

## Black-bellied Tern....

per senior birdwatchers from south Gujarat, it is still known to occur along the Narmada River, but is uncommon / rare in the state. Thus, in Gujarat, the Narmada River is now the only place where it is still seen. It seems that the Black-bellied Tern is now indeed uncommon or rare (or even absent) in Saurashtra and Kachchh, but detailed surveys are needed to confirm this. It is possible that it is overlooked but now, with many bird watchers actively taking photographs and travelling widely all over the state, it is strange that this species has not been seen or photographed recently.

Since the Black-bellied Tern is now treated as 'Endangered', an urgent survey and a population assessment is required to be done in the state to know its current status and distribution in Gujarat. This sighting of five individuals is encouraging and suggests that a few individuals may still be resident in the state. Birdwatchers should actively look for this species in suitable habitats like large rivers and lakes, sandbanks, etc. and report sightings – Eds]

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## Significant bird sightings near Porbandar

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Gosabara Wetland, also known as Mokarsagar Wetland, is situated near Porbandar. It is a well known place for bird watching, attracting large number of birds in the winter. In the course of birding here during the last two-three years, following are the important sightings noted by me:

**Amur Falcon (*Falco amurensis*):** On 3 January 2017, Rajesh Shah and I visited the wetland. At around 09:00 hrs, we saw and photographed an Amur Falcon. It was easily identified as this species by its orange-red cere and eye ring. It was perched on the branch of a tree and gave us very good views. The Amur Falcon is given as an autumn and spring passage migrant in Gujarat (Ganpule 2016). However, this sighting in January is in mid-winter and too late for autumn passage. This could be an individual which was late in its migration to its wintering grounds in southern Africa. For this district, there are only two previous records of Amur Falcon; from Porbandar and near Madhavpur (Ganpule 2011). Hence, this is an important record for this area.

**White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*):** On 3 February 2017, I visited Gosabara for bird watching. There, in a flock of Painted Storks (*Mycteria leucocephala*) and Woolly-necked Storks (*Ciconia episcopus*), I saw and photographed a White Stork. It was easily

identified by me since I had seen in previously in Jamnagar with wildlife photographer Amish Patel. I was happy to get this species near my home. Though the White Stork is a widely distributed winter migrant to Gujarat (Grimmett *et al.* 2011), it is not very common here in Porbandar.



**Pin-tailed Snipe (*Gallinago stenura*):** On 7 May 2017, a Sunday, I visited the area with my son Konark in the morning. As soon as we started bird watching, we saw a snipe (*Gallinago* sp.) which was foraging on the ground in the open. We were sure that it was not a Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) as its size, plumage and length of bill looked different. We took some photos and shared the photos with Prasad Ganpule. He confirmed that it was a Pin-tailed Snipe by its plumage and underwing pattern. The Pin-tailed Snipe has been noted here in Gosabara before, but it is an uncommon/rare winter migrant to Gujarat (Ganpule 2016). This sighting in the month of May is surprising, as it is rather late for the species to remain here in the summer.

**Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*):** On 8 October 2017, I visited this area in the evening. I took photos of a first-winter Red-backed Shrike. It was perched on a dry branch of a tree and I could take photos from a very close distance. It was identified by its plumage; upperparts with scaling, grey and unmarked nape, typical head pattern and white underparts with scaling on the flanks. It was a first-winter individual. For Porbandar, an adult Red-backed Shrike was seen and photographed here in September 2017 (Raval 2017). This record is further confirmation that a few Red-backed Shrikes do pass through Porbandar area during the autumn passage migration season.

The Gosabara Wetland is an important area for wintering birds and it hosts large number of waterbirds as well as birds of prey etc. The above mentioned four species are not common in our area and hence, these are significant records for Porbandar district.



Red-backed Shrike

Punit Karia



Pin-tailed Snipe

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Amur Falcon

Punit Karia



White Stork

Punit Karia

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