

Sighting of Thick-billed Warbler *Arundinax aedon* near Jamnagar

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On 8 October 2021, I was birding with my friend Varun Shah, near Khatiya, Jamnagar. At around 09:15 hrs, some 100-200 meters from the village towards Kalavad, we saw a large-sized warbler near a water body. It was tough to identify it in the field as the bird was perched in the open only for a few seconds and then flew away. But luckily, I got record photographs for identifying the bird. Later, while reviewing images at home, it became clear that the bill looked a bit different from the Clamorous Reed Warbler (*Acrecephalus stentoreus*). The structure also seemed different, as this bird was visibly longer tailed. I asked Prasad Ganpule for identification of this individual, and he informed that this was a Thick-billed Warbler (*Arundinax aedon*) based on the plain-faced appearance, long tail, pale and short blunt bill, and overall plumage. The bird was seen near a water body (water had accumulated at this place due to the monsoon rains, forming a small pond) but was not at the water's edge. Instead,

it was some 50 to 100 meters away, near the boundary of a village house, probably feeding on insects. It was perched in a small tree of about four feet in height. More photos of this individual are posted on eBird at: <https://ebird.org/india/checklist/S95766596>.

For Gujarat, there is one sighting of the Thick-billed Warbler from the Kachchh region reported previously; Dr. Salim Ali collected two specimens near Bhuj in September 1959 (Ali 1960). Dr. Ali speculated whether these birds were vagrants or whether this species has evaded observation in the past; its close resemblance to Clamorous Reed Warbler makes it difficult to identify it in the field. In the recent checklist of the birds of Gujarat (Ganpule 2020), the Thick-billed Warbler is listed as a 'historical' species meaning the record for the state was before 1960 and there have been no documented records since 1 May 1960. However, there is a sight record listed on 'eBird' from Kachchh in March 2008 though a photo is not available. It is possible that since a photo was not available, this sighting was not treated as confirmed by Ganpule (2020). Thus, this is the first photographic record of the Thick-billed Warbler from Gujarat. Now, the 'historical' status for this species given in the recent Gujarat checklist needs to be removed due to this sighting.

References

- Ali, S., 1960. Additions to the birds of Kutch. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 56 (3): 635
- Ganpule, P., 2020. A checklist of the birds of Gujarat. Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat. Ahmedabad, India. □

Streak-throated Woodpecker *Picus xanthopygaeus* in Hingolghadh Nature Education Sanctuary, Rajkot

Arif Theba: I/C Range Forest Officer (RFO), Hingolghadh, Rajkot District.

On 25 May 2021, I was doing official field work, combined with birding, in the late afternoon, at Hingolghadh near Rajkot. I was with Forest Guards Mepa B. Toliya, Mahesh Dabhi, and Shatrughna Jebalia. At around 16:30 hrs, I saw one green woodpecker climbing on the tree besides a trail. It flew away once it noticed me. I was not able to relocate it for one hour. Then, I saw this individual again and was able to observe it well. From a safe distance, I was able to take some photographs and videos. I concluded that it was a Streak-throated Woodpecker (*Picus xanthopygaeus*). It was pecking on tree trunks, to find insects and worms, and climbed on trees, searching for food. I saw only one individual. After this initial

sighting, this bird was seen in the last week of May 2021, and up to mid-July 2021. It was usually found in the premises of the camp site and beyond 'Bhim-ku' as well. It continuously foraged on dry or soft tree trunks or was seen 'drilling' in the trunks of trees in this area.

The Streak-throated Woodpecker is lime green in colour, with grey face and scaled underparts; the bill is usually dark with yellowish lower mandible. It has blood red crown in male and black crown in female. Its preferred habitat is semi-green moist deciduous, bamboo, teak and sal forests (Kazmierczak 2000). It is usually found in the foothills of the Himalayas, from