

Plain Leaf Warbler...

small warbler (*Phylloscopus* sp.) perched on a dried branch of a *Prosopis* just about 15-20 feet in front of us. It stayed there for 10-15 seconds and changed its position once or twice. Since it was very near to us, we could get good photographs. We initially thought that it was a Common Chiffchaff but saw that it had a shorter tail and a larger head, lacked any yellow at the wing-bend and had a small bill. We referred to Shirihai & Svensson (2018) and in addition to the features described, confirmed the identification as a Plain Leaf Warbler based on the pale olive-tinged edges to the secondaries forming a hint of a panel, white undertail-coverts, whitish supercilium in front of eye become isabelline-tinged behind the eye, darker eye-stripe extending beyond eye, and pale brownish-tinged head and mantle. On the same day and near this area, we saw another warbler which was smaller and looked different from a Common Chiffchaff. However, we could not get any images to confirm the identification. But, we felt that it could also have been a Plain Leaf Warbler.

This sighting confirms the occurrence of Plain Leaf Warbler near Nal Sarovar. Since the identification of Plain Leaf

Warbler in the field is quite difficult, we feel that it is probably overlooked and could be present in suitable habitats, especially in Saurashtra and Kachchh. The Plain Leaf Warbler prefers open wooded areas, tamarisks and acacias in the winter; these are the habitats in which it should be looked out for in the state.

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Unusual prey by White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* and Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus* in Jamnagar

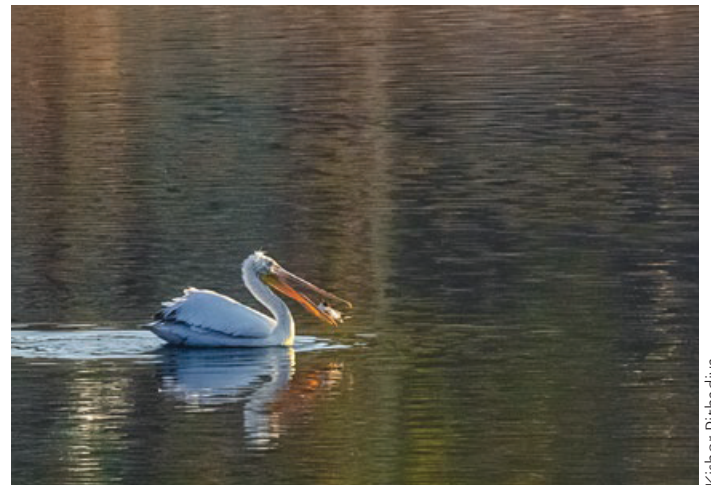
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Kishor Pithadiya

On 25 May 2018, while birding at Lakhota Lake, Jamnagar, which is also known as Ranmal Lake, I saw three White-throated Kingfishers (*Halcyon smyrnensis*), most likely a family, which included both parent birds along with one juvenile, perched on a tree. While searching for prey, they found a bat (*Chiroptera* sp.), which was probably a juvenile, and had come on to the ground and was hiding in a small hollow in the ground. I could not identify the species of the bat – it was probably either a *Chiroptera* sp. or a juvenile of flying fox

(*Pteropus* sp.). It was not the pipistrelle since it was quite large in size. One parent bird caught the bat in its beak and settled on the ground. The other adult bird rushed towards it and snatched the prey with its beak. Thereafter, a competition started and both the birds got busy snatching, tearing and eating the prey. After about seven minutes, they finished the prey, and only the wings were left. The juvenile bird was sitting nearby and observing the parents during the whole event. I took many photos of the birds feeding on the bat.



Kishor Pithadiya

I visit Lakhota Lake almost daily for bird watching. On 17 February 2019, while birding in a part of the lake near Mig Colony, one Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*) caught my attention. It seemed actively searching for prey, and so I immediately got ready with my camera. There were a few birds nearby, including a Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonias hybrida*) resting on the ground, adjacent to the shallow water. Suddenly, the Pelican caught this tern in its beak, with its pouch open, and within a fraction of a second, swallowed it whole. This happened so rapidly that I managed to take only one photo, wherein the tern can be seen in the pelican's beak! I was amazed to witness this event.

In both these observations, the prey taken is unusual. The White-throated Kingfisher is known to take a variety of prey; insects, crabs, fish, frogs, lizards, mice and small birds are taken (Woodall & Kirwan 2019). But, it has not been documented / photographed in Gujarat feeding on a bat and this is an addition to its already varied diet. The Dalmatian Pelican

usually feeds on different varieties of fish (Elliott *et al.* 2019). Pelicans are opportunistic feeders; the Great White Pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) has been documented feeding on birds in Jamnagar, but, the Dalmatian Pelican was observed to be reluctant in taking birds (Patel 2016). However, in this instance, the pelican caught the tern and swallowed it whole. It is possible that the Dalmatian Pelican too takes birds when the opportunity arises.

References

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Indian Scops Owl *Otus bakkamoena* and Pallid Scops Owl *Otus brucei* in Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary, Jamnagar

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On 3 February 2019, the first author visited the Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary, near Jamnagar, along with a group of people for the recording of his interview in an educational purpose film about the sanctuary. When he entered the 'jacana' trail, the second author, a wildlife photographer from Jamnagar, along with the other authors (who are from Rajkot), were already there and they directed him to have a look at one of the owls (*Otus* sp.) perched in a nearby tree, which they assumed to be a Pallid Scops Owl (*Otus brucei*). However, after getting some photographs of the owl, the first author realized that it was different from a Pallid Scops Owl and looked more like an Indian Scops Owl (*Otus bakkamoena*) and so he shared the photos with other birders. The identification was confirmed as an Indian Scops Owl with the help of Dr. Maulik Varu and Prasad Ganpule. While returning back, we saw two Pallid Scops Owls on a branch of a tree at a height of around 12 feet. The birds were roosting and were undisturbed by our presence. These individuals were first noted by the Forest Department staff of the sanctuary almost one month prior to our sighting them here. The birds were perching in this tree regularly. The Pallid Scops Owls were also photographed and the identification confirmed.