

Calling behaviour of Small Buttonquail in breeding season

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On 30 August 2015, at around 17:45 hrs, we saw a Small Buttonquail (*Turnix sylvaticus*) giving booming calls in the grassland of Khirasara vidi, near Rajkot. In this species, the females are larger than the males; they are dominant and known to be polyandrous (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). The ordinary call-note is a soft booming sound, which is ventriloquial in character, and usually uttered by the female. It attracts the male, whom she courts, turning and twisting and posturing. The females are very pugnacious and fight amongst themselves fiercely for the possession of the male (Whistler & Kinnear 1949).

While the call of the Small Buttonquail is frequently heard in the grasslands of Saurashtra in the monsoon season, we could not find photographic observations of the female uttering

the call in the wild. We observed that the female fluffed up its body, with a noticeable protuberance of the nape (hindneck), which can be seen from the photograph given here, and gave a series of booming calls, which were repeated. These calls are given during the breeding period of the birds, which is in the monsoon season in Saurashtra. Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) describe that the 'polyandrous female booms with fluffed-out plumage'. This is similar to what we observed here, but the hindneck was visibly more fluffed-out while calling. This raises an interesting question; is the fluffed up nape a subtle visual display or is it a physical requirement for uttering the call? It is well known that in many bird species, the song is often accompanied by a visual display, ranging from simple adjustment of feather posture to complex and dramatic display of plumage. We are not aware whether the fluffed-out nape in the Small Buttonquail is a visual display and this is not described in literature either. Studying songs and calls of birds is very interesting, and is helpful in understanding bird behaviour and ecology.

References

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Status of Blue-capped Rock Thrush in Girnar Wildlife Sanctuary

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The Blue-capped Rock Thrush (*Monticola cinclorhynchus*) is a species of the Chat family, which breeds in the Himalayas and winters in the Western Ghats (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). In Gujarat, Ali (1955) collected specimens from the Dang

forest, and found it in small numbers in the area, and stated that it was not recorded in north Gujarat, Saurashtra and Kachchh. It is shown as a winter visitor to south Gujarat, with an isolated record from Saurashtra (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). We present records of the Blue-capped Rock Thrush from Girnar Wildlife Sanctuary (henceforth Girnar WLS) and discuss its status. The Girnar WLS (21° 30' N 70° 32' E) is located in the Junagadh district. It is a sub-tropical forest, with areas of scrub in between. There are a few rivers in the area, some of which are perennial.

On 11 December 2016, during our survey of birds in the southern part of Girnar WLS, we saw and photographed a male Blue-capped Rock Thrush. We have seen this species regularly for the last three years in the sanctuary. We also collected records of the species from the Girnar WLS from birdwatchers. The list of records is presented below in table.

No.	Date	Locations in Girnar WLS	Observer	No. of individuals	Remarks
1	23 March 2014	Fatel Khodiyar	Prasad Ganpule	1	female
2	22 December 2015	Kashmiri bapu Ashram	Naman Doshi	2	male & female
3	26 December 2015	Kashmiri bapu Ashram	Second Author	1	male
4	29 December 2015	Kashmiri bapu Ashram	Naman Doshi	1	male
5	02 January 2016	Kashmiri bapu Ashram	Naman Doshi	2	male & female
6	15 January 2016	Kashmiri bapu Ashram	Second Author	1	male
7	20 January 2016	Kashmiri bapu Ashram	Second Author	1	female
8	24 January 2016	Kashmiri bapu Ashram	Ankit Shukla	1	female
9	24 January 2016	Jatashankar Temple	Viral Joshi	1	female
10	27 January 2016	Kashmiri bapu Ashram	Second Author	1	male
11	10 February 2016	Bordevi Temple	First Author	2	male
12	11 February 2016	Kashmiri bapu Ashram	Second Author	1	female
13	23 February 2016	Kashmiri bapu Ashram	Second Author	2	male & female
14	28 February 2016	Velnath	Naman Doshi	1	male
15	03 March 2016	Asaiba Pir	First Author	1	male
16	11 December 2016	Fatel Khodiyar	First Author	1	male

A few of the sightings are probably of the same individuals, as they were seen in a small area for a few weeks. During our surveys in the foothills of Girnar, the Blue-capped Rock Thrush was always seen in forested areas, near streams or waterholes. It has been recorded in six different locations in Girnar WLS. It is seen in small numbers – with either single individuals or pairs noted. Our observations indicate that the Blue-capped Rock Thrush is seen from early December till late March. Hence, it can be said that the Blue-capped Rock Thrush is an uncommon, but regular, winter visitor to the Girnar WLS.

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References

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Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher from Surat, South Gujarat

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I am a teacher at the Industrial Training Institute, Majura Gate, Surat, which is situated besides one of the busiest roads in the middle of the city. On 5 November 2016, when I was teaching, some students informed me that an unknown bird had flown into the classroom through the window, and crashed into the fan. Immediately, I went to rescue the bird, but it was dead. As per information received from the students, a Crow (*Corvus* sp.) was attacking the bird and hence it rushed in the classroom. I took some photos and later, it was identified as an Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher (*Ceyx erithaca*) by my friends.

This sighting is the fourth of the species for Gujarat. Earlier, an Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher was recorded at Ahmedabad in June 2013, and at Vansada National Park, in Dang, on 14 June 2014 (Jat 2015). It was seen again in Dang in June 2016 (Vishal Mistri & M. U. Jat, *in print*). All the three previous records were in the monsoon season, while this individual was found in early winter. Hence, it is a significant record. It is possible that the species moves through Gujarat in June, as it disperses northwards during its breeding season in the monsoon and later, returns southwards to its known range in the Western Ghats (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). This sighting of a forest dwelling species like the Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher from the middle of a large city like Surat is very surprising.

References

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