



### **Sighting of Western Crowned Warbler *Phylloscopus occipitalis* in Rajpipla**

On 18 October 2020, I, along with my father Ketan Shah, went to a birding trip to Sagai range of Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary. On reaching Sagai, we found a small stream. Along the stream, there was a hunting party which consisted of birds such as Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*), Red-breasted Flycatcher (*Ficedula parva*), Indian Paradise Flycatcher (*Terpsiphone paradisi*), Sulphur-bellied Warbler (*Phylloscopus griseolus*) etc. We saw a *Phylloscopus* warbler there, having a large beak with an orange-yellow colored lower mandible. The sides of the crown were dusky-olive colored, contrasting with the supercilium and it had a dark eye-stripe. The plumage was quite worn out as the double wing bars were not prominent. Based on the large bill, the head pattern and the plumage, we identified it as a Western Crowned Warbler (*Phylloscopus occipitalis*). The Western Crowned Warbler is uncommon here and this sighting adds to the sightings of this species from Gujarat.

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### **Sykes's Short-toed Lark *Calandrella dukhunensis* in Greater Rann of Kachchh**

On 15 February 2019, I visited the eastern part of Banni in Greater Rann of Kachchh, near Lodai, with Manoj Finava, Subhash Das and Kapilsinh Zala. At about 08:30 hrs, we came across a flock of about 15-20 Greater Short-toed Larks (*Calandrella brachydactyla*) feeding in the dry grass. One bird in this flock looked very different, with rufous tinged face, nape and breast sides, heavily streaked upperparts, black streaking on breast sides and a prominent black lateral crown stripe. The bill was horn coloured with black culmen and tip. The crown was not strongly streaked. The bird was photographed by us and we observed that though it associated with Greater Short-toed Larks, it was often chased away when it approached closer to the birds. It was identified as a Sykes's Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella dukhunensis*), also known as Mongolian Short-toed Lark, by its rufous-tinged face and breast side, bill with dark culmen and tip and strongly streaked upperparts. The black lateral crown stripe was an unusual feature seen in this individual. The Sykes's Short-toed Lark is believed to be a rare winter migrant or winter vagrant to Gujarat; there are few records from South Gujarat and Little Rann of Kachchh (Ganpule 2018). This is another record of the species from our state.

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