



### Sightings of Short-Eared Owls *Asio flammeus* at Dantiwada, Banaskantha

It was a routine early morning bird watching session for us at the Dantiwada Dam, Banaskantha, on 5 December 2021. After seeing many birds, the first author noticed a small pyramidal-shaped, brownish bird in the green leafy mustard field from our car. A closer look revealed a Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) hiding behind the leaves. We excitedly went towards the owl but it flew away. However, we saw four more Short-eared Owls in the surrounding mustard fields. Thus, a total of five owls were seen at the Dantiwada Dam area. The Short-eared Owl is a common to uncommon winter visitor to Gujarat (Ganpule 2016). Due to restricted nesting habits and nomadic nature, the species is vulnerable to habitat loss at their feeding and roosting grounds (Varagiya & Chakraborty 2018). The sighting of the owls in good numbers at this site is encouraging.

**Tarun Sutaria & C. F. Chaudhari:** Palanpur, Banaskantha. tarun.vets@gmail.com



### Oriental Scops Owl *Otus sunia* at Jessore

From 3 January 2021 to 11 January 2021, I was able to see and photograph an Oriental Scops Owl (*Otus sunia*) at the Jessore Sloth Bear Sanctuary. As per local birdwatchers, this species has never been reported from the Jessore Sloth Bear Sanctuary earlier. The Oriental Scops-owl is polymorphic and is found in different morphs, including grey-brown and rufous morphs. The individual photographed by me was a rufous morph bird. The closest geographical record of this species from Jessore is from the Mt. Abu forest in the Sirohi District of Rajasthan. The nearest records of Oriental Scops Owl from this location in Gujarat are from Gandhinagar and Ahmedabad Districts. The Oriental Scops Owl is given as a rare resident in the forest regions of South Gujarat and there are isolated records from Central Gujarat and from Gir / Girnar area (Ganpule 2016). This sighting from Jessore is important and shows that this species is present in forests of northern Gujarat too. However, its status here is not known and needs further study.

**Javed Ghasura:**



### European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* in Velavadar

On 12 September 2021, I was visiting the Blackbuck Safari Lodge near Velavadar National Park. I work there as a naturalist and I was visiting the property after a spell of rains. At around 16:15 hrs, I saw a bird on a tree near the gazebo in the lodge. I saw it well with binoculars and took some photographs. I identified it as a European Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*) and confirmed the identification by sharing photos with experts. The bird was seen there till about 18:15 hrs after which it flew away. The European Nightjar is an uncommon autumn passage migrant in Gujarat, with sightings mainly from Kachchh (Ganpule 2016). This species has not been recorded from Saurashtra recently though it could be passing through this region but is likely to be overlooked.

**Amit Vegad:** Velavadar. vegadmit5@gmail.com



### Rusty-tailed Flycatcher *Muscicapa ruficauda* in Nalsarovar

On 30 September 2021, my father Kasambhai Sidani and I were bird watching around Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary. Since it was the passage migration season, we were looking for passage migrants which occur here. We observed a flycatcher perched in a tree. It looked different from the flycatchers seen here. We took some photographs and observed the bird. It had reddish tail, was plain-faced and the plumage was greyish-brown. We shared the photos with Sunil Kini and Prasad Ganpule, who identified it as a Rusty-tailed Flycatcher (*Muscicapa ruficauda*). This was the first sighting of a Rusty-tailed Flycatcher from Nalsarovar and this bird stayed here for a few days. Recent records of this species, with photos posted on eBird, are from Girnar, Mahuva, Bhavnagar and Morbi. This sighting from Nalsarovar is during the autumn passage migration season and suggests that this species could be passing through this area in September-October. More records will help in known its status here.

**Ramzaan Qasim:** At – Nalsarovar.