

Flamingo

Newsletter of the Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat



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Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat (BCSG) was founded in 2000 with the objective of conservation of birds of the State through field research, documentation, training, awareness activities, networking with like-minded NGOs; and lobbying for protection of birds and their habitats. It is the only statewide network of bird-watchers, ornithologists and conservationists of Gujarat striving to achieve the above goal.

BCSG brings out a quarterly newsletter – 'Flamingo'. Articles, notes on bird-life of Gujarat, interesting bird sightings, knowledge about important bird areas, information / appeal regarding conservation issues, reports on society's events and activities are published in 'Flamingo'. For publication of articles/notes in the Flamingo, both the common English and scientific names must be given when a bird species is mentioned for the first time and later references, common English name only. Common English and scientific names should follow Richard Grimmett, Carol Inskipp and Tim Inskipp (2011), Birds of Indian Subcontinent, Second edition. Oxford University Press, New Delhi. If the nomenclature is adopted from other source, full reference should be given.

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Editorial....

Recently, I had an opportunity to interact with bird-watchers from south Gujarat. One important conclusion at the end of the meeting was the paucity of birding data from the adjacent coastal area. For the participants too, it was a revelation that there was no data on birds from coastal areas of south Gujarat. While remaining by and large focused on the forests, they had ignored the shores.

Subsequent meetings with birders from some districts of Saurashtra re-affirmed this fact that long stretches of our coastline have remained unexplored and most of the data gathered is from oft-visited, traditional birding spots.

The sea-coast of Gujarat - the longest in the country - with its array of complex natural and artificial habitats is quite rich in variety, as well as in the population of water-birds. Of the three gulfs in our country, two are in Gujarat. Being on the Central Asian - Indian Flyway, the Gulf of Kachchh has an added advantage of hosting migrant species.

Many large, medium and small rivers discharge water in to the sea creating estuaries all along the coastline. The embankment dams raised near the emptying points have created sweet-water reservoirs at many places, which have become unofficial sanctuaries for birds. South coast of Gulf of Kachchh was declared as the first ever Marine National Park of the country, and is undisputedly very rich in Marine bio-diversity, including birds.

Uday Vora, a passionate birder and a senior forest official who has made several excursions to the Gulf of Cambay - two of them aerial surveys - submitted that huge congregations of flamingos and other interesting encounters, like a possible Nordmann's Greenshank, and large numbers of Crab-Plovers, raise the hope that if properly explored this area can spring many surprises. J. K. Tiwari, a naturalist from CEDO, Moti Virani, Kachchh, is optimistic about the presence of breeding colonies of Caspian Terns on the islands of the Gulf of Kachchh.

According to most birders, inaccessibility and long distances are the main reasons birders don't visit unknown areas. Getting permissions for reserved areas, army controlled border zones and international waters are the deterrents too to visit some of the high-potential coastal areas and the adjoining deep-sea waters. But once all the doubts and difficulties are surmounted, I am sure a bird-watcher would enjoy the adventure of exploring these areas. There could be many exciting birding surprises in store for birders who would take up the challenge to investigate these unfamiliar expanses. So why not head to the shore for your next birding jaunt!

- **Bakul Trivedi, M.S.**

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