



Indian Blackbird *Turdus simillimus nigropileus* in Malnath Hill Range, Bhavnagar

On 11 November 2020, whilst birding in the Malnath Hill Range, near Bhavnagar, at around 10.15 hrs, my attention was drawn to a thrush-like bird skulking in the undergrowth. It was foraging for food in a muddy patch and on closer observation, I realized that it was a female of the Indian Blackbird (*Turdus simillimus nigropileus*). The yellowish-orange eye-ring, postorbital patch, colour of beak and legs were noted, photographs taken and the identification confirmed. I observed it for some time as it foraged for food on the muddy ground amongst garbage strewn by the locals, flicking aside leaf litter and plastic to search for worms and insects. Later in the evening, my friend Kandarp Andhariya went to the same place to look for it and was lucky to find it again in the same area. The Indian Blackbird is uncommon in Bhavnagar area and this is another sighting of this species from this district.

Vivek Upadhyay: Bhavnagar. viveku39@gmail.com



Colour aberrant Spotted Owlet *Athene brama* near Bhavnagar

I went for photography in a farming area of Ghogha Village near Bhavnagar on 20 May 2020 with a few friends. We found an India Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus kundoo*) nest on a tree. Nearby, we saw two Spotted Owlets (*Athene brama*), of which one was with normal plumage and the other was a colour aberrant individual. After posting photos on social media, we realized that this was quite unusual. The mutation in this individual seemed to be 'Progressive Greying' as the bird had white feathers mixed with normal ones; some feathers on the breast and crown were normal coloured while other feathers on the underparts and upperparts were white. Identification of the exact colour mutation is difficult and we were not sure of the exact mutation in this bird. On 20 March 2020, I had observed a colour-aberrant Red-wattled Lapwing (*Vanellus indicus*) at a pond on Bhavnaga-Avaniya Highway. It was interesting to see these colour aberrant birds near my regular birding spots.

Vimal Makwana: Bhavnagar.vimalmakwana8090@gmail.com



Breeding of Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus* at Kadod Village, District: Surat

On the 26 June 2021, we were birding in and around Kadod Village, District: Surat, because the area is not explored by bird watchers. I noticed two birds on the wire, which looked like myna from far, but they had grey upperparts and white underparts. We took some photographs and confirmed that these were Ashy Woodswallow (*Artamus fuscus*). We continued visiting the area because we were aware that the breeding season of the Ashy Woodswallow is from March to July. We thought that there was a possibility of it nesting here. We found three different nests in the same area and observed about eight individuals, out of which two were juveniles. An interesting observation was that we once observed an Ashy Woodswallow take an egg in its mouth and fly away. We were unsure of what this meant. The breeding of Ashy Woodswallow in this area was noted by us for the first time.

Minal Patel & Mansi Patel: Navsari. minalpatel_forestry@yahoo.in



Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus* trying to hunt an Indian Silverbill *Euodice malabarica*

Ashy Drongo (*Dicrurus leucophaeus*) visits near my home once or twice in the winter every year. This year, Ashy Drongo was seen on 11 November 2020 trying to catch bees from trees around my house; there were two individuals. On 26 November, they came in the morning at 07:30 hrs and were catching bees from Lime and Singapore Cherry trees. The Lime tree is the everyday roosting place of around 20 Indian Silverbills (*Euodice malabarica*). These silverbills were also active in the morning, moving around and perching in the trees and on electric wires without any fear of the Ashy Drongos. Suddenly, one Ashy Drongo swooped on a silverbill perched on a wire and caught it in its claw. The Ashy Drongo tried to eat it but the silverbill managed to escape. The drongo followed it but did not succeed in catching it again. This is the first time that I saw an Ashy Drongo trying to prey on birds.

Ashok Mashru: Rajkot. mashruashok@gmail.com