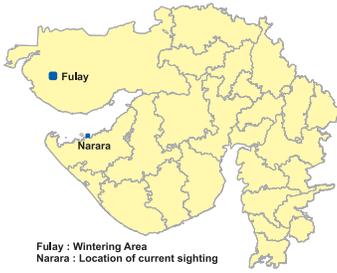


Significant sight record of Grey Hypocolius at Narara, Jamnagar District

Jaypalsinh Jadeja: Sh. Amba Bhuvan, St. No. 7/8, Patel Colony, Jamnagar. jaipalsinhj@gmail.com



After getting a message about sighting the rare and elusive Grey Hypocolius (*Hypocolius ampelinus*) by birders Mr. Noshewan Shethna, Mr. Kunal Munsiff and Mr. Pratik Joshi at Narara creek, near Vadinar port, Dist. Jamnagar. We

were thrilled and decided to take a chance to see the bird.

I started with Jay Bhayani, Suraj, Mehul and Umesh Khetani on 15 March 2015(Sunday) at 7 am. As Narara is about 50 km from Jamnagar city towards Dwarka, we reached there in an hour. While travelling the last 3 km stretch, we could enjoy sightings of Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) to our right in the sea waters.

Towards the left side of Narara beach, the habitat is quite different. There are scattered 'Pilu' (*Salvadora persica*), other thorny trees/scrub and mangroves. After taking necessary permissions, we approached this area and there we found fellow birders Arpit Deomurari, Yashodhan Bhatia and Dr. Bhadania settled on a grassy area opposite a huge *Pilu* tree. We could listen to the calls of Grey Hypocolius (Gujarati Name: *Mascati Latoro*) frequently. It was a mewling piew...piew...chirrup with trilling. As the birds were behind the tree, we still could not see them.



Photo : Prasad Ganpule

Rosy Starlings (*S. roseus*) were also perched on the same tree. All of a sudden the flock of Rosy Starlings flew away and we saw that two Grey Hypocolius joined them. The flock settled some 50 m away from us. After 20 minutes the birds returned to another *Pilu* nearby. The birds were calling constantly and within 10 minutes a handsome male Hypocolius came



Photo : Prasad Ganpule

out and perched on the top of the tree. A lifer for all of us!!!! I could not resist taking photos of this beautiful bird, and they too appeared to be quite friendly if you don't make hasty movements. Then another male came out. We could see the plumage clearly as it was now adequately bright and sunny out there. The male has grey head with black mask, which looks striking. While I was watching it, the bird occasionally slightly raised its crest, and then quickly lowered it. A terminal tail band was visible, making it more attractive when seen in flight. After some time, the birds suddenly flew away but we could still see the other male to our right side, perched on a thorny bush near us which too eventually flew away. We were indeed excited to see this beautiful bird which we observed for almost one hour. We returned to Jamnagar cherishing memorable moments with 'Mascati Latoras' in Narara area !!!!

(Grey Hypocolius might be visiting this area in the past too, and must have been remained unnoticed!! There are only two reported sightings of Grey Hypocolius outside the Banni area. Ali (1931) noted it near Mumbai and Vora *et al.* (2007) reported a sighting from Little Rann of Kachchh area. Hence this is indeed a wonderful record of this rare bird, which was believed to visit only Kachchh district. - Edit)

References:

- Ali, S.(1931). The occurrence of the Grey Hypocolius (*Hypocolius ampelinus*) in North Konkan. *J. Bom. Nat. Hist. Soc.* 34 (4): 1061
- Vora, C; Chauhan, F; Jadeja, S; Thoria, V. (2007). Hypocolius and Black Stork in the Little Rann of Kachchh. *Flamingo* 5 (1&2):10. □



"We human beings have added to the difficulties of almost all birds in our ascendancy as the most populace and dominant species on the planet."