

the state, with sightings from almost all parts of the state except in the desert areas of Kachchh.

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Sighting of Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris* in Kachchh

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site for this species), as well as in isolated pockets in Armenia, Azerbaijan, south European Russia, western India and western China. It is a winter migrant to India.

In general, the species has nomadic tendencies. In some areas, birds disperse from the breeding grounds, and have been encountered in the winter period in the Sahel zone, south of the Sahara (Birdlife International 2021). Its preferred breeding habitat is temporary and shallow fresh, brackish or alkaline waters with densely vegetated shores in regions that otherwise are fairly dry. It may also breed in coastal lagoons, along slow rivers or man-made waters like reservoirs. They are common in captive collections but are a nervous and flighty bird.

For Gujarat, the Marbled Duck is given as a vagrant / rare winter visitor, with many historical records and recent sightings from Nalsarovar and Porbandar (Ganpule 2016). There have been sightings from Nalsarovar and Little Rann of Kachchh in the past few years. These Marbled Ducks in Kachchh remained in the same area for two weeks. Many birders visited this location and saw these birds. There were about 8 to 10 individuals in this area, but there could have been more as the area is very large and it was not possible to scan the entire waterbody. After heavy rainfall in the end of September, these birds were not seen again. For mainland Kachchh, a flock of about 200 Marbled Ducks was seen in Chhari-Dhand in February 1990 (Akhtar *et al.* 1992). Thus, this sighting in Kachchh is after 30 years and is an important record of this species for Gujarat.

On 7 September 2021, I was with Kunan Naik, Esha Munshi and Ashwin Vishwanathan, and we saw Marbled Ducks (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*) in Vekariya Dhand, at Banni Grassland in Kachchh. We were going from Loriya to Khavda, to explore the region in the passage migration period. We saw five Marbled Ducks swimming in shallow water. The birds were around 100 meters away from the road. In the wetland, the water level was not very deep and the birds were then seen walking on one small mud mound, which had some grass. We saw Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*), and Eurasian Coot (*Fulica atra*) along with Marbled Ducks at the same place. We saw these birds properly with a spotting scope and took some photographs, which confirmed the identification.

The Marbled Duck (also known as Marbled Teal) is a threatened species and listed as 'Vulnerable'; it is a medium-sized duck, which is seen from southern Europe, northern Africa, and western and Central Asia (Birdlife International 2021). This duck formerly bred in large numbers in the Mediterranean region, but is now restricted to a few sites in southern Spain, southern Italy, northwest Africa and the broader Levant (Birdlife International 2021). Further east, it survives in the Mesopotamian marshlands in southern Iraq and in Iran (Shadegan Marshes is the world's most important

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