



Sighting of Little Crake *Porzana parva* near Surat

On 28 February 2019, I went to wetland near Palanpore Village, just on the outskirts of Surat city. At around 08:15 hrs, I was passing on Palanpore Canal side road, when I saw a crake (*Porzana* sp.) basking in the reeds. Slowly, I moved closer and took 10-12 photographs. After observing carefully, I could detect a red patch at the base of the bill. Along with this, I noted the long primary projection, less extensively barred underparts and yellowish-green bill with reddish base, confirming it to be a Little Crake (*Porzana parva*). I found that this bird was very shy. Many bird-watchers from Surat visited this place but could not take any photographs. My friend Anil Bhatt could take a record shot. The Little Crake was seen in this area for a week. Though there are recent records of Little Crake from different parts of the state (photos posted on the OBI website), this is probably the first photographic record of Little Crake for South Gujarat.

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Slaty-breasted Rail *Gallirallus striatus* near Vadodara

On 16 June 2020, at about 07:30 hrs in the morning, I was birding at Timbi Lake, near Vadodara. While birding, a Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*) took flight some feet ahead on my path. The sudden flight of the bird caught my attention and I noticed a crake (*Rallidae*) cross over the path I was on and go into the bush nearby. I stopped to see if the crake would come out again. And it did take a quick peep back on the path. But, since I was very near to it, it darted off again under the bush. This time, I knew it would not come back again. So, I quickened my pace to have a better look or may be take a good photograph. I saw a trail leading away from the lake towards a small water hole nearby with a few bushes. I saw the crake go into it. I waited for a while for it to come out and to my surprise, when the bird did appear, it was not a Brown Crake (*Amauornis akool*) but something similar in size but with different plumage. The most prominent feature of the bird was its red beak. I managed to take a few photographs before it disappeared in the bush. I waited for 30 minutes but it did not appear again. I immediately sent the photos to Mrs. Deepti S. Mehta, who, with the help of Dr. Gaurang Bagda, identified it as a Slaty Breasted Rail (*Gallirallus striatus*). The next day, I went again at the same spot to get a better look at the bird but got just a glimpse of it. I have been observing the bird for four days now. It seems to have made itself comfortable at this spot.

Jenny Solomon: Vadodara.



Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* at Valda Dam, near Nal Sarovar

On 9 December 2018, we were birding around Vadla Dam area near Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary. At about 10:30 hrs, while scanning the area with my binoculars, we saw three unusual looking ducks in a large group of Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) & other commonly seen migratory ducks. As we took record images & zoomed in, we realised that that these were Common Shelducks (*Tadorna tadorna*), which is very uncommon for this area. We approached slowly and managed to get some good images of one of the three birds. We later learnt that the last sighting of Common Shelduck in Nal Sarovar area was many years back and that this species is not a regular visitor there. An important thing to note was that inspite of the location being favourable for them in the winter, these three birds were only seen here for a short period of 5-7 days, post which they probably migrated to other areas with suitable habitats.

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