

Short Birding Notes



Slaty-breasted Rail *Gallirallus striatus* near Dhari, Amreli District

On Saturday, 21 November 2018, I went for birding at Khodiyar Temple, near Khodiyar Dam, Dhari, Amreli District. Near the temple, there is a stream, which runs off the river. There are lot of reeds and grasses, with muddy areas in between. At around 10:00 hrs, I saw a rail (*Rallus* sp.) coming out of the reeds and searching for food in the area. I took some photos. With the help of the field guide and photos, I confirmed this as a Slaty-breasted Rail (*Gallirallus striatus*) based on the stout red bill, faintly whitish barred upperparts and pale chestnut crown and nape. It seemed to be an immature individual. On the next day, I went again, but could not find the bird. I heard its call from a nearby area but could not see it. The Slaty-breasted Rail is rare in Saurashtra, though sightings from Barda (near Porbandar) and Nal Sarovar are documented; it is a regular monsoon migrant to southern Gujarat (Ganpule 2016). This is a sighting from the early winter and a very good record for our area.

Ramesh Vagadia: Rajula. rameshvagadiya91@gmail.com



Steppe Grey Shrike *Lanius meridionalis pallidirostris* in Bhavnagar

On 16 December 2018, in the morning at 07:30 hrs, my friend Vivek Upadhyay and I were passing through the cable bridge near Bhavnagar. We saw one shrike (*Lanius* sp.) perched on an electric wire. We stopped to watch it but it flew away in the nearby bushes. To confirm its identification, we searched for it, found it and I took a few photographs. After coming home and sharing the photos on social media, it was identified as a Steppe Grey Shrike (*Lanius meridionalis pallidirostris*) by the pale bill, pale black mask in front of eye (not extending on forehead), long primary projection, pinkish wash to underparts, white scapulars etc. The Steppe Grey Shrike is an uncommon to rare winter visitor to Gujarat, and has been mainly recorded from Kachchh (Ganpule 2016). This is probably the first record of the Steppe Grey Shrike from Bhavnagar area.

Kandarp Andharia: Bhavnagar. kandarpandharia053@gmail.com



Little Crake *Porzana parva* near Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary

On 13 March 2019, in the evening, I was bird watching on the outskirts of Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary. In an area with reeds and water, I saw and photographed an adult male Little Crake (*Porzana parva*). It was identified by the red base to bill and the longer primary projection. Its plumage was typical of adult male. This individual was seen here for 2-3 weeks, in the same area. The Little Crake is a vagrant to Gujarat, with recent records from Jamnagar and Anand/Kheda Districts (photos on the website Oriental Bird Images). This was the first time it has been recorded near Nal Sarovar.

Ashraf Sama: At – Nal Sarovar



Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis* in Kuchchh

I saw and photographed a Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*) near Kunathiya Bustard Sanctuary at Naliya, Kachchh, on 20 January 2019. It seemed to be either a female or a first-winter bird. The habitat is open grassland with some small bushes. I saw the bird perched on a *Prosopis juliflora* and since it was quite confiding, I spent some time with this individual and observed its behaviour. Only one bird was seen. The Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush was foraging on the ground, between small rocks and in the dry grass. I saw it go near a *Ziziphus nummularia* tree and collect a fruit from the ground and eat it. The Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush is a rare passage migrant or vagrant in Gujarat, with recent sightings from Saurashtra, Kachchh and Central Gujarat. This sighting is from the winter and suggests that a few individuals could straggle to Kachchh in the winter.

Vikramsinh Sodha: Godhiyar (Than), Ta. Nakhatrana, Kachchh. kutchkunj@gmail.com