

For a better understanding of the population and distribution of the Sykes's Nightjar in the area, we explored the surroundings of Timbi at night from December 2018 to February 2019. A total of 19 sightings of Sykes's Nightjar were noted in 10 visits to the area and the distribution of the species is shown in the map.

Discussion

Though an uncommon winter visitor to Gujarat (Parasharya *et al.* 2004, Ganpule 2016), this species was found to be breeding in the Greater Rann of Kachchh (Tiwari & Dadu 2010). During our surveys, a total of 25 sightings of nightjars were noted on 19 occasions. Once, we came across five individuals in one night at different locations, which indicate that the species is seen in good numbers in this area. Though some of the sightings may be of the same individual seen at different times and dates, there is no doubt that more than five birds were present in this area. The only historical record, which we found for Vadodara district, is of a specimen, a female (GS290), collected by Salim Ali on 18 November 1945 from Dabka, on the dry grassland at the edge of a jheel (Ali 1956). Ali (1956) also states that 'elsewhere not noted' in Gujarat, but observed that Hume obtained a specimen in north Gujarat between Deesa and Suigam, and who stated that it occurs in Kachchh and Saurashtra as well. Padate *et al.* (2001) did not come across the species during their survey in the Vadodara district. The sightings here, over a period of more than two months, suggest that the species is a winter visitor here. The wintering of Sykes's Nightjar in small groups around

Timbi Irrigation Reservoir of Vadodara district appears to be a hitherto unrecorded fact and adds to our knowledge regarding the distribution of the species in Gujarat.

References

- Ali, S. & Ripley, S. D. 1983. *Handbook of the birds of India and Pakistan*, Vol. 3. Oxford University Press, Bombay.
- Ali, S. 1956. *The Birds of Gujarat*. Gujarat Research Society, Bombay.
- Cleere, N. 2010. *Nightjars of the World*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, New Jersey.
- Ganpule, P. 2016. The birds of Gujarat: Status and distribution. *Flamingo* 8(3) – 12(4): 2-40
- Grimmett, R., Inskipp C., & Inskipp T. 2011. *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent* (Second edition). Oxford University Press and Christopher Helm, London.
- Holyoak, D. T., 2001. *Nightjars and their allies: the Caprimulgiformes* (Vol. 7). Oxford University Press.
- Kazmierczak, K. 2000. *Birds of India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and the Maldives*. Om Books International, New Delhi.
- Naria, K., 2019. IBC1591036. Accessible at hbw.com/ibc/1591036.
- Padate, G. S., Sapna, S., & Devkar, R. V. 2001. Status of birds in Vadodara District (Central Gujarat). *Pavo* 39: 83-94
- Parasharya, B. M., Borad, C. K., & Rank, D. N., 2004. *A checklist of the birds of Gujarat*. Bird Conservation Society, Gujarat.
- Rasmussen, P. C. & Anderton, J. C. 2012. *Birds of South Asia - The Ripley Guide*. Vols. 1 & 2. 2nd Ed, NMNH - Smithsonian Institution, Lynx Edicions, Washington D.C., and Barcelona.
- Tiwari, J. K., & Dadu, M., 2010. Nesting of Sykes's Nightjar *Caprimulgus mahrattensis* in the Great Rann of Kachchh, Gujarat, India. *Indian Birds* 5 (5): 151–152 □

Sighting of Moustached Warbler *Acrocephalus melanopogon*, Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris* and Asian Desert Warbler *Sylvia nana* at Nal Sarovar

Pankaj Maheria, Viral Patel & Geet Maheria Patel: 11, Shyam Sundar Society - Part 3, Vejalpur, Ahmedabad. drpankajmaheria@gmail.com

We present here sightings of Moustached Warbler (*Acrocephalus melanopogon*), Marbled Duck (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*) and Asian Desert Warbler (*Sylvia nana*) from the Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary from the winter season of 2018-2019. These sightings were made during the course of routine bird watching in the area.

