

Sightings of King Quail in the Dang forest

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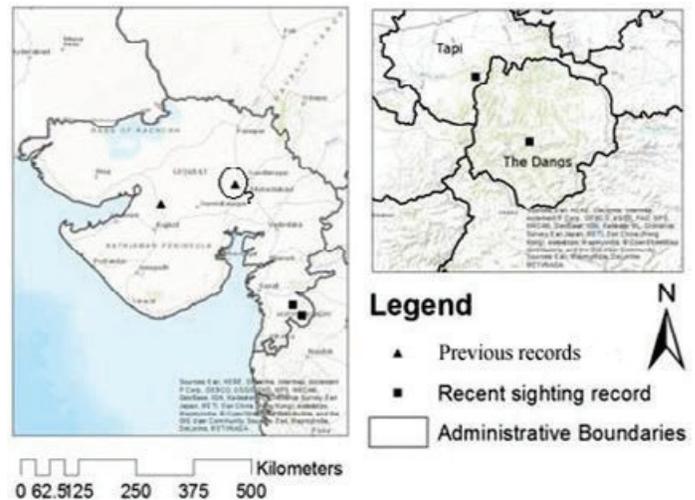
King Quail (*Coturnix chinensis*) is a widespread resident in India, but unrecorded in the north-west (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). There are only two sight records from Gujarat, one from Paneli vidi in Saurashtra region (Ganpule 2005), and the other from Thol Bird Sanctuary in central Gujarat, which was treated as 'needs confirmation' in the editor's note given in the post script (Iyer 2005). But none of the previous studies have reported this species in the Dang forest (Ali 1954, Khacher 1996, Singh *et al.* 2000, Trivedi & Soni 2006, Ganpule 2016). This note presents two sightings of male King Quail in the Dang forest.

On 17 March 2016 at around 15:00 hrs, a King Quail was sighted by the first and second authors in the ghats section of Waghai – Ahwa Road, SH – 14 (20° 45' N, 73° 40' E), at an elevation of about 406 meters above m.s.l. in the Dang district. The bird flew across the road in front of our vehicle. The size of this individual was that of a Buttonquail (*Turnix sp.*). It had dark blue flanks, blue upperparts and yellowish legs. The vegetation on both the sides of the road was mixed deciduous forest with dense undergrowth. With the help of field guide and based on its size and distinct colour, we identified it as a male King Quail. A second male was flushed by the first and third authors on 09 May 2016 at around 13:00 hrs near Ambapani village (20° 57' N, 73° 30' E, elevation – 123 meters above m.s.l.) in the Tapi district. The habitat was Teak (*Tectona grandis*) dominated deciduous forest with dry undergrowth. The individual foraging in this habitat disappeared in the grass after being flushed. Unfortunately, we could not take any photos on both occasions, but could confirm its identity based on its blue colour and small size.

The King Quail is considered as a monsoon vagrant in Gujarat (Ganpule 2016), but both of our sightings suggest its presence in the summer season. More surveys are essential to determine its status and distribution in Gujarat.

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Source : Internet