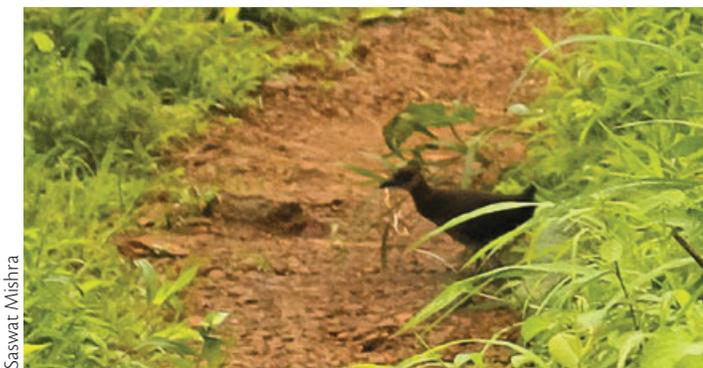


# Sighting of Slaty-legged Crake from Dadra and Nagar Haveli; an addition to Gujarat checklist

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On 26 August 2017, I visited Madhuban Dam forest (20° 12' 43.9" N 73° 03' 28.5" E), near Silvassa, in Dadra and Nagar Haveli (Union Territory). The northern part of Madhuban Dam is in Gujarat while the southern part is in Dadra & Nagar Haveli. The area is a Western Ghats type dense forest. Some parts such as Tinoda and Vasona are reserved forests; still hunting of birds is common in these forests by the local people. The weather was sunny and humid. There were light showers in the morning, but after that, it was sunny.

At around 16:30 hrs, I sighted and photographed one adult and one juvenile Slaty-legged Crake (*Rallina eurizonoides*) in this area. The adult was easily identified by its chestnut head and upper breast, and black and white barring on the underparts. The chick was dark brownish in colour and smaller in size. I could take photos of both, the adult and the juvenile.

The adult Slaty-legged Crake was very agile and came out of the grass and bushes for feeding (possibly on insects) along with its chick. It became alert once I started approaching. The chick quickly went inside the bushes, but the adult picked up some insects and ran away into a distant bush. After 15 minutes, the adult came out in the open again and foraged for some time before disappearing in the forest. This was my first sighting of a Slaty-legged Crake from Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and seeing it with a juvenile was indicative that it could be breeding in the area.

[Dadra & Nagar Haveli is a Union Territory (UT) and its geography is unique. Dadra is separate, land-locked and surrounded by Gujarat on all sides, while Nagar Haveli is between Gujarat and Maharashtra; with Gujarat to the north and Maharashtra to the south. In view of its location, BCSG considers Dadra and Nagar Haveli, along with Diu & Daman – another UT which is again bordered by Gujarat, as an extension of the state and the Gujarat state checklist includes sightings from both these UT's. The location of this sighting is also very near Gujarat, about half a km from the actual state boundary (Source: Google Earth).

The photos taken by the author leave no doubt that it is indeed a Slaty-legged Crake and as stated by him, the sighting of a juvenile along with the adult indicates that it could be breeding here, which is quite surprising. The Slaty-legged Crake is a breeding visitor to some parts of the Western Ghats (southern Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka and northern Kerala) and in the foothills of the Himalayas, and is resident in North-east India, with isolated records from the Peninsula; there are no records of the species shown for Gujarat (Grimmett et al. 2011). This species is not included in the recent checklist of the birds of Gujarat (Ganpule 2016) and it is an addition to the avifauna of the state – Eds]

## References

- Ganpule, P., 2016. The birds of Gujarat: Status and Distribution. *Flamingo* 8(3)-12(4): 2-40
- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T. 2011. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 2nd ed. Christopher Helm & Oxford University Press. London. □

A clarification regarding the age/sex of Masked Shrike sighting published in the previous issue - *Flamingo* 15 (2): 6. In the editor's note given in this paper, the individual was thought to be 'probably a male'. Krys Kazmierczak suggested that it was probably a female, in fact, or possibly an immature male. He consulted Tim Worfolk, an expert on shrikes, who wrote 'there are no signs of any browner and more worn retained juvenile primaries or secondaries and it is an adult. There are two generations of median and greater coverts on this bird, the more worn outer coverts have solid black-centres so must be adult, and are not retained juvenile feathers. As to the sex, I suspect it is a female - greyer and less glossy black than the male (browner females occur but perhaps mainly/all 1st summer birds)'. Hence, the individual is an adult and probably a female. We thank Krys Kazmierczak and Tim Worfolk for clarifying the age/sex of this individual. - Eds.