Moustached Warbler

On 24 November 2018, we visited Vadla Wetland. At first, we saw a Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*) but it disappeared quickly into the reeds in the area. So, we were just waiting quietly for it to come out again. Meanwhile, we observed some other common birds like Bluethroat (*Luscinia calliope*) and some warblers (*Acrocephalus* sp.). There were five warblers foraging



Pankaj Maheria

at the same place. We photographed all of them and believed that these were Paddyfield Warblers (*Acrocephalus agricola*). Later, at home while inspecting the photographs on the

Nal Sarovar....

computer, one warbler looked different and we suspected that it was a Moustached Warbler. We sent the photographs to Prasad Ganpule to confirm the identification. He confirmed that it was indeed a Moustached Warbler based on the broad white supercilium, blackish crown sides, streaked upperparts and long, thin blackish bill.

The Moustached Warbler is a rare winter visitor to Gujarat, with sightings from Kachchh, Saurashtra and central Gujarat; it is thought to be overlooked (Ganpule 2016). There is a recent sighting from the Little Rann of Kachchh (Ganpule 2017). So, this record from Nal Sarovar is not unexpected. However, there are very few photographic records from this region and so this sighting is noteworthy.

Marbled Duck

Due to a weak monsoon in 2018, the water level was quite low at Nal Sarovar and its peripheral areas. As a result, many water bodies had dried up and others were somewhat exposed with



Pankaj Maheria

very less water. On 24 December 2018, I (first author) planned a visit this area with my friends from Surat (Dr. Anand Patel, Viren Desai, Dr. Dharmesh Patel and Dr. Pragnesh Patel) for photography of Red-crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*). We reached there in the evening. We saw 8-10 pairs of Red-crested Pochards. They were foraging in the water at least 200 meters away. So, we decided to go on the other side of the water to get some good photographs. Meanwhile, we saw one duck in flight. I hastily took some photographs and believed that it was a female Red-crested Pochard. I posted the images later on the 'Oriental Birding Pix' group and it was pointed out that this was a Marbled Duck. All its features were matching with a Marbled Duck and the grey eye-mask, whitish forehead, white underwings, barred rump etc. were seen. The photographs were then uploaded on the 'Oriental Bird Images' website and the three images posted on the website show all the features of a Marbled Duck (Maheria 2018).

The Marbled Duck is a rare winter visitor to Gujarat with scattered records from the state. However, there are very few

photographic records from Gujarat and so this was a good sighting for us.

Asian Desert Warbler

On 16 March 2019, we visited Nal Sarovar in the evening. We were busy with the photography of the fascinating 'puff-and-roll' display of a Stoliczka's Bushchat (*Saxicola macrorhynchus*) in the area. After some time, we observed the presence of



Pankaj Maheria

one small warbler with a distinct yellow iris. It was foraging fearlessly in lower bushes besides the Stoliczka's Bushchat. It was easily identified as an Asian Desert Warbler. Generally, all of our sightings of Asian Desert Warblers were either from Little Rann of Kachchh or Greater Rann of Kachchh. Since this location is not very far from the Little Rann of Kachchh, the sighting was not very surprising. But, as far as we know, the Asian Desert Warbler has not been photographed from this area in the recent years and so this was a significant record for Nal Sarovar.

These three sightings highlight the importance of Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary. This area provides an important habitat for the wintering and migrant birds and even though there was very less water this year, these sightings show that Nal Sarovar remains an important area for bird watching.

References

- Ganpule, P., 2016. The birds of Gujarat: Status and distribution. *Flamingo*. 8 (3)–12 (4): 2–40
- Ganpule, P., 2017. Sighting of Moustached Warbler, Red-throated Pipit and Grasshopper Warbler in the Little Rann of Kachchh. *Flamingo*. 15 (2): 17–18
- Maheria, P., 2018. Marbled Duck. http://orientalbirdimages.org/search.php?Bird_Image_ID=172358&Bird_ID=185&Bird_Family_ID=&Location= [Accessed on 1 August 2019]. □