



Blue-capped Rock Thrush *Monticola cinclorhynchus* in Kachchh

On 16 September 2021, I was birding in my school campus at Kotdi, Taluka: Mandvi, in Kachchh. The campus is well wooded and attracts a variety of warblers and flycatchers. While following the call of a warbler, I saw a thrush-like, rufous coloured bird. After watching carefully and taking photos, I identified it as a male Blue-capped Rock Thrush (*Monticola cinclorhynchus*). It was seen at the same place for the next three days. After contacting senior birder Shantilal Varu, I came to know that this species is a rare winter migrant in Kachchh, with only two previous records in 1985 and 1999. Hence the present sighting is the third record and the second photographic record from Kachchh.

Dipak Goswami: Bhuj-Kachchh. goswamidpk8@gmail.com



Sightings of Common Whitethroat *Curruca communis* in Jamnagar District

On 13 September 2019, the first and second authors were on a birding trip on Jamnagar-Samana Road. Near Vadpanchasara Village, they saw a Common Whitethroat (*Curruca communis*) and got some good photographs of it there. The area is hilly, with scrub forest. That was probably one of the first photographic records of this species from Jamnagar District. On 5 September 2021, the third author saw and photographed a Common Whitethroat from the same area. Hence, these two sightings, in the month of September and during the autumn passage migration season, suggest that this species could be a regular autumn passage migrant in Jamnagar District in suitable habitat. More sightings will help in determining if a few birds pass through this area regularly.

Mehul Bhadania, Yashodhan Bhatia & Maulik Varu: Jamnagar. mehulbhadania@gmail.com



Crested Bunting *Melophus lathami* in Little Rann of Kachchh

On 13 November 2021, Eshith Anand and I visited Little Rann of Kachchh. After completing our morning safari, we visited Vachhada Dada Mandir, in Vacchraj Bet, to check for the Pallid Scops Owl (*Otus brucei*) which was seen there a few days previously. While searching for the owl, we found a bunting perched on a cactus and I took some photographs. It was identified as a female Crested Bunting (*Melophus lathami*). The Crested Bunting is a common to uncommon resident in Gujarat, with scattered sightings from the state (Ganpule 2016). According to senior bird watchers and experts, this species is quite rare in the Little Rann of Kachchh and this could be the first photographic record from this area.

Rajendra Kasi: raaz80@gmail.com



Lesser Kestrels *Falco naumanni* at Velavadar National Park

A group of seven birders, namely Tushar Tripathi, Dr. Nahid Ansari, Rakesh Singh, Rahul Rathod, Gaurav Singh, Kunal Sharma and I visited Blackbuck National Park, Velavadar on 12 December 2021. We entered the park at around 07:15 hrs via the wetland side. At around 08:15 hrs, we saw ten Lesser Kestrels (*Falco naumanni*) in two groups of six and four individuals perched on two adjacent trees. This was the first time we had seen Lesser Kestrels in such a group. We took some photographs and noticed that there was an Amur Falcon (*Falco amurensis*) in this group. This group was then chased away by a pair of Eurasian Sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*). The flock of kestrels perched on a nearby tree where we again managed to get a few photographs. Sightings of Lesser Kestrels in such large numbers is rare in Gujarat and this was most likely a group of migrating birds. We left the park at 11:30 hrs and some 500 meters away from the booking office, we saw another Amur Falcon fly overhead but we were not able to get any photographs of this bird. This group was seen here for almost three to four weeks and there are many photos of these kestrels posted on eBird. The other significant sightings from our trip were seeing a Western Crowned Warbler (*Phylloscopus occipitalis*) and a Grey-bellied Cuckoo (*Cacomantis passerinus*). It was an eventful trip for us. I am thankful to Dr Nahid Ansari for the photograph of the Lesser Kestrel given here.

Ayaz Mansuri: Gandhinagar. ayaz@sybertech.in