

## Sighting and rescue of female Watercock *Gallicrex cinerea* from Porbandar

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With reference to my previous sightings of two male Watercocks (*Gallicrex cinerea*) in July 2016 at Porbandar (Vargiya *et al.* 2017), I was lucky to see and photograph a female as well on 27 October 2017 at Mokarsagar Wetland, Porbandar. The female was on the road when observed and later moved into the reeds after seeing the approaching vehicle. It is interesting to note that one female Watercock was also rescued by NayanThanki of Green Wildlife Conservation Society in July 2017 and was released in the aviary of Porbandar Bird Sanctuary.

The Watercock is uncommon to rare monsoon migrant in Gujarat with sightings from few locations of Saurashtra (mainly in Nalsarovar) and chiefly from South Gujarat. There are many

historical records as well as recent records, from almost all parts of the state, and a few winter records are known too but its status in the winter is not clear and more data is needed (Ganpule 2016, Mashru 2017).

The Watercock is mainly seen from early May to mid-September, and occasionally in October and November in Gujarat (eBird 2020). While at Porbandar, I have seen it once each in July and October and twice in August but all the sightings were only of males. This is the first time I have seen a female Watercock in Porbandar. It is possible that females are shy and difficult to see in the monsoons.

### References

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## Sightings of Indian Courser *Cursorius coromandelicus* in Ankleshwar Taluka, Bharuch District

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Since 2012, I am regularly birding at the lake of Bharan Village of Ankleshwar Taluka, which is 13 km from my home. The lake is surrounded by barren ground, grassland and agriculture

fields, due to which there are suitable habitats for birds, resulting in good diversity. On 11 March 2012, when I was on routine birding at this place, two Indian Coursers (*Cursorius coromandelicus*) were seen. They stayed here up to the end of June. Since then, two to four birds were sighted here regularly from end of February to July every year. They have never been seen here in the winter months or in the peak of monsoon season in August. As per Dharmakumarsinhji (1955), March to May is its breeding season. Hence, I watched for it breeding here and finally a pair with chicks was seen in 2014. After that, pairs with chicks have been seen every year in May or June. Due to publicity in the social media by some birders, a number of photographers have visited and tried to photograph the adults with chicks in the last two years.

Though this species is given as a widely distributed local resident in Gujarat in Grimmett *et al.* (2011) and Rasmussen &

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Anderton (2012), I have found only one previous record of this species from South Gujarat in the last two decades. This record is by Tony Palliser at Tundi Wetland of Surat District (see eBird checklist: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S24206475>). I have searched published records, social media reports, websites and inquired amongst birders of South Gujarat, but did not find any other records in recent years. Ganpule (2016) has stated that this species is a common to uncommon resident in Gujarat, and there are scattered sightings in South Gujarat too. But, this is only place in South Gujarat where Indian Courser has been seen regularly every year. Further, this species is not resident here as shown in the reference books, but rather, it is a summer breeding migrant to this place, which is interesting. Probably, the Indian Courser is an uncommon summer breeding visitor in South Gujarat region.

## References

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## Sighting of Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus* in Surat District

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The Lesser Adjutant (*Leptoptilos javanicus*) is listed as 'Vulnerable' since its population is suspected to be rapidly declining as a result of a variety of threats (Birdlife International 2021). It is a large stork, belonging to the family Ciconiidae. The Lesser Adjutant was formerly common and widespread across its range in S & SE Asia, but their numbers declined dramatically and it has disappeared from many areas in recent years due to persistent and unregulated harvesting of eggs and chicks at colonies, loss of nesting trees and loss and degradation of wetland habitats; the current global population is believed to be around 5500–10,000 individuals (Birdlife International 2021). For India, it is a resident species mainly in the Northeast; it is a winter migrant to east-central part of the country and there are isolated records from southern India (Grimmett *et al.* 2011).

During routine birding on 24 October 2020 near Barbodhan Village, Surat, I saw a large stork in a grassland. I stopped my car and observed it. I could make out that it was different from other stork species found around Surat. I took some record photographs and video, and observed it for almost half an hour. It was searching for food in the grass. I left that place without disturbing it. At home, I confirmed the identification as a Lesser Adjutant by referring to Grimmett *et al.* (2011). There are eight stork species listed for Gujarat by Ganpule (2016), with the Lesser Adjutant given as a vagrant. There are only two previous sightings of this species from our state; at Mandvi, Kachchh (Ali 1954) and a recent photographic record near Valsad in South Gujarat (Jat 2010). Thus, this is only the third record of the Lesser Adjutant from Gujarat and it is an important sighting for our state.

## References

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