

Short Birding Notes



Asian Desert Warbler in South Gujarat

On 18 October 2018, Pravin C. Patel and I went for bird watching around Tena village, which is just 12 kms from Surat city. At around 08:00 hrs in the morning, we saw a small warbler-like bird, with light brown coloured upperparts and rufous rump. It was continuously moving from one branch of dried *Prosopis juliflora* to another and in between, it was even hopping on the ground. It was readily identified as an Asian Desert Warbler (*Sylvia nana*), as we had seen it last year at Greater Rann of Kachchh. It gave us plenty of time to take good photographs. It is mainly seen in Kachchh and some parts of Saurashtra (Ganpule 2016). We believe that this is the first record of an Asian Desert Warbler for South Gujarat.

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White-bellied Drongo in Kachchh

On 31 March 2018, I saw and photographed a White-bellied Drongo (*Dicrurus caerulescens*) near Dhunai, Ta: Mandavi, Dist: Kachchh. I had recorded the same species on 29 November 2016 and 25 December 2017 in this area previously. According to senior birder Shantilal Varu, this species is rare in Kachchh with only 2-3 previous sightings. All the previous sightings of the White-bellied Drongo from Kachchh are from the winter season and it seems that the species is a rare winter migrant or vagrant to Kachchh in the winter.

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Indian Grey Hornbill in Wadhwan, Surendranagar

A single Indian Grey Hornbill (*Ocyrceros birostris*) was seen at my farm near Wadhwan, Surendranagar, on 27 July 2018, at around 18:30 hrs. This bird was first sighted by Dadabapu Bhavanisinhji Mori. The bird was silent and we could see it from a long distance. On the next morning, I visited the site again, but could not find it. This is an important record for Saurashtra region. Ganpule (2016) mentions a record from Gir National Park and other than that record, this is the only recent record from Saurashtra. This record will also be very significant for understanding the distribution and the range extension of the species in Saurashtra.

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Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher in Vansada National Park

On 19 October 2018, I visited Vansada National Park with my parents (Suryamani Mishra and Smita Mishra) for bird watching as it was open after the monsoon. We entered the park at around 08:30 hrs and drove to many areas for one whole hour without any bird sightings. It was 09:30 hrs, and I saw a bird sitting on the ground catching a fly/insect (probably a bumblebee). I immediately took a few photos but it flew away. I waited for 15 minutes and saw it again and it was identified as an Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher (*Ceyx erithaca*). It had an insect in its mouth. It perched just in front of me for about half an hour. Later on, my friends Dr Anand Patel, Viren Desai and Dr Pragnesh Patel joined me and after one hour, they saw the bird again. There are previous records of the species from Vansada (Mistri *et al.* 2017) but this sighting in October is too late for the monsoon season and indicates that it may remain in this area probably till the onset of winter.

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