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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

that this bird, due to its weakened condition, had succumbed or the harrier had preyed on it since it was not healthy and became easy prey.

This sighting is unusual because the habitat of the Watercock includes reed beds and dense vegetation around water and it is not seen in desert areas. It is possible that this individual, probably on migration, and disoriented and due to its weak condition, was resting on the mud-flats. This sighting of Watercock inside the rann is quite surprising, because previous records of this species from Gujarat are not from desert areas. Ganpule (2016) stated that the Watercock was an uncommon to rare monsoon migrant to Gujarat with a few records from the winter months. Mashru (2017) gave details regarding the previous sightings of Watercock from Gujarat but gives no record from any desert areas in the state. After this publication, more records of Watercock have been published /

noted (photographed) but there is no record of this species from the Little Rann of Kachchh. This is probably the first photographic record of the species from this area.

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Sighting of Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malaiensis* and Black Shaheen *Falco peregrinus peregrinator* in Gandhinagar

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of the Black Eagle from Gujarat till 2010. This species is given as a rare winter visitor to Gujarat by Ganpule (2016). In eBird, the records of Black Eagle are from the forest areas from north to south Gujarat and from Gir / Girnar and Rajkot in Saurashtra. It is now known that this species is an uncommon but regular winter migrant to Gujarat. However, there are no records of the Black Eagle from Gandhinagar area so far and this sighting shows that the Black Eagle could frequent well wooded areas around Gandhinagar too.



On 22 August 2020, I decided to go for birding and I visited Sant Sarovar area. It was the monsoon season and so the day

On 27 October 2019, while birding in Sant Sarovar, in the Gandhinagar outskirts area, I saw a large raptor soaring in the sky. I observed that three to four Black Kites (*Milvus migrans*) suddenly appeared and began to mob this large raptor. I took some photographs and observed that this bird stayed in the area for almost 10 to 15 minutes. I could not identify this bird of prey and hence posted the photos on the 'Ask ID of Indian Birds' facebook page. Many bird watchers and experts commented that this was a Black Eagle (*Ictinaetus malaiensis*) and local bird watchers opined that this was a rare sighting for Gandhinagar. Parasharya (2010) listed more than 15 records

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