



### **Chestnut-tailed Starling at Hingolghadh Sanctuary**

On 13 December 2017, I saw and photographed 6 Chestnut-tailed Starlings (*Sturnia malabarica*) at Hingolghadh Nature Education Sanctuary, Dist: Rajkot. I have been birding at this place since many years but I had never recorded this species here earlier. On 12 February 2017, 8 birds were seen near Bhichari village, Dist: Rajkot and on 4 January 2018, 3 birds were seen near Bhutnath Temple, Halenda (about 25 kms from Rajkot). The Chestnut-tailed Starling is resident in Gir forest and adjoining well wooded areas. These records of the species around Rajkot are suggestive of a wider distribution in Saurashtra.

I am thankful to Valkubhai Khacher for showing me this bird at Hingolghadh.

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### **Watercock near Vadodara**

On 4 July 2018, I went to Timbi Lake, near Vadodara. I was passing through a marshy area and suddenly, I saw an unusual bird. I stopped my vehicle and went to see it. It was a male Watercock (*Gallicrex cinerea*). Due to the very less distance between us, it flew away. The very next day, I visited the same place again hoping to spot it. Surprisingly, it was foraging out in the open and I could get very good photographs. The Watercock is uncommon in Vadodara area and this sighting from Timbi Lake in the monsoon is not unexpected but shows that the species does occur in this area.

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### **Red Spurfowl in Dadra & Nagar Haveli**

On 19 August 2016, a female Red Spurfowl (*Galloperdix spadicea*) was seen along with 2 chicks in Madhuban Dam forest area, Dadra & Nagar Haveli. It was probably nesting in the nearby bushes. Every monsoon, a family (adult pair with chicks) is noted in this same location. The Red Spurfowl is resident in south Gujarat and seen in the forest areas of the region. So, its occurrence in Dadra & Nagar Haveli is not unexpected. But, it is resident in this area and successfully breeding here.

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### **Crested Bunting near Bhavnagar**

On 29 July 2018, my friend and I went for the birding to Malnath Hills, near Bhavnagar, in the evening at about 16:00 hrs. I saw a bird, slightly smaller than a Red-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*) suddenly flew from one branch to another. I called my friend and we observed that, it was bathing in a small stream and then perched on a wooden fence near the stream. I took some photographs and identified it as a Crested Bunting (*Melophus lathamii*). It seemed to be a juvenile or immature bird, with dark plumage and streaking on mantle and underparts. The Crested Bunting is uncommon / rare in Bhavnagar District.

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### **Indian Pitta in Rajkot**

On 26 May 2018, I visited Randarda Nursery, in the outskirts of Rajkot, along with my wife Parul and friends Akshay and Krunal Trivedi for birding. While roaming in the area near the nursery, Akshay and I heard the distinct call of an Indian Pitta (*Pitta brachyura*). Its call is a distinct two-note whistle and very well known to us. I whistled back and the bird responded. After a few minutes, the Indian Pitta came out and we could see it well and take photographs. We spent almost two hours observing it. While the Indian Pitta is regularly seen in Hingolghadh Nature Education Sanctuary near Jasdan, in Rajkot District, this was the first time we had seen the species in Rajkot city.

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