



Colour aberrant Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* near Dahod

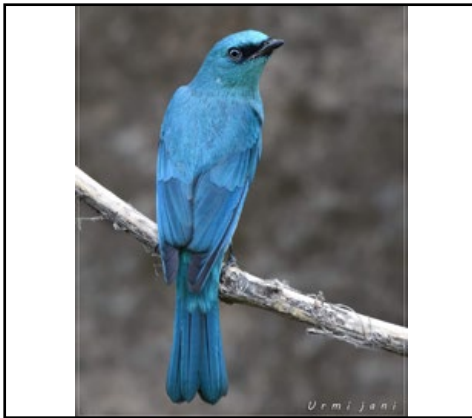
On 22 December 2020, I went for bird watching and photography along with my father Dharmendra Khatri and my father's friend Akil Kharodwala to a lake near the village of Kharach, in Dahod District. We went to see the Red-crested Pochards (*Netta rufina*) which are seen there in the winter. We saw many ducks and waders. Our attention was drawn towards two flocks, of 15 birds each, of Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*). One bird in this flock caught our attention as it was white in colour. We took photos and showed them to Shakir Kadiwala, who informed us that this was a colour aberrant Little Grebe. This bird had whitish plumage, and the eye looked red. We could not identify the mutation in this bird. This was the first time I had seen a colour aberrant Little Grebe here.

I thank Akil Kharodwala for taking photographs.

[We sent the photos to Hein Van Grouw, who informed that 'the Little Grebe's colour is affected by a mutation causing an incomplete melanin synthesis. As a result all the pigment is still present, but is not as dark coloured as it normally should be. It is most likely the mutation Brown (but bleached further by the (sun) light), or a dark form of Ino'.

We are very grateful to Hein Van Grouw for helping with the identification of the correct mutation in this bird – Eds]

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Verditer Flycatcher *Eumyias thalassinus* in Kachchh

On 2 November 2016, while birding in Mandvi area, Kachchh, I saw an unusual bird wandering among the branches of a Banyan tree. So I took a few photos and shared them with senior birders. It was identified as a Verditer Flycatcher (*Eumyias thalassinus*). Previously, in 1964, M. K. Himmatsinhaji had recorded it in Kachchh (Himmatsinhaji 1964). Then, senior birder Shantilal Varu had seen this species in 1988 and 1999 (*pers. comm.*). I was very happy to know that this sighting of the Verditer Flycatcher had happened after a span of 17 years. On 1 November 2019 and 5 December 2019, I again recorded this species in the same area. It seems that the Verditer Flycatcher could be a regular visitor to Kachchh but is overlooked.

Urmi Jani: Bhuj.



Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* in Bhavnagar

On 20 November 2020, I was birding near Avaniya Lake, Bhavnagar. Around 08:00 hrs, I saw a Common Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*) in the bushes near the lake. I immediately took photographs and observed the bird closely. The underparts were cream-coloured or yellowish-buff, with a few dark brown spots and streaks on the breast and flanks. The vent was boldly marked. The upperparts were marked with blackish spots. The bill was longish looking.

It was identified as a Common Grasshopper Warbler based on these features. The Grasshopper Warbler is generally uncommon in our area and very rarely seen in Bhavnagar. This is another photographic record of the species from Gujarat.

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Cinereous Tit *Parus cinereus* in Jamnagar District

On 2 January 2021, I visited Churi Aai Temple near Jamjodhpur, Dist: Jamnagar, with Shantilal Varu, Dimple Varu, Ashvin Trivedi and S. P. Jadeja. The area consists of a temple, surrounded by well wooded habitat. There we saw and photographed a Cinereous Tit (*Parus cinereus*). Excepting few well wooded areas like Barda Forest, this species is uncommon to rare in Jamnagar District. Hence this sighting is worth reporting.

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