

possibility that this species may not be a vagrant but a few birds could be wintering regularly in well wooded areas or forests of Gujarat and are not recorded due to the difficulty in separating it from the Common Hawk Cuckoo.

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Ringed Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* recovered near Surat

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The terns (Sternidae) are a distinctive group of birds that occupy aquatic environments around the world. The Bridled Tern (*Onychoprion anaethetus*), also known as the Brown-winged Tern, is medium-sized pelagic bird which is mostly seen off-shore. We report here the recovery of a ringed Bridled Tern near Surat.

On 17 September 2021, in the late evening, Nature Club Surat (NCS) received a call that a sick unidentified bird had fallen on the ground in Bhimpore area of Surat. NCS team members immediately left to rescue the bird. The rescue site was 8 km from the city centre near a coastal area. On arriving at the rescue spot, the rescuers found a pelagic tern. It looked severely dehydrated when observed. No external injury was visible on the body. It later died and we assumed that severe dehydration was the probable cause of death. On close observation, we found that the bird had a ring on its right foot. We recorded the ring number to find details regarding the ringing location and date. Later, the bird was buried after doing the necessary formalities. We thought that this was probably a juvenile Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*) due to the brownish plumage and darker head. We discussed the identification of this tern with Madhumita Panigrahi and referred to Peterson & Harrison (1991), and concluded that this was, in fact, a juvenile Bridled Tern. It could be identified as a juvenile Bridled Tern based on the scaly pattern formed by pale feather edges on the mantle, less distinct face pattern, brown cap streaked with white and a diagnostic white stripe above the eye extending till the rear of the eye. Immature Sooty Terns have an all-dark face and breast, with white only on the belly, as opposed to the white underside from the chin to the vent in Bridled Tern.

We tried to obtain the ringing information and the following ringing details were received from Dr. Abbas Ashoori (Department of Environment, Rasht, Iran) which are given here (Table 1) and the ringing location and recovery location are given in the map presented here.

Table 1: Ringing and re-sighting details of Bridled Tern recovered at Bhimpore, Dumas, near Surat

Right leg ring number	ENVIRONMENT, TEHRAN, CW02935
Age when rescued	Juvenile
Ring color	Silver aluminum
Ringing date	28 July 2021
Ringed by	Farhad Hosseini Tayefeh and colleagues
Ringing place	Nakhiloo Island, South Iran
Age when ringing	Chick
Coordinates of the release site	27° 52' 22.8"N, 51° 26' 48.12"E
Finding date	17 September 2021
Finding time	18:05 hrs
Country	India
State	Gujarat
Finding place	Bhimpore, Dumas, near Surat
Distance	2280 km from ringing place
Finding coordinates	21° 4' 52.32" N, 72° 43' 44.04"E



Map 1: Ringing location and re-sighting location of Bridled Tern recovered near Surat

Status in Gujarat

The Bridled Tern is given as a vagrant to Gujarat (Ganpule 2016). There are few records of this species from our state. Earlier reports of Bridled Tern noted from various parts of the Gujarat are given in Table 2.

As can be seen from Table 2, there have been many previous records of the Bridled Tern from Gujarat. Almost all the sightings are from the monsoon months of August and September. Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) stated that this species is a breeding visitor to seas off Pakistan and W India. It is likely that after breeding, the birds make a southbound journey off the coast of Gujarat in the autumn. More than 10 Bridled Terns were seen off the Gujarat coast during a pelagic trip in September 2016 (Naik 2016). It is interesting to note that ringed Bridled Terns have been noted in our state previously and two of the previous rescued birds were ringed. This is the third recovery of a ringed individual in Gujarat.

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Table 2: Records of Bridled Tern from Gujarat

Sr. No.	Date	Location	Coordinates	Remarks	Reference
1	7 September 2011	Surat	21°05'00"N 72°49'38"E	Rescued (ringed bird)	Thakor 2012
2	3 August 2012	Ahmedabad	23°03'77"N 72°03'47"E	Rescued	Rafique 2012
3	16 August 2014	Surat	21°10'30"N 72°48'24"E	Rescued	Kasambe <i>et al.</i> 2014
4	12 August 2016	Amalsad, Navsari	20°81'40"N 72°95'53"E	Rescued	Patel 2016
5	24 September 2016	Veraval coast, Gir-Somnath	off-shore – during pelagic trip	sightings of 12 birds in the sea	Naik 2016
6	N. A	Kachchh	N. A	Dead bird	Ganpule 2016
7	1 September 2017	Porbandar	21°37'48"N 69°37'40"E	Rescued (ringed bird)	Vargiya & Kanjariya 2019
8	21 October 2018	Veraval coast, Gir-Somnath	30 NM off Veraval Coast – pelagic	Adult	Bhatia 2018
9	16 August 2020	Dharasana wetland, Valsad	20°41'21"N 72°52'02"E	Juvenile	Maheria 2020 (see elsewhere in this issue)
10	25 August 2020	Dharasana wetland, Valsad	20°41'21"N 72°52'02"E	Juvenile in flight	Patel 2020
11	15 September 2021	Surat	21°08'12"N 72°72'89"E	Rescued (ringed bird)	Authors' sighting

information related to the rescue. We are grateful to the Gujarat Forest Department for their kind support. We express gratitude to Madhumita Panigrahi (senior scientist – B at Bombay Natural History Society), Dr. Abbas Ashoori (Department of Environment, Rasht, Iran) and Farhad Hosseini Tayefeh (Department of Environment, Iran) for sharing the ringing information with us.

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Sighting of Watercock *Gallixrex cinerea* in the Little Rann of Kachchh

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I was on a bird-watching trip with Sadik Pathan in the Little Rann of Kachchh on 30 October 2021. At around 08:00 hrs, inside the Little Rann of Kachchh (23°15' N, 71°35' E), about 22 kilometers from Zinduwada, on a vast open mudflat, I saw a bird, which looked like it was some Rallidae, from a long distance but I was unable to identify it since it had a peculiar structure. I recognized it as a female or non-breeding male Watercock (*Gallixrex cinerea*) after closer examination based on the following: dark brown head and nape, blackish mantle

feathers with broad buff fringes, darker (almost blackish) feathers on crown, paler brownish below with variable narrow darker barring, dull pale bill and legs; reddish eyes. It was a very unusual sighting since there were no reeds in this area and the bird was very exposed on the mud-flats. I took several photographs and confirmed the identification.



Tushar Tripathi

A dead Watercock was observed by Tushar Tripathi in the Little Rann of Kachchh after a few days. It was around 07:55 hrs on 5 November 2021 when a Harrier (*Circus* species) was observed feeding on a probable female Watercock near the location where I had previously observed the bird. It is possible