

Veervaibhav Mishra : Centre for Desert and Ocean (CEDO), Moti Virani, Kachchh. vvaibhavm2007@gmail.com

Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*), also known as Common Rock-thrush or Rock-thrush, belongs to the Turdidae family, and breeds in NW Africa, southern and central Europe, and east across central Asia to inner Mongolia and central China (Collar & Bonan 2013). This species is strongly migratory, with all populations wintering in Africa, south of the Sahara.

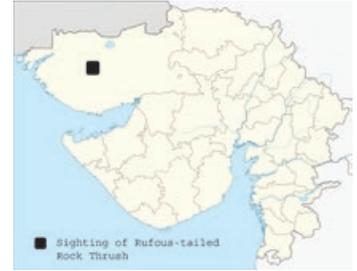


Photo : Veervaibhav Mishra

On 4 February 2015, I was going to Banni grassland area, Kachchh, with a birder couple Mr. Ganesh Shankaran and Mrs. Vidya Murugan from the USA. Here, we came across a bird at around 3.50 pm., which on the first sight looked like a male Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush. We took pictures and confirmed that it was indeed a Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush. It was further identified as a first winter to second summer male (Jugal Tiwari, *pers. communication*).

There are very few records of the Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush from India. It has been recorded in Ladakh a few times as an autumn passage migrant (Pfister 2001) and S. Sen photographed an individual near Hunder Dunes, Nubra Valley, Ladakh on 16 September 2011 (images on <http://orientalbirdimages.org>). It has been recorded from Naliya, Kachchh (in October of 1998, 2000 and 2002) as an autumn passage migrant (Jadeja & Shah 2007). This sighting provides further evidence of the likelihood of Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush being a passage migrant in Gujarat.

[This sighting in February is interesting, as this bird could be on spring passage migration, during which it is much rarer (Rasmussen & Anderton 2005), evidently with no previous records during spring migration from India – Ed.]



References :

Collar, N. & Bonan, A. 2013. Common Rock-thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*). In: del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A., Sargatal, J., Christie, D. A. & de Juana, E. (eds.) (2013). *Handbook of the Birds of the World Alive*. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona. (retrieved from <http://www.hbw.com/node/58410> on 31 May 2015).

Jadeja, R. D. and Shah, T. D. (Kavi Tej). 2007. Additions to the Birds of Kachchh: *Rallus aquaticus* Linnaeus, *Halcyon pileata* (Boddaert) and *Monticola saxatilis* (Linnaeus). *Flamingo* 5 (3 & 4): 5

Pfister, Otto 2001. Birds recorded during visits to Ladakh, India, from 1994 to 1997. *Forktail* 17: 81–90

Rasmussen, P. C & Anderton, J. C. 2005. *Birds of South Asia: The Ripley Guide*. 2 vols. Washington, D. C. and Barcelona. Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Edicions. □

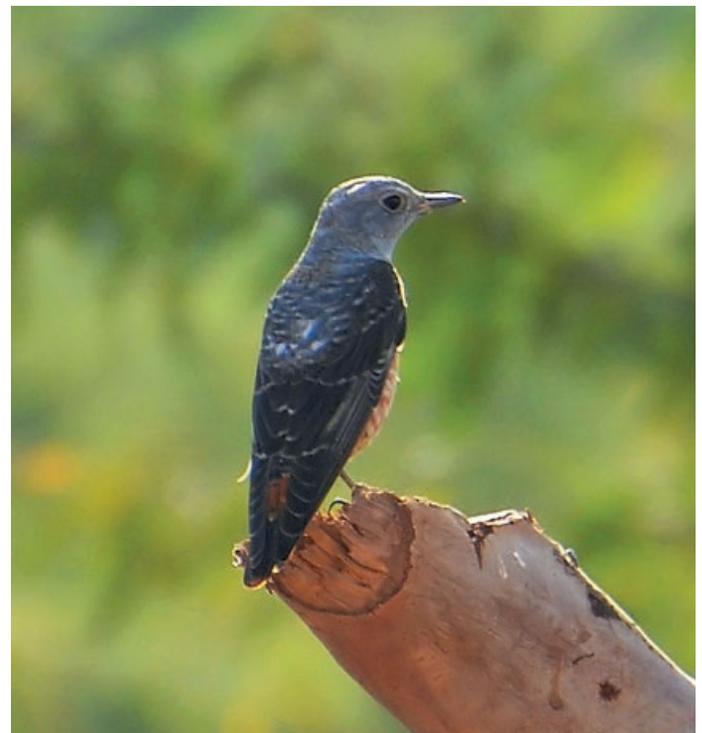


Photo : Veervaibhav Mishra