

## Sightings of Water Rail at two places in Saurashtra

**Viral Joshi :** At & Post Saladi, Ta. Liliya, Dist. Amreli-365535. virjoshi892@yahoo.com

Our local pond in the village Saldi, Dist. Amreli, Gujarat (21° 34' N, 71° 20' E) becomes a heaven for Rails, Crakes and other reed birds, as some part of it turns into a wet, marshy ground, full of tall reeds during winters (October to February). We made observations of Water Rail in this patch during two consecutive winters (2012-13 and 2013-14). We used to visit the site every day from 6:00 hrs to 10:00 hrs and 16:00 hrs to 18:00 hrs. Total number of days we made visits to monitor this bird were above 100. We also carried out observations with the help of a camera trap, which was placed in a small open patch in the centre of the reeds for a couple of weeks at some point of time during the study-period. This gave us good insight into the behaviour of these elusive and shy bird. Secretive nature of this bird and the character of its habitat made spotting of Water Rail, difficult. But its presence could be detected, as we were familiar with its calls. Normally this bird calls during sunrise and sunset and is silent at other times unless disturbed

by a predator. Water Rail utters a call like “tip tip tip”. Its alarm call is a high pitched scream. Totally 4 individuals were seen during this period of observation.



### Sightings:

First winter: First seen 12-12-2012 to last seen 27-1-2013.

Second winter: First seen 31-12-2013 to last seen 10-2-2014.

(Detailed note on the relevant subject submitted for publication)

**Punit Karia :** C/o. Mijbani caterers, 27, 'Nirant', Jalaram Colony, National Highway, Porbander-360575. mijbani@yahoo.com

My son Konark and I started our early morning birding trip on 25 April, 2015 to Mokal-sagar wetland. This wetland is about 20 km from Porbander, on the Veraval coastal highway. As it was midsummer, we were sceptical about good sightings. But no sooner we reached the place; we sighted a wonderful bird within a short time. It looked like some *Rallidae* and it was on the edge of the wetland, engaged in feeding. We were not sure about its identification as we didn't carry any reference book on that day, but we realised that it was something different from the birds we usually see in this area and so we took photos. We confirmed the identification as Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*) from the oriental bird images website and field guide (Grimmett *et al* 2011).



Photo : Punit Karia

There are a few previous records of Water Rail from Gujarat. It was seen in Kheda District (Mukherjee *et al* 2002), near Surat (Shah 2004) and Jamnagar (Patel 2012, photo on INW). It is shown to be a winter visitor to N India (Grimmett *et al* 2011), but its status in Gujarat is unclear.

It would be interesting to see if there are Water Rail sightings from Saurashtra in the future. -Eds

### References:

Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C. & Inskipp, T. 2011. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 2nd ed., London: Christopher Helm & Oxford University Press.

Mukherjee, A., C. K. Borad and B. M. Parasharya. 2002: A study of the ecological requirements of water fowl at man-made reservoirs in Kheda district, Gujarat, India, with a view towards conservation, management and planning. *Zoos' Print Journal* 17(5): Pp 775-785.

Patel, Amish. 2012. <http://www.indianaturewatch.net/displayimage.php?id=429367>.

Shah, S. 2004. Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*) sighted near Vav, Surat. 'Vihang' (in Gujarati): Grishm : Pp 13; 'Flamingo' Vol. 2 No. 1-2: Pp 2

