

Short Birding Notes



Orange-breasted Green Pigeon *Treron bicinctus* in Gir National Park

On 1 December 2021, I was on a morning safari ride in Gir National Park on Route no. 1. On this route, a visit to Kamleshwar Dam is one of the highlights as the habitat is very good. Near the dam, at around 09:00 hrs, I saw a pigeon perched on a tree. On a closer look, I was surprised to see that it was an Orange-breasted Green Pigeon (*Treron bicinctus*). I took some photographs and confirmed the identification; the orange breast patch, reddish legs and the plumage was visible. The Orange-breasted Green Pigeon is a vagrant here and there is only one previous record of the species from Gujarat; three-four birds were seen near Gir National Park, in the revenue area, in January 2014 (Dave 2020). This is the second record of the species from Gujarat. It is interesting to note that this individual was also seen in Gir area. It is possible that it could be a vagrant to Gujarat in the winter. Bird watchers should look for this species in forested areas of the state, especially in South Gujarat.

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Chestnut Munia *Lonchura atricapilla* near Gandhinagar

We were out for bird watching on 15 August 2021 in the morning at Mulsan Village, Taluka: Kalol, District: Gandhinagar. We saw some different looking birds in a group of munias. The belly and head were black and the rest of the body was shiny brown. We initially thought these looked like Tricolored Munia (*Lonchura malacca*). We were in a car and the group perched in front of us, when we could observe them for a while. Later, we identified the birds as Chestnut Munia (*Lonchura atricapilla*). They were feeding with Tricolored Munia on the ground. There were three Chestnut Munias in this group. We posted photos on a Facebook group asking for identification, where it was identified as a Chestnut Munia or a hybrid between Tricolored Munia and Chestnut Munia. After our sighting, Ayazbhai also saw three birds here. There are sightings of Chestnut Munia from Gujarat; Bhatt *et al.* (2019) reported sightings from Anand District. It was explained in the editor's note in this paper that the origins of Chestnut Munias seen in Gujarat are uncertain and further studies are required. Here too, the Chestnut Munias were seen in a flock with Tricolored Munia. It is not clear whether these are hybrids or this represents a range extension. More studies will help in knowing about the origins of the birds seen here.

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Shikra *Accipiter badius* hunting Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

The Shikra (*Accipiter badius*) is well known for hunting different kinds of birds. On 20 August 2021, we were observing a Common Hawk Cuckoo (*Hierococcyx varius*) actively feeding on different caterpillars. Suddenly, we observed a juvenile Shikra swoop down on a water bird and take it in its claws. It sat near the water and we saw that the bird caught by the Shikra was still alive. The Shikra was trying to kill it. It then perched on another tree with the prey and was still struggling to kill it. We could identify the prey as a Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*). Luckily, we could photograph the event. We had never seen a Shikra hunting a Little Grebe and so we shared the photographs with senior birder Ashok Mashru. He confirmed that the Little Grebe was unusual prey for the Shikra. This documentation confirms that the Little Grebe is also a part of its diet.

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