

Velvet-fronted Nuthatch in Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary

Devvratsinh Mori: Opp. Darbargadh, Wadhwan 363030. devvratsinhmori@gmail.com

Viral Joshi: Near Bus Stand, At-Saldi, Dist. Amreli 365535. virjoshi@yahoo.com

Mukesh Bhatt: Mavji Nivas, Nr. Jalaram Temple, Vesu, Surat 395007. mukeshbhatt_mbhatt@yahoo.com



Mukesh Bhatt

The Velvet-fronted Nuthatch (*Sitta frontalis*) is an insectivorous, sparrow-sized bird. It is widely distributed throughout the Indian subcontinent, in the Himalayas from Uttarakhand, east to Arunachal Pradesh; NE India and Bangladesh; hills of the peninsula and Sri Lanka, Eastern and Western Ghats and central India (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). For Gujarat, Ali (1955) collected specimens from the Dang forest and noted that it was fairly common in moist deciduous forests, with breeding noted in April. Dharmakumarsinhji (1955) and Trivedi & Soni (2006) also reported the species in Dang forest, Purna WLS and Ratanmahal WLS in the forest belt of south Gujarat. It was considered as possibly locally extinct in Ratanmahal WLS (Trivedi & Soni 2006). It is given as an uncommon resident in the forest belt of Gujarat (Ganpule 2016). We present here recent records of the species from Shoolpaneshwar WLS.

On 25 December 2016, at around 08:00 hrs, during a birding trip in the northern part of Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary in Narmada district, we were with Anil Bharadwaj, who took us to a specific location where we could see this bird. When we reached there, we saw that one adult pair was preying on

insects from branches of a Teak tree (*Tectona grandis*). We could only take record photographs because of the distance.

Other birdwatchers have also sighted this species here in the past three years. We gathered records of the Velvet-fronted Nuthatch from Shoolpaneshwar WLS, which are given in the Table. These records show that the Velvet-fronted Nuthatch is not very common and there are only a few records of the species recently from this area.

Acknowledgements

We thank Anil Bharadwaj for his company and for showing us this bird in the sanctuary.

References

- Ali, S. 1955. The birds of Gujarat – Part II. *J Bombay Nat Hist Soc* 52 (4): 735-802
- Deomurari, A. 2016a. <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S28614854> [Accessed on 28 June 2017].
- Deomurari, A. 2016b. <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S30839454> [Accessed on 28 June 2017].
- Dharmakumarsinhji, R. S. Undated. (=1955). *Birds of Saurashtra, India with additional notes on the birds of Kutch and Gujarat*. Bhavnagar, Saurashtra. Published by the Author.
- Ganpule, P. 2016. The Birds of Gujarat: Status and Distribution. *Flamingo* 8(3) – 12(4): 2-40
- Grimmett, R., Inskipp, C., & Inskipp, T. 2011. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. 2nd ed. Christopher Helm & Oxford University Press. London.
- Naik, K. 2015 <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S31561155> [Accessed on 15 June 2017].
- Theba, I. 2016 <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S30318630> [Accessed on 12 June 2017].
- Trivedi, P. & Soni, V. C. 2006. Significant bird records and local extinctions in Purna and Ratanmahal Wildlife Sanctuaries, Gujarat, India. *Forktail* 22: 37-48 □

Recent records of Velvet-fronted Nuthatch from Shoolpaneshwar WLS

Sr. No.	Date	No. of Birds	Observer	Source
1	07 May 2014	-	Mukesh Bhatt	Author's sighting
2	07 March 2015	1	Kunan Naik	Naik 2015
3	18 March 2016	1	Arpit Deomurari	Deomurari 2016a
4	15 May 2016	1	Irshad Theba	Theba 2016
5	24 July 2016	1	Arpit Deomurari	Deomurari 2016b
6	25 December 2016	2	Devvratsinh Mori, Viral Joshi & Mukesh Bhatt	Author's sighting