

## Red Knot *Calidris canutus* in breeding plumage at Jamnagar

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Photo: Vimal Dubal

On 8 April 2022 in the night, Pratik Bhatt and I started our journey from Ahmedabad to Jamnagar to photograph waders in breeding plumage. On 9 April, early in the morning, we, along with Siddharthsinh Sisodiya, visited Sachana, near Balachadi, for photography of different migratory waders in their breeding plumages. We reached there at around 07:00 hrs and started moving towards different groups of waders.

We were trying to photograph Bar-tailed Godwits (*Limosa lapponica*) in breeding plumage and so we approached a group of godwits while Siddharthsinh went to a separate side to try for other species. We came across one different looking individual, which was also in breeding plumage and looked like a Bar-tailed Godwit from a distance with naked eyes, and so we approached it. It was smaller compared to a Bar-tailed Godwit so Pratik and I took a few pictures of it; I captured a video, and then came to know that there were two of these birds in that group.

The other species we photographed were Bar-tailed Godwits, Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), Little Stint (*C. minuta*), Lesser Sand Plovers (*Charadrius mongolus*) and Greater Sand Plovers (*C. leschenaultii*), Broad-billed Sandpiper (*Limicola falcinellus*), and my most favourite, the Crab Plovers (*Dromas ardeola*). We concluded our session at around 09:30 hrs and came back to the hotel and then checked all the pictures of the unidentified birds and came to know that these were two Red Knots (*Calidris canutus*) in breeding plumage. They were foraging continuously and looked like they were feeding restlessly

because they were about to fly for their return migration. I sent the photographs to Nushad Theba and Manish Trivedi, who further confirmed the identification. Ashish Pankhania and Yashodhan Bhatia were also at the same location, but very far from us. These Red Knots were then seen for more than one week and many bird watchers visited Jamnagar to see these birds.

The Red Knot is given as a winter vagrant to Gujarat, with sightings from coastal Saurashtra and Kachchh (Ganpule 2016). The sighting of these birds in almost full breeding plumage was unusual as there are hardly any records of it in breeding plumage from our state. This is an important sighting for Jamnagar as well as Gujarat.

### References

Ganpule, P., 2016. The birds of Gujarat: Status and distribution. *Flamingo* 8 (3) – 12 (4): 2-40 □

## Nesting of Collard Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* in Kachchh

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Photo: jaysukh Parekh Suman

On 19 April 2022, late in the morning, I visited Charri-Dhand in Banni, Kachchh, with my son Nirav, and with Nirav Pomal and Mukim Mutva. We were photographing birds in the area. We saw and photographed Collard Pratincoles (*Glareola pratincola*) in Chari-Dhandh. There were small group of 6-8 birds which were scattered in the area. The area had small to medium dry grass, with depressions covered with dense grass. We observed that sometimes, the birds were flying and landing on the ground. After landing, some birds were walking fast with necks

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stretched in the front. The temperature was about 40° C and so the birds were panting. Some mud in the area had not yet fully dried and so it was wet, with short dry grass. We saw many birds sitting on the wet mud to cool themselves. Suddenly, one bird landed near this wet area, walked a little and sat down in one of the depressions on the ground. After sitting down, it spread its belly. This looked like incubating behaviour. I was surprised to see this and thought that a nest must be present there. We were in our car and with the intention of not disturbing the bird, we waited for a while. The bird was relaxed but panting continuously due to the heat. After sometime, the bird stood up and walked away. We took some photos with a telephoto lens from a distance and saw one chick and one egg. We also saw that there were four-five other individuals nearby, but not too close to the nest. The bird returned after some time and started re-incubating the egg. As this species generally nests in colonies, we thought that there might be more nests nearby but did not search for them.

After that day, I went there five times in the next few weeks. We saw a few chicks around that area and observed that at least 3 pairs of Collared Pratincoles were parenting the chicks. We could see that the chicks were healthy even though the temperature was more than 40° C.



Photo: Jaysukh Parekh Suman

They were active and were wing stretching, preening and walking on the ground. We also saw some juveniles of Crested Lark (*Galerida cristata*) landing near to the Collared Pratincole chicks but the adult pratincoles were tolerant of the larks.

There are very few records of nesting of Collared Pratincoles in Kachchh [see elsewhere in this issue – Eds] and it was thus noteworthy to see that a few pairs had bred in Kachchh this year. □

## Sighting of Tickell's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis* in Bopal, Ahmedabad

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Photo: Vyom Vyas

The Tickell's Leaf-Warbler (*Phylloscopus affinis*) is a distinct leaf-warbler with yellowish supercilium and underparts, and greenish, gray-brown, or yellow-tinged upperparts. The yellow supercilium is long and is distinct in all plumages. It has yellowish ear-coverts, contrasting with the green body. Its

remiges and rectrices are brown with olive fringes. It has a distinct pale lower mandible to the bill and the legs range from dark brown to yellowish-brown in colour. When vocalizing, it perches on the tops of small trees, shrubs, and boulders and sings with a series of short notes (in breeding season). In winters, it usually gives short 'chit' calls which are similar to Sulphur-bellied Warbler (*Phylloscopus griseolus*) (Clement 2020).

In the winter months, it prefers a habitat with bushes, trees, forest edges, clearings, and also among cultivated areas (Clement 2020). On 1 October 2021, it was a cool morning. I ventured on a cycle to my backyard birding hotspot amidst Ahmedabad city. The habitat was a small patch with a mix of natural vegetation, agricultural fields, and a few scattered trees (*Acacia sp.*, *Calotropis sp.*, and *Azadirachta indica*). At 09:00 hrs, when it started getting hot, the activity was also very low. During that time, I happened to scan a flock of Lesser Whitethroats (*Curruca curruca*) foraging in a field with short shrubs. Amongst them, there was a bold leaf-warbler that