

Sightings of Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus* near Navsari

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On 20 November 2020, we went to visit Sultanpur Wetland (Taluka: Amalsad, District: Navsari). Around 16:00 hrs in the afternoon, we were bird-watching at a small wetland near Abrama Village. During that time, we saw a snipe-like small bird, bobbing its body, which was completely different compared to the bobbing behaviour of a Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*). We tried to go closer but four to five small snipes flew away; the first author managed to take three-four photographs. From the photographs and field observations, we identified these snipes as Jack Snipes (*Lymnocyptes minimus*).

After that, on 6 December 2020, the first author again visited this area with his friend Dipak Patel but the water had almost dried up. So, we went to a nearby village called Kanera, where there is a wetland. We found the Jack Snipes in this wetland and took a few photographs. We visited Kanera Wetland on 12 December 2020, 13 December 2020, 26 December 2020 and 27 December 2020, and saw the snipes but the birds were quite shy and it was difficult to get photographs. After that, on 3 January 2021, we visited the area with Vitrag Shah and saw the snipes again; we could manage to take a few photographs of the snipes in flight. During these days, birders and other friends Anand Patel, Pragnesh B. Patel, Dharmesh Patel, Viren

Bachu Desai, Dharmesh Kanthariya, Pragnesh R. Patel, Saswat Mishra, Abhijit Mahaskar, Pankaj Maheria and others visited this wetland and saw these elusive Jack Snipes.

From the field observation we made of these species, we could find some behavioral differences between Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) and Jack Snipe. The Jack Snipe is shy compared to Common Snipe and it is smaller in size when compared directly with Common Snipe. Mostly, we found Jack Snipes with Common Snipes but the Jack Snipe preferred to hide in the grass / reeds in the wetland. When we visited these wetlands and tried to go nearer to these species, the Common Snipes used to fly away with *cack..cack..cack* calls but Jack Snipes used to fly later (after sometime), without giving any calls. The flight of the Jack Snipe is different; Common Snipe flies a straight line while Jack Snipe usually flies away in a zigzag path, making a big circle and then landing directly into the reeds from height.

For Gujarat, the Jack Snipe is shown to be an uncommon winter visitor to Saurashtra, parts of Kachchh, Central Gujarat and South Gujarat (Grimmett *et al.* 2011). Ganpule (2016) stated that this species was a common to uncommon winter visitor, with sightings from many parts of the state and was probably overlooked. Since the Jack Snipe is quite shy and skulking, there are very few photographs of this species from our state. For example, there are only four photos of Jack Snipe, taken in Little Rann of Kachchh, on the website 'Oriental Bird Images'. However, there are more photos posted on eBird; many of the photos on eBird, from Gujarat, are from Navsari District taken recently by our birder friends. The other photos of this species are from Jamnagar, Porbandar and Nalsarovar. Thus, while this species may be somewhat common here, it is not frequently photographed. These sightings from Navsari District are important for the South Gujarat region and show that this species is present here, probably in good numbers.

References

- 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. Oxford University Press & Christopher Helm. London. □