



Sightings of Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis* near Dahod

The Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*) is a vagrant/rare passage migrant to Gujarat; it has been reported by me from Rampura Grassland, Dahod, earlier (Patel 2017). I regularly visit this area in all seasons. I have observed the Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush for three consecutive years in the month of February in the Rampura Grassland near Dahod. I have observed it in the month of February of 2018, 2019 and 2020. I have seen it feed on the ground in the grass and perch on the trees or on open rocky perches. It is surprising that this species has been seen for three years now in the month of February in this location. It is possible that it could be on its return migration and the Rampura Grassland is a suitable habitat for it. These sightings add to our knowledge regarding the occurrence of this species in Gujarat.

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Sighting of Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo *Surniculus dicruroides* near Vadodara

On 27 June 2020, we were on a birding trip en-route to Narukot, as the core sanctuary area of Jambughoda WLS was not yet open. We were walking on a road with dense trees and also driving in patches. Having heard calls of Indian Cuckoo (*Cuculus micropterus*) the previous week in the same area, we were keenly looking for cuckoos. We noticed a strange looking, drongo-like bird, idly perched for a considerable amount of time and behaving differently than drongos (*Dicruridae* sp.). It was a strange sight since drongos sally frequently for insects. On taking a few photographs, we saw that the bird had a glossy-blue plumage with a deep, long, forked tail. It also had a slightly curved, thin bill which indicated it to be Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo (*Surniculus dicruroides*). After checking previous records on eBird, we came to know that Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo has not been photographed in Vadodara. This is an important sighting of the Fork-tailed Drongo Cuckoo from Vadodara District.

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Western Crowned Warbler *Phylloscopus occipitalis* in Mahisagar District

On 20 September 2020, during a family outing to Bakor, in Mahisagar District, I was enjoying the evening at Jarmai Mata Temple. I went out for some bird watching. It was the end of the day and the weather was overcast; not the best light to take bird photographs. I saw a lot of activity in the upper canopy of the trees. One bird in particular caught my eye as it looked like a Green Warbler (*Phylloscopus nitidus*) with a very pale beak and wing-bars. I waited for it to settle on the lower branches in the open to take a photo. I was able to get a good photo. I posted the photo on the social media and it was identified as a Western Crowned Warbler (*Phylloscopus occipitalis*) by senior birders based on the all pale beak, the grayish mantle, crown stripes and pale legs. The Western Crowned Warbler is uncommon here and I was surprised to see it in this area in September.

Ayaz Mansuri:



Banded Bay Cuckoo *Cacomantis sonneratii* in Dadra & Nagar Haveli

On 17 January 2021, at around 11:00 hrs in the morning, I was photographing some flycatchers in the Dadra & Nagar Haveli Wildlife Sanctuary outskirts area. I was with other bird watchers and we were at an elevated part of the forest. While scanning the valley with our binoculars, we saw and heard calls made by a Banded Bay Cuckoo (*Cacomantis sonneratii*). After some time, it descended towards the undergrowth of the forest and was seen well by us. We took some good photographs and confirmed the identification. The Banded Bay Cuckoo is a rare resident in the forests of south Gujarat (Ganpule 2016) and this sighting in the winter is interesting. This was the first time I had seen this cuckoo here.

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