

Collard Pratincole....

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 Vyasa

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

preferred to stay on top of the shrubs and mixed easily with the whitethroats. I clicked a few photographs of the leaf-warbler and identified it as a Tickell's Leaf-Warbler (*Phylloscopus affinis*) by the lemon-yellow wash on the breast and belly, greenish back, long and prominent yellow supercilium, and a pale lower mandible. One of the important features for identification of the Tickell's Leaf Warbler is the olive-green wing edges, which was seen and photographed in this individual. Later, I asked Ashwin Viswanathan and he also suggested that it was a Tickell's Leaf-Warbler.



Photo: Vyom Vyas

The sighting of a Tickell's Leaf Warbler is an uncommon sighting in the drier regions of India (mainly in some parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat). This species has been recorded a few times previously in Gujarat; the first record was by Akhtar & Tiwari (1995), and it was subsequently seen in Morbi (Ganpule

2013), in Vansda National Park, Navsari, in March 2012 (see eBird checklist: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S20694735> - no photograph is available), and at Sant Sarovar, Gandhinagar in 2019 (see photo: [Macaulay Library ML184905771](https://macaulaylibrary.org/ML184905771)). There is a sighting from the Little Rann of Kachchh too (Christian 2017). This is another record of the species with photographic evidence from Gujarat and it is probably the first record from Ahmedabad district. The Tickell's Leaf-Warbler is likely to be overlooked in Gujarat and it is possible that it could be occurring here in suitable habitats.

Acknowledgments

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References

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- Christian, C., 2017. Sighting of Tickell's Leaf Warbler in Little Rann of Kachchh. *Flamingo* 15 (1): 12
- Clement, P., 2020. Tickell's Leaf Warbler (*Phylloscopus affinis*), version 1.0. In *Birds of the World*. Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.tilwar1.01>
- Ganpule, P., 2013. <https://birdingingujarat.wordpress.com/2013/07/27/tickells-leaf-warbler-in-gujarat/> [Accessed on 15 June 2022]

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Errata

In the article on the Eurasian Coot (*Fulica atra*) with 'progressive greying' in the previous issue [*Flamingo Gujarat* 5 (1): 5-7], a reference from a newspaper, 'The Hindu' is given for an aberrant Eurasian Coot seen in Kerala where it was identified as a 'leucistic' individual. The correct reference is as follows:

Hariharan, C., Raveendran, J., Prabhu, V., & John, A., 2016. Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra* affected by progressive greying. *Malabar Trogon* 14 (1-3): 27-28.

and the bird was affected by the mutation 'progressive greying'.

[We are thankful to Praveen J. for pointing out the correct reference for this sighting – Eds].