

## Short Birding Notes



### Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* near Surat

I was bird watching with my friends Pradip Sharan and Neha Joshi Sharan near Olpad, in the outskirts of Surat, on 27 January 2019. At around 10:00 hrs, we were taking photos of a Red Avadavat (*Amandava amandava*) when one harrier (*Circus* sp.) flew in. Without identifying it, I took some photos of the bird. After checking the reference books, I was confused between a Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) and a Pallid Harrier (*Circus macrourus*) and later, I uploaded the photos in our local birding groups of Surat and also on the 'ask id of indian birds' Facebook page. After some discussion, it was identified as a Hen Harrier based on the five fingered hand, underwing barring and face pattern. It was probably an adult female, but ageing is difficult from only two photos. The Hen Harrier is a vagrant or a rare winter migrant to Gujarat, with a recent record from Nalsarovar (Kini 2018). This is a first record from South Gujarat and the second photographic record for the state.

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### Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris* in Little Rann of Kachchh

On 22 October 2017, I visited the western part of Little Rann of Kachchh. Since the monsoon was good that year, there was lot of water in the Rann. I saw a flock of more than 2000 ducks (*Anas* sp.) in the area. While scanning this flock, I saw a duck which looked different. I took some photographs but the duck was quite far away and I could manage only record photos. The flock then flew and I could not locate this individual again. This duck had a dark greyish mask through the eye, white spotting on the upperparts and was overall sandy-brown in colour. Based on these features, I identified it as a probable Marbled Duck (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*). I posted the photos on 'birdinggujarat' blog where the identification was confirmed by Peter de Rouw. The Marbled Duck is a vagrant / rare winter migrant to Gujarat (Ganpule 2016) and there are very few documented sightings from the state. I thank Peter de Rouw for confirming the identification of this bird.

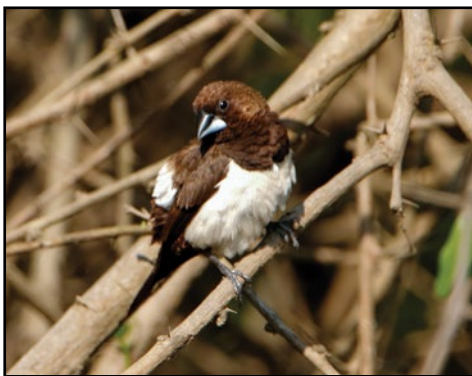
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### Stoliczka's Bushchat *Saxicola macrorhynchus* in Nal Sarovar

On 19 February 2019, at around 17:00 hrs, I saw and photographed a Stoliczka's Bushchat (*Saxicola macrorhynchus*) at Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary. I took many photographs, and so it was easily identified. I also saw and photographed the typical 'puff-and-roll' behaviour, which is diagnostic of the species. The bird was seen in a fallow field. The Stoliczka's Bushchat is a regular but uncommon winter migrant, mainly to Kachchh, with scattered and isolated records from Saurashtra (Ganpule 2016). This was the first time I had seen it here in Nalsarovar.

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### White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata* near Bilimora, Navsari District

On 6 January 2019, I saw and photographed a group of six White-rumped Munia (*Lonchura striata*) at Devsar, near Bilimora, in Dist: Navsari. I had seen a group of about 15 birds earlier in the same area (a few days prior to this sighting) but could not get good photos. The identification was confirmed in the field and all the characteristic features were noted in the photographs too. The White-rumped Munia is known to be resident in the Dang forest and it is given to be an uncommon resident in South Gujarat (Ganpule 2016). This was the first time I had noted it at Devsar, near Bilimora, which is outside the forest area and is very near to the city.

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