

## Short Birding Notes



### White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* near Nalsarovar

On 28 November 2020, near Vithalgadh, on the periphery of Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary, I observed an eagle sitting in an agricultural field and stopped to identify it. I was rewarded when the bird flew overhead, allowing me to capture some photos that could help with the identification. The eagle looked much larger and bulkier than a Steppe Eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*). It had a dark beak, mottled chest (with white feathers), and showed white feathers on back and wings. The tail feathers were whitish, with dark brown edges. I checked my photographs with the field guides and noted that it was a White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*). It was an immature/juvenile bird. This was the first time I had observed this eagle here. There is a recent record from Velavadar NP (Bhatt 2018) but the White-tailed Eagle is a vagrant to Gujarat and thus, this is an important sighting for the state.

**Dakshina Magiawala:** Ahmedabad. aara.ahd@gmail.com



### Orange-headed Thrush *Geokichla citrina* in Kachchh

On 16 February 2020, I visited Chadva Rakhal, in Taluka: Bhuj, with my friend Lalit Tank. The area is quite small but well wooded and includes a fresh water lake. There, we saw and photographed an Orange-headed Thrush (*Geokichla citrina*). The bird was easily identified by its distinct plumage. We saw it for some time and took good photographs. As per senior birders, there is no previous record of this species from Kachchh. Hence, we were very much excited after finding this rarity. Though apart from forests of S. Gujarat, there are records of this species from well wooded areas of Saurashtra and northern Gujarat, the sighting of the Orange-headed Thrush in Kachchh is quite unusual and is probably the first photographic record for Kachchh.

**Parin S. Thacker:** Bhuj. parinthacker699@gmail.com



### Blyth's Starling *Sturnia blythii* in South Gujarat

On 27 September 2020, at around 08:00 hrs, we were on the way to the wetland area at Sultanpur, Navasari, for bird photography. Unfortunately, sudden heavy rain started when we reached at the destination. We waited for 30 minutes but the rain did not stop and finally, we decided to do a round of the area. We saw a group of starlings moving ahead of the car, and identified these as a small flock of Chestnut-tailed Starlings (*Sturnia malabarica*). They were in three groups, consisting of 15-20 birds in each group. Out of all birds, 4-5 starlings looked quite different, with bright white head and deep orange-red underparts. We took photos and uploaded them on Facebook, where these birds were identified as Blyth's Starlings (*Sturnia blythii*), also known as Malabar Starling. We were seeing it here for the first time and later came to know that it could be the first photographic record from Gujarat. Ganpule (2016) has given it as a rare resident in South Gujarat forests, with isolated records from other parts of the state but as far as we are aware, there are no recent records from Gujarat.

**Mehul Patel & Dipak Patel:** Bilimora. mehul\_01ee@yahoo.com



### Sighting of Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* at Kadod Village, Surat District

On 7 October 2017, I visited Kadod Village outskirts area (on Kosadi Road), in Bardoli Taluka, Surat. I reached there at around 18:00 hrs and started bird watching. I saw a small falcon perched on an electric pole. I took some pictures but I could not identify the bird in the field. I asked my friend Saswat Mishra and he informed me that this was a Eurasian Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*). The Eurasian Hobby is a widespread autumn passage migrant in Gujarat. There are records from South Gujarat but this was the first time I had seen this bird here. The timing of the sighting suggests that it was an autumn passage migrant here. I did not see the bird again in the area. I am grateful to Saswat Mishra for his help in the identification of this bird.

**Nikhil Gamit:** At Post – Kadod, Surat District. nik.ng81@gmail.